



Citizens' Pact for SEE



Youth Issues and Challenges

in South-Eastern Europe

Ioan HOSU
coordinator



CIVITAS
foundation
for civil society

Youth
Issues and
Challenges
in South-Eastern Europe

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Introduction

In SEE countries, the 90s meant radical change in society organization patterns. New types replaced the socialist political and economic system. The transition to the new structures has taken place in all former communist countries, each of them finding this process more or less 'painful', depending on the difficulties they encountered.

Objectives

The social, political and economic background has always played an important role in shaping lives. Young people too are part of this interdependence. Thus, school life, sports, peer group life, leisure activities and many more share and borrow characteristics of transition. This sociological investigation tried to answer basic questions like: "How do the youth respond to their social context?", "What are the common characteristics of transition in all SEE countries?", "How could this process reach its goals without painful consequences?", "What are the gains and losses of transition?" . . .

The present research does not exhaust all categories of factors that contribute to a complete picture of life problems and strategies that SEE young people adopt. A shortcoming of the research is that the results of the study cannot be assigned to the whole young population in the SEE area. On the one hand, the reason would be that the target group of the investigation consists in young people belonging to nonprofit organizations. On the other hand, a complete image of youth problems in the present-day context would be the outcome of a large variety of approaches, from the economic one to the sociologic, social-psychological or anthropologic one. Sociological approaches focus on socialization processes, cultural anthropology deals with culture and its transformation from one generation to another, and social psychology focuses on socialization as an interactive process. Socialization facilitates the individual's group integration and maintenance of membership in salient groups. The group interviews and sociological surveys done during the research recorded the youth's opinions vis-à-vis the social, political and economic aspects of their society. Transition is seen as a difficult process implying high social costs. Therefore, the population is hardly satisfied with it. Young people are even less content because they, along with the elderly, are provided less social assistance.

The investigation followed several issues:

- How satisfied are the youth with their life given the social, economic and political context in their country?
- How can the youth be part of social development processes in order to improve their standard of living?
- How can NGOs contribute to a better integration of the youth in society?

The answers given helped researchers register a variety of issues that the young people are confronted with, as well as a range of strategies meant to offer solution to their problems.

Methodology

The methods of data collection were the sociological survey and the group-focused interviews. The methods of analysis of qualitative and quantitative data were used to obtain a complete picture of the subject of investigation. As always, the investigators had to take into consideration aspects regarding the validity and reliability of the instruments of measurement.

Speaking of the quantitative dimension of the present research (sociological survey), the criteria of selecting the sample subjects was their belonging to non-governmental organizations. The selection also viewed the subjects' degrees of activities performed in their organizational environment. Thus, the subjects were young NGOs people, volunteers or students members of unions or students' federations.

The qualitative approach of the investigation analysed young people's opinions in a comparative way. The focus groups were composed of students, NGOs' activists and young people that have jobs or are unemployed. Such research provides information about how young people motivate their choice, how they reflect on and understand the social space and its impact on them.

The questionnaire was applied to members of non-governmental organizations, to NGOs staff and to volunteers. For this, the results of the investigation cannot be assigned to the entire young population in a specific country. Non-governmental organizations are associations, foundations, leagues or students' federations.

The sample

The pieces of information obtained in this study do not necessarily represent beliefs and opinions of the whole youth. The subjects of the investigation are part of non-governmental organizations and they were selected on the premises that they were well informed and were part of the public sector. Their opinions would direct to a better understanding of the present-day political and social life. The selection was through a non-random sampling procedure. Therefore, the findings are typical for the

Introduction

youth and cannot be used for the assessment of their qualitative distribution in the population of their country. It is almost impossible to set up a complete sampling frame of all organizations that develop one type of activity. For this, partners contributed to creating the sampling frames of organizations active in different domains. These organizations provided the subjects to be part of the sample. Due to the imperfection of the sampling procedure and/or the sample size, the sampling error cannot be identified.

The design of the instruments of investigation, the criteria of selection of the subjects of the sample as well as of the young people who took part in the group interview belonged to the Civitas Foundation for Civil Society. The responsibility for the accuracy of data collection is entirely assumed by the partners in the countries where the research was carried out.

South Eastern Europe – The Balkans



Presentation of Region

South Eastern Europe – The Balkans

In his comprehensive work “Twenty-Five Lectures on Modern Balkan History” Steven W. Sowards provides an expressive description of the Balkans:

“The Balkan region is a peninsula with a wide northern border, narrowing to a tip as it extends to the south. The Black, the Aegean, the Mediterranean and the Adriatic Seas surround it; they have been both barriers and entry points. Unlike some peninsulas, the Balkan area has not been physically isolated from nearby regions. In the northeast, Romania is exposed to the steppe regions of the Ukraine, an easy invasion route from prehistoric times to the present. In the northwest, the valley of the Danube and the flat Hungarian plain are easy points of entry. Most (but not all) of the ethnic groups in the region entered by one of these paths.”

The region takes its name from the Balkan mountain range in Bulgaria. The mountains, which divide the region, are a prominent internal physical characteristic. The first effect of these mountains is to divide the region into small units, in which distinct ethnic groups have been able to sustain themselves. This area is home to a dozen or more prominent ethnic groups and there is no nation that would be limited within its country boundaries. This diversity enriches the Balkans, but in the same time is the classical source of conflicts and depression.

Knowledge of the area’s national and ethnic groups is fundamental to understand the present and the past of the region. At minimum, this means recognizing a dozen major ethnic groups, and knowing where they live (now and in the past) and how their religions, languages and cultures compare and interconnect.

From the concept of “unity in diversity” of the Balkans, the basic methodical principle of the scientific research results: in any domain, political, religious, cultural, linguistic, economic, literature, the nations of the Balkan peninsula should not be studied isolated, but obligatorily in a comparative way, granting the necessary attention to the ties, links and mutual influences, impossible to ignore if we wish to really understand the evolution of each separately and all together. The present study is based entirely on this approach.

The combination of oriental and occidental elements has generated into veritable syntheses, but also into severe troubles. During the Cold War, the impression that the negative features of the region have disappeared was created. However, after 1989 these characteristics or features have again emerged: the bloody split up of Yugoslavia, accompanied by the economic stagnation in the other countries of the Peninsula. The global impact of the Balkan crisis from the 1990s cannot be contested.

In a few words, we could say that the Balkans have played the role of a huge geo-political brake for Europe. Unfortunately the complications from the 1990s persist in the 21st century, and still represent obstacles in the way of development not only in the region, but for the larger Europe also.

Most of the time it is ignored or forgotten the fact that not the presumed tradition for violence of the Balkan nations have lead to the unfortunate confrontations placing the region and its people in the spotlight of the world politics several times during the 20th century, but the steps of implementing – down to their last consequences – the West European principles of organizing the national state, in an environment totally unfit for such an endeavour.

All of the Balkan states made significant economic progress in the second half of the 20th century, compared to the interwar period. With the exception of Greece, and partly the unconventional socialist state Yugoslavia, all the other Balkan countries have built up soviet type centralized economic system. It is important to mention that differences in political systems in the Balkans hardly ever have translated into socio-economic differences that are in sharp contrast to those of neighbouring states.

The socio-economic problems, such as consumer discontent played an evident role in the 1989 changes in the Balkans, generating popular uprising and political turmoil, which have led to the failure of all the communist regimes, in a more or less violent manner. The political forces which gained power as a result of the political changes, were not prepared to offer viable solutions to the arising socio-economic problems, and nearly all of them lacked the capacity to manage the transition and the economic reform. In their attempt to distress attention from the depressing socio-economic issues, in many cases the political elite played the card of the nationalism: inducing fear and hatred towards the other. Unfortunately, this was also something “in common” for the Balkan nations, leading to bloodiest conflict in the post World-War-II Europe.

The end of the Cold War had a significant impact on South Eastern Europe and brought about various changes. The involved countries embarked on a journey that involved a complete transition of their political, social and economic structures in order to build a democratic political system and a free market economy. These transitional efforts are common for most of the countries yet, there are some specific characteristics for each of them. What is common is the orientation towards the EU and NATO. The countries in the region Bulgaria, Romania, Albania, and those that seceded from Yugoslavia- Slovenia, Croatia and FYROM oriented their foreign policies towards Euro-Atlantic integration. However, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia did not go this way until the Milosevic regime was overthrown. Given its inability to establish a differentiated approach to each country, the EU finds that it is more convenient to set them all in a group utilizing the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe as an interim phase. The Process of stabilizing South Eastern Europe is considered as a preparation stage for European integration. The Stability Pact was designed to promote stability in the region and, although thought of as a good idea or initiative, the Pact did not turn out to be a valid working instrument.

Presentation of Region

Today the Balkans are dealing with the transition from the centralized socialist economy to market economy. This transition is difficult and, in many countries, slow. Governments must worry about privatisation of state-controlled enterprises and rising unemployment. Citizens of these countries are concerned about the thinning of the social safety net of government-sponsored educational, medical, and pension benefits and unemployment. Businesses have to operate in an environment of rapidly changing legal framework.

About 150 million people live in the Balkans, and the birth rate is among the highest in Europe. It is clear that this region has a huge growth potential, the main resource for development in the human factor, with special emphasis on the youth. This was the main reason why we considered to be extremely important to make a radiography of the status of youth in the region, to learn about the problems affecting this category, about their general attitude towards the major issues facing the Balkan societies, and last but not least to provide a base for comparison among the countries involved, with the intention of drafting a regional profile.

The reason for initiating the project lies in the specific characteristics of the region itself: despite the similarities of the problems the Balkan societies are confronted with, there is a very low level of cooperation among the institutions and organizations involved in policy elaboration and implementation.

The specific aim of the research project was to create a database and a comparable review of the problems youth are confronted with in South Eastern Europe, and to improve the strategies for joint action. For this purpose the former republics of the Yugoslav federation with the exception of Slovenia (the level of development places outside of the Balkan "socio-economic" region) were selected, together with Romania, Bulgaria and Albania. These countries more or less have a comparable level of socio-economic development, face similar problems in respect of the status of the young people in society and their attitude towards the future of their country and implicit towards the future of the region. They are all former communist countries, pursuing very similar political agendas: European integration, democratisation of the society, economic reform.

We strongly hope that through this project we will succeed in bringing a contribution to establish closer cooperation among the policy makers in the region, especially regarding the youth policy.

At the end all hopes and dreams of this ill-fated region lie in an optimistic and dynamic young generation, committed to development and for cooperation, leaving behind confrontation and ethnic competition.

Citizens' Pact for South Eastern Europe

What it is

The Citizens' Pact for South Eastern Europe is an initiative of civil society groups in South Eastern Europe and the rest of Europe in response to the establishment of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe. The specific purpose of the project is to promote, develop and organise (implement) models of regional co-operation by local NGOs and municipalities committed to stability, peace and democracy. Citizens' Pact offers a forum for exchange and co-operation, creates a structure for establishing a stronger connection between the civil society in South Eastern Europe and the Stability Pact and will establish an efficient and successful structure to meet these targets, including a project fund for initiatives of members of Citizens' Pact. Citizens' Pact aims to contribute to the objective of securing lasting peace and stability in Europe, in particular by strengthening the role and position of civil society

The structure

Citizens' Pact has defined two sectors:

- NGOs and
- Municipalities.

Office of the General Secretariat, along with the Board is a unique coordinating body of both supports.

Support

The Inter Church Peace Council (IKV, the Hague) has actively promoted and supported the birth of the Citizens' Pact. The International Development Agencies NOVIB and HIVOS (The Netherlands) are financially supported the CP movement till October 2003.

Membership

Citizens' Pact membership is open to NGO's and Municipalities from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia and Turkey, which subscribe to the objectives of the organization and its statement of intent.

Presently, Citizens' Pact has 83 members within its network.

YOUTH
ISSUES AND
CHALLENGES
in South-Eastern Europe

Albania

Albania



Country Presentation

Albania	Geography
Location:	Southeastern Europe, bordering the Adriatic Sea and Ionian Sea, between Greece and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
Area:	<i>total</i> : 28,748 sq km <i>land</i> : 27,398 sq km <i>water</i> : 1,350 sq km
Land boundaries:	<i>total</i> : 720 km <i>border countries</i> : Greece 282 km, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 151 km, Yugoslavia 287 km
	People
Population:	3,510,484 (July 2001 est.)
Age structure:	<i>0-14 years</i> : 29.53% (male 536,495; female 500,026) <i>15-64 years</i> : 63.48% (male 1,073,351; female 1,155,115) <i>65 years and over</i> : 6.99% (male 107,476; female 138,021) (2001 est.)
Population growth rate:	0.88% (2001 est.)
Birth rate:	19.01 births/1,000 population (2001 est.)
Death rate:	6.5 deaths/1,000 population (2001 est.)
Net migration rate:	-3.69 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2001 est.)
Sex ratio:	<i>at birth</i> : 1.08 male(s)/female <i>under 15 years</i> : 1.07 male(s)/female <i>15-64 years</i> : 0.93 male(s)/female <i>65 years and over</i> : 0.78 male(s)/female <i>total population</i> : 0.96 male(s)/female (2001 est.)
Infant mortality rate:	39.99 deaths/1,000 live births (2001 est.)
Life expectancy at birth:	<i>total population</i> : 71.83 years <i>male</i> : 69.01 years <i>female</i> : 74.87 years (2001 est.)
Total fertility rate:	2.32 children born/woman (2001 est.)
Ethnic groups:	Albanian 95%, Greeks 3%, other 2% (Vlachs, Gypsies, Serbs, and Bulgarians) (1989 est.) <i>note</i> : in 1989, other estimates of the Greek population ranged from 1% (official Albanian statistics) to 12% (from a Greek organization)

Albania

Religions: Muslim 70%, Albanian Orthodox 20%, Roman Catholic 10%
note: all mosques and churches were closed in 1967 and religious observances prohibited; in November 1990, Albania began allowing private religious practice

Albania **Government**

Country name: *conventional long form:* Republic of Albania

conventional short form: Albania

local long form: Republika e Shqiperise

local short form: Shqiperia

former: People's Socialist Republic of Albania

Government type: emerging democracy

Capital: Tirana

Independence: 28 November 1912 (from Ottoman Empire)

National holiday: Independence Day, 28 November (1912)

Constitution: a new constitution was adopted by popular referendum on 28 November 1998; note – the opposition Democratic Party boycotted the vote

Albania **Economy**

Economy – overview: Poor by European standards, Albania is making the difficult transition to a more open-market economy. The economy rebounded in 1993-95 after a severe depression accompanying the end of the previous centrally planned system in 1990 and 1991. However, a weakening of government resolve to maintain stabilization policies in the election year of 1996 contributed to renewal of inflationary pressures, spurred by the budget deficit which exceeded 12% of GDP. The collapse of financial pyramid schemes in early 1997 – which had attracted deposits from a substantial portion of Albania's population – triggered severe social unrest which led to more than 1,500 deaths, widespread destruction of property, and a 7% drop in GDP. The government has taken measures to curb violent crime and to revive economic activity and trade. The economy is bolstered by remittances from some 20% of the labor force that works abroad, mostly in Greece and Italy. These remittances supplement GDP and help offset the large foreign trade deficit. Most agricultural land was privatized in 1992, substantially improving peasant incomes. In 1998, Albania recovered the 7% drop in GDP of 1997 and pushed ahead by 8% in 1999 and by 7.5% in 2000. International aid helped defray the high costs of receiving and returning refugees from the Kosovo conflict. Privatization scored some successes in 2000, but other reforms lagged.

GDP: purchasing power parity – \$10.5 billion (2000 est.)

Unemployment rate: 16% (2000 est.) officially; may be as high as 25%

These data are taken from the site of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe.

Partner Presentation

Young Intellectuals, Hope

The district of Shkodra has a population of 250,000 inhabitants, from which 90,000 live in the city of Shkodra, 3,000 in the city of Kopliku and 157,000 live in the countryside.

The city has railway and road connections. Passing the Albanian-Yugoslavian border at the customs of Hanna i Hotit, one will reach Shkodra after 35 km, the distance from Tirana is 117 km. The Adriatic seaside is 32 km far. The Shkodra Lake is situated 6 km far from the city of Shkodra.

Some of the most important river of Shkodra are the rivers Drini and Buna.

There are 90 cultural monuments, among them the City Museum, and the “Migjeni” Theater. These Museum houses recall important events, dedicated to famous personalities of the city. The old history of the city is concentrated in the castle “Rozafa”.

The Shkodra city sometime is called as capital of the North Albania.

Shkodra and the entire North Albania region present today have a number of social–economic problems like: unemployment and the blood feud phenomenon. There are also human rights problems in the rural zones especially in regard to women and children. Nevertheless Shkodra and its region have good human resources that can contribute to the development of a civil society.

Presenting / Introducing Young Intellectuals, Hope (IRSH)

Why it has been founded

Who has it founded

During 1990-94 Albania has been transformed in a democratization process. But the people and particularly intellectuals were not participating very actively in the development of the society. So with the aim to promote the Albanian civil society, IRSH has been founded in 1994. This was an initiative of students and professors of the “Luigj Gurakuqi” University, Shkoder. To be realistic the students expressed in the name of the NGO the word HOPE that has an overall meaning because these students:

HOPE to be, become good intellectuals.

HOPE to change the Albanian reality

HOPE to promote the promotion of the Albanian civil society.

“IRSH” association was funded by a group of students and professors in April 1994 and licensed by the Albanian Ministry of Culture Youth and Sports in June 1994.

“IRSH” works in the development of civil society in Albania

“IRSH” is an NGO (with around 200 member’s who for the most part are volunteers) where individuals, groups, partner NGO-s as their profiles are grouped by section, each of which has a representative on the Board.

Currently IRSH has the following sections:

1. *Human rights departament* (which is more concentrated in Albanian legislation, advocacy, consulence trainings on human rights etc).
2. *Social-economic departament* (which analyze social-economic problems of region.)
3. *Women departament* (which is more concentrated in woman rights)
4. *Education departament* (which is active in the education field as in the implementation of the conditions of the schools, organizing professional courses, trainings for the teachers etc)
5. *Media departament* (which is preparing the “Identity” newspaper and keep contacts with journalist of the region promoting free and independent information)
6. *Environmental departament* (which is dealing on environmental issue)
7. *Youth departament* (which is dealing with Youth problems and activities)
8. *Art-Culture and Sport departament* (which is dealing with Art-Culture and Sport activities)

Some of NGOs members of “IRSH” are:

Some of the International partners of “IRSH” are:

1. Threshold Foundation
2. South East European Youth Network (SEEYN) (member)
3. Team Volunteer 2001
4. East West Institute
5. SEVERIN
6. DGI / ISCA
7. Balkan Sunflower
8. Citizens’ Pact for SEE (member)

Board members of “IRSH” NGO are:

1. Mr. Blendi Dibra President
2. Ms. Ermira Hoxha Executive Director, chief of Social-Economic Depart.
3. Mr. Vildan Plepi, General Secretary
4. Mr. Admir Uruçi, Chief of Art-Culture and Sport Department
5. Mr. Erard Çurçia, Chief of Human Rights Department
6. Ms. Majlinda Çela Chief of Women Department
7. Ms. Suela Kacerja, Chief of Youth Department
8. Mr. Julian Gjoni, Chief of environmental Department
9. Mr. Ndrëçim Ciroka, Chief of Education Department
10. Ms. Doriana Metollari, Chief of Media Departament

Mission statement

Organization "IRSH" is a social-cultural, independent, non-political and non-profit organization licensed by Albanian Youth, Culture and Sports Ministry. We represent people which hope to be intellectuals like teachers, university professors, students, engineers, advocates, doctors, economists and different other groups or NGO.

The name of the NGO "Young Intellectuals, Hope" means that we are people that

HOPE to become good Intellectuals,

HOPE to change the Albanian reality

We believe in a progressed Albanian civil society.

Organization "IRSH" offers its partnership in developing different projects mainly in these fields: juridical and human rights, social-economical, on women rights protection, education, on free and independent information development, on art culture and sports.

Our future goal will be the extent of our relations and collaboration with foreign and local organizations and different institutions for a better fulfilment of our mission

List of Activity

Some of the activities of "IRSH" are:

1994. Cultural exchange with the Italian NGO ARCH-i in Taranto, Italy. (Supported by "Soros" Foundation)

1995. Minifootball tour between students of different Facultys of University "Luigi Gurakuqi", Shkoder. (Supported by "IRSH" and Salesian sportiv center)

1995-96. Round tables on the blood feud (revenge) phenomenon. (Supported by "Soros" Foundation)

1996. "Simulation games" with law students and faculty. (Supported by "Soros" Foundation)

"The week of Italian culture in the city of Shkodra" (Supported by Italian Culture Istitute in Tirana)

"Visit on Albanian Parliament" (Supported by "Soros" Foundation")

1997. Round table on peace and disarmament of the population with the theme: "Don't kill the smile of your children" (Supported by "Soros" Foundation)

"Stop clandestine" a youth meeting by the Adriatic seaside. (Supported by "Soros" Foundation)

"Round table about blood feud" (Supported by DANIDA)

1998. A photoexhibition on Albanian-Italian relations 1900-1950. (Supported by Italian Culture Institute in Tirana)

Training course for NGO of Shkodra in Collaboration with Burkhard Luber (Supported by "Threshold Foundation", Germany)

At the beginning of 1999 started collaboration commenced with the “Threshold Foundation”. Our first project was “Contributions for Civil Society, Education and Democratic Participation in Northern Albania”.

The aims of this educational project were to promote information about the following topics:

- 1) Implementation and protection of Human Rights
- 2) Achieving equal rights for women and men
- 3) How to promote democratic structures and citizens participation in villages in the region of Northern Albania
- 4) Promoting the creation of other small non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in villages in Northern Albania (“snowball effect”) with the aim of a promoting these general projects aims (as listed here) and also promoting a democratic network between these NGO-s
- 5) Training people on how to get free and independent information from newspapers and other information sources
- 6) Steps towards overcoming the blood feud problem.

The “Threshold Foundation” has given some financial assistance for the basic office equipment and communication facilities of IRSH.

But with the beginning of the Kosova crises our association somewhat changed its direction, playing an active role by giving modest help by offering to three family from Drenica, Kosovo the house of our association. Also since February 1999 “IRSH” has been publishing a monthly newspaper “Identity” (a resume of the information is translated into English on the last page)

- In collaboration with the “Identity” association and UNDP our association “IRSH” in March 1999 started a project publicising women’s rights among the people of Northern Albania.
- September 1999–March 2000 in collaboration with “Soros” Foundation our association has organise an elementary course in economics and marketing for women in Shkodra to promote the job for women.
- November 1999 in collaboration with “Soros” Foundation has organise some training course on human rights with students of University “Luigj Gurakuqi” Shkoder.
- March-June 2000 in collaboration with “Threshold Foundation”, “IRSH” has organise a Roma school in Shkodra city
- June–August 2000 in collaboration with “IRC” has organised some training’s on the capacity building
- August–October 2000 in collaboration with “SEVERIN” Danish NGO has organise in Denmark, for Albanian youth people a training course on democracy.
- November 2000 IRSH assisted BBC TV to make a film about blood feud.
- March-June in collaboration with “Threshold Foundation” has organised the Roma school.
- March June 2001 in collaboration with “Threshold Foundation” has organised the “Peace tour” project. This project intended to find Balkan partners where IRSH organised three

Partner Presentation

meetings one in Kosovo another one in Montenegro and last one in Albania with NGOs from Albania Montenegro and Kosovo.

- May-June 2001 in collaboration with USA Embassy has organised a exhibition with hand-products of women's by the aim to promote the employment of women's.
- June-August 2001 IRSH hosted two volunteers from Colgate University, USA.
- August 2001 IRSH assisted Associated Press Television to make a film about Women's position in Albania.
- August 2001 IRSH participated in a International sport event in a swimming competition in Montenegro.
- November 2001 – April 2002 IRSH hosted a Danish volunteer.
- December 2001 IRSH in collaboration with MRG from UK organised a training on minority rights facing Albanian reality.
- December 2001 IRSH by the financial support of Bussinesmen's of Shkodra organised for the orphan children's a party on the occasion of the new year coming.

For the year 2002 "IRSH" association is planning a project which needs a basic financial support:

- The organisation of a regional center for the development of the civil society in Albania to which contributions from all the local and international NGO-s are invited.

Some of the activities that this Centre will offer are:

- Social – cultural activity between youth people in region and in Balkan.
- The exchange of information about the region
- Different activities in the promotion of human rights. Will particularly be supported initiatives in the promotion of women and children rights.
- Training's on conflict resolutions, on democracy, on capacity building etc.
- Cross border activity.
- Consulence and advocacy.
- Minority rights promotion
- Activity on preservation of nature and environment

As with all the projects of "IRSH", we welcome collaboration with all kinds of partners (NGO, Institutions, local and central government etc). We wish to share our assets: information, advice, hospitality, meeting place etc. We also seek financial and material contributions.

What IRSH could offer to the Young people

If you are a student or already You finished the University and if you have the desire to be active to the “IRSH”:

1. You could participate on the SEEYN activity and other International and national activity's which IRSH is invited to participate as: Conference, meetings, volunteer exchange, workcamps, trainings etc etc etc.
2. You could participate on the professional course that IRSH will organise as: computer courses, foreign language courses etc etc etc.
3. You could benefit from social services that IRSH will offer in the future.
4. You could exchange information etc etc etc etc.

How You could contact us:

Through our phone/fax, e-mail and mail address and also every Saturday “IRSH” at 10 o clock has the Assembly meeting to the “IRSH” house.

Address and Bank account.

“IRSH” L: “Qemal Stafa” Rr: “Daut Boriçi”, 874, SHKODER, ALBANIA

Tel/ Fax: +355 22 41229

E-mail: irsh@albnet.net

<http://departments.colgate.edu/peacestudies/kosovar/>

www.dieschwelle.de

Bank account: Savings Bank of Albania Tirana 1

Dega e Bankes se Kursimit Tirana 1

Rr: “Deshmoret e 4 Shkurtit”, Nonviolence, 6, Tirana, Albania

Konto Nr: 4843/3621

Permbledhje

Ky studim trajton aspekte te gjendjes se te rinjve ne Shqiperi. Ne kete studim jane prekur nje sere problemesh te cilat jane evidentuar nga vete te rinjte shqiptare.

Duke filluar qe me menyren dhe kushtet e jeteses ku pjesa me e madhe e tyre jane te pakenaqur dhe njekohesisht nuk kane besim per te ardhmen e vendit. Gjithashtu ato jane shume skeptike ne lidhje me proceset demokratike ne vend.

Papunsia dhe edukimi jane dy probleme te lidhura ngushte me njera-tjetren ku te rinjte shprehin opsionet e tyre ne drejtim te permiresimit duke u shprehur per nje edukim sa me bashkekohore dhe per me shume vende pune.

Nje problem i prekur nga te rinjte eshte edhe rregullat e moralit te cilat shpeshhere behen pengese per zhvillimin e shoqerise. Po ashtu emigracioni eshte mjaft shqetesues vecanarisht kur behet fjale per intelektualet.

Por te gjitha problemet e mesiperme ne menyre direkte apo indirekte i adresohen klases politike shqiptare e cila shihet si e paafte te drejtoje vendin. Duke pare kesaj edhe fenomenin tjetër i cili po pengon seriozisht zhvillimin e vendit, fenomenin e korrupsionit. Duke pare nje terren te tille kuptohet qe eshte mjaft i favorshem per inkurajimin e kimit i cili ka marre tashme nje forme te organizuar si dhe te trafiqeve te shumta duke e kthyer Shqiperine ne nje ure kalimi.

Te gjithë problemet e mesiperme te pohuara nga vete te rinjte bejne qe te rinjte shqiptare te mos shohin nje te ardhme te qarte dhe te sigurt per vehten dhe per vendin e tyre.

Por ne te njejten kohe te rinjte shqiptare mendojne se inkurajimi i OJQ-ve do te sillte ndryshime ne gjendjen aktuale qe po kalon vendi.

Ne gjendjen aktuale te te rinjve shqiptare mendojme se ato besojne shume tek shoqeria dhe familja. Ndersa niveli i besimit per Institucionet shteterore eshte i ulet. Duhet theksuar qe te rinjte shqiptare kane nje besim fare te vogel per qeverine shqiptare aktiviteti i se ciles nuk eshte aspak i besueshem. E kunderta ndodh me Institucionet Nderkombetare ku ato besojne se Integrimi i Shqiperise ne keto struktura do sillte ndryshime ne zhvillimin e vendit. Ato mbeshtetin cdo perpjekje per perfshirjen e Shqiperise ne strukturat Europiane.

Nje opinion pozitiv kane te rinjte shqiptare ne lidhje me aktivitetin e OJQ-ve dhe shumica e tyre shprehin mbeshtetje per aktivitetin e tyre. Keto organisma ato i shikojne si instrumente te domosodshem per te influencuar qeverin ne vendimet e sajë. Sidoqofte gjate ketij studimi nje pjese e te rinjve kane shprehur edhe mendime negative persa i takon aktivitetit te OJQ-ve sic jane abuzimi me fondet apo edhe devijimi i qellimit per te cilin ato jane krijuar. Por puna e OJQ-ve ka akoma vend per tu permiresuar ashtu si dhe rritja e bashkpunimit dhe kordinimit ndermjet tyre.

Ne mbyllje te kesaj permbledhje do te theksonim se gjate ketij studimi u verjetje nje prirje e te rinjve drejt tolerances. Ky element eshte nje faktor mjaft i rendesishem per zhvillimin e vendit si dhe per integrimin e Shqiperise ne strukturat Europiane.

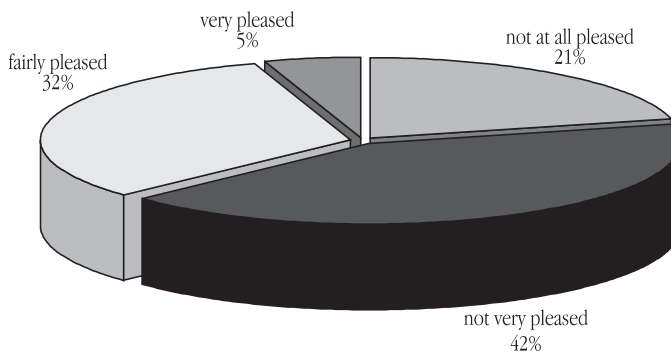
Main Research Findings

General Aspects

The economic and social situation of South Eastern Europe countries, currently undergoing a period of democratisation and market economy consolidation, is one that induces at the level of population a series of fears and discontent related to the way of living. The democratisation and institutional reconstruction processes, begun in the last decade of the previous century in former communist countries, caused certain unbalances and tensions in the social life, the effect of which is also felt in people's attitudes related to the way of living.

According with the general discontent tendency of the East European population with regard to the way of living, the youth, as a segment of population with specific problems and attitudes, tend to align to this trend¹. For young people active in the Albanian NGO sector, their attitude towards the way of living inclines towards dissatisfaction and discontent. Most of them (63% of the survey respondents) are not satisfied with the way they live and only little over a third of the respondents (37%) seem satisfied.

Figure 1: Satisfaction with the way of living

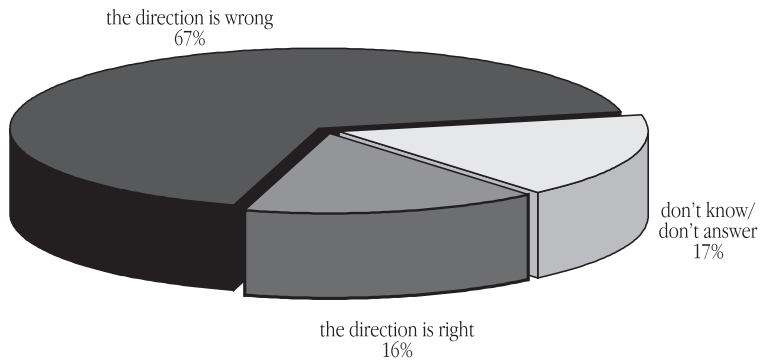


¹ See for example "Eurobarometer 2001 – Applicant Countries", European Commission, March 2002 at http://europa.eu.int/public_opinion

Behind this attitude is indeed a multitude of causes of different nature. The general character of the answered question is one meant to indicate an overall attitude. Therefore, the multi-factorial causality behind the majority dissatisfaction could have a series of objective and subjective aspects, which we try to uncover and to discuss within this report.

The dissatisfaction with the way they live determine young people to have a critical attitude towards the way society works. The youth general perception is that the society they live in is not on the desired path. Most of them (67%) consider that the Albania's direction as the wrong one.

Figure 2: Direction the country is on

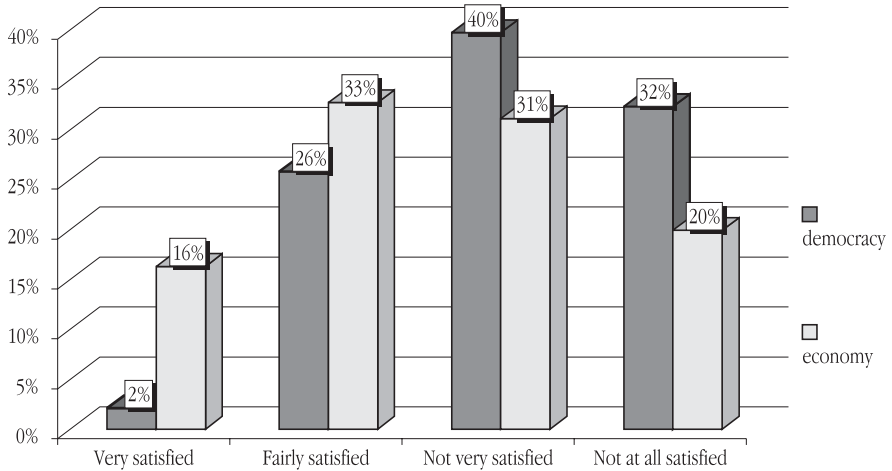


The main statistical argument supporting the opinion that the country is on the wrong direction resides firstly on the fact that a proportion of 72% of the respondents are not pleased with the way democracy works in Albania (see fig. 3). It seems that this is the main source of dissatisfaction towards the way society works.

The insufficient performance of democracy raises furthermore difficulties in the way economy works or, at least in youth opinion, the quality of economy is an output of democratic mechanisms inefficiency, as one of the focus group respondents suggest:

...we have instability in our country, which makes a very low level of economy
[NGO activist]

Figure 3: Satisfaction concerning democracy and the economy system



Only a half of the respondents (51%) are not satisfied with the way economy works (see figure 3). The difference in appraising the two plans of social activity is a deceiving one, since the two aspects are actually strongly connected. The actual discrepancy is given by those that are very satisfied with the way economy works and who, in contrast, are not satisfied with the Albanian democracy (explainable especially through the nature of respondents NGO activities, which is that of mediating between civil society and the political sector; for they have more intense experience with the way institutions work, and implicitly, more problems dealing with authorities – their satisfaction towards democracy is strongly influenced by this interaction).

These general aspects of youth attitudes towards Albanian social-economic situation are to great extent consequences of concrete problems this country deals with. From the analysis of the focus groups recordings, several of those came out, at least from the youth perception.

A main problem (appearing in all discussions as “cause of all evils”) is that of education, more exactly the lack of optimal education conditions, i.e. adequate educational offer.

First of all, I think that there are no good conditions for education and also there are no possibilities for employment of young people. [...] Then we see our young people facing and falling down in some negative phenomena such as drug, prostitution, alcohol abuse etc. [NGO activist]

Together with the issue of education and closely related to it, young people refer to unemployment as negative aspect of society.

I would like to stress again that unemployment is one of the difficult barriers, which do not permit to our young people to make steps toward. [NGO activist]

Another problem, this time specific to young people, is represented by the rigid moral code of society.

The strict moral code in Albania, and the poor inter-generational communication, put great pressures on the youth. [employed]

My friends and I agree that there is a low standard of life and a primitive mentality, and it is more pronounced in the villages. I have encountered a number of cases with my friends where they were prevented by their families from dating a person who they loved.[...] There are cases where the family pressures girls into marriage with a husband that they approve of. The extended family is used to pressure the individual. [employed]

These structural problems of Albanian society determine a series of other problems that appear especially among young people and draw an anomic situation. Young people consider that they live in a society characterized by a high uncertainty and criminal climate.

A really important problem I think is the problem of public order which facilitate the criminal activity of people who want to practice. [unemployed]

The criminality is associated to deviant phenomena such as drug consumption, alcohol abuse, prostitution, which is embedded on both the lack of occupation due to high unemployment, and the lack of education among youth that choose to earn a living through illicit activities.

Some negative phenomena are drug, prostitution, alcohol abuse etc. which of course are based on some social and economical problems. [NGO activist]

Another problem of the Albanian society indicated by youth is emigration, especially that of intellectuals and young people, whose level of expectations with regard to material and intellectual living conditions is higher.

Another injury of our society is emigration, of which our society suffers a lot. Of course the emigration is one of the worst problems which the society is facing and mainly young people leave country looking for a better life. [student]

Looking that our state is not taking care especially for the Intellectual part I am afraid that our brain is emigrating everyday and I think we are still not (?) able to give a solution to this question. [NGO activist]

Main Research Findings

The causes of all these problems are multiple and interconnected: some of them refer to structural aspects of society, as economy and education, and some regard the mentality dimension, like political strategies and corruption practices.

The highest responsibility with regard to the situation Albania is in belongs to the political system, more exactly to defective political management.

I would say that one of the factors [which have bad influence on society] is the instability of the country, which of course is encouraged by our bad politic and bad politicians.

[student]

Of course there are many factors, which have influence on the worsening of situation, but some of principals I would like to list a wrong politic made on this country for many years.

[NGO activist]

The political class is considered irresponsible and oriented towards acquiring power, towards political games and less towards solving the country's social and economic problems.

I would like to stress that the main negative factor on worsening the situation remain the politicians which are only thinking for their private interest and not at all for the people.

[unemployed]

I could say also a bad politic where we saw an extreme way of leading the country but also even during the democracy period we saw a lot of mistakes. Most important is that we still have a political instability. When the head is ill of course the body will have difficulties to have orientation. Also I see that our Political parties are so eager to take immediately the power without looking back on the bad situation and enormous problems of which our people is suffering. [employed]

Closely connected to “a really bad management made for many years here in Albania” [NGO activist] is another major cause of the difficult situation young people see: corruption.

... there is also the way of organization of our state and our government – working in a bad way by promoting a lot of corruption and other abusive methods which only are going to the profit of some individuals and not to resolve the enormous problems that people is facing. [employed]

Social problems find their roots in the disfunctionalities of two major sectors of social life: education and labour market. The lack of an educational program to provide a framework for civic values uphold and social skills improvement necessary to give meaning to individual life and to generate social integration, leads to manifestation of deviant phenomena especially among youth.

*Weak education is one of the root problems to all these social ills. [unemployed]
First of all I think that there are not good conditions for education and also there are not possibilities for employment of young people because of that then we are looking that our young people are facing and falling down in some negative phenomena as drug, prostitution, alcohol abuse etc. [NGO activist]*

Unemployment is the other major cause generating criminality and a state of social anomy, reflected in a feeling of lack of safety young Albanians have. The lack of work activities determine the Albanians to seek a refuge in drugs and alcohol or simply to get income by exploiting certain social vices, through participation in activities of drug trafficking or human trafficking, i.e. prostitution.

*Unemployment is reducing the perspective of today's youth, because the unemployment rate is high. There are many young people looking to qualify themselves but the opportunities are limited. Prostitution of the weaker sex is growing. Drug use is also a growing problem. Family problems, especially those of parents, are transferred to the youth. [unemployed]
I think unemployment is one of the key factors pushing our people to make drug abuse prostitution, alcohol etc. [NGO activist]*

In youth's perception, there is a vicious circle that hinders the overcoming of Albania's social economic problems. Unemployment and a low level of education determine a high level of criminality, which prevents business people from investing and implicitly from creating employment. Thus, high unemployment embedded on a social background characterized by low level of education leads to a circular self-generated situation.

Also I see some relations between all what is going to be mentioned here??? As unemployment, low level of education brings a high level of criminality and high level of criminality, which don't permit people to invest their money and to offer free job placements. [NGO activist]

All of these convince young people to consider that Albania is going through a situation characterized by social and political instability, having as outcome an inefficient economy:

we have instability in our country, which makes a very low level of economy [NGO activist].

The political leaders are considered responsible for this situation:

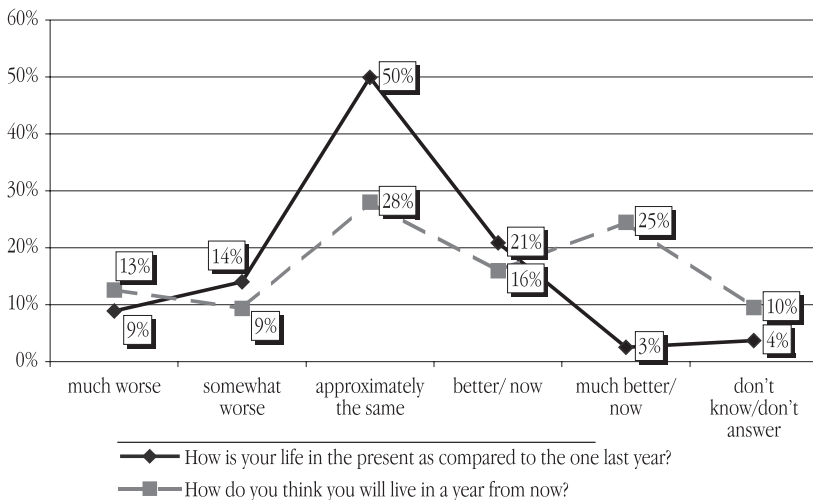
Main Research Findings

I would say that one of the factors is the instability of the country, which of course is encouraged from our bad politic and bad politicians. [student]

This climate of uncertainty and instability makes people consider that things are not going well in the society they live in. Two thirds of the respondents (67%) believe that things do not go in a good direction, and the reasons are generally the ones presented above.

However, from a social-psychological perspective, things are not at all severe, as they would seem at first glance. Although many of the respondents are dissatisfied with the individual and societal situation, with regard to involvement in social life there is a latent state of optimism that constitutes a positive aspect at the level of motivation.

Figure 4: Compared evaluation of life in past and future



If in the past year life has not changed for most of the respondents (50%), for a large part (41%) there is an evident optimism that things will improve with regard to their way of living. Of course, this optimism is specific to young age, nevertheless it represents a very important psychological resource which the Albanian society, through its institutions, should fully use.

The problem of the future is central to youth concerns. Although there is an increased level of optimism, young people look for answers to concrete problems, in order to make decisions that may determine their faith. In this register of future possibilities, the expectancies young generation from Albania has are important especially for those ensuring the social management of Albania.

Young NGO members that participated in the survey conducted in Albania have signalled the following aspects as most feared things in the present.

Table 1: Deepest fears in the present

The things that you fear the most in the present are:	Percent of responses
Criminality	25
Unemployment	19
Children's future	19
Diseases	19
War in the area	9
Social disturbances	7
Prices	2

It can be observed that the most acute fear is that referring to an increased state of social anomy. Half of the respondents are afraid of criminality: a probable effect of current experience of Albanian society in this respect, as a student declared:

Everything is not sure and is not safe but of course we must hope that every year it will become better but till now goodness know what's happened. I still hope ! [student]

Unemployment remains a problem difficult to solve and a great challenge for the future. It is understandable that it represents a horrid fear for young people, especially considering the fact that they do not have the resources that the adult population possesses (low life and work experience, lack of certain social networks which to provide them with social and informational support, absence of previously acquired goods – housing, properties, savings, etc.).

My fear is that unemployment is one of the most negative phenomena which young people are facing day by day and it seems that there is no solution. M. So you say unemployment? Yes, this is really important and the perspective is really obscure. [student]

On the other hand, the absence of these resources makes them more independent and thus more exposed to emigration in search of employment or the complementary situation, more involved in illicit delinquent activities. It must be mentioned the fact that in the focus groups conducted in Albania, one of the most important youth fears turned out to be emigration, to great extent determined by the high unemployment rates:

Unemployment is the root problem, leading to the emigration. [unemployed]

The mechanism that justifies such a fear is extremely visible, as one of the young persons presents it during a focus group interview:

Main Research Findings

I think that instability of our country in all aspects as political and economical will make our young people to not see a clear perspective. Also I think this will not motivate any to open new job opportunity or to invest their money. For sure this situation will keep a high level of emigration as it is right now. [NGO activist]

Another important fear is directly connected to the future, more exactly to the lack of perspectives for youth.

I do not see a perspective after I finish my University. So I do not know what I am going to do when I finish my school. For now I am clear on my goals because I am studying and I will finish my faculty but what to do after that there is absolutely no perspective. [student]

The lack of jobs and the inexistence of strategies for future with regard to the youth professional situation induce them with a state of disorientation and an attitude ironically retrograde.

Maybe the capitalist system we are building up do not guarantee to the people a job as it was during the communist period when everyone when finished the school got a job... (laughter in the room) [student]

The positive side is that there can be found practical solutions for the present problems, provided that governmental programs consider the improvement of youth lives among priority objectives. The participants in the focus groups suggested a series of solutions to improve the situation of young people and give them the chance to get responsibly involved in solving their own problems. Among these, greater support from governmental institutions was emphasized, with regard to cultural and leisure activities. One of the participants in the discussions is direct and suggestive in this sense:

I would like to add that the local and central authorities as municipality, district or government should work more to make possible for young people to practice their skills and also to manage better their free time. Sbkodra is a big city and it is a shame that it doesn't have a cultural or a youth centre. [employed]

Moreover, young people expect from authorities support and encouragement of young intellectuality, by creating optimal life and work conditions to provide the opportunity of performance in activity. And this is not just the individual interest of the young person wishing to prove himself or herself, but also the interest of the community, which can gain an important profit from making use of the attitudes and the work of its own members.

Some of the aspects which could be developed is to support the young intellectuals and give them the opportunity to express themselves with regard to their lives. Because our young people are looking to find themselves and it is important that our society supports them by giving space and possibility to use their skills. [employed]

Another practical solution that young Albanians suggest concerns the encouragement of NGOs and their activities. NGO involvement in youth lives represents an alternative to youth governmental programs inefficiency (see above). On one hand, NGOs organization of cultural activities for young people is a desirable situation. On the other hand, drawing young people in NGO activities is a necessity. Thus, young people benefit from organized and specialized civic education; moreover, they get involved in solving social problems of their own generation.

... Maybe a good option could be to encourage the work of NGOs and participation of young people on the activities of these NGOs. Also if youth people will be more involved in these NGOs, for sure it will influence to keep away young people from criminality. [NGO activist]

I think that some of the positive aspects that should be developed are: involvement of NGOs in society and also, more NGO participation in different cultural activities. Also is important that our young people are away from the street and concentrate on the social life in order to be useful. [unemployed]

Trust and Civic Culture

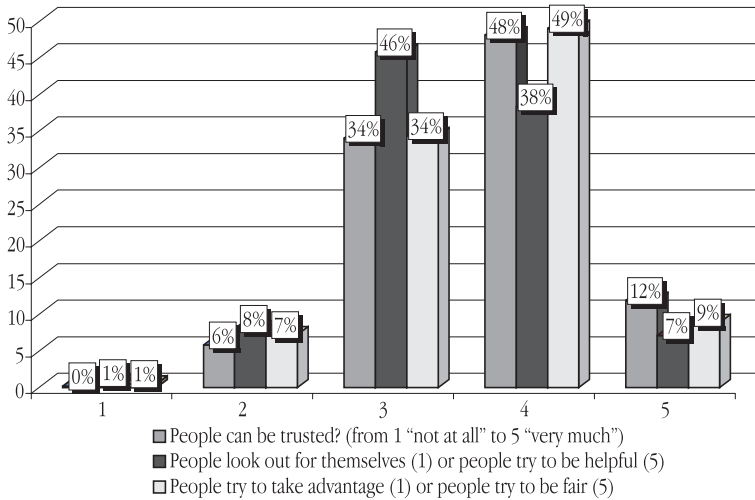
Trust represents the background element that ensures a high level of solidarity in a society. A state of spirit in which trust has an important place is beneficial to the social mobilization and to building a solid civil society.² Although there are deep roots in a cultural normative background on which social practices specific to a society are embedded, therefore, a stability ensured by the integrative function that cultural constraints exercise, trust is moreover a currency, an increasing and decreasing capital of society, which can erode with time.

With regard to the Albanian youth willingness to trust in their peers one can say that it is large enough. Thus, there is a common tendency to invest in social relations, to consider the society through its members as positive environment (see fig. 5). Of course, the answer provided by young Albanians can be due to normative constraints, to social desirability, to the need to agree with moral or religious precepts. This alignment cumulated to certain social norms, specific to a community moral pattern, may just as well lead to the same social consequences, through the game of social exchange or the effect of self-fulfilling prophecy.

² see Robert D.. Putnam, 1993, Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy, New Jersey, Princeton University Press

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Figure 5: Levels of general trust³ (%)



General trust can be operationalized in various ways, yet an important problem is the way trust in social groups is distributed. This specific attitude stands at the basis of generalized trust in people, since trust is not only a consequence of moral norms functioning, but also an effect of individual social experiences with various groups and in different social settings.

As expected from theoretical perspective, family cumulates the largest capital of trust (93% of the respondent have high and very high trust), followed by social groups that youth interact with the most and which can perform the reference groups role for them (friends, colleagues/ members of this organization). Therefore, as an obvious conclusion, we can say that the larger the social distance or the possibilities of direct contact, the lower the trust.

Table 2: Level of trust in the following groups of people (%)

	very low trust	low trust	medium trust	high trust	very high trust	not applicable
Your colleagues	0	1	28	56	15	0
Members of your family	0	2	5	35	58	0
Your friends	0	1	12	54	33	0
Your neighbours	0	1	29	40	23	7
Members of this organization	1	1	27	54	17	0
People in your town/village	1	0	39	57	3	0
People in your region	1	4	35	42	12	6
People in your country	0	9	38	41	10	2
Ethnic minorities	3	8	52	33	2	2

³ To questions from fig. 5, the answers to be chosen from were on a scale from 1 ("lack of trust") to 5 ("total trust").

A specific aspect for the social climate young people from Albania live in is represented by their level of tolerance towards various categories of people forming groups characterized by certain specific attitudinal and behavioural features. Whereas trust is a good indicator of cooperation possibilities among people, tolerance is an indicator of acceptability and conflict minimization in such a diversified society as the modern one is, which deals more and more with a type of cultural syncretism of different social groups.

Table 3: Acceptance and tolerance (%)

	Accept as neighbours		Should be allowed to hold public meetings	
	would not accept	would accept	should not be allowed	should be allowed
Christian fundamentalists	57	43	61	39
Islamic fundamentalists	75	25	60	40
Left wing extremists	61	39	65	35
Immigrants	14	86	17	83
Homosexuals	54	46	50	50
People with a criminal record	70	30	70	30
Racists	63	37	75	25
People of a different race	14	86	22	78
Right wing extremists	60	40	63	37
People who have AIDS	28	72	10	90
Drug addicts	79	21	63	37

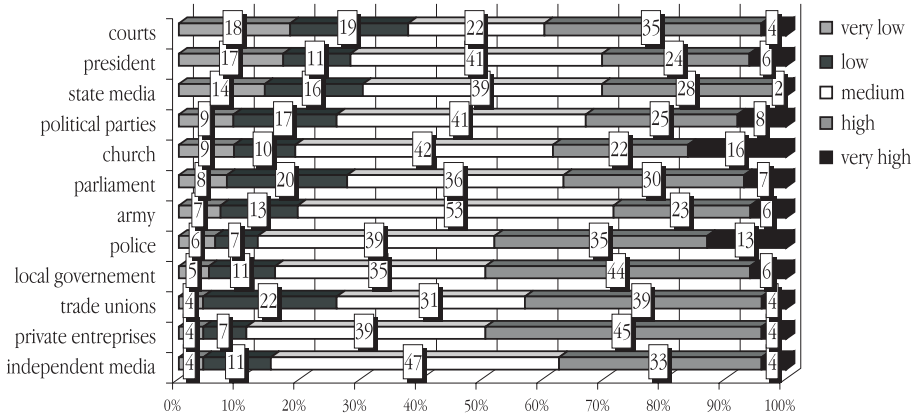
From this perspective, one can say that youth society from Albania is characterized by democratic values-oriented humanitarianism, yet to the same extent, intolerance towards radical ideologies and delinquency. If they show high tolerance towards those living in a social marginalized situation (immigrants, people of different race, people with AIDS), whose lives are made difficult by the prejudice of others, to the same extent, young Albanians have an attitude of rejection, of social distance from radical, criminal groups or which they consider as embodying the most severe vices of society (Islamic and Christian fundamentalists, racists, left and right wing extremists, criminals, drug addicts), though the right to public meeting is recognized to some of them.

Relations with Institutions and with the Political System

Institutional trust is another important indicator for the social climate in which youth life and activities take place. It is the zero level of collaboration relations between citizens and institutions that regulate co-habitation, the basic investment through which the latter can legitimate themselves in front of the community. In a society in which social institutions are in a reform process, people's trust does not reach very high levels. But the way youth relate to these institutions is also an indicator of the activity of these institutions and of their hierarchy in the public perception.

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Figure 6: Trust in institutions (%)



A comparative perspective on the answers of youth with regard to trust in institutions reveals some interesting aspects. If we consider an indicator of trust increase towards institutions, which represents the difference between those who have high levels of trust and those with low level of trust, it can be noticed a ranging of institutions as by the symbolic capital they hold.⁴ “Overall trust increase” is a measure of the overall dynamic of trust capital and one may say with regard to this dimension that Albanian youth generally have high level of trust in institutions, especially in private economic institutions, in police and in local government. As far as the report between maximal and minimal trust investments (those that have “very high trust” and those with “very low trust”), it is noticeable that the tendency is to credit very much (positive) the church and the police and less (negative) the state media, courts and President (see table 4).

It can be noticed that in each category of institutions youth trust is distributed in a diversified manner, depending on the information they possess and on the experience lived in the relations with the respective institutions. The institutions that respond to needs and major problems of Albanian society (criminality, lack of safety, low living level, lack of employment, weak economy, lack of an order of values and education) are those that have the highest confidence/ trust scores: police, local government, trade unions, private enterprises and church. Institutions such as courts, state media, president and political parties are those with lower capital of trust, because they are the ones that young people find responsible for some of the major causes of Albania’s social-economic situation: corruption and defective political management (see above). In a general comparison comes out the

⁴ “Overall trust increase” represents the difference between the sum of answers “high trust” and “very high trust” and the sum of answers “low trust” and “very low trust”: $OTE = [(Percent\ of\ 'high\ trust' + Percent\ of\ 'very\ high\ trust') - (Percent\ of\ 'low\ trust' + Percent\ of\ 'very\ low\ trust')]$, whereas “radical trust increase” is the difference between the answers “very high trust” and the answers “very low trust”: $RTE = (Percent\ of\ 'very\ high\ trust' - Percent\ of\ 'very\ low\ trust')$.

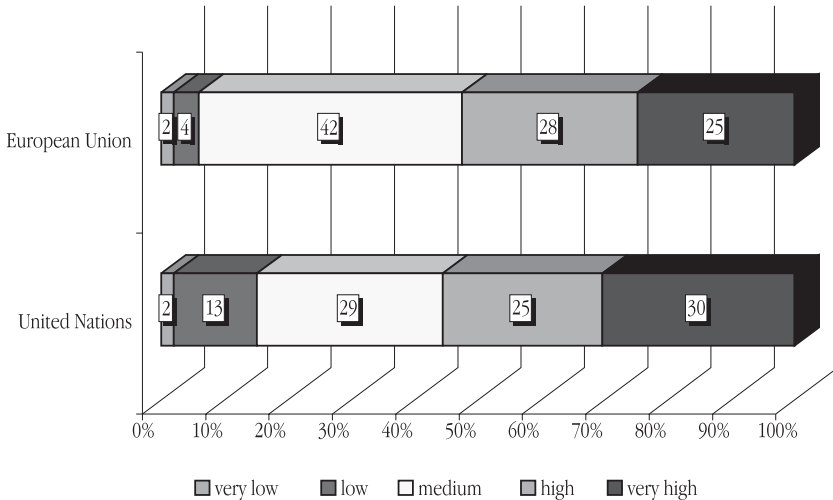
fact that young people evaluate institutions through cognitive-categorization mechanisms founding their trust investment strategies: individuals tend to score institutions by evaluating goals accomplishment in their social activities.

Table 4: Trust increase index (%)

Institution	Overall Trust Increase	Radical Trust Increase
private enterprises	+38	0
police	+35	+7
local government	+34	+1
independent media	+22	0
church	+19	+7
trade unions	+17	0
army	+9	1
parliament	+9	1
political parties	+7	1
president	+2	11
courts	+2	14
state media	0	12

Youth perception with regard to the two most important international organizations, the European Union and the United Nations is a positive and optimistic one. Almost half of the survey respondents show high level of trust in the two institutions, which demonstrates their opening towards western democracies and towards European integration (see figure 7).

Figure 7: Level of trust in European Union and United Nations (%)



Main Research Findings

This positive attitude towards the European Union has a special consequence: young people affirm the fact that it is necessary Albania integrates in the Community organism. Firstly, because this would stimulate the country development and would lead Albania towards a mature democracy. However, as it comes out of the interview participants' answers, integration is a difficult process, which requires increased efforts from the entire society.

*I think EU is a positive institution. I think EU will push our development process. [student]
Regarding EU I think is a really important institution where Albania should be integrated.
But I think we are too far for only reason that we have many conditions to fulfil to enter there. Concretely we should do concrete steps for a stable country and we should work to make our economy function by avoiding the negative phenomena of corruption.
[NGO activist]*

The present difficulty in making the integration process comes from the social-economic standards imposed by the European Union, as well as from the political incapacity of the Albanian government to assume these standards.

*I think that all Albanians are likely to be part of EU but it seems too difficult because Albania need to fulfil many conditions and to reach many standards. [student]
However there are such high standards which seems that never will be reached from Albania... [NGO activist]
EU means more obligations for our governments, which seems to be not at all capable to undertake such high standards. [unemployed]*

According to youth opinion, the Albanian government, through its political activity, is the primary responsible for the slow European integration rhythm.

*Being part of EU is really important but Albania is facing some barriers which our government seems have nor the will or desire to solve; but we hope that sooner or later we will become part of EU. [NGO activist]
Involvement of Albania in EU is a really important factor or process but also I think it will take too much time because of the many problems we are passing by but most important one I think is our bad politic played here. [NGO activist]*

Therefore, most of the focus group participants agreed that the integration process will be long and difficult, but not an impossible one. Nevertheless, in order to achieve this goal, there have to be eliminated some shortcomings of Albania's society, which youth identify and for which they provide some general solutions:

- Country's political stabilization
- Economy revitalization
- Corruption diminishing
- Public safety improvement

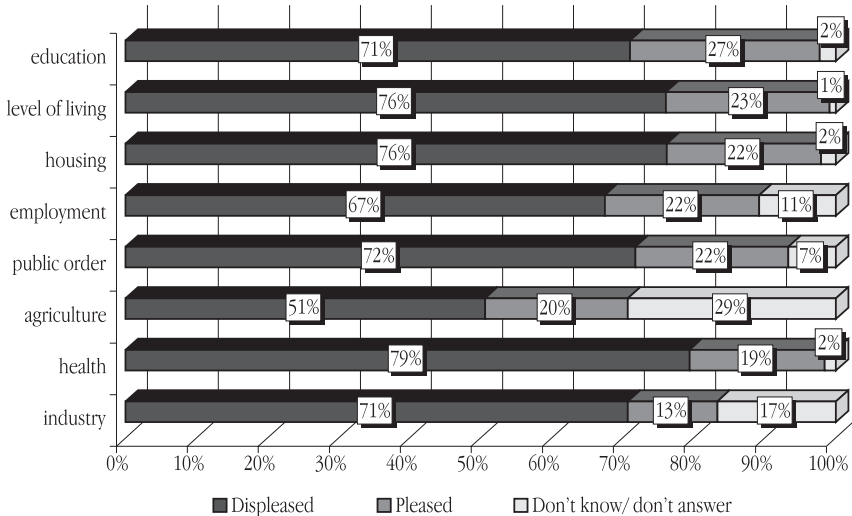
...We should do concrete steps for a stable country and we should work to make our economy function by avoiding the negative phenomena of corruption. [NGO activist]

I do not think that we could be part of EU with all this high level of corruption and this climate of lack of safety that exists here in Albania. [NGO activist]

I think that EU is a high standard for Albania and mentioning that we still suffer from a high level of corruption and from an abusive system. [employed]

Youth attitude towards governmental policies from various sectors of activities is not positive. Generally, they are dissatisfied with the way things work, and this dissatisfaction is justified by the existence of problems youth deal with in every day life (see below).

Figure 8: Satisfaction with state (government) involvement in the following areas



The government activity evaluation is closely connected to the relation youth have with the political system of Albania, with political life in general. The way they, as civil society members, relate to politics is closely linked to their interest in politics, to their experience with political activities and accessibility to political communication.

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Generally, there is an average interest in political life: 43 percent of the survey respondents declare that they are interested in politics in general. Of course, the priority point of interest is represented by local and national politics, less by the international one.

Table 5: Interest in politics (%)

	Very interested	Fairly interested	Not very interested	Not at all interested
Interest in local politics	39	20	34	7
Interest in national politics	29	29	36	6
Interest in European politics	5	39	41	15
Interest in international politics	14	27	39	20

Youth attitudes towards governmental institutions is formed based on information they have access to and to the exchange of ideas with people belonging to their social environment: family, friends, colleagues, etc. These two regulatory mechanisms for opinions shared by youth with regard to the political sphere and governmental activity have a special role in forming public opinion which polarizes diverse trends of ideas and which allows democratic confrontation and political negotiation of alternatives.

According to survey data, youth preferred sources of information in political life are the radio and TV, followed by written media. The high frequency of audience behaviour of these media on political topics indicate an extended interest (around two thirds of the young respondents follow at least once a week the radio or TV in view of political information, and half of them read a newspaper at least once a week).

Table 6: Frequencies of informational activities regarding politics (%)

	everyday	3-4 days a week	1-2 days a week	less frequently	never
Reading the political content of a newspaper	17	17	16	42	8
Listening or watching news programmes on radio or TV	33	8	26	28	5
Listening or watching other programme about politics and social affairs on radio or TV	16	26	19	24	15
Using the internet to obtain information about politics and society	6	20	19	35	19

The preferred environments young Albanians discuss politics in are the family and circles of friends (see table 7). These are continuous political socialization environments, where opinions assumed from the media or formed through youth direct and indirect experience with social institutions are disseminated and evaluated.

Table 7: Discuss politics... (%)

	often	sometimes	rarely	never	not applicable
with your friends	18	47	30	3	2
with your family	18	45	32	4	1
with your neighbours	10	18	32	35	5
with your coworkers, colleagues	6	37	33	21	3
with other member of this organization	8	41	37	12	2
with member of other organizations	9	25	19	25	22

The activity of institutions and political actors is considered by young people from Albania of high importance in managing the country's internal and external affairs. Although considered responsible for the difficult social-economic situation Albania is in, young people believe that politicians hold an important role for society because they are the elected representative to lead, they embody people will.

As far as our politicians are elected with the vote of the people and they represent voice of the people; I think they are very important. [employed]

Nevertheless, current political actors from Albanian society are considered as inadequate. In other words, the portrait young Albanians make of their representatives is as negative as can be. A most sombre image of ruling politicians comes out of the focus group participants' opinions. The themes most frequent refer exclusively to negative features of Albanian political class. The politicians' moral and behavioural coordinates are reduced to few classes of features (see table 8)

The conclusion that may be drawn from this public image young people have of their elected representatives is quite obvious: although they are a very important vector for societal development, current politicians rather embody the vices of society than be a positive example for citizens. Naturally, the solution proposed is to change the current political class and replace it with a younger generation of politicians.

For the society I think politicians are very important, but I am with the opinion that they should be changed with fresh blood. [NGO activist]

I would like to say that I hope only if this generation of politicians will be changed otherwise I don't hope much. [student]

This change may occur, in the youth' opinion, firstly through the population awareness raising and responsibility-increase in voting exercising. Increased voting presence and real citizens' political and civic involvement might sanction in a democratic way those holding office.

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I think that people should be made more sensitive and people should be more responsible when they are voting. Also if we are looking to our last election there is a low percentage of people who voted and this is sad to say because it means that our people are indifferent. [NGO activist].

Table 8: Portrait of politicians

Features	Arguments
Politicians do not keep their promises	<i>I think the government is quite clear before electoral campaigns and they work too much to convince people; in many cases it is sad to say but is going to make the people believe in; but after they are voted they are totally confused and nothing they said during the electoral campaign becomes a reality. [NGO activist] Almost everyone speaks very well and promises many things. But when they are elected they totally forget what they promised and what they said. [Student]</i>
Politicians are more pre-occupied with their own personal interests, than with peoples problems.	<i>As we see, every politician when taking a chair on the politics s/be looks more to use in maximum bis/her chair than to work for the problems of the people. So this is one of the worst things our politics suffers from everyday. [NGO activist]</i>
Politicians are corrupt	<i>I do not believe it will become better because it seems that they are structured as a network and this is a network based on their private interests and on their own profits which are based on much trafficking. [NGO activist] But I know that Albania is listed on the first countries with the biggest corruption so this is the best example who is our government and our politicians. [NGO activist]</i>
Politicians are a negative example for society	<i>... But our politicians are not doing well their duties and sometimes they are going to be mentioned as bad examples for our life. [Unemployed] Oh yes I think they are not so much important for Albanian society and maybe I could call them sometime as the worst part of the society. [Unemployed] Our government is too much noise for nothing. [NGO activist] I could reply indirectly because when a mother brings her baby to sleep could say sleep fast because a politician is coming to eat you!!! [Student]</i>

A second solution proposed by young people for improving the political actors' activity targets the diminishing of corruption, through legislative and institutional measures:

Maybe by implementing a stronger law to keep them far from the corruption. [NGO activist].

The obvious question in this context would then be: who should have such initiatives – civil society or politicians?

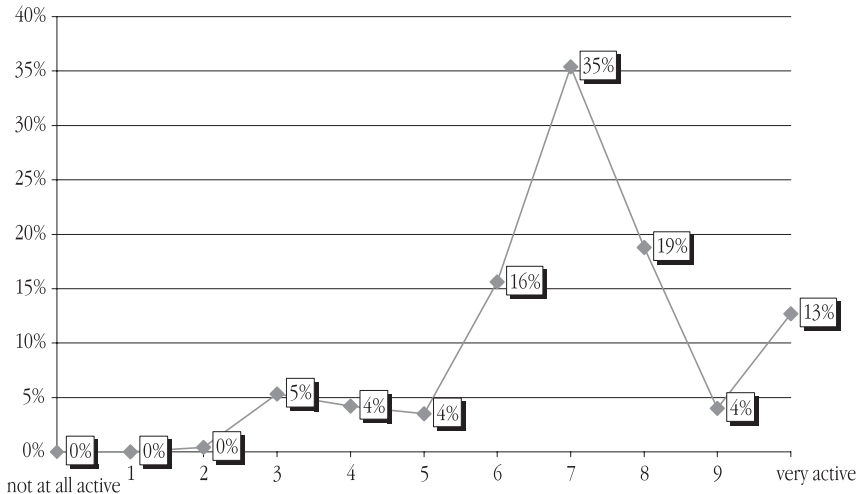
NGO Activism

One of the institutionalised forms of civil society in South Eastern Europe, as elsewhere, is represented by NGOs. From a civic participation perspective NGOs activity within Albanian civil society constitutes an environment in which these organizations can contribute to a good functioning of society. Through social projects undertaken, NGOs are an alternative to governmental policies in the most various fields.

NGOs are a good tool or instrument to involve young people in really useful activities and also, in many cases, they are going to promote programs of development and reconstruction that are really helpful for the country. [employed]

Young people who are part of NGOs have a high level of participation in the activities of these organizations. Over 70% of survey respondents declare that they are active and very active within their organizations, which means a systematic presence in undertaken projects.

Figure 9: Activity in organization

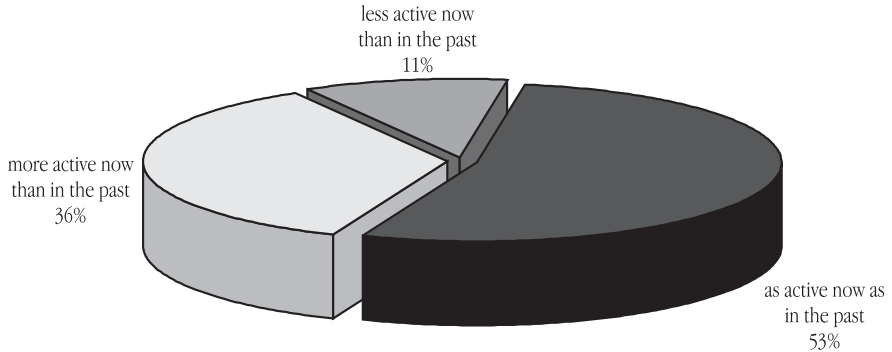


Youth involvement in non-governmental organizations may contribute to increase their civic and social activism levels. The fact that over one third of young people from NGOs are more active in the present than in the past, may suggest two significant aspects: that the volume and complexity of NGOs activity increased, on one hand, and therefore, the input of time and effort made by the

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members is higher than in the past (see fig. 10), or, on the other hand, that youth activism increased significantly for the same volume of projects. The two aspects may have evolved in parallel, and this would be beneficial for the NGO sector.

Figure 10: Compared level of activism



Relying to a great extent on youth volunteer participation in activities and projects undertaken, NGOs are seen an organized environment of civic socialization.

I think that these NGOs are working a lot with young people by trying to make them active and trying to socialize them on the society. [NGO activist]

Through informal social interaction mechanisms, NGOs prepare young people for social life, organize their experience, and these occur in an active way, through direct involvement in very diverse activities.

The positive aspect is that they are joining young people and make them active on the civil society life. [unemployed]

NGO importance for society and for youth lives reflects primarily in the way they are involved professionally and advisory in youth lives. Firstly, according to own young people's opinions, NGOs provide social and educational support youth needs and which specialized institutions no longer have sufficient resources and inspiration to provide. Moreover, through their consultancy activities and through attracting young people as volunteers, NGOs struggle to keep them safe from social vices or other negative phenomena Albania presently deals with: criminality, drugs, prostitutions etc.

I see positively the non-profit sector because it tries to give a new impulse to the life of the young people by offering different activity's, trainings, advocacy, consultancy etc.
[employed]

I see these NGOs as positive because they also are a good help to avoid young people from the negative problems we mentioned. [NGO activist]

And last, but not least, NGOs are very important factors in the relation between civil society and the political power, being able to influence authorities' decision in an institutional manner which is not to be neglected.

I see the non-profit sector generally in a positive way because they are going to be able to influence the authority on their decisions. [employed]

This political or administrative decision influencing possibility is based on the collaboration and communication relation with state institutions and authorities. The data provided by the survey reveal the fact that NGOs have a higher communication level with local authorities, as presumed to be. A more intense permanent contact is between NGOs and local administration or representatives in local councils and less active with members of parliament and local politicians. However, as noticed, at this general level of data, the lack of contacts is found mainly in the relation with local members of parliament (whereas in western democracies it is very close) and to great extent to some NGOs with local councillors, whereas occasional communication with politicians and parties is due rather to the nature of politicians' activities who organize meetings in function of their electoral agenda. These data may suggest that NGOs have the capacity to influence or persuade rather local administrative authorities than central ones.

Table 9: Contact with... (%)

	no contact	occasional contact	regular contact
Municipal administration or local officials	28	46	26
The city council or member of the council	43	34	23
Local parliament or local parliamentarians	65	30	5
Local political parties or politicians	37	53	10

There are, of course, negative aspects that young people notice about NGOs. Although not a general phenomenon, they say, there are cases of NGOs that elude the purposes they were established for and break the law.

But of course there are some negative elements as I could mention here that they could function without respecting the law or sometime as we hear they are going to cheat their real aim or goal. [unemployed]

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Some NGOs abuse of the funding received, using it for personal purposes of some members or to undertake activities that have nothing in common with their object of activity. On the other hand, there are complaints about the lack of transparency in implementing projects and of sometimes defective organization and management. Nevertheless, it has to be mentioned that, as focus group participants declare, such situations are rare.

But of course there could be some negative elements in these organizations; I see that on some cases there is no good management of funds and also they abuse funds, even that it is quite rarely I think. [employed]

Of course they have some negative parts because sometime they are staffed by some individuals who are not transparent with their work. [NGO activist]

But as negative elements I see that there is a lack of transparency and also sometime they are not well organized. [unemployed]

In view of improving NGOs activities, young people that participated in the focus groups made a series of suggestions and proposals which can be resumed in several main themes:

- To have a better communication and cooperation among NGOs in order to increase work efficiency

My opinion is that NGOs and foundation should try to be better coordinated because as we are working with NGOs very often see many NGOs working for the same aim and maybe having same projects, but they do not know each other or sometime it's sad to say but they hate each other. [NGO activist]

Also I have the same opinion that NGOs should work more closely between them. Also I have the opinion that there is a need to establish network of NGOs which have the same aim or NGOs which are working at the same field. I think without coordination their work will have no results. [NGO activist]

- To collaborate more intensively with governmental institutions

I think that NGOs should work more with the State as partners; this is one of the priorities. [NGO activist]

- To provide more social services and expand their area of operation/ coverage

I think that NGO should provide more social services in order to create more professional young people. [NGO activist]

If the NGOs will be focused more to the youth people, to children in need in rural zones (...) these are some immediate requirements because the state is not able to make proper intervention there and NGOs must be cover all these areas. [employed]

- **To develop professional courses/ training for young people and work more with young people**

They should develop more professional courses and they should work more with Young people in order to manage better their capacities and skills. If this happens, the status of our young people will be improved for sure. [student]

Conclusions

Presently, young Albanians are confronted with various social situations and problems. Most of their dissatisfactions regard the country's social and economic situation, but also the situation of the Albanian political class. The lack of employment, the precarious material conditions, as well as the lack of serious educational offer determine the expectations to be very low, so youth prefer the solution of emigration westwards. However, the key problem is represented by the economy: in youth perceptions, unemployment is the source generating a series of social complications (criminality and lack of safety) and a social climate characterized by increased lack of trust in the future. The existence of a state of public lack of security and of deviant behaviours among youth (drug and alcohol consumption, prostitution) completes the spectre of problems identified by the young members of the Albanian society.

The origin of these problems is the lack of economic, educational and political reforms, which young people expect from the government. Yet the defective political management and corruption from institutions hinder the development of structural reforms. The solution in solving the situation the country faces, and implicitly to solve youth specific issues, is represented by civil society development, through the government institutions and the citizens encouraging NGOs activities, on one hand, and through a higher involvement of NGOs in public debates and in people's everyday life. NGOs are called to provide alternatives to governmental educational policies and to involve youth in volunteer activities in order to develop civic conscience and to deter them from the temptations of drugs and of other social vices. The success of these civic organizations depends to a great extent on their capacity to self-organize and to develop the collaboration with governmental institutions. Youth problems from Albania, as the entire precarious social-economic situation of the country, can be overcome, as the research subjects repeatedly claim, only through cooperation of all actors involved: government, civil society and each individual member of society.

Annexes

Methodological note

The survey was conducted on a sample of 900 subjects.

Focus group interviews:

Group Name	Number of subjects	Number of group interviews	Group composition
NGO activist	12	2	NGO activists
Un/Em	12	2	unemployed & employed
STUD	12	2	Students

Tables

Sharing political opinions with... (%)

	we share the same opinion	sometimes we have differences of opinion	important differences of opinion	not applicable	TOTAL
Family	27	52	13	8	100
Friends	20	51	21	8	100
Neighbours	15	19	40	26	100
Members of this organization	23	40	15	22	100
Members of other organization	18	25	25	32	100

Effective ways to influence decisions in society (%)

	1 Not at all effective	2	3	4	5 Very effective
work in a political party	0	13	24	47	16
work in voluntary organization	1	0	49	46	2
vote in elections	1	0	23	49	27
contact politicians	3	7	49	32	10
work to get attention by the media	1	4	51	30	13
boycott certain products	7	11	50	28	3
participate in public demonstrations	3	4	48	40	5
participate in illegal protest activities	19	8	39	24	10

Albania

Organization's influence on the decisions made by... (%)

	City Council	Regional Government	National Government
no influence	4	6	7
small influence	19	23	28
medium influence	38	36	32
great influence	20	16	9
very great influence	11	5	9
don't know	7	13	9
not applicable	1	1	6

YOUTH
ISSUES AND
CHALLENGES
in South-Eastern Europe

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bosnia and Herzegovina



Country Presentation

Bosnia and Herzegovina	Geography
<i>Location:</i>	Southeastern Europe, bordering the Adriatic Sea and Croatia
<i>Area:</i>	<i>total:</i> 51,129 sq km <i>land:</i> 51,129 sq km <i>water:</i> 0 sq km
<i>Land boundaries:</i>	<i>total:</i> 1,459 km <i>border countries:</i> Croatia 932 km, Yugoslavia 527 km
Bosnia and Herzegovina	People
<i>Population:</i>	3,922,205 <i>note: all data dealing with population are subject to considerable error because of the dislocations caused by military action and ethnic cleansing (July 2001 est.)</i>
<i>Age structure:</i>	<i>0-14 years:</i> 20.13% (male 405,713; female 383,850) <i>15-64 years:</i> 70.78% (male 1,422,796; female 1,353,410) <i>65 years and over:</i> 9.09% (male 150,802; female 205,634) (2001 est.)
<i>Population growth rate:</i>	1.38% (2001 est.)
<i>Birth rate:</i>	12.86 births/1,000 population (2001 est.)
<i>Death rate:</i>	7.99 deaths/1,000 population (2001 est.)
<i>Net migration rate:</i>	8.91 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2001 est.)
<i>Sex ratio:</i>	<i>at birth:</i> 1.07 male(s)/female <i>under 15 years:</i> 1.06 male(s)/female <i>15-64 years:</i> 1.05 male(s)/female <i>65 years and over:</i> 0.73 male(s)/female <i>total population:</i> 1.02 male(s)/female (2001 est.)
<i>Infant mortality rate:</i>	24.35 deaths/1,000 live births (2001 est.)
<i>Life expectancy at birth:</i>	<i>total population:</i> 71.75 years <i>male:</i> 69.04 years <i>female:</i> 74.65 years (2001 est.)
<i>Total fertility rate:</i>	1.71 children born/woman (2001 est.)
<i>Ethnic groups:</i>	Serb 31%, Bosniak 44%, Croat 17%, Yugoslav 5.5%, other 2.5% (1991) <i>note: Bosniak has replaced muslim as an ethnic term in part to avoid confusion with the religious term Muslim – an adherent of Islam</i>
<i>Religions:</i>	Muslim 40%, Orthodox 31%, Roman Catholic 15%, Protestant 4%, other 10%

Bosnia and Herzegovina **Government**

<i>Country name:</i>	<i>conventional long form:</i> Bosnia and Herzegovina <i>conventional short form:</i> B&H <i>local long form:</i> Bosna i Hercegovina <i>local short form:</i> BiH
<i>Government type:</i>	emerging democracy
<i>Capital:</i>	Sarajevo
<i>Administrative divisions:</i>	there are two first-order administrative divisions – the Bosniak/Croat Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Federacija Bosna i Hercegovina) and the Bosnian Serb-led Republika Srpska; note – Brcko in northeastern Bosnia is a self-governing administrative unit under the sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina; it is not part of either the Federation or Republika Srpska
<i>Independence:</i>	1 March 1992 (from Yugoslavia)
<i>National holiday:</i>	National Day, 25 November (1943)
<i>Constitution:</i>	the Dayton Agreement, signed 14 December 1995, included a new constitution now in force

Bosnia and Herzegovina **Economy**

Economy – overview: Bosnia and Herzegovina ranked next to The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia as the poorest republic in the old Yugoslav federation. Although agriculture is almost all in private hands, farms are small and inefficient, and the republic traditionally is a net importer of food. Industry has been greatly overstuffed, one reflection of the socialist economic structure of Yugoslavia. Tito had pushed the development of military industries in the republic with the result that Bosnia hosted a large share of Yugoslavia's defense plants. The bitter interethnic warfare in Bosnia caused production to plummet by 80% from 1990 to 1995, unemployment to soar, and human misery to multiply. With an uneasy peace in place, output recovered in 1996-98 at high percentage rates from a low base; but output growth slowed appreciably in 1999 and 2000, and GDP remains far below the 1990 level. Economic data are of limited use because, although both entities issue figures, national-level statistics are not available. Moreover, official data do not capture the large share of activity that occurs on the black market. The marka – the national currency introduced in 1998 – has gained wide acceptance, and the Central Bank of Bosnia and Herzegovina has dramatically increased its reserve holdings. Implementation of privatization, however, has been slower than anticipated. Banking reform accelerated in early 2001 as all the communist-era payments bureaus were shut down. The country receives substantial amounts of reconstruction assistance and humanitarian aid from the international community but will have to prepare for an era of declining assistance.

<i>GDP:</i>	purchasing power parity – \$6.5 billion (2000 est.)
<i>Unemployment rate:</i>	35%-40% (1999 est.)
<i>Currency:</i>	Konvertibilna Marka (BAM, or on local language KM)

These data are taken from the site of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe.

Partner Presentations

Helsinki Citizens' Assembly – Tuzla

Helsinki Citizens Assembly

The Helsinki Citizens' Assembly is an international coalition of civic initiatives in Eastern, Central and Western Europe, the USA and Canada, committed to the democratic integration of Europe. HCA has its origins in the previous decade of dialogue between independent citizens' movements for peace, democracy and human rights on both sides of the Cold War divide. In 1990 this network of contacts was transformed into an international organization, the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly. HCA was officially established at its first Assembly in Prague (October 1990), that was addressed by Vaclav Havel, one of HCA's founding fathers.

The program of HCA is founded on the belief that European integration cannot take place at the level of national governments alone; society has to be involved as well. Therefore, HCA's motto is "Integrating Europe from below". It is HCA's aim to widen the debate beyond the level of the political elite's. Since HCA wants to shape effective guarantees for freedom, democracy and human rights in Europe, special attention is paid to conflict areas.

The international secretariat of HCA is established in Prague (Czech Republic). HCA also has a Western Liaison Office in the Hague (the Netherlands), and several offices in conflict areas (Sarajevo, Tuzla, Tbilisi). HCA also has local branches in all countries of the Helsinki region. This region consists of all countries which are signatories to the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (now OSCE), which was signed in 1975 in Helsinki. In all of these countries, we want to involve citizens in the discussions about Europe and the problems and challenges it is confronted with. That is why we call ourselves the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly.

HCA-TUZLA

In June 1994, some members of Forum Građana Tuzle (Forum of Tuzla Citizens) were present at a HCA-meeting in Strassbourg (France). Just like HCA, FGT believes in a bottom-up approach. FGT is fighting against the nationalist tendencies that prevail in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Tuzla is the only city in Bosnia-Herzegovina that is still governed by a non-nationalist majority. Its citizens, and especially the members of FGT, are struggling to keep the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious way of life in Tuzla alive.

At the meeting in Strasbourg, it was decided that HCA would support the city of Tuzla, and the Forum Građana Tuzla, because it is an example of the citizens-approach that HCA stands for. A international "Open Cities"-Campaign was launched at this meeting. The main objectives of this campaign are:

- 1 To re-establish links between the cities of Bosnia-Hercegovina and the outside world.
- 2 To focus on concrete demands such as the re-opening of Tuzla Airport.
- 3 To stimulate concrete co-operation on reconstruction-projects.

As a first initiative, an International Working Seminar on Local Democracy and Reconstruction was organized by Forum of Tuzla Citizens, the Municipality of Tuzla and the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly. This Working Seminar, that was held in November 1994 in Tuzla, was attended by 125 full participants. The participants were representatives of municipalities, NGO's, media, and civic groups, both from Bosnia-Hercegovina and abroad. Twinning relations between between cities, support for local free media, contacts between NGO's, and many other things resulted from this meeting. At this meeting, it was also decided that HCA would open an office in Tuzla, and that HCA's fourth Assembly would be held in Tuzla in October 1995.

In April 1995, HCA has opened it's office in Tuzla. The main tasks of HCA-Tuzla are:

1. The strengthening and linking of civic initiatives in different towns in Bosnia and Hercegovina and abroad.
2. Producing regular reports about the perspectives of civil society, the work of various local groups working on peace, human rights, democracy, culture, education, etc., and about recent events in Tuzla and elsewhere.
3. Serving as a clearing house for international contacts by identifying concrete projects in Tuzla that are in need of partners from abroad, and assisting counterparts from abroad by answering queries, facilitating communication with various local organizations, organizing delegations to Tuzla, etc.
4. Actively promoting international cooperation on reconstruction-projects in Tuzla.
5. Preparation of the HCA International Assembly, that will be held in October 1995 in Tuzla under the title "Unite the Citizens, Unite the Nations".
6. Preparing a Foundation for Reconstruction, which will consist of both local and international partners, and will provide a longer term framework for reconstruction-projects.

We have served as a clearinghouse, not only for local organisations seeking contacts abroad, but also for foreign organisations, that are willing to support groups and organisations in Tuzla, but don't know how to reach them. We have initiated and supported projects on a wide range of subjects: culture, education, refugees and d.p.'s, independent media, physical reconstruction, community building, non-violent conflict-resolution, youth-projects, civic initiatives, etc.

Apart from that, we have organised HCA's Fourth General Assembly, which took place in October 1995. Among the 550 participants, there were people from all areas of former Yugoslavia, Eastern

Partner Presentations

Europe, Western Europe, and Northern America. Among others, they have discussed topics like Refugee Rights; Economic Reconstruction; Civic Education; Women, Nationalism and Fundamentalism; Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Intervention; War Crimes; Local Democracy; and the role of media in conflicts. But more has been done: from these discussions, several concrete projects have been developed. For instance, it was decided that a network of civic initiatives should be set up, including both entities in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Very soon, this decision will be executed. Another important result of the Assembly is the project concerning city-to-city cooperation with Tuzla. Several major Dutch cities and NGO's have committed themselves to support this community-building-programme, that covers diverse subprojects concerning cultural cooperation, neighbourhood cooperation, communal services, support for the younger and the elderly, support for the University, day-care-centres, d.p.'s etc. etc. Some parts of this project have already started, some other sub-projects will be started very soon.

Some other activities of hCa Tuzla are:

- In close co-operation with hCa Banja Luka and Sarajevo, hCa Tuzla organised three women's conferences (Zenica – June 1996) (Banja Luka – December 1996) (Mostar – July 1997).
- With hCa Banja Luka we set up a youth network in BiH containing: seminars, festivals, youth magazine etc. hCa Youth Network in B&H consist more than 120 youth organizations from B&H. More info you can find at: <http://www.hcamreza.org>
- We are actively engaged in establishing an independent cultural centre/theatre in Tuzla and we have organised trips for various theatres to theatres in The Netherlands. In 1998, representatives of Dutch theatres will give various workshops in Tuzla.
- We have facilitated and supported many contacts between Federation and Republika Srpska (between students, theatres, universities, schools, civic activists, Roma etc.)
- We have facilitated and/or organised various Bosnian delegations to other countries in Europe.
- We have initiated many contacts between local groups in Tuzla and abroad.
- All hCa offices in BiH are involved in a Phare programme: "Integration from below". This programme contains various elements: postercampaign, flying universities, international missions, bulletins and appeals.
- Together with our co-partner "Sae Roma", we have organised two big Roma conferences and one Roma night in Tuzla. hCa Tuzla and Sae Roma have received a grant enabling us to work for two years on various projects to improve living standards and position of Roma in BiH.
- HCa Tuzla has organised a non violent conflict resolution seminar in Tuzla (January 1996)
- Supported projects of Dom Mladih (cultural center). Courses for young people, computers etc.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- HCa BiH offices have organised two seminars under the title “After Dayton”. One concerned the legal aspects of Dayton (Sarajevo, Jan 1997) and one on relationship between local NGO’s and international community in BiH in rebuilding civil society in BiH (Banja Luka, July 1997)
- Co-organised participation of Bosnians in summerschools of Helsinki Citizen’s Assembly International: (Crete, 1996), (Croatia, 1997) and (Georgia, 1997)

The staff of the HCA-office in Tuzla consists of the following members:

- Mr. Miralem Tursinovic – office co-ordinator hCa Tuzla
- Mr. Samedin Kurtalic – project co-ordinator / assistant
- Mr. Boško Vlajic – Technical secretary

The office can be contacted on the following numbers:

- Telephone: + 387 75 250 481
- Telefax: + 387 75 250 481
- E-Mail: hCa Tuzla@bih.net.ba

If you have any questions concerning HCA and its work, feel free to call us any time.

Youth Association – UNO

UNO BiH & UNO YU

www.uno.rs.ba

'Association of citizens "Youth Association – UNO" is established as a non political, non governmental and non profitable association of citizens with aims of scientific and professional research of human rights, education of jurists and other experts, education of youth, education of NGO staff, cultural activities and conscious development of context and protection of human rights.'
deduction from statute of the organization

Organization exists since 1999.

UNO contact persons:

Dimitrije Dragovic, director of UNO offices, dm@paleol.net

Bojan Stancevic, coordinator, office UNO BiH, boy@inecco.net

Bojan Stankovic, coordinator, office UNO YU, unoyugoslavia@yahoo.com

Objective, aims and activities of the organization:

Aims:

- to ensure support to youth population (especially to youth that need to improve skills for further studies and work in non government and government sector, take no account of nationality and religion;
- to define psychological war trauma that youth of ex Yugoslav republics have been through;
- to ensure focus, structure and continuity of youth spare time;
- to offer new knowledge and skills to teenagers;
- to help users – youth to express their creative abilities and trust feelings, self-respect, friendship and affiliation through organized gathering;
- to create atmosphere in area in which youth can feel safe and useful;
- to protect youth from losing faith in their future and interests for their own life;
- especially arrange and implement projects that concerns insurance, existence and security of local community with particular reference to youth life in it;
- to promote programs that will upgrade youth status through media and inform population on their needs;

Methods:

- Organizing of Centers, that will be “open house”, where youth can always come to associate between themselves, work creatively, upgrade knowledge, talk, etc.;
- Organizing of educational, recreational, social and cultural activities, including various trainings, groups with the same sphere of interest, sectors of organization with special purpose, clubs, etc.;
- Giving psychological support by individual and group discussions;
- Support creativity and self-helping;
- Development of connection with other educational, social, health and humanitarian bodies on both levels, local and international.

UNO Cooperation:

- Member and one of first organization in Youth Network BiH. Also have one representative (since 1999) in coordination board of this network (ex. HCa Youth Network in Bosnia & Herzegovina).
- Member of Citizens pact for SEE. (one of the founders)
- Member of Coordination board CRO-SLO-BIH Network “EDA – NET”
- Member of Council of Europe Project “LTTC Participation and Citizenship”
- Coordinator in project together with Intercultural center of Austria and foreign ministry of Austria.
- In Partnership with organization “YANGSTERS –DUNAU” from Vukovar we preparing a project about Trainers Network for Intercultural learning in SEE. First preparing seminar will be held on the end of this year in Tuzla.
- Organizer of trainings in the sector of Intercultural learning, Conflict Resolution and Non –Violent Communication and Human Rights Education in SEE region.
- In Cooperation with City government of NIS, UNO office in Serbia is one of co organizer on NISOMNIA festival in City Nis, Serbia, Yugoslavia. www.nisomnia.org.yu
- Member and founder of Regional NGO Network in Republic of Srpska called Youth Forum Serb Sarajevo. www.uno.rs.ba/youthforum
- Together with Youth Forum and municipality Serb Ilidza (City Serb Sarajevo) we established first youth club in this part of Bosnia (after Banja luka, Bihac and Tuzla) called UNDERGROUND where we already made together more then 10 concerts and other free activities for youngsters (First YU punk band “NOVEMBER” Zagreb-Nis, Danish band “Birk”, BiH band “Central Heating” and many more). Club is established 6 months ago and in next 4 months we need to renovate space and to improve activities. www.uno.rs.ba/underground

For more information contact us on: uno@paleol.net

Details:

- Youth Network of BiH: www.omladinskamrezabih.org
- Citizens Pact for SEE: www.citizenspact.org
- “EDA – NET“ www.uno.rs.ba

The major change is that we now have as a goal for the project to set up an umbrella organization for the environmental NGO's on Balkan. We have been discussing this internally in the organization. On one hand institutions can be limiting for creativity and action, and be very slow to work with. But on the other hand an institution will make it much easier to obtain international funding for joint projects from the EU, UN and Danish developmental aid, where there is a special program called “Fresta”. Since most organizations are rather small and not very well funded and do not have a solid base or structure, we have concluded that unity will make the individual organizations stronger and ready to act on a larger scale. This is needed in order to obtain the goal of the project, which is threefold: To strengthen the environmental consciousness, to make the environmental movement a progressive force in the building of democracy and to further peace and stability in the region.

This organization will then act as a platform for the NGO's in the future. Both regarding capacity building of the individual organizations, and for the establishment of common projects in the region.

Forming this organization will however be very much up to the NGO's, and will be a running process through all this first phase. Also setting the agenda for future activities and plans will be up to the NGO's with the support from Severin.

- “LTTC Participation and Citizenship”

Principal aim of the LTTC Participation and Citizenship

- To train and empower minority youth leaders to develop local projects and associative strategies based on participation, intercultural education and Human Rights within a European perspective.

Objectives of the LTTC Participation and Citizenship:

- To support/promote minority youth participation from the local to the European level;
- To reflect on issues such as identity, nationalism, Europe, discrimination, social exclusion and majority-minority relations and their relevance to youth projects;
- To initiate innovative local youth projects on participation and citizenship;
- To develop practical approaches and methods for translating solidarity, empathy, citizenship and human rights education into youth work practice;
- To enable participants to prepare, run and evaluate a project;

- To develop participants' skills in the areas of human rights education, leadership and programme development, project management and intercultural learning;
- To provide information about European institutions, structures and programmes relevant to youth, minorities and human rights issues;
- To motivate and enable participants to share their acquired knowledge and experience and to act as multipliers;
- To gather contributions for the development of Council of Europe youth policy regarding minority youth and human rights education

Coordination in project together with Intercultural center of Austria and foreign ministry of Austria.

Idea and Context

In 2000/01 "Youth for Tolerance" – a joint project of the Austrian Federal Youth Council and Interkulturelles Zentrum Vienna, supported by the Austrian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Ministry for Social Security & Generations and the European Commission (Youth programme) – was carried out successfully. The major aim was achieved by bringing together young people from EU-Member States, pre-accession countries and countries in South Eastern Europe in order to discuss important topics regarding Europe as a peace project: tolerance and its implementation in our daily lives. The discussion was not only based on relevant theories concerning "values", "perceptions" or settings that enhance interactive processes for mutual understanding. The lively seminar and the follow up on the web-site brought up personal experiences, views and proposals from very different backgrounds in Europe.

Moreover, many participants expressed their wish to continue the co-operation with their peers of "the greater Europe" and to extend the access to the dialogue so that more young people can actively contribute to the discussion about "tolerance" as a main pillar of a shared identity as European citizens. Tolerance as a starting point of discussion seems fashionable to us in the actual political situation, where we experience a strong tendency to a right wing policy in Europe. It challenge us to define our limits to tolerate any policy which is against human rights on one side and on the other side it makes us understand that tolerance is a matter to be negotiated in daily life practice. Youth for Tolerance II is a sign to open the debate about culture, participation, differences, common projects and politics based on human rights. It should provoke debates in order to challenge prejudices, all forms of discrimination and to give the possibility to develop new practice.

Youth for Tolerance II brings together representatives of young people's organisation from all parts of Europe in order to develop a European exhibition on the topic of "tolerance". This multimedia approach is planned to tour through several European countries – EU-Member-States, "pre-accession" countries and countries in South Eastern Europe.

Youth for Tolerance II is an Austrian initiative, additionally supported by the European Commission and the Council of Europe.

Youth for Tolerance II – Aims

The managing team of “Youth for Tolerance” compiled the proposals, wishes and needs expressed by the participants and proposes a concept for continuation of the initiative is based on the following aims:

- to raise the awareness for the importance of the concept of tolerance as a basic element of the European citizen
- to stimulate the perception of “tolerance” and its many aspects in the daily life of young people
- to stimulate the intercultural dialog about tolerance
- to support the reflection of the specifics of “tolerance” in the different environments/countries and to contribute to an intercultural exchange of the various particular meanings throughout Europe.
- to motivate young people to engage in activities to promote “tolerance” in their country as well as to start European projects to deepen and spread the dialogue about “tolerance in Europe”

There is secure evidence that the dialogue about “tolerance in Europe” can be seriously enriched by the diversity of participants coming from all parts of Europe reflecting different situations in which tolerance is an important issue in everyday life. Relevant areas which should be addressed are

- the co-existence of people with different cultural heritage
- the relationship between people of different religious affiliation
- the basic human right of the freedom of expression at school, work or in public
- the freedom to define and develop one’s personal identity
- the relationship between the sexes
- the relationship between generations

Organizing trainings in the sector of Intercultural learning, Conflict Resolution and Non-Violent Communication and Human Rights Education. First time in SEE this kind of trainings.

Aim

- To create unified network of trainers consisted of 3 trainers' teams in areas of:
- Intercultural learning
- Conflict resolution and non-violent communication
- Human rights education and to help them to work as a multipliers and trainers.

Objectives

- Support all youth initiatives in BiH & Yugoslavia that promote democracy, self-sustainable peace and inter-ethnic tolerance within mixed communities
- Promote cooperation between all youth initiatives in BiH and Yugoslavia through grass-roots level and self help approaches as a means of promoting sustainable livelihoods
- Create more favorable local social environments to facilitate minority returns, especially youth
- Expand current inter-entity and regional cooperation
- Cultivate self-sustainable community-based democratization through civic infrastructures that offer youth peaceful and proactive ways to achieve meaningful lives
- Positive effect on developing creative consciousness and skills among young people
- Provide young people positive alternatives to influence their communities
- Promote the work of NGOs
- Strengthening of work of NGO's to prepare them for work when donors leave country

UNOBiH

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Executive Summary in Bosnian

Entitet Republika Srpska

Generalan aspekt

Fokusna grupa intervju je obavljena u tri ciljane grupe: članovi NGO-a, studenti i zaposleni/nezaposleni mladi ljudi. Za sve navedene ciljane grupe teme diskusije bile su iste. Navedene grupe smatraju da strukturalan problem koji postoji u društvu određuje neke od rastućih problema kao što su: korištenje droge, alkoholizam, nelegalne poslove itd.

U cilju identifikacije najvećih problema u društvu u kojem oni žive i sa čime je ono najviše suočeno, podaci ankete pokazuju da se ispitanici najviše boje bolesti (32%), rata u regiji (27%) i socijalnih nemira (11%).

Iz perspektive participanata fokus grupe, uzimajući u obzir mlade koji su završili studiranje, nedostatak posla predstavlja jedan od negativnih aspekata sa snažnim uticajem. Nezaposlenost koja u stopu prati završetak školovanja predstavlja najveći strah i veoma ozbiljan problem sa kojim su mladi suočeni. Isto tako nezaposlenost stvara niz problema okarakterisanih kao prekršaji: konzumacija droge, fizičko nasilje i alkoholizam.

Nemogućnost mladih da uzmu učešća u pravljenju odluka za oblasti koje se direktno tiču njih samih, predstavljaju drugu kategoriju problema koji zaokuplja mlade.

Ovim negativnim fenomenima možemo dodati ostale iz društvenog okruženja: velika volja mladih za emigraciju, krajnje nepovoljna percepcija političke klase.

Povjerenje i Građanski stav

Ispitivanja fokus grupe pokazuju da su mladi koji rade u NGO sektoru oni koji čvrsto vjeruju da je nedostatak mladih u politici-bilo na lokalnom ili centralnom nivou- glavni problem.

Istraživanjem su prikupljene informacije koje govore da je povjerenje mladih u političke partije ekstremno malo (77% ispitanih mladih ljudi u Republici Srpskoj imaju veoma malo ili nimalo povjerenja u političke partije) Ispitanici i to njihova velika većina smatra da je neefikasan menadžment u političkim strukturama proizveo fujasko demarša u ekonomiji. Nepovjerenje u političare i političke partije je najjasnije dokazano u odgovorima upitanika. Zaključak koji se može iznijeti je: (1) Političari predstavljaju model negativne uloge u društvu; (2) Nezainteresiranost političke klase za probleme građana koji su glasali za njih.

U ovom trenutku nema mogućnost za mlade ljude da se uključe u odlučivanje političke strukture. Njihova se mišljenja ignoriraju na polju socijalne-ekonomije što se kasnije reflektuje njihovim

odbijanjem da budu uključeni u politički život. Odnosi sa institucionalnim sistemom Demokratske institucije, u koje se među prvima ubrajaju Parlament i Predsjedničke institucije ne posjeduju veliki nivo povjerenja. Institucije kao što su nezavisna massmedia i crkva uživaju veće povjerenje među mladim ljudima. Fokusna grupa ispitanika pokazuje da je mali nivo povjerenja prema Evropskoj Uniji i Ujedinjenim Narodima. Ispitanici misle da su ove dvije pomenute institucije dale dosta doprinosa i pozitivne intervencije u zadnjih deset godina ali je još uvijek mnogo stvari koje bi se mogle unaprijediti u saradnji sa vlastima, posebno sa političkom klasom. Trebamo spomenuti da podatci ispitanika pokazuju mali interes za međunarodnu i Evropsku politiku.

NGO aktivizam

Od organizacione i institucionalne perspektive NGO-i predstavljaju primjere u koje se ima više povjerenja nego u političke partije, vladu ili druge državne institucije. Asocijacioni sektor koji je ponovno rođen nakon pada komunizma nudi-posebno mladim-mogućnost da se iskažu u javnosti. NGO-i (označene kao asocijacije ili fondacije) mogu-u nekim slučajevima- da djeluju na proces donošenja odluka od strane lokalnih ili centralnih predstavnika vlasti.

I NGO članovi i druge kategorije mladih ljudi priznaju da je mali broj organizacija koje bi diskutovale o nedovoljno razmatranim problemima kao što su: edukacija, zakonodvodstvo, profesionalna obuka itd.

Negativan aspekt vrijedan za napomenu je nedostatak transparentije što je možda rezultat nepravilnog rukovođenja ili manjkavost komunikacijske strategije/odnosa sa javnošću.

Federacija Bosna I Hercegovina

Generalni aspekt

Ispitivanjima i odgovorima od strane mladih dobi od 18-30 godina pokušalo se sa identifikacijom najvećih problema sa kojim su mladi u Bosni suočeni u organizacionom okruženju.

Mladi vjeruju da su prodaja i konzumacija droge, alkoholizam, prostitucija, siromaštvo najveći problemi u društvu i posebice među mladim ljudima.

Odnosi sa institucijama i politički sistemom

Fokusna grupa ispitanika smatra da ekonomske i političke promjene na bolje u Bosni i Hercegovini mogu biti moguće samo onda kada politička i upravljačka elita uključi dobro obučene i motivirane mlade ljude koji bi donijeli novi mentalitet i ideje. Prema statistici više od 50% ispitanika nema puno povjerenja prema političkim partijama, dok se samo 23% njih izjasnilo da imaju veliko ili dosta veliko povjerenje u političke partije. Negativno mišljenje o političkoj klasi može se objasniti sa njihovim malim interesom za politiku. Malo je povjerenje i u međunarodne institucije kao što su Evropska Unija ili Ujedinjeni Narodi.

Prema ovim pokazateljima možemo zaključiti da mladi imaju veoma malo interesovanja za lokalnu, nacionalnu i međunarodnu politiku.

Povjerenje i Građanski stav

Za većinu mladih ljudi negativna iskustva koja su imali (nezaštićenost, siromaštvo) učinili su da oni sve više gube povjerenje u "ostale". Kao što se može očekivati, osobe kojima oni vjeruju su: porodica, prijatelji i kolege. Razgovorima vođenim sa mladim aktivistima NGO-a su pokazali da velika većina mladih traži šansu za emigraciju u zapadne zemlje.

NVO Aktivizam

Nedostatak regulacija NVO aktivnosti, nedostatak finansijske regulacije NVO-a itd. neki su od važnih aspekata naglašanih od strane ispitanika u vezi funkcionisanja NVO-a..

Saradnja sa vlastima i političarima je još uvijek mala, samo 25% ispitanika je odgovorilo da njihova organizacija održava konstantne kontakte i komunikacije sa političarima i lokalnim zvaničnicima. Više od dvije trećine je izjavilo da nikada nisu kontaktirali ili da su povremeno surađivali sa političarima i lokalnim zvaničnicima. Više od 85% upitanika je izjavilo da organizacija kojoj oni pripadaju održava konstantnu saradnju sa drugim NVO. Intervju je pokazao da su takve saradnje daleko od aktivnog partnerstva i uticaja na život u zajednici.

Zaključak

Kvantitativna i kvalitetna sociološka analiza izrađena tokom istraživanja pokazuje da je trenutni status mladih nesiguran, upućujući na na oba aspekta: ekonomski i socijalni. Među najozbiljnijim aspektima ukazanih od strane mladih su: nedostatak posla (koji stvara seriju nezadovoljstva), povećanje konzumacije droge i alkohola i kriminala među mladim ljudima, socijalna i ekonomska nestabilnost, emigracija (mnogi mladi ljudi smatraju da njihovi problemi mogu biti riješeni samo ako emigriraju u zapadne zemlje).

U pogledu partnerstva sa lokalnim ili centralnim vlastima proizlazi da je neispravno i potrebno je uspostaviti stalnu komunikaciju kanala između javnosti i nevladinog sektora.

Main Research Findings

In the framework of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the research was carried out separately for the two administrative units of the country. Therefore there were two samples, one for the Republic of Srpska entity (administrative unit with Serbian majority) and one for the Federation (administrative unit of Bosnian/Croat majority). The analysis will be carried out separately for the two administrative units of the country.

The Republic of Srpska Entity General Aspects

Youth assessment concerning the direction everything is on in their country represents a synthetic indicator that provides an image – at a very general level – regarding the general situation of the society from the economic, political and social point of view. The questions of general interest referring to economy and democracy lead to diffuse evaluations of the social reality. Both the positive and negative attitudes identified among the youth are the result of a complex of factors:

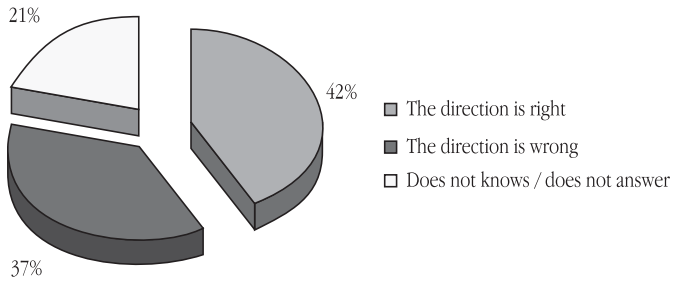
- one essential set of factors that influenced the answers at these general questions is the personal experience of the youth (success in life, professional satisfaction, the family's economic situation, etc.);
- a second one is given by the events taking place at national levels (activities carried out by the politicians, the government's activity, confidence in public institutions, etc);
- finally, the third level that enables the respondents to evaluate the general situation of the society they live in is the local or community level (in this case, they evaluate trust and the efficiency of the local institutions, trust and the social environment and trust in the, etc).

As in the other countries in South-Eastern Europe, some of the survey questions aimed at stating the degree of contentment or satisfaction of the youth regarding general aspects of the political or the socio-economic situation of the society they live in. Following the case of other South-Eastern European countries, in this republic the war was also one of the realities that complicate even more the socio-economic and political environment.

Focus group interviews were carried out on three target-groups: members of NGOs, students and employed/unemployed young people. For each of these three target groups, the discussion topics were the same. The first discussion topic – “Youth and society” – brings up a great diversity of opinions, thus reflecting obviously polarized attitudes concerning the place and role of the youth in

the society. Some of the subjects associate being young with optimism, belief in the future, and success in life. Nevertheless, most of them characterize the young generation as the social class confronted with the most difficult problems. In the framework of the focus group interviews carried out with students and NGO activists, one can identify much more critical attitudes regarding the situation of the youth in the society.

Figure 1: Direction the country is on



Interviews indicate the fact that the “direction” everything in society is on is not one that could solve the problems of the youth in a short-term. The youth and the elderly alike are identified as the most under-privileged groups in periods of transition.

The above mentioned target groups consider that the structural problems existing at society level determine some diverging phenomena such as drug use, alcoholism, underground economic activities, etc. The working and unemployed youth emphasize even more the negative aspects present at individual level. Moreover, they are much more pragmatic and when asked to identify causes, they identify ruling political groups as responsible for the bad situation that most of the young people are in.

Table 1: Deepest fears in the present

The things that you fear the most in the present	Percent of responses
High prices	7
War in the area	27
Diseases	32
Unemployment	8
Criminality	4
Social disturbances	11
Children's future	9
Don't know/don't answer	2

With regard to the identification of the most serious problem their society is confronted with, the survey data shows that the youth included in the survey are most afraid of diseases (32%), war in the

Main Research Findings

area (27%) and social disturbance (11%). Fear of diseases, mentioned on top of the list indicates the precarious economic and social situation young people are in. War and social disturbance emphasize the fears of the youth concerning the inability of the state institutions to find solutions for the major problems with which society is confronted with. This type of situations represents anomic situations at society level, situations that negatively affect the individual security and welfare. By interpreting the data in a structural manner, we must accept the fact that there are external conditions determining the life of the individuals in society and that the dis-functionalities at macro-social level will affect the middle and micro-social levels.

The attitude of the majority of the interviewed young people reflects the discontent and the disbelief in the future. These negative attitudes of the youth reflect their precarious social economic conditions, to which some of them also add the absence of young people in politics. From the perspective of the focus group participants who complete their studies, the lack of jobs represents one of the negative aspects with the strongest impact.

We are still living from our parents' earnings or from our part-time jobs. Our position in society is far away from good. Youth in society like this is only a part of enormous problems
[student]

Youth – and the old ones also – are without proper possibilities for living, jobs and everything else related to day-to-day living. [student]

I don't know why are we studying. We will not have a job afterward. We will do something else in our lives. Really, why...? [student]

At first sight, the degree of satisfaction regarding the way economy works shows that the majority of the survey respondents believe that the economic situation of the country is disastrous. The high degree of discontent regarding the economic situation has also a negative impact on other dimensions and aspects of social life. Moreover, we should mention that for most of the people, post-communist transition implies mostly economic changes, and in societies in transition periods of the most often evaluated are the indicators regarding economic performance and those that concern the democratisation of the society.

The discontent of the youth regarding the present state of facts may also be put on the account of lack of jobs; the unemployment that immediately follows the completion of studies represents by far the deepest fear and the most serious problem the youth is confronted with. Unemployment also generates numerous problems mostly in the field of contraventions: drug use, physical violence and alcoholism. The lack of trust in institutions and the scepticism of the young generation lie in the negative experiences and the individual fiascos accumulated by individuals in the framework of the society. The impossibility of the youth to take part in decision-making in matters that directly concern them, represents the second category of problems that concern the youth. To these negative phenomena we can also add others from the social environment: high willingness of the youth to

emigrate and the highly unfavourable perception of the political class. As far as the case of the Republic of Srpska Entity goes, the causes of poor economic performances are, on one hand, the structural deficiencies of a non-developing economic system (heritage of the communist system) and on the other hand to the negative effects of the war:

Society in post-war period is trying to develop itself. At the moment there isn't good enough circulation of money, merchandise or products, as well as opportunities. [student]

The analysis of the focus groups also marks out other elements that have contributed to the aggravation of the economic situation. In this category we can include bureaucracy and the non-competitive educational system:

Rather old educational system, lack of perspectives and low financial power... Bureaucratic political structure, too. [student]

In the subjects' opinions, the causes contributing to the aggravation of the situation of the youth are ascribed to the war (the war also being one of the future situations that are mostly feared by some of the respondents).

Trust and Civic Culture

Focus group interviews show that the youth working in NGOs are those who strongly believe that the absence of young people in politics – both at local and central level – is a major problem. They want to mention that this is one of the most notable negative phenomena. As compared to the other groups of young people, those involved in organizational environments resent even more intensely the fact that their access to the politics is blocked. This situation arises mainly because NGOs act most of the time as mediators / intermediaries between citizens and authorities. In this case, their members have a wider experience so as to express competent opinions regarding youth participation in public life. The research data shows that most of the time these opinions concerning youth participation in public life are mainly negative.

The problems identified by the youth are numerous, the same applies to their causes. However, politicians are most frequently held responsible for the negative situation occurring in the society. They are the ones directly responsible for the malfunction of the economy, corruption and nepotism proliferation; they are also perceived to be the main responsible for starting the war and in general for all the other phenomena that has contributed to worsen the situation at the level of the society as a whole.

Even if the youth disapprove the attitude of the political class, they also believe that the involvement into a political party can bring some changes in the life of the individual and of the

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society. The inquiry gathered data mark out the fact that the confidence of the youth in the political parties is extremely low (77% of the survey respondents in the Republic of Srpska entity have very little or little confidence in the political parties).

The association of the political performances with the economic ones is clearly shown by the group interviews: in their greatest majority, the interviewed subjects, consider that the inefficient management at political level causes the fiasco of the demarches in the economic sector. The political class or the politicians are most often elements that have caused the defective management of the societal problems:

Mostly war and politicians caused all the problems... Nationalistic politicians, ...politicians are guilty for most of bad things... incompetent, egoistic, nationalistic... and too old, also. [unemployed]

The lack of credibility or the low trust in the political class is also reflected in the survey answers, the confidence in the political parties being very low. More than 2/3 of the respondents do not trust their political class. Two conclusions can be reached:

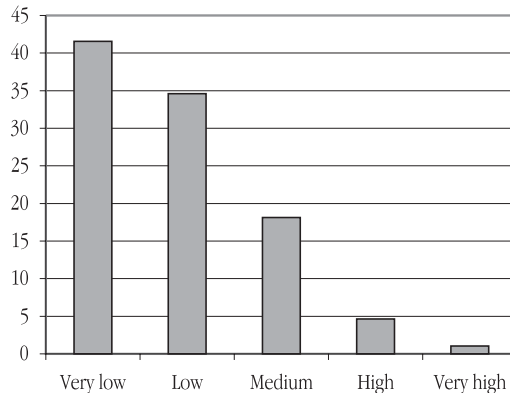
- I. Politicians represent negative role models in the society;
- II. The political class is not interested in the problems of the citizens who voted for them.

They are leading us into disaster. [employed]

Their priority is only their own future. They don't care for citizens at all. Politician act as individuals, mostly. We should ask them and their work for more. [NGO activist]

Our politicians have great power and influence which is probably a negative one, since they aren't doing anything to help young ones or older persons which are often in problems, without house, food and other things needed for normal life. [student]

Figure 2: Trust in political parties (%)



Under these circumstances, one question imposes itself: which are the strategies that the youth adopt in order to overcome such negative phenomena associated with transition towards democratic societies with market economies? Most of these young people believe that the educational system could represent one of the major chances concerning both their social and professional achievements. Focus group interviews prove that young people working in NGOs consider that more involvement of these organizations in public life would change in better the society they live in, meaning that it would increase the decision power of the youth in the society. In this case, the reference is especially made to a younger political class that would bring along favourable changes for the youth and for the society in general.

The study identified an inventory of problems concerning economic aspects. The economic dimension of the social reality represents one of the categories that configure to the greatest extent the strategies of life adopted by the youth. The political and economic life provides the youth with the chance to choose among alternative life styles. These alternatives are most frequently set in theory, in everyday life the alternative choices being strongly limited.

Discontents concerning the economic system are most often associated with deficiencies existing at political level. Another possible explanation identified by the subjects regarding the low performances of the political class is that most of the politicians holding the power are old. The subjects believe that the situation will improve once younger people join the political class. Young people working in NGOs are the most concerned with the way the political class can be changed in better, whereas young students do not expect short-term positive changes. In their greatest majority, the youth believes that, in this moment, there is no possibility for young people to join the decision-making political structures. Under these circumstances, we asked the participants in the focus groups to specify the steps or the steps to be taken or to be made by the public institutions, the representatives of the political class and the NGOs in order to improve the situation of the youth.

Let me notice that the youngest actual politician in our entity is older than any one of us. Youth ones should come. They could address the present situation better than the old ones.
[NGO activist]

Wider youth associations, more influential approach and, finally, a role of youth presenters among the decision-makers. Municipalities should perhaps employ one officer for NGO and youth matters. [NGO activist]

These "observations" coming from the young people express the wish to get involved and to participate actively in matters that directly concern them. The insufficient consultation of the youth in decision-making processes represents a matter that arises as often as the lack of jobs for those who completed educational studies (this aspect is to be found mainly in the focus groups of students and NGO workers). Thus an evident frustration is felt towards the fact that others can influence their life

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strategies. The fact that their opinions are ignored in the field of the socio-economic is afterwards reflected in their rejection to get involved in political life. Many NGO workers believe that there is little involvement of the youth in NGO activities (associations, foundations).

I would like to point that the youth population in the society is a group without power to decide or to change its inadequate position. [NGO activist]

I would like to have more important role in actual power as a possibility to deal with my own future. [NGO activist]

Trust in others and solidarity are elements standing at the basis of optimal functioning of the social space – based on the fact that this statement is generally accepted, we consider it valid and shall not discuss theoretical aspects regarding its validity. By trust we mean that one expects from the others to be treated in an honest and cooperative manner that respects existing norms within community. The data show that 25% of the respondents give high and very high trust to others. The reference groups with important role in the individual’s socialization, such as the family (over 90% give high and very high trust to family), the friends and the work colleagues benefit from highest level of trust.

Table 2: Tolerance (%)

	Should be allowed to hold public meetings	
	Should not be allowed	Should be allowed
Christian fundamentalists	70	30
Islamic fundamentalists	77	23
Left wing extremists	59	41
Immigrants	46	54
Homosexuals	47	53
People with a criminal record	70	30
Racists	68	32
People of a different race	20	80
Right wing extremists	56	44
People who have AIDS	23	77
Drug addicts	49	51

Extremism of any nature is strongly rejected by survey respondents, no matter if it concerns political or religious opinions. On the list of those not welcome in the public area, the highest score have the people who commit crimes. There are high levels of tolerance towards emigrants and people suffering from certain diseases. This availability to accept in the public area shows both high social empathy and high levels of social solidarity.

Relations with the Institutional System

Trust in main state institutions represents one of the most important indicators with regard to the good functioning of new democracies or market economies. Democratic institutions, and here we include firstly the Parliament and the Presidential institution, do not hold very high levels of trust. Institutions such as independent mass media or church benefit from higher trust among youth. Since the political system is seen as not worthy of great trust (see low level in political parties), then neither institutions that result from the political game can gather much trust.

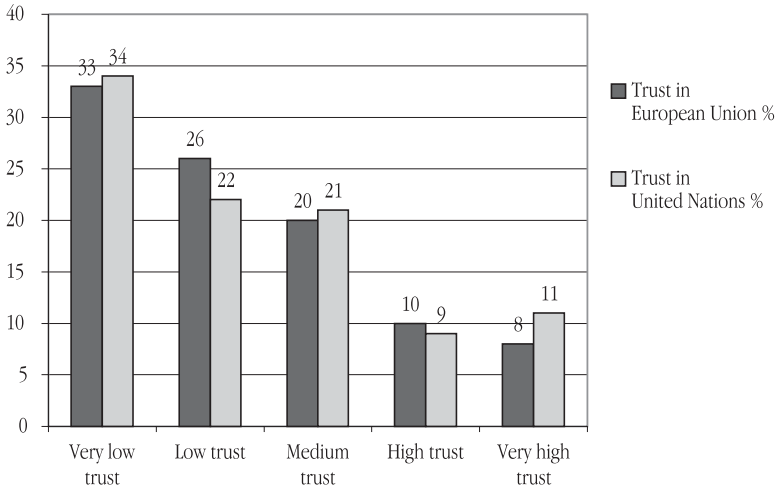
Table 3: Trust in institutions (%)

	Very low trust	Low trust	Medium trust	High trust	Very high trust
Courts	21	19	40	12	8
Army	24	27	28	11	10
Parliament	20	28	30	18	4
Church	29	22	22	17	10
President	42	28	22	6	2
Independent media	21	24	28	22	5

European institutions or United Nations agencies played an important role in recent history of SEE countries. In this context, we attempted to check the level of trust that the two most known international bodies hold: the European Union and the United Nations.¹ As it can be noticed, both European Union and the United Nations hold rather high negative rating from the survey respondents. The focus group interviews showed that both the two organisations have had many contributions and positive interventions in the last ten years, yet, there are still many things that could be improved in their collaboration with authorities, especially that with the political class. The relatively reduced levels of trust may be also due to low public visibility. In addition, we should mention that the data obtained during the survey shows low interest in international and European politics, the survey respondents being rather concerned with aspects of local or national politics.

¹ Since the questionnaire used in the survey was standardized for all South Eastern Europe countries where the research was conducted, we cannot say whether the participants' answers refer to the United Nations or to the United Nations Mission in Bosnia Herzegovina.

Figure 3: Trust in European Union and United Nations



NGO Activism

Regarding the role and place held by the organizational environments in the life of the individuals and at social level, the respondents' opinions are extremely different. Some of them consider the NGO presence in the community as being positive. Others express opinions that reflect only the imperfections or the flaws existing in civic organizations, but these drawbacks are structural imperfections and inherent to societies in which the non-governmental sector is relatively young.

For most of the young people, regardless of the socio-economic status and the environment they come from, family and friends are still the most trusted. From organizational and institutional perspective, NGOs represent instances that are far more worthy of trust than political parties, the government or other state institutions. The low confidence in state institutions is one of the constants that can be found in all socio-professional categories at young people between 18 and 30. Distrust in political institutions is mainly due to the way politicians (meaning people who have administrated in a defective way the country after 1990) are perceived by the respondents. All past and present disastrous situations are put on their account: the war, the aggravation of the economic situation, corruption, etc.

The existence and functioning of the NGOs is possible only on the condition that they manage to find sources of finance, mostly coming from outside the country. Under these circumstances, the young people working in NGOs believe that the more they are supported, the more these organizations will get more involved in solving the problems the youth is confronted with. This support should also come both from individuals and from public, local and central institutions.

The young people's wish to influence as efficiently as possible the life of the youth and society was reflected in their answers which motivate their participation in the associative life (NGOs and other more or less formalized groups). The associative sector, reborn after the fall of the communism, offers – especially for the youth – the possibility to express themselves in public. The activities carried out inside NGOs imply different degrees of youth participation. The focus group interview topics that concerned the role and the place of NGOs in the life of the youth show some attitudes worth mentioning. NGOs (meaning mainly associations and foundations) can – in some situations – influence the decision-making process of the local or central authorities' representatives. Discussing problems that society is confronted with during campaigns of different organizations or of organization coalitions has a positive impact on those involved in the associative sector. Such campaigns also contribute to attract other new members in this sector.

Youth in society. . . it's obvious that problems exist. . . Let's deal with them. That's my point and also a reason why am I engaged in NGO sector. [NGO activist]

My involvement in NGO sector is because of similar reasons. Also, besides the wish to change something I look at the NGO like on my personal entrance into the better future. [NGO activist]

Both NGO members and other categories of young people admit the insufficient number of organizations to address problems belonging to less discussed fields: education, legislation, professional training, etc.

They are helping. We should have more of them. [employed]

They are alternative for everything else. If we aren't satisfied with system of education, laws and everything else we usually open an association and deal with it. [NGO activist]

It gets involved in society, providing help. [NGO activist]

I suppose positive aspect is involvement of NGO sector. Our parents haven't had such thing. [NGO activist]

These would be some of the positive aspects found in the analysis of the interviews. There are also some negative aspects mentioned in connection with NGOs and these opinions prove a relatively good knowledge of this sector. Among the less favourable aspects we can mention those that concern the influence of NGOs in the public sector:

NGOs are not influential enough. . . It's only few of them- only few activists, too. [employed]

Certainly, positive but [with] weak power. We should take more active role in NGOs. All of us and the others. I agree with the rest. [NGO activist]

One negative aspect that is worth underlining is the lack of transparency, which may be the result of an improper management or of a deficient communication / public relations strategies, leading to the isolation of these organizations towards those who otherwise could be involved in their activities.

Bosnia and Herzegovina – The Federation

General Aspects

Both the survey and the focus group interviews with young people aged 18 to 30 aimed at identifying the most important problems that the Bosnian and Croat youth in organizational environments is confronted with. Alike in the other countries belonging to the former Yugoslavia space, transition to market economy and the damages caused by the war are realities that have a negative influence upon the life of the individuals.

Satisfaction concerning the economic situation of the country, democracy, jobs, youth confidence and optimism, aspects regarding NGO environments are some of the most important aspects discussed in this section. The youth believes that drug traffic and consumption, alcoholism, prostitution and poverty are the most serious problems in the society, especially among young people. This type of phenomena occurs in the context of the precarious economic situation of the youth and their families. In default of other income sources, participation in illegal activities insures a certain income for the youth and their families. The lack of authority and the corruption in the state institutions perpetuate these criminal activities. Some of the respondents show how school promotes negative role models concerning deviant behaviour. They mentioned the fact that, in some cases, passing certain examinations was conditioned by paying large amounts of money. Therefore, the youth considers that corruption is a constant presence in the Balkan space.

Table 1: Satisfaction concerning the democracy and the economic system (%)

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Not very satisfied	Not at all satisfied
Satisfaction concerning the democratic system	9	26	40	25
Satisfaction concerning the economic system	9	18	32	41

Concerning the economic performances of the system, it can be noticed that the number of those who are discontent with them is above two thirds.

The recent history of the former Yugoslavian countries mentions the war as one of the constant presences during the last decade, each of the new republics encountering this phenomenon in different forms and degrees. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, the outcomes of the war are perhaps more evident than in the other countries, the subjects making frequent references at the war whenever

they were asked about the greatest fears regarding the near future. Besides, the war contributed in a large extent to increasing poverty and proliferating phenomena concerning crime wave and social anomaly.

Each day there is a different fear. At least here, those are general experiences. Each day there is new experience, but the worst is that there is nothing positive, always some fear. How to call that fear I do not know: future, entrance in EU, I do not know. What that new brings nothing knows, I also do not know. What I am most afraid of is war, of course, that it happens again, or I would not be here. [NGO activist]

I am afraid that the situation will stay as it is or become worse. When I say to stay as it is, I mean this poverty, crises, starving, cold, streets that are so dirty, unemployment, etc. When I say to become worse, I mean also the war or to be colder or more starving. [NGO activist]

Unemployment and low-paid jobs are the main cause of discontent among the youth. The precarious economic situation of the youth results in a set of negative attitudes, of distrust in the society as a whole, the most affected by this situation being the political class that is held responsible for all the wrong in the society.

Relations with Institutions and with the Political System

The inefficiency of the political class, the “Balkan” mentality and the counterproductive practices inherited from the former communist system contribute to maintaining this negative situation in the Bosnian society. The focus group participants consider that an economic and political change in better in Bosnia-Herzegovina is possible only if the political and managerial elite will include well-trained and motivated young people to bring a new mentality and a genuine will to improve the situation of the Federation society.

According to the table above, more than 50% of the respondents do not have too much trust in the political parties while only 23% of the subjects declare that they have high and very high trust in the political parties. The negative attitude regarding the political class may be related to the relatively low interest for politics. This low interest may be explained also by the fact that, according to legislation, most of the respondents are not of age to participate on election lists; therefore, political life is still one they cannot experience directly. Local and national political life present higher level of interest, as compared to the European or international one.

Trust in international institutions such as the European Union or the United Nations is low, though these institutions are present in various aspects of Bosnian social life. The low trust in these institutions may be due to the fact that people have had high expectations with regard to solving some of the major problems they face. European and UN institutions are perceived as important

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actors in the globalisation processes. Adapting to everything that means world globalisation would represent the only chance to become compatible with the new realities. There is however a high degree of scepticism regarding EU accession because of the economic situation of the country. EU accession is wanted, but at the same time it causes a lot of concern.

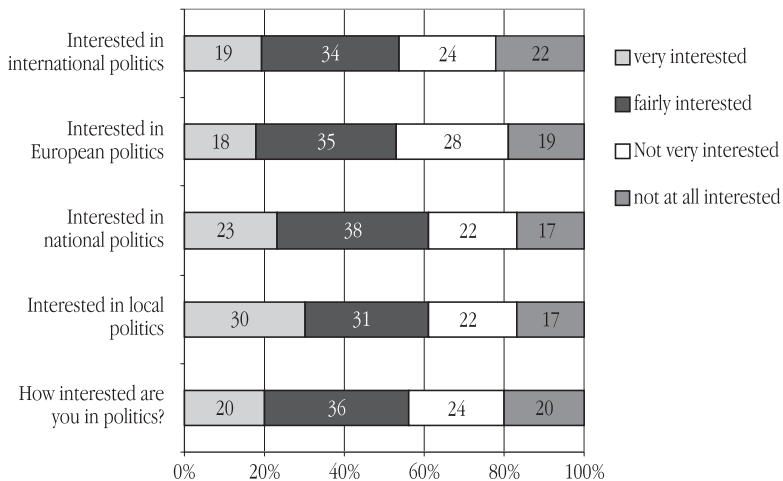
Table 2: Trust in institutions (%)

	Very low	Low	Medium	High	Very high
Courts	22	23	25	16	14
Political parties	30	21	26	14	9
Police	19	18	28	24	11
Local government	25	22	29	17	7
Army	24	21	27	16	12
Parliament	30	22	30	14	4
Church	32	19	25	14	10
Trade unions	39	22	27	10	2
President	31	26	29	11	3
Private enterprises	34	30	25	8	3
State media	26	26	33	11	4
Independent media	20	20	33	20	7
Privatisation	38	23	24	11	4

It will take a long time for us to become part of them. Even if we do, most of the things here will stay the same. [employed]

I have to admit that it is a scary thought to become part of the EU; the prices could rise to European level but the salaries could stay the same. [employed]

Figure 1: Interest in politics (%)



Globalisation of the world has started. We cannot stop that. We will have to adapt to the globalisation and to find piece of the sky or cake in that big world cake if we are clever. We are slaves of our inactivity habits. [NGO activist]

According to gathered research data, we can notice the youth's interest in local and national politics, as well as their low interest in international politics.

What is indeed striking is the fact that only half of the youth are interested in political life. This fact is even more serious considering that most of those interviewed are young people working in organizational environments (associations and foundations). The explanation for the low interest in politics is mainly due to the negative image political elite has among youth. In the post-war countries, due to the numerous daily problems, the interest in political life is placed second. The proven inefficiency of the political class in handling crisis situations (we make reference mainly to the conflict situations and the economic crisis) have led to the increase of unemployment and to the decrease of social economic status.

Unemployment as a problem, but not only unemployment, because there are some jobs available. The issue is price of work. What is the price of work of young person that is working 5-6 days a week comparing to the youth of same age and same profession in some other western country? People here are living as citizens of second or third level in their own country. [NGO activist]

Trust and Civic Culture

Trust in others, trust in institutions and social solidarity are defining elements of the social space. Exaggerated individualism, distrust, lack of co-operation, intolerance are some of the most frequent behaviour patterns in the new South Eastern European democracies. For most of the young people, the negative experiences they had (insecurity, poverty etc.) have contributed to lose more and more of the trust in 'the others'. Family and friends are most trusted. The competition, specific for capitalist societies, or, in this case, the limited resources of a society in transition, bring about a re-evaluation of the notion of trust and willingness to co-operate with the others.

As expected, the most trusted are the family, the friends and the colleagues. This is a normal situation, considering that the family, the groups of friends and colleagues are the most important actors of individual socialization. These are also the environments where the individuals' sets of values originate from. Besides, it can be noticed that, except from family and friends, the respondents have less and less faith in the others.

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Table 3: Level of trust in the following groups of people (%)

	Very low trust	Low trust	Medium trust	High trust	Very high trust	Not applicable
Your colleagues	10	17	19	23	21	9
Members of your family	7	9	6	12	63	4
Your friends	7	11	11	29	36	6
Your neighbours	19	25	28	17	5	6
Members of this organization	13	17	23	22	17	8
People in your town/village	26	24	28	10	3	9
People in your region	30	23	26	8	3	10
People in your country	31	22	23	11	3	10
Ethnic minorities	33	22	21	11	1	12

Concerning the tolerance and the acceptance of the other, the table 4 shows high levels of intolerance and rejection both regarding people involved in criminal activity and those who belong to fundamentalist factions (be they Christian or Islamic). Therefore, people involved in criminal activities, racists and political extremists are the least excepted. They also score highest when it comes to refusing to have a neighbour belonging to one of the above mentioned categories.

Focus group interviews with young NGO activists show that most of the youth are blasé, and consider emigrating to a western country as their only chance for personal fulfilment. The lack of opportunities to participate in public life represents one of the causes of low involvement in community and social projects. Some of the focus group subjects believe that the situation that best word representing them is “potential voters”. Except for voting, there is no other possibility to contribute – in any way – to changing their social status, their participation to democracy being reduced to voting. Except for the elections, politicians and other public institutions are not interested in the citizens’ opinions.

Table 4: Acceptance (%)

	Accept as neighbours	
	Would not accept	Would accept
Christian fundamentalists	63	37
Islamic fundamentalist	64	36
Left-wing extremists	67	33
Immigrants	47	53
Homosexuals	57	43
People with a criminal record	74	26
Racists	80	20
People of a different race	43	57
Right-wing extremists	71	29
People who have AIDS	53	47
Drug addicts	72	28

[We are] potential voters for potential parties. [student]

When I hear that, it sounds to me kind of contradictory, since “youth and society” is related only to discotheque and coffee shops, etc. As for me, youth in society do not have any special role, since youth is uninterested to change their status, so this is very bad in our society.

[NGO activist]

Mostly there are the people who are deciding something, who are working, who are something. They mostly belong to the 40s, 50s, 60s generations. You cannot find any director who was born in the 70s. For the elections, they hand up posters for 20 DM and that's it. So, youth is totally uninterested in society. [employed]

The lack of interest concerning youth participation in public life could be the result of the lack of optimism and trust in the society they live in. Some of the youth working in NGOs believe that the general disinterest of the young generation represents one of the difficulties they face in their activity.

Above all, there is no [longer the] rebellious youth that we used to have... some ideas and such things. Previous generations and each generation had certain aims. In the 70s there was a new rock generation and they were kind of rebellious. Currently, young generations are not at all rebellious. It is not lack of interest, they are destroyed with new, folk-culture, with primitive way of thinking, nationalistic thinking that is more chauvinistic. What we – NGO people – are trying to do is raise the interest of the young people. The fact is that 5% of youth are members of some NGO. Only members on paper, while 8% are members of political parties. In those parties they are just formally, to hang out posters. It is not important for anybody if I am a member of a political party, if I do not decide anything, if I do not change anything. In NGOs you are changing something, somehow...

[NGO activist]

The youth is interested only in one issue and that is how to leave the country. That is the one and only thing they are interested in. After they finished university or high school, their only wish is to leave the country. We all know what are the reasons. There are just a few of them that stay here to struggle. It is interesting that no matter what is done and what is offered, nothing is as attractive as it is abroad. [employed]

For most of the youth, NGOs represent the place where they have the chance to get involved in activities that provide more opportunities to actively participate in society reforming projects. Youth involvement in NGOs could make them more responsible, break them away from general apathy, increase the number of civic activities and make them participate in the democratisation process of the society.

There are two contrary points of view that can be noticed with regard to involvement and participation in projects reforming the Bosnian society. The first one states that the youth have no

interest at all in what happens around them; the second one is that, in case they are given a chance, the youth are very interested in it, be that both at professional and civic level. In this second case, youth involvement in NGO activities provides chances for socializing and for socio-professional integration.

I have been working for 2 years in NGO area and I've noticed young people showing interest. The majority though have no interest because nobody gives them any choices or possibilities. [NGO activist]

According to the focus group participants, the political class is important, as the political decisions influence all the other sectors of social life. The problem is that people of the best quality does not always represent this political class, and they often seem to forget they represent the people who voted for them.

They are important for me since they brought me here to work in the youth sector, to struggle for the existence of young people and myself. [NGO activist]
Related to politics, I will not say politicians, but those that are in power, those that are ruling. Everyone is ruling our life, each politician is important. I read somewhere "if elections can change something they would discontinue them". I agree with this. [student]

The same attitude of distrust is reflected in the answers regarding the results of the act of governing. In the focus group participants' discourse, the negative image of the government members is determined primarily by the fact that the political elite has been getting wealthy in a relatively short period of time. The lack of transparency with regard to economic activities undertaken by the new elites contributes to the increase of the distrust climate in the new ruling elite.

They are very measurable by their accounts in banks, the number of Mercedes they are driving and number of poor people in the streets. Our government does not have any aims. [student]

NGO Activism

Youth involvement in the NGO sector and the accumulation of positive or negative experiences reflect a good knowledge of both the strong and the weak points of the sector.

Positive thing is that it exists, that it is doing something but it cannot be said that it has continuity, that there are a lot of organizations. There are not. There are just on paper. All NGO activity is negative in Bosnia Herzegovina. ... huge money was given and nothing was done... only few of them are working properly. [NGO activist]

The good thing is that the youth is doing something, they are paying attention at something and there is a place for them. And of course, those organizations are doing something. They are solving some problems together, but the government should finance those NGOs. That is not happening. You write project proposals, look for donors, but the government should finance NGOs. [NGO activist]

The lack of NGO activity regulations, the lack of clear NGO financing frame etc. are some important aspects pointed out by the respondents regarding the functioning of NGOs. In all the ex-communist countries, the statistics made after 1990 show that a great number of associations and foundations have been established, when, in fact, only a few of them are truly active. Therefore, it is necessary for NGOs to carry out activities, as solely their presence in the statistics does not change at all the difficult situation of the BIH society. There are further negative aspects that are mentioned, the most frequently being the one concerning the small number of NGO services or activities. The continuous adaptation of services and programs should represent a constant concern for NGO activists. This aspect implies a permanent analysis of the community's problems, establishing some communication channels between the organizations and the community. In this case, the NGOs should have the role of mediator between the citizens and the decision factors. The solutions regarding the active involvement of the youth in community life cannot come exclusively from NGOs as an important role is also played by family and school that can encourage the sense of co-operation or the sense of community. The lack of this sense of co-operation is reflected both at individual and organizational level. Some of the participants emphasized the existence of certain individualism and competition among organizations, most frequently the general interest that they have to serve being placed second, while the interest of some staff members takes priority.

Here is another example of youth organizing at entity level. It means non-existence of law to regulate the status of NGOs. It should be regulated how organizations should be financed. To establish some criteria. That organization is not under direct influence of the ruling party. The law should provide possibility to be financed. You are not under the influence of the government, you simply work according to the law. [NGO activist]

Mostly positive things since it is nice to see that someone is interested in something, that there are some projects. But there is a mistake. Each organization is working on something without cooperation with other organizations that are working on the same problem. There is no global aim. Each organization is working at local level and only for its own project. [NGO activist]

NGO priorities are clearly reflected in the focus group interviews and the survey data. Co-operation with authorities and politicians is still deficient, only 25% of the subjects answered that their organization maintains constant interaction and communication with politicians and local

Main Research Findings

officials. More than two thirds state that they have never contacted or that they have occasional interaction with politicians and local officials. More than 85 % of the respondents say that the organizations they belong to maintain constant interaction with another NGO. The interviews showed that these interactions are far from being active partnerships and having a great impact on community life.

In the respondents' opinions, the main cause for the present situation seems to be the attitude concerning work and the leaders' degree of responsibility. The individuals' system of values seems to be specific to the communist period. On the other hand, the new values and mentalities specific to market economy are accepted with some difficulty. This type of perception regarding the relation between mentalities and present realities proves once again that the communist system was not capable of creating alternatives for individual and social action to meet the changes (we refer to the complexity specific to modernism).

We were in the communist system, we are used to having a big salary and to do nothing for 8 hours – that's our mentality. Laws are just copied after the European countries and now we are trying to harmonize them with our mentality and our way of thinking, which is impossible. [student]

Regarding communication with the authorities, this process is not yet an efficient one. This can be observed both by analysing the survey data and the answers of the subjects in the focus groups. Besides, communication with public authorities and NGOs is perceived as a possible way to solve the numerous problems that the Bosnian youth is confronted with. The need for co-operation, for association and for more participation in making and implementing decisions represent some constants in the discourse of the interviewed youth.

Only with co-operation between representatives of youth organizations and political parties and government to overcome the problems we can improve the situation, it means only with cooperation and mutual support of each other, since we all need support. [NGO activist]

Conclusions

Quantitative and qualitative sociological analyses conducted during the research show that, at present, the general status of youth is precarious, referring to both economic and social levels (important aspects to lead to their integration in society). The low levels of trust granted to fundamental institutions of state and law indicate on one hand the severe nature and the multitude of problems youth faces, and on the other hand the government incapacity to give solutions to these problems. Among the most severe aspects indicated by youth are: the lack of jobs (which generate a series of discontents), the spreading of drug and alcohol consumption and of criminality among youth, the social and economic instability, the emigration (more young people consider that their problems could be solved only if they emigrate to a western country).

Frequently signalled are the dissatisfactions towards activities of politicians and of political elites in general, the latter being accused on inefficient management of crisis situations. Data show that youth or youth organizations manage only with great difficulty to participate in the development or implementation of decisions that directly concern them. Youth access to management and political elites is very difficult, state institutions do not stimulate better integration of youth in the Bosnian society.

Values and practices imposed by a society in transition does not contribute to forming and developing the sense of solidarity or trust; in this sense an important role is held by non-governmental organizations, which should cultivate to a larger extent the individual's higher level of responsibility towards current problems and challenges.

With regard to the non-governmental sector, both its strengths and weaknesses are pinpointed. The diversification of activity areas, higher efficiency, impact and transparency of activities would be only some of the aspects that require improvements in the non-governmental sector. Concerning the partnership with local or central authorities, it comes out that it is defective and needs to set permanent communication channels between the public and the non-governmental sectors.

Annexes

Methodological note

The survey was conducted on a sample of 986 subjects, of whom 486 were from Republic Srpska entity and 500 from the Federation.¹

The interviews have been conducted as follows:

In the Federation:

Group Name	Number of interviews	Number of subjects	Group composition
NGO	1	8	NGO activists
U/E	1	8	Unemployed & employed
STUD	1	8	Students

In Republic of Srpska entity:

Group Name	Number of interviews	Number of subjects	Group composition
NGO	1	7	NGO activists
UE	1	6	Unemployed & employed
STUD	1	6	Students

Tables

The Federation

Trust in European Union and United Nations (%)

	Very low trust	Low trust	Medium trust	High trust	Very high trust
The European Union	29	20	25	15	11
The United Nations	41	18	17	9	15

¹ Since the questionnaire used in the survey was standardized for all South Eastern Europe countries where the research was conducted, we cannot say whether the participants' answers refer to the entire Bosnian federation or just the administrative unit they live in.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Trust in political parties (%)

	Very low trust	Low trust	Medium trust	High trust	Very high trust
Political parties	30	21	26	14	9

Satisfaction with the way of living (%)

	Not at all pleased	Not very pleased	Fairly pleased	Very pleased	Does not know/does not answer
How pleased are you in general of the way of living?	9	32	47	8	4

Republic of Srpska entity

Satisfaction with the way of living (%)

	Not at all pleased	Not very pleased	Fairly pleased	Very pleased	Does not know/does not answer
How pleased are you in general of the way of living?	13	55	30	2	0

Y
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Youth
Issues
and
Challenges

in South-Eastern Europe

Bulgaria

Bulgaria



Country Presentation

Bulgaria	Geography
<i>Location:</i>	Southeastern Europe, bordering the Black Sea, between Romania and Turkey
<i>Area:</i>	<i>total:</i> 110,910 sq km <i>land:</i> 110,550 sq km <i>water:</i> 360 sq km
<i>Land boundaries:</i>	<i>total:</i> 1,808 km <i>border countries:</i> Greece 494 km, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 148 km, Romania 608 km, Yugoslavia 318 km, Turkey 240 km
Bulgaria	People
<i>Population:</i>	7,707,495 (July 2001 est.)
<i>Age structure:</i>	<i>0-14 years:</i> 15.11% (male 597,765; female 567,030) <i>15-64 years:</i> 68.17% (male 2,588,805; female 2,665,736) <i>65 years and over:</i> 16.72% (male 543,665; female 744,494) (2001 est.)
<i>Population growth rate:</i>	-1.14% (2001 est.)
<i>Birth rate:</i>	8.06 births/1,000 population (2001 est.)
<i>Death rate:</i>	14.53 deaths/1,000 population (2001 est.)
<i>Net migration rate:</i>	-4.9 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2001 est.)
<i>Sex ratio:</i>	<i>at birth:</i> 1.06 male(s)/female <i>under 15 years:</i> 1.05 male(s)/female <i>15-64 years:</i> 0.97 male(s)/female <i>65 years and over:</i> 0.73 male(s)/female <i>total population:</i> 0.94 male(s)/female (2001 est.)
<i>Infant mortality rate:</i>	14.65 deaths/1,000 live births (2001 est.)
<i>Life expectancy at birth:</i>	<i>total population:</i> 71.2 years <i>male:</i> 67.72 years <i>female:</i> 74.89 years (2001 est.)
<i>Total fertility rate:</i>	1.13 children born/woman (2001 est.)
<i>Ethnic groups:</i>	Bulgarian 83%, Turk 8.5%, Roma 2.6%, Macedonian, Armenian, Tatar, Gagauz, Circassian, others (1998)
<i>Religions:</i>	Bulgarian Orthodox 83.5%, Muslim 13%, Roman Catholic 1.5%, Uniate Catholic 0.2%, Jewish 0.8%, Protestant, Gregorian-Armenian, and other 1% (1998)

Bulgaria

Bulgaria

Government

<i>Country name:</i>	conventional long form: Republic of Bulgaria
<i>Conventional short form:</i>	Bulgaria
<i>Government type:</i>	parliamentary democracy
<i>Capital:</i>	Sofia
<i>Independence:</i>	3 March 1878 (from Ottoman Empire)
<i>National holiday:</i>	Liberation Day, 3 March (1878)
<i>Constitution:</i>	adopted 12 July 1991
<i>Legal system:</i>	civil law and criminal law based on Roman law; accepts compulsory ICJ jurisdiction

Bulgaria

Economy

Economy – overview: Bulgaria, a former communist country struggling to enter the European market economy, suffered a major economic downturn in 1996 and 1997, with triple digit inflation and GDP contraction of 10.6% and 6.9%. The current government – which took office in May 1997 after pre-term parliamentary elections – stabilized the economy and promoted growth by implementing a currency board, practicing sound financial policies, invigorating privatization, and pursuing structural reforms. Additionally, strong assistance from international financial institutions – most notably the IMF which approved a three-year Extended Fund Facility worth approximately \$900 million in September 1998 – played a critical role in turning the economy around. After several years of tumult, Bulgaria’s economy has stabilized. Its better-than-expected economic performance in 1999 – despite the impact of the Kosovo conflict, the 1998 Russian financial crisis, and structural reforms – and strong growth in 2000 portends solid growth over the next few years; this assumes continued fiscal restraint, additional structural reforms, aid from abroad, and prosperous times in the EU economy. According to the 2002 Report of the European Commission on Bulgaria’s Progress Towards Accession in the European Union, prepared on October 9th, 2002, Bulgaria is a functioning market economy.

GDP: purchasing power parity – \$48 billion (2000 est.)

Unemployment rate: 17.7% (2000 est.)

Currency: lev (BGL)

These data are taken from the site of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe.

Partner Presentation

Society and Information Society

Main Goals

“Society and Information” Foundation was established in the beginning of 1998 having the ambition to work for the fulfillment of several main goals:

- To enhance the processes of forming an informational society in Bulgaria by means of using and developing the NGO’s potential to collect, systemize and exchange information for the needs of the citizens and their organizations.
- To search, find and develop the potential of the young people in Bulgaria to generate new methods and projects for development of the different spheres and sectors in society.
- To enhance the mutual understanding and integration in society by paying special attention to the needs of those social groups that are in unequal economic, social – cultural and geographic situation and by helping their development.
- To work for the development of the civil society in the country by helping the NGOs and providing resources needed for their capacity development.
- To support the development of non-formal education in the country by means of popularizing educational forms and standards that provide development of the human resources consistent with the changes on the labor.
- To support in different spheres of public life the processes of our country’s integration into the European and Euro-Atlantic structures by preserving and developing our national unique possibilities and characteristics.

Implemented Activities and Projects

Working out a marketing strategy, advertising and publishing materials for the “Youth for Europe” program – project with the National Agency “Youth for Europe” – 1998

“Financing regular monitoring on the state of environment and nature in the territory of Pazardzhik district” – project signed with the district governor of Pazardzhik – from August 6th, 1999.

Bulgaria

Establishing an initiative committee and founding a Regional Youth Council – Sofia, a joint project with the Committee on Youth, Physical Education and Sport – 1999 “The Future Generation of Leadership” – a training seminar in which took part over a hundred youth leaders from various political and non-governmental youth organizations. The seminar was realized in collaboration with the Political Academy for Central and Eastern Europe. Lecturers: Mr. Donald Simpson and Mr. Scott Carpenter.

“NATO and the Euro-Atlantic integration at the end of the second millennium. New tendencies and opportunities for young people after Washington '99”. International conference that gathered 80 young leaders from Bulgaria, Macedonia, Albania and Romania. The official opening was by the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign and Integration Policy of Republic of Bulgaria and the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Policy of the Republic of Macedonia. The conference was held with the kind support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Coordinative conference of youth leaders from South-Eastern Europe working on the programs of the Stability pact and the programs of the European Union – “Youth”, “Leonardo” and “Socrates” – hosted in Bulgaria and Macedonia – May, 2000. In the conference lasting 10 days took part over 100 representatives of the South Eastern countries.

“Youth tourism and social-economic development of the abandoned regions in Bulgaria” – project of Bulgarian, Romanian, Greece, Polish and Netherlands organizations for development of the social entrepreneurship in the sphere of tourism – March 2000 “Collecting and processing information for the youth NGOs and publishing a handbook of the youth organizations in Bulgaria both in Bulgarian and English language” – project from the beginning of 2000, partly financed by the “Youth for Europe” program and further development of a dynamic data base in Internet concerning youth NGOs.

“Regional program for financing small projects of citizens and civic organizations in South-West strategic region of the Republic of Bulgaria” financed by the PHARE program in the period 2000-2001 through Foundation “development of Civil Society”. After a contest there are supported 17 projects (the total amount of money that is allocated is 50.000 Euro) in four program areas: “Defending, developing and integrating the minority groups”, “Fight against crime and corruption”, “Social entrepreneurship for minority groups and youth” and “Preserving nature and environment”

“The civil sector facing the challenge of the social vulnerability; Research of the capacity of the NGO sector” – The project was implemented from 06.01.2000 to 30.04.2000. The overall objective of the project is to make needs assessment of the vulnerable groups, research of the capacity of the NGO sector and its relevance to its needs in their realistic dimension.

“Initiative for employment via acquiring new skills and qualification in the field of computer science and informational technologies; and establishment of a permanently functioning training center”

Partner Presentation

The project objective:

General objective: Establishment of proper conditions for sustainable employment via training and new skills acquiring in the sphere of computer science and informational technologies for family members of unemployed workers and servants from the steel-processing and steel-mining industries via establishment of permanently functioning training and retraining center in the Sofia-municipality region of Kremikovtzi; Recruiting and employment of unemployed from the steel-processing and steel-mining industries in the reconstruction activities envisaged.

Target groups (beneficiaries):

60 young people, 17 – 29 years old, family members of unemployed from the steel-processing and steel-mining industries. They will be recruited by means of announcements, and with the cooperation of the Kremikovtzi municipality authorities and the local employment office. 30 of them will be given the opportunity for sustainable employment in the one of the fastest growing industries – the IT.

39 unemployed from the target steel-processing and steel-mining industries, who possess a minimum of reconstruction activities skills or would like to acquire such will be employed for a six-month period, in the course of the envisaged reconstruction activities, related to the establishment of the Training Center.

Main Activities:

Within the framework of the project we envisage the following main activities:

Reconstruction of the building given by the Sofia-town municipality Region of Kremikovtzi so as to fit the training requirements. The reconstruction activities will be coordinated by the project partner “Alfa Luks” Ltd. – a company specialized in building-reconstruction activities. Approximately all of the employed in the reconstruction-building activities will be among the unemployed from the steel-processing and steel-mining industries from the Sofia-town municipality Region of Kremikovtzi. Prior to starting work they will pass a weeklong orientation course on the skills that they will need for their work as well as the respective safety rules and regulations. In particular the beneficiaries will be employed for 5,5 months as workers, painters, wood-makers, plaster-makers, surface-makers and tile-makers. Their work will be professionally managed by experienced brigade-leaders. The brigade-leaders are professionals in their respective fields so as the beneficiaries besides working experience will acquire practically based knowledge.

Providing the center with the technical equipment needed for the training activities as well as providing permanent Internet traffic with the respective capacity.

Development of a detailed Programme for acquiring basic knowledge in the field of hardware and applied web-based programming.

Training of 60 young beneficiaries following the detailed Programme developed.

Assessment of the knowledge and skills acquired. Carrying out test for Cisco certificate. Taking an examination for acquiring a certificate in the field of Web-based Programming. Providing employment to 30 of the beneficiaries that have successfully passed the examination.

Details on how many working places will be established – temporary, permanent, including their names.

For the purpose of the restructuring 39 persons will be employed. They will carry out mainly manual labour / workers, painters, wood-makers, plaster-makers, surface-makers and tile-makers/ not requiring qualification. According to the project the building-reconstruction activities will be implemented mainly by means of manual labour. The beneficiaries will be employed for a six-month period and before that they will pass a weeklong orientation course on the skills that they will need and the respective safety rules and regulations.

After the reconstruction and the equipment of the center 60 young people from the beneficiary families will be trained on the basics of the computer science and Informational Technologies. After the training course is over, the beneficiaries will be ranked according to the results they have shown at the tests and the first 30 of the trained young people will be offered sustainable employment at permanent working places, and the rest will have acquired relevant skills and knowledge making them competitive at the labour market in the field of a rapidly developing economy sector presently opening a bigger number of working places than the number of qualified people that the labour market can offer. Those who have successfully passed the final exams will be certified experts in the sphere of hardware and networks sustaining and will also have a certificate for having basic knowledge in the field of Web-based programming. They will be able to work as service technicians of standard hardware and/or networking software experts having a personal option to continue studying higher education.

Details on the training places offered and the names of the courses.

Reconstruction-building activities will be carried out in the course of the project and respective working places for beneficiaries will be opened. Prior to starting work they will pass a weeklong orientation course on the basics of the work that they will subsequently undertake including the safety rules and regulations. In the course of the 5,5-month-long practical experience they will assimilate the skills acquired and will also acquire many new ones.

The training in the training center will follow two general schedules – hardware and software. The final exam will have two modules, respectively: 1/ for acquiring Cisco certificate for sustaining and servicing networks and hardware; and 2/ for acquiring certificate on basic knowledge on Web-based programming. The Programs and scheduling of the courses envisaged can be found among the annexes of the project.

“Voluntary Work – Community assessment and role in the establishment of the social environment” – The project have been implemented from 15.09.2002 to 15.07.2002. This is an Access' 99 macro-project supporting the activity of NPO and the development of civil society by assessment of the role of volunteer work in the building of social environment, in the qualification of volunteers,

Partner Presentation

its contribution in the development of the cooperation with local authorities in the joint management of social projects. It contributes to the creation of a favourable legal base for exercising of volunteer work and protecting from exploitation of labour. Comprises organising of regional trainings, national conferences, preparing handbooks and sociological research that will assist in building an active conscience and initiative of citizens, unemployed people or those on flexible working hours and will help them in their realisation on the labour force market and in the society in general. The project target group exceeds 400 direct beneficiaries and over 3000 indirect beneficiaries of the project materials on the territory of Bulgaria and south-eastern Europe.

“A Charter for the cooperation between the civil society and the public institutions in the name of the social interest” – The project have been implemented from 01.11.2001 to 30.12.2002. The Charter stands the main partnership areas between the public authorities and non-governmental sector, principles of cooperation, realization, funding opportunities and assessment of the cooperationship efficiency. In the Charter are set the rights and commitments of the both sides in their equal partnership and their common efforts for development of participative democracy. The Charter is a symbol of synergies good European practices. It is discussed in the Parliamentary Commissions and will be ratified.

It launched a large-scale nation-wide informational campaign and consultation process that will result maximum support and participation of the civil society.

“International Youth Workshop Human Rights” supported by YouthNet. The project was implemented from 01.03.2002 to 04.03.2002. The aims of the workshop were:

- To enhance the young people awareness of human rights issues and to stimulate their participation in the process of popularisation of the Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.
- To encourage young people to acquire skills and sustainable models of interpretation and free practice of human rights as an essential and natural part of people’s existence.
- To make young people acquire citizens’ culture with respect to the human, social and economic rights (described in the European Social Charter) in terms of non-formal education, attracting public opinion and involvement in the process of turning these topics into matters of collective responsibility.

Partners

The foundation works in partnership with different organizations, institutions and firms in the country and abroad.

- National Agency “Youth for Europe”
- The Delegation of the European Commission
- European Youth Network
- European Youth Forum
- Stability Pact’s Youth Commission
- Citizens Stability Pact
- Young Europeans for Security
- International Network against racism and xenophobia
- International Educative Institute – Barcelona
- Political Academy for Central and Eastern Europe
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Ministry of Internal Affairs
- Ministry of Defense
- National Agency for Youth and sport
- National Youth Council of Bulgaria
- National Youth network

Funding Resources

From its establishment up to now the Foundation covers its administrative expenses as well as the honoraries of its permanent staff 100% with incomes from other physical and juridical bodies. The project activities are financed at average 64 percent by funds allocating organizations and institutions and 36 percent by donations of physical and juridical bodies.

Official Acknowledgements

The foundation has received official acknowledgements for the implemented projects and activities by the European Youth Forum, German National Youth Council, Macedonian Youth Euro-Atlantic Club, Committee on Foreign Policy at the Parliament of Republic of Macedonia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Bulgaria, National Agency on Youth and Sport and others.

През последните 12 години след падането на комунизма, България показва значителен напредък по някои отношения, въпреки, че настъпиха драматични събития в икономическия и политическия живот. България се намира в преходен процес водещ към присъединяване в Европейския Съюз, което рефлектира върху положението на младите хора.

Наблюдават се оптимистични тенденции сред младите хора, засягащи техните очаквания за бъдещето, техния сегашен начин на живот и удовлетвореност. Въпреки това съществуват няколко основни проблеми и страхове у младите, основен сред които е безработицата.

Безработицата, според младите хора в България, е следствие на няколко фактора, като например: образователната система, която е неадекватна на търсенето на пазара на труда; липса на осъвременено и неформално образование и др. Този проблем води до някои други проблеми: намаляване на амбициите, самоуважението, финансова независимост от една страна и от друга увеличаване на емиграцията сред младите хора.

Друг проблем отбелязан от младежите е свързан със страха от загубата на традициите и ценностите, риск от културна асимилация от Западната “масова култура” и липса на вътрешна духовна опора. Те вярват че Българската традиция и култура е уникална и трябва да бъде съхранена.

Младите хора не са способни да намерят решение на техните проблеми. Някои от тях не са мотивирани активно да се включат в гражданския живот, докато други мислят, че това което правят е нестойно, поради липсата на последващи действия. Все още младежите в България се чувстват отговорни за икономическия просперитет в живота, докато от държавата се очаква само да им осигури условия за развитие. Политиците се определят като важен елемент, но все още е налице липсата на вяра и комуникация на младежите с тях и затова те вярват, че частната медия и НПО-тата трябва да изпълняват ролята на медиатори. Европейският Съюз се възприема от младите като политическата и икономическа сила, която ще обедини балканите. Основните ползи за страната от присъединяването към ЕС са: мобилност, богата културна среда, по-добри възможности за личностно и професионално развитие. Възраженията срещу присъединяването са: вероятността, България да бъде поставена в страни от съюза, вероятността българската икономика да бъде принудена да се развива само губещи отрасли и малки и средни предприятия и др.

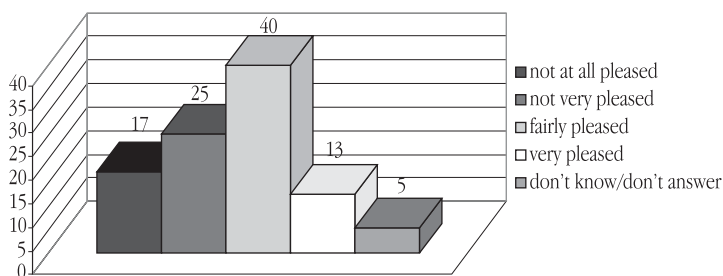
Младите хора в страната смятат, че НПО-тата играят решаваща роля в обществения и културен живот, занимавайки се с проблемите, които политиците са загърбили. Според тях НПО-тата в България страдат от липса на финансова подкрепа от страна на държавата и затова разчитат на чуждестранни спонсори. Това в крайна сметка рефлектира върху отслабване на опитите им за решаване на проблематични за българското общество аспекти и желанието им да играят ролята на медиатор между държавата и населението.

Main Research Findings

General Aspects

In the years after the falling of communism, Bulgaria has been going through spectacular, in some cases, even dramatic events both in political and economic life. The signals given by international institutions indicate a transformation in good of the social political space and of the economic one, the last years meaning the stabilization of economy and the improvement of the political climate. The progresses registered by Bulgarian society provided more incentives for government commitment in Euro-Atlantic integration processes. Despite the evident progresses registered by Bulgarian society at structural level, there are however a number of problems that require solutions, one should not forget the fact that in mid '90s Bulgaria undergone a severe crisis whose effects are still being sensed. Bulgaria is in full transition process, and the transformations specific to the transition period mean high costs for certain social categories. In this framework, the sociological study attempted to provide an overview regarding youth opinions from non-governmental organizations' environments with regard about the present status of youth, problems youth face and main solutions they see for their problems.

Figure 1: Level of satisfaction that life provides to young people involved in civil society in Bulgaria (%)



The economical reforms implemented in Bulgaria in the last years determined an increase in the level of satisfaction that life provides to youth, as the survey respondents' answers show.

Table 1: Compared evolution of life in past and future (%)

	Much worse	Somehow worse	Approximately the same	Better	Much better	Don't know / don't answer
How is your life in the present compared to last year?	7	22	51	14	3	3
How do you think you will live a year from now on?	4	11	42	25	4	14

The same optimistic trend is noticed in the youth's answers to the questions regarding the quality of life in the present and especially in the future. The future is considered to be positive by 25% of the survey respondents, more than half than the ones who assess the evolution of the Bulgarian society as negative (table 1). Another factor coming to support this affirmation is represented by the answers to the question regarding the direction the country is on. 34% consider the direction to be right, 24% disagree and 41% do not know or do not answer this question.

The fears outlined during the survey overlap quite well with the problems pointed out by the focus group participants. Unemployment is a central problem of young people pointed by both the survey respondents and the focus group participants. The reasons mentioned are: (1) the lack of work experience, which they are unable to gain if nobody would give them the opportunity to acquire it; (2) the lack of governmental employment policies; (3) the lack of legislation to support the employment of youth; (4) the absence of the financial support to young people to start up their own business; (5) the non-existence of financial assistance for starting a family (advantageous loans for purchase of housing). The devaluation of academic diploma is signalled as another factor contributing to the increase of youth unemployment rate. In order to find a job, young individuals often accept any offer, even under their level of professional qualification, and in unsuitable employment and working conditions. Thus, not only unqualified individuals are unemployed, but also individuals with university degree. According to respondents, this situation raises the problem of the educational system inadequacy to market demands.

The solutions mentioned by the respondents include the existence of a connection between employer and the ones seeking employment, between market demands and education – that should provide young people with the necessary and adequate knowledge for integration and competitiveness on the working market.

The big problem is that not only young people who are under-qualified are unemployed, but also those who are highly qualified. Today thousands of young people with MA degrees just cannot find a job. Their education profile is not consistent with the market's requirements. [unemployed]

Main Research Findings

Unemployment and the lack of connection between education and employers are the biggest problem. If this problem were solved we would have nothing else to complain about.

[student]

As respondents pointed out, unemployment implies financial difficulties to the young people, but also the decrease of their ambitions, hopes and self-esteem, damaging especially the beginning of their careers. Young people become apathetic, show less interest for society, their social and political involvement decreases to a total lack of interest. Some of them look for a way to spend the spare time and end up committing crimes, using drugs and alcohol and deviant behaviour. Unemployment brings about poverty and desperation, depression and lack of trust, dissolution of values, mentalities and beliefs.

One of these conditions is unemployment. It brings to young people more than economic difficulties. This is also a crash of their ambitions and of hopes, especially in the beginning of their labour activity, which I think often worsens their psychological status. The high rate of unemployment influences the way of thinking and acting of young people. As a result, their social and political commitment is diminishing until they get totally disappointed with the politics. [NGO activist]

Talking about unemployment, I am sure that it is definitely one of the conditions that worsens the situation of young people in Bulgaria. Why? Because it brings poverty and desperation, ...uncertain well being. That's why we have crime, alcoholism, drug addiction, etc. among young people. All these are because of depression and despair. Unemployment is on its way to create a whole generation of "angry young men". Among them, the destroyed values and mentalities are very deep and long lasting. [NGO activist]

Another problem pointed out is the state of stress on the labour market, determined by the transition from the communist system (when everybody had a stable job immediately after graduation) to the actual period when the new "hard" rules of the market economy govern, generating a state of insecurity. This phenomenon also has a negative impact on the ones who are employed and live with the fear of losing their job, thus ending up accepting whatever conditions imposed by the employer (minimum wage, lack of work contract, lack of insurance, no seniority).

Moreover, unemployment among young people is causing negative impact on those who have a job. That's because they do not feel self-assured and consider themselves endangered. They feel like they will lose their job all the time. This makes them stumble with the conditions imposed by the bosses. Rather often they receive lower than the usual salary

or the minimum one. Many young people work in the so-called “grey economy” – without labour contract, without insurance taxes. They go on like that for years and then one day they realize that they have no length of service. [unemployed]

One of the effects of the conditions offered to youth by the economical situation in Bulgaria is the migration of youth westwards, seeking another society interested in their problems and which could offer them more, which would be interested in their personal and professional development. 25% of the survey participants declared their intention to move to another place in the next 5 years, and 70% of those intend to move to another country. The reasons for migration mentioned by the youth are exterior to the subjects, other factors being mentioned: the lack of self fulfilment opportunities, the lack of a clear strategy for youth development, the lack of stimulation for development, the lack of opportunities, of conditions necessary for professional and personal self-fulfilment and the difficulty of finding suitable job.

First of all, young people do not have the appropriate conditions to find a worthy accomplishment in the country and moreover, they face problems concerning their physical survival, their economic survival, they cannot develop their personality and intellect. At the same time, we have escalating rates of crimes, violence, drug addiction, and let me add prostitution. We are witnessing a destroyed system of values and we seem to have difficulties in forming a new one. [NGO activist]

Fear of diseases and criminality are other two problems signalled by young people, yet situated further than unemployment on the scale of importance. The fear of diseases appears as unjustified, if we are to consider that the respondents are young and therefore in a good state of health; nevertheless, they pointed out the preoccupation to avoid a potential problem that may lead to loss of the working capacity, and of the possibility to live life to the maximum level.

Closely to these follow the financial problems, strongly connected to the danger of unemployment, but representing also a reason for the emigration. Young people express their discontent with regard to the financial dependence on their parents, with negative effect on self-esteem, and self trust. Unfortunately, these are the conditions of a society described as having low salary and a grey economy. The same financial problems are reflected by the constraints manifested towards forming a family, which implies owning (or the possibility of purchasing) a house and / or the possibility of having own business.

I think the biggest problem is money. Most of the young people consider themselves as dependable on their parents, which is not good for their self-confidence. [NGO activist]

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The young people interviewed pointed out another problem, which may seem less connected to their field of interests – values, tradition. The respondents notice the fact that they live in a period of continuing changes that affect national and religious values. Western values are considered to have a strong impact on traditional life and values, modifying the behaviour of individuals. The high quantity of information, its availability, the mass-communication to which more and more individuals have access are perceived to have great influence on young people. The fear of change with regard to the system of values, the fear of losing the tradition and spirituality, due to influences of “mass culture” come out of the statements made by the young people. The lack of hope, poverty and the lack of opportunities, the lack of faith will lead, according to the opinions of the focus group participants, to assimilation by the mass culture, to dissolution of values.

The main problem is values. The typical Bulgarian values are the core of the problem. The thing is that little children will some day become young people and they will find out that they lack national values, a kind of religion, and a belief that could help them survive through hard times. Then they will begin searching for other values or will create their own ones and this would make them more vulnerable, more fragile. [student]

Definitely this is one of the major problems that needs to be overcome. I am talking about a whole generation of Bulgarians whose hopes have died; they are just crashed down. These people lost their faith in finding a proper personal and professional realization in Bulgaria, so they just emigrate. [employed]

The respondents also considered that youth has fewer opportunities for personal self-fulfilment. They indicated that the obstacles in their personal and professional self-fulfilment are related to: (1) lack of self trust that is not stimulated by economic conditions (unemployment, lack of perspectives for finding a job in accordance to their training, which to suit to a certain extent their expectations); (2) lack of policies to provide opportunities for affirmation of the potential young people hold; (3) the feeling that what they do is worthless. One should add to all these aspects the daily concerns for procuring the necessary means for subsistence, which leave insufficient time for personal development.

[They] are afraid that their education is not relevant in real terms. They think that the educational methods, textbooks, and the whole educational system are too old-fashioned and don't give them the necessary knowledge and skills. [student]

The educational system is thus held responsible for the state of facts of the Bulgarian society. The following aspects are signalled: (1) inadequacy to labour market demands; (2) need for change and modernization of this system; (3) non-existence of a good relation between the employers and the educational system; (4) the need to change the system in order to make room for non-formal education, which is perceived as beneficial for the preparation of young people.

Our education has to be improved and modernized. It should be adequate to the needs of the contemporary society and labour market. [student]

People expect things to change for the better. The evaluations regarding the perspectives of the future, the way the respondents consider that they will live in a year's time (table 1) bear the mark of hope. Nevertheless, the focus group participants also signalled the perspective of an insecure future that produces fear due to lack of control, impossibility of planning, and especially due to lack of hopes and perspectives. A whole generation of youth that lost their hopes looks fearfully towards the future.

One of the existing fears is that these people do not see their future at all. They do not know what will happen tomorrow. They have started from somewhere, but they do not know where they will end. They just know the direction. They do not have aims in their life. [unemployed]

All the problems indicated by the young people in relation to the future are similar to those confronted by youth in the present time: migration, financial problems, cultural assimilation, loss of traditions, informational boom, other cultures' influences, globalisation, lack of opportunities for self-fulfilment, the inadequacy of the educational system to the demands on the labour market.

Emigration is really a big problem. There are Bulgarians everywhere in the world. They lose the Bulgarian traditions and replace them with new ones. Bulgarians are now more open to the world. The old roots that connected them with their parents' home are getting loose. [NGO activist]

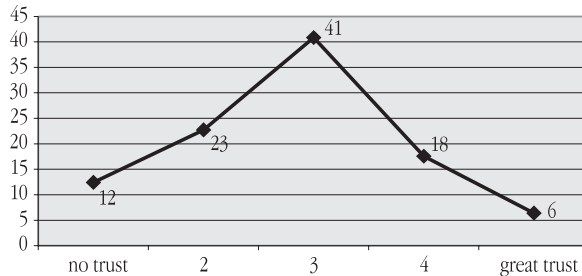
Young people are also afraid because they lack a sustainable system of values. This is what religion used to give to the civilized world in the past. At that time people used to be self-assured and they cherished great expectations about their lives. This is because they had a sort of internal spiritual pillars they relied on. Now we do not have such ones. [employed]

Trust and Civic Culture

The level of trust represents an indicator of the population state of mind, of the individuals' availability to interact with each other, reflecting on the vision of political and social control. As it can be noticed from fig. 2, the level of this indicator presents a population that maintains a certain distance towards peers, yet manifesting high levels of trust in family and friends.

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Figure 2: Level of general trust (%)



The responsibility for the problems faced by Bulgarian society, and especially by youth, can be divided in two categories: assumed by youth and caused by the environment they live in. As the focus group participants pointed out, specific for youth is the lack of involvement in solving typical youngsters problems, apathy and passivity, their only way of expressing dissatisfaction being through protests.

Young people are also to be blamed. They don't care about their own country anymore. They don't even vote. [student]

The causes of the problems are attributed in most of the cases to political leaders who only make promises and do not keep them, yet who hold the power in society. The political leaders disappoint their constituents, making only election campaign promises. The financial policies are unstable and have negative consequences on strategic plans of companies. The lack of a clear vision of the future, of a governing strategy is signalled. National problems such as reducing unemployment are believed not to be on the government priority list.

That's right. Young people feel themselves deceived, but not only that, they are being told that their present condition is due to their own incapability. I think this is absurd. I think that the ones that should be responsible are the politicians. [NGO activist]

The old mentality inherited from communism times does not disappear and influences the capacity of business initiative, problem-solving or taking attitude. Other factors held responsible for the state of fact are: the influence of external systems of values, the global development of the world and the decrease of the enlarged family influence, of traditions, which lead to individual alienation and difficulty in adjusting to new living conditions.

The state on one hand and the family on the other do not give possibilities and chances to the young people. [NGO activist]

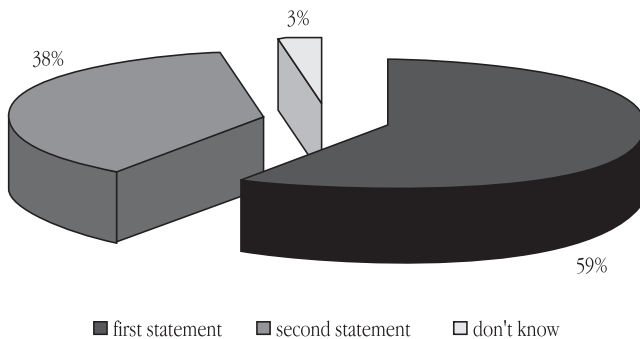
The vast invasion of too many systems of values, the global development, the necessity of enlarging this system of values has its positive and negative sides. [unemployed]

Nowadays the families in the big cities consist of parents, grandparents, children and that's it. The so-called "family circle" is shrinking and connections with other relatives are limited. Family now has a diminishing influence on people. It is replaced by relations with close friends, but they are rather chaotic because young people form relationships in school on an occasional basis. [unemployed]

Relations with Institutions and with the Political System

Young people consider that economic success in life depends on them; the state is not a responsible and important factor in this regard (see fig. 3). Yet, according to the respondents, the state is perceived as having weak performance especially in ensuring employment to the people without jobs (ensuring legislative framework for stimulating business and investments that would generate the creation of new working places), thus increasing the level of living (table 4).

Figure 3: State responsibility for economic problems of individuals (statements: 1 – individuals should be responsible for their own welfare and 2 – the state should be responsible for everyone's economic security)



Young people can offer solutions for society's problems if the political leaders consult them (see the relation with politics). They have initiative and support the necessity of their generation's involvement in society and the increase in the level of responsibility for their own successes and failures.

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Table 2: Satisfaction with state (Government) involvement in the following areas¹ (%)

	Dissatisfied	Satisfied
Education	58	32
Public order	66	25
Health	75	15
Level of living	84	9
Employment	84	8

If you are right, then it is really sad because these young men will soon become parents and then we will have a country full of enraged young men and women. It is important for the young people to take initiatives because they bear the responsibility of future parents. Someday they will have to take care of the future of their children and if then they don't know how to put things in action and to take responsibility for their own future, they will be unable to help their children to live in a better world. [NGO activist]

Other suggestions made by young people refer to some processes whose initiator is in most cases the state (the government). Thus, it is considered necessary for interested companies to recruit young people while in school, to stimulate young entrepreneurs, to provide financial support for students and preferential treatment to those who employ young people. Also, the state should: (1) provide proper qualification for individuals to ensure competitiveness labour market; (2) ensure assistance to young people through laws, financial assistance, information on employment opportunities; (3) ensure equal chances for self-fulfilment; (4) ensure compatibility of the educational system and the labour market demands; (5) develop the non-formal education. The state, the biggest employer, can be determined to have a long-term strategy concerning national human resources and young people looking for a job.

Firstly, young people should start participating in all levels of society. They should be motivated and granted access to all these social levels. This could be done only if the information presented to young people by the media, politicians, teachers, etc. is accessible, understandable and clear. In this way young people will not feel like a socially excluded group and they will be able to find themselves the solutions of their problems. [student]

The youth (40%) declare that they are satisfied with the economical situation of their family; moreover, 16% are very satisfied with this aspect. Nevertheless, the spectrum of migration towards a better world, which can materially provide more, persists among young generations. Some of them consider emigration to another country (preferably European, in order to be closer to home) as the solution for many economical problems and professional self-fulfilment.

¹ The differences until 100 % represent non-answers (don't know / don't answer)

Table 3: Satisfaction concerning the democracy and the economic system (%)

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Not very satisfied	Not at all satisfied
How satisfied are you with the way democracy works in your country?	4	31	41	24
How satisfied are you with the way economy works in your country?	2	21	38	39

The respondents indicate the relation with politics as one of the problems that young people are confronted with. The political dimension of the society is considered as being the one holding the power and the influence, namely because of the degree to which society in Bulgaria is politicised.

In accordance to the respondents' opinions, the authorities / the government are responsible to find solutions to the problems the society is confronted with (unemployment, poverty, lack of values) through legislative initiatives (tax deduction for employers hiring young people, advantageous loans, etc) or thought direct measures (the state being considered the largest employer). The politics and the politicians (the personalization of politics and administration) disappoint the young people because election promises are not respected.

Youth issues lack or are not separately dealt with in governmental strategies, they are not granted the deserved importance, according to the respondents. The economical system, in which the majority of problems are noticed, is instable due to the frequently changing financial policies, the responsibility for this being held again by the politics. The respondents also notice the lack of coherent strategies necessary to solve the problems faced by the Bulgarian society. In addition, there are communication problems between the politicians and youth.

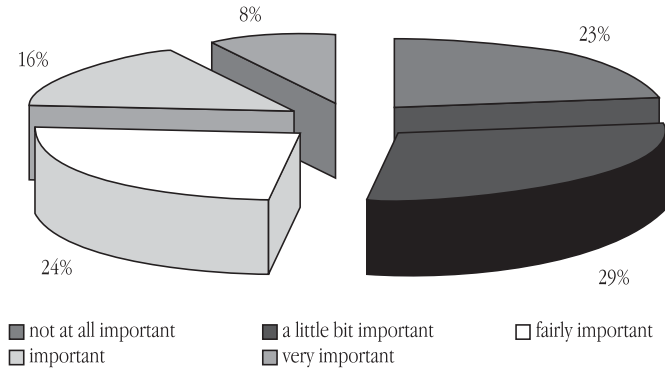
Another problem is that young people are disappointed with politics. They find it "dirty"; they think politicians' promises are "empty" and not fulfilled. As a result young people do not have any further expectations from the political elite and therefore they do not vote, which I think is a big problem itself [NGO activist].

In Bulgaria politicians can be useful to a pretty big extent. This of course doesn't mean that our politicians are quality ones. I mean that they have big influence, but it is not always positive. It is just that our society is politicised [employed]

On the other hand, with regard to the image of politicians, the respondents observe also positive aspects that can contribute to finding solutions for the state of facts. The politicians, the administrators of society hold great power to change the society state of fact. In most cases, they are seen as rescuers, as the ones that can offer solutions and also implement them. They can determine the gathering of information about companies looking for employees, thus ensuring the connection between employers and young individuals looking for a job.

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Figure 4: Importance of politics



According to the obtained survey answers, the low level of trust is towards institutions that define the democracies (the Parliament, the political parties, the President), but also towards institutions applying the reform (Privatisation Investment Funds), and towards those that should protect workers' interests (unions). The trusted institutions are the independent mass media (which ensures the information of the common citizens), the Army and the Police (responsible with maintaining order and being as well representatives of order, having symbolic meaning).

Table 4: Portrait of politicians

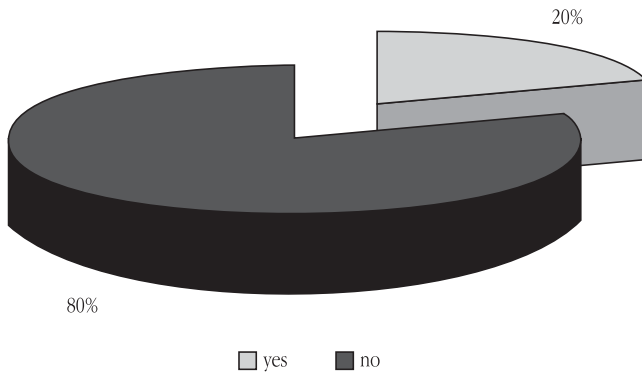
Features	Arguments
Politicians promise much, but don't keep their promises.	<i>The problem is that politicians promise lots of things to the young people and to the society and this is just a manipulation. After they win their five-year-mandates they stop caring about what they have promised.</i>
Politicians have great influence.	<i>In Bulgaria politicians can be useful to a pretty big extent. This of course doesn't mean that our politicians are quality ones. I mean that they have big influence but it is not always positive. It is just that our society is politicised.</i>
Politicians don't know how to solve problems faced by society.	<i>Politicians know what to do. They are not so bad and I am sure they know what needs to be done. The problem is that they do not know how to do it.</i>

Table 5: Trust in institutions (%)

	Very low trust	Low trust	Medium trust	High trust	Very high trust
Independent media	25	18	31	19	7
Army	25	23	27	13	12
Police	27	22	30	13	8
Courts	34	24	22	14	6
State media	33	29	25	10	3
Local Government	36	27	26	6	5
The Presidency	41	25	23	7	5
Private Enterprises	40	26	22	10	2
Church	48	21	19	6	6
Parliament	44	30	17	5	4
Trade Unions	44	30	17	6	3
Political Parties	53	25	16	4	2
Privatisation	58	24	14	3	1

In the opinion of many respondents, there are numerous difficulties in communicating with authorities. Due to those, the politicians are not useful – do not make themselves useful – to society; the government priority list is not made taking into consideration the citizens' demands. The focus group participants signal the fact that there are not many people that have the opportunity to discuss with politicians and, even if individuals get to express their opinions, they are not sure that these will be taken into consideration. The same attitude appears among the survey respondents – despite the fact they are actively involved in civil society, only 20% of them had contacted a politician (thus, had contact with the power dimension of the society). (fig. 5)

Figure 5: If one contacted a politician in the last 12 months



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A part of the young people do not even want to have contacts with politicians; for them, this is senseless, the only worthy form of communication being the civic protest. This attitude is due to the fact that young people have been taught by their parents and grandparents that communicating with politicians has no effect – this mentality must be changed. The individuals live with the belief that they cannot expect anything from meeting the decision-making factors; the advice and suggestions will not be considered. NGOs and mass media are the ones that should mediate such a relation, making people's voice heard, informing the authorities about the opinions of individuals, of youth, militating for their rights.

The respondents indicate the fact that there are 2 types of communication relations with politicians:

- a) direct, through meetings, letters, street demonstrations
- b) indirect – mediated by NGOs and mass media (institutionalised access), which can constitute themselves as authorities monitoring the administration's actions.

The young person usually has the presumption that nothing will come out of such attempts to meet the authorities and to provide them with his advice and opinions. I think that the NGOs should make young people think that their voice can be heard, that it is important to speak up and stand for your rights, no matter how difficult it could be. [NGO activist]

Another problem that doesn't help the politicians to be useful to their society is that there is no communication between themselves and the young people. Pretty old people to whom youth problems are not that existential maintain the youth centres. The politicians themselves communicate with young people only within their parties. [NGO activist]

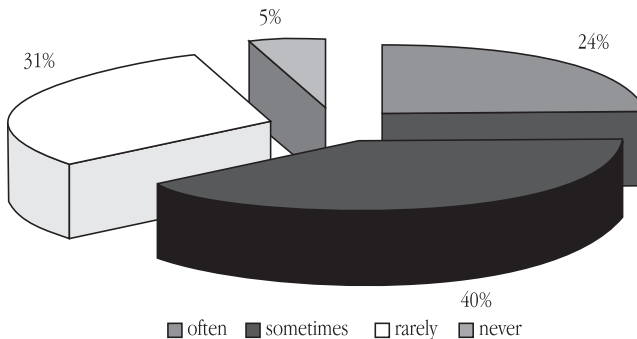
The responsibility for the communication problem is assumed, to a certain extent, by the youth. Communication problems are due to internal factors related to individuals: the lack of communication at individual level, the prejudice that communication has no point (resulted from the education in family) and the lack of youth involvement in the society (voting absenteeism). Communication problems appear also because of external factors, such as the authorities' lack of interest for communicating with citizens. According to the focus group participants, a certain segment of youth is integrant part of society, is involved in social events, interested in what is going on, believing in society and declaring their place in the public space, becoming members of the civil society (NGO members, "conscientious citizen"). Young people have potential, more information, and the experiences of their previous generations, rights and previously tested ways to get them. But there are young individuals, the outsiders, who oppose the society precisely because it doesn't meet their expectations or because they are individuals who do not care at all – considering non-involvement as fashionable and intelligent. Because they do not get involved in social life, they cannot develop and express their talents, being unhappy (social, professional, relational self-fulfilment); they become passive participants who repress and hide their feelings and are afraid to communicate.

Bulgaria

There are two subdivisions in the category of young people: the integrants and the deviants with different axiological systems, the latter ones not assuming the category of conscientious citizen. These young people make themselves guilty of their position and their problems in the society because they are not interested in social problems, because they are not actively involved.

Another aspect of the civic dimension in Bulgaria is noticed from the survey answers: the interest expressed by youth for politics. Only 24% discuss politics often (fig. 6).

Figure 6: Frequency in discussing politics with others



Under such circumstances and with regard to these problems, young people consider as viable solutions to monitor and support the actions of politicians by the society, as well as to determine the politicians to keep their promises through lobby and pressure from mass media and NGOs. The active problem-solving is expected to come from the political sphere, which can receive solutions from youth or other people, whom they should consult periodically.

The need of changing the priority list and granting top position to tax and social issues, increasing the population's living standards, creating better employment opportunities are only few of the measures that the decision-makers (politicians) should adopt in order to solve the problems Bulgaria is confronted with.

I think that society should make politicians keep their promises. If the media and the NGOs support a society, politicians will be forced to implement what they have promised. There are instruments to make a politician helpful for society. The question is whether there is enough will. [NGO activist]

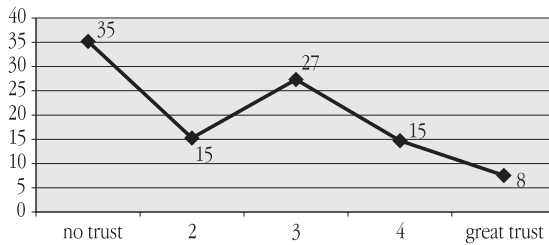
Politicians know what to do. They are not so bad and I am sure they know what needs to be done. The problem is that they do not know how to do it. So I would advise them to listen

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to the young people, to ask them for opinions, to try to be in constant contact with them. This will help them a lot and will make their policy more efficient. Young people will prompt them the right answers. [NGO activist]

I agree that the state administration should be more efficiently structured. That is what I would advise the politicians. There also should be created laws for the young people aiming at defending them and providing them with rights and responsibilities. Otherwise our future is lost. [NGO activist]

Figure 7: Trust in European Union (%)



The focus group participants see the European Union as political and economical power, a structure that can provide the solution to problems and misunderstandings that exist in the Balkans, opportunity for mobility, contact with other cultures and offer the possibility for young people to travel and work in other countries.

The European Union is perceived by many of the respondents as not “free help for the poor”, the benefits that it can provide implying costs that should be expected and assumed by everyone.

Young people don't have a clear idea of what European Union is. Most of them think that when we become members of the EU our living standard will become better. And that is just because these people have a mere idea of the EU. We always think that somebody else will solve our own problems. [employed]

I think European Union is quite a solution for us to escape all these problems and misunderstandings that exist in the Balkans. [student]

Part of the focus group participants expresses their support for Bulgaria's accession to the European Union. The European Union structures seem to be unable to generate a high level of trust among young NGO activists. The focus group participants also pointed out that the Bulgarians do not know the costs and benefits of the EU integration, nor those of the membership in this structure. NGOs may do the information of citizens.

Bulgaria

So what is important is not to be Euro-sceptic or Euro-optimist but to know what our advantages are and to have a worthy knowledge of them before entering the EU, because otherwise we will be accepted as beggars. [NGO activist]

Most of the people think that becoming a member of the European Union will bring to Bulgaria lots of money, but this is not true. EU will not be glad to grant much money, structure funds, etc. to the new members. This is why I don't think that EU will make Bulgaria a richer country. [student]

Other respondents are against accession European Union, on the following grounds: (1) the lack of importance and power of Bulgaria in the European Union's decision-making process; (2) the probability that Bulgaria would be on a marginal position; (2) the possibility that their country becomes a deposit of waste produced in more developed and powerful countries within the European Union; (3) the lack of preparation of Bulgaria's economy to deal with the competition on the European Union market; (4) the loss of cultural identity.

I think that we will not be more powerful as a member of the European Union will. Our country will be provided with too limited information and will not be able to participate effectively in the mutual decision-making process. We will be expected to accept and be thankful for everything that is offered to us, without claims. [student]

NGO Activism

During the qualitative research, the focus group interviews were conducted on subjects from non-governmental sector, but also on young people who have no connection with it. A part of the respondents believe that NGOs are a good thing because of their functions and duties they cover. NGOs can solve problems that government and politicians cannot, they try to spread and sustain democracy practices and to provide assistance to the newly-formed civil society, get involved in developing and facilitating the process of Bulgaria's accession to the European Union. According to the respondents, NGOs are formed as stock of valuable resource of experts and specialists (human resources) and ensure institutional alternatives for expressing opinions and involvement in society. The funds NGOs receive from the European Union are a guarantee of their professionalism and correctness.

... they possess very large resources consisting of excellently trained experts, who are quite useful to society. I think that NGOs are the best training place for people that will further benefit society. [student]

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Bulgarian NGOs receive funding from the European Union and the European Commission and I think this is a good sign and acknowledgement of what they do towards making things in Bulgaria better and towards making the process of integration in the EU easier. [student]

Other answers offer another type of image on the activity of NGOs. These are associated with politics, NGOs gravitating and being financially sustained by political parties to serve their interests. The low development of civil non-governmental sector, which is dependent on foreign financial support, and the lack of state involvement in financing NGOs are also signalled.

The vision of the European Union about civil society is based on those organizations that work to benefit people with an unequal status in society, handicapped people, minorities, etc. and these are not a target group of the trusts I have mentioned above. In Bulgaria the civil society that corresponds to the European Commission's idea of civil society in general is practically not very well developed. [employed]

According to the respondents, the youth have a distorted image of the NGO sector. They perceive it only as financing source and have a negative attitude towards it, fed by preconceptions that present NGOs in the darkest colours.

This means that most of the young people in Bulgaria think of the NGOs as of a funding resource and nothing else [employed]

A big part of young people in Bulgaria have a negative attitude towards NGOs because their opinion is influenced by the massive prejudices that accuse NGOs of dealing with dirty money [employed]

The youth, self-centred, focused on their problems, consider that NGOs must get involved in all problems related to them, in the information exchange between young people and authorities. NGOs must cooperate with the government to solve the problems the youth is confronted with. The nongovernmental sector must also be involved in maintaining the connections with the Bulgarian Diaspora, must contribute to the process of personal development of the youth through support given for acceding in social and political high positions in the society. The involvement of NGOs in education, employment, social assistance, and culture is seen as a necessity.

I think NGOs' top priority should be young people. We are aware of the fact that young people's percentage in the population is constantly diminishing and the gap between generations is enlarging. [student]

NGOs should work to benefit young people, to provide the necessary coordination, information exchange and collaboration between young people and authorities. They should work to improve young people's authority, social status and possibilities [student] NGOs could help young people in the process of their personal development. These organizations should help young people enter successfully the Bulgarian political and social life because otherwise they will remain out of it as a marginal and excluded group. NGOs aims should be the following of ordinary but very important spheres: employment, well being, education, equal opportunities, information, solidarity, tolerance, etc. These are things with existential importance; everything else will get better if these spheres are developing well. [student]

Most of the survey respondents consider that the NGO they belong to does not have much influence on the decisions made by the national government. Nevertheless, as respondents indicate, it is possible to act towards changing some of the decisions.

Table 6: Contact with ... (%)

	No	Occasional	Regular
Municipal administration or local officials	9	22	69
The City council or Members of the Council	16	26	59
Local Parliament or local parliamentarians	12	19	69
Local politicians	34	22	45

The closest communication relations established between NGOs and authorities are the ones with local parliament or local parliamentarians, followed by local authorities, less open to the communication with civil society.

In accordance with the opinion of the respondents, who are NGO members, the activities undertaken by NGOs are complementary to the government (administration) ones, trying to substitute and solve the problems of the society. NGOs are bodies that ensure the connection between citizens and the ones ruling the country. They are formed of common citizens, allowing them to make their opinions heard.

The NGOs are to work in those spheres the government cannot manage well with. Therefore the aim of the NGOs should be consistent with the main problems faced by society. I think that Bulgarian NGOs manage pretty well with the process of defining these problems. [NGO activist]

NGOs in Bulgaria are usually the connection between common citizens and those who rule the country. Therefore, they should initiate the creation of new laws, to provide lobby and to support those laws that are defending the citizen. [NGO activist]

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NGO members consider that youth have a distorted image of the non-governmental associations and organizations in Bulgaria. Their activities are often associated with fraud. Responsible for this negative attitude are the lack of knowledge about NGOs' activities, and the lack of communication between these and young people.

I don't think that young people know what exactly an NGO is. There is a lack of communication between the NGOs and the young people themselves. [NGO activist]

NGO activists point out the need to improve the young people's level of education at an extracurricular level. One of the most important objectives NGOs should consider is to make young people have more initiatives, become more responsible for their future and get involved in solving problems.

Conclusions

The results of investigation pointed out that there is an optimistic trend among youth that may be due to economic recovery resulting from economic structural reforms.

Nevertheless, the main problem pointed out by the respondents is the unemployment, a spectrum that also includes the youth with advanced studies. As a result of unemployment, lack of hope concerning professional fulfilment and the impossibility to attain a certain economic comfort, the youth prefer to emigrate westwards in order to find a society that is indeed interested in their problems and can give them more opportunities.

The government is responsible for this state of fact – the lack of government policies regarding the labour market, the lack of a legislation to encourage youth employment. The political leaders are perceived as having no interest in youth problems. This aspect is mentioned by the youth that consider Bulgarian society to be a highly politicised one; therefore nothing can be undertaken without involving the political dimension in one way or another.

Most of the youth involved in this research consider that, should the political leaders consult them, they can provide solutions for the problems the society is confronted with. They show initiative and support the necessity of youth involvement in society and awareness-raising for own personal success and / or fiasco.

In this economic and political framework, NGOs are considered a positive factor that could contribute to finding solutions for many problematic aspects the Bulgarian society is confronted with. Moreover, one important role of the NGOs is that of mediator between the youth and the state, thus acting as an institutional framework able to ensure a constructive communication or dialogue, through which the youth can express their grievances and come forward with suggestions on how to solve the problems they are facing.

Annexes

Methodological note

The survey was conducted on a sample of 1000 subjects.

The focus group interviews were conducted as follows:

Group Name	Number of interviews	Number of subjects	Group composition
NGO	2	13	NGO activists
UE	2	12	Unemployed & employed
STUD	2	12	Students

Tables

Tolerance and acceptance (%)

	Should be allowed to hold public meetings		Accept as neighbours	
	Should not be allowed	Should be allowed	Not accepted	Accepted
People who have AIDS	12	88	24	76
People of different race	11	89	11	89
Immigrants	19	81	16	84
Homosexuals	23	77	28	72
Drug addicts	28	72	52	48
Christian fundamentalists	64	36	64	36
People with a criminal record	68	32	68	32
Right-wing extremists	73	27	66	34
Islamic fundamentalists	79	21	74	26
Left-wing extremists	76	24	66	34
Racists	86	14	73	27

Annexes

Deepest fears in the present

The things that you fear the most in the present:	Percent of responses
Unemployment	24
Diseases	19
Criminality	18
Prices	12
Childrens future	9
War in the area	7
Social disturbances	5

Youth
Issues and
Challenges
in South-Eastern Europe

Croatia

Croatia



Country Presentation

Croatia	Geography
<i>Location:</i>	Southeastern Europe, bordering the Adriatic Sea, between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Slovenia
<i>Area:</i>	<i>total:</i> 56,542 sq km <i>land:</i> 56,414 sq km <i>water:</i> 128 sq km
<i>Land boundaries:</i>	<i>total:</i> 2,028 km <i>border countries:</i> Bosnia and Herzegovina 932 km, Hungary 329 km, Yugoslavia 266 km, Slovenia 501 km
Croatia	People
<i>Population:</i>	4,334,142 (July 2001 est.)
<i>Age structure:</i>	<i>0-14 years:</i> 18.16% (male 403,722; female 383,151) <i>15-64 years:</i> 66.61% (male 1,452,872; female 1,434,086) <i>65 years and over:</i> 15.23% (male 245,727; female 414,584) (2001 est.)
<i>Population growth rate:</i>	1.48% (2001 est.)
<i>Birth rate:</i>	12.82 births/1,000 population (2001 est.)
<i>Death rate:</i>	11.41 deaths/1,000 population (2001 est.)
<i>Net migration rate:</i>	13.37 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2001 est.)
<i>Sex ratio:</i>	<i>at birth:</i> 1.06 male(s)/female <i>under 15 years:</i> 1.05 male(s)/female <i>15-64 years:</i> 1.01 male(s)/female <i>65 years and over:</i> 0.59 male(s)/female <i>total population:</i> 0.94 male(s)/female (2001 est.)
<i>Infant mortality rate:</i>	7.21 deaths/1,000 live births (2001 est.)
<i>Life expectancy at birth:</i>	<i>total population:</i> 73.9 years <i>male:</i> 70.28 years <i>female:</i> 77.73 years (2001 est.)
<i>Total fertility rate:</i>	1.94 children born/woman (2001 est.)
<i>Ethnic groups:</i>	Croat 78.1%, Serb 12.2%, Bosniak 0.9%, Hungarian 0.5%, Slovenian 0.5%, Czech 0.4%, Albanian 0.3%, Montenegrin 0.3%, Roma 0.2%, others 6.6% (1991)
<i>Religions:</i>	Roman Catholic 76.5%, Orthodox 11.1%, Muslim 1.2%, Protestant 0.4%, others and unknown 10.8% (1991)

Croatia

Languages: Croatian 96%, other 4% (including Italian, Hungarian, Czech, Slovak, and German)

Croatia **Government**

Country name: conventional long form: Republic of Croatia
conventional short form: Croatia
local long form: Republika Hrvatska
local short form: Hrvatska

Government type: presidential/parliamentary democracy

Capital: Zagreb

Independence: 25 June 1991 (from Yugoslavia)

National holiday: Republic Day/Statehood Day, 30 May (1990)

Constitution: adopted on 22 December 1990

Croatia **Economy**

Economy – overview: Before the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the Republic of Croatia, after Slovenia, was the most prosperous and industrialized area, with a per capita output perhaps one-third above the Yugoslav average. Croatia faces considerable economic problems stemming from: the legacy of longtime communist mismanagement of the economy; damage during the internecine fighting to bridges, factories, power lines, buildings, and houses; the large refugee and displaced population, both Croatian and Bosnian; and the disruption of economic ties. Stepped-up Western aid and investment, especially in the tourist and oil industries, would help bolster the economy. The economy emerged from its mild recession in 2000 with tourism the main factor. Massive unemployment remains a key negative element. The government's failure to press the economic reforms needed to spur growth is largely the result of coalition politics and public resistance, particularly from the trade unions, to measures that would cut jobs, wages, or social benefits.

GDP: purchasing power parity – \$24.9 billion (2000 est.)

Unemployment rate: 22% (October 2000)

Currency: kuna (HRK)

These data are taken from the site of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe.

Partner Presentation

European House, Slavonski Brod

Europe House was established in 1998 with aims of promoting World's and European integration processes, and cultural, political and economic integration of Croatia into Europe. The members of the Europe House are the citizens of the Brodsko-posavska county, young people and students and pupils.

One of the main aims of the Europe House is the education of the citizens in our community about intercultural understanding, promotion and protection of human rights, European institutions, protection of natural and cultural heritage and co-operation of people and countries of the world.

The objective is to spread European horizons directly among the members of the Europe House and indirectly among the members of community where the work is being done on their own benefit.

We have accomplished many successful projects on international, national and local level.

We promote a true co-operative spirit with the help of other complementary associations and also with the support of governmental organizations.

- In the last several years our main projects were:
- Lectures "The main points of Civil Society"
- Public Debates
- Radio Presentations
- Youth Parliament
- Schools of Democracy
- Translation of books /All Different – All Equal, Domino, Global Kids in Croatia, Kompas.../
- Publishing of books / Dictionary of Proverbs, European Clubs.../
- Attending of seminars and visiting the European institutions
- Seminars for teachers
- Seminars for youngsters
- E-youth, newspapers for the young people

Rezultati Istraživanja provedenog u republici Hrvatskoj

Terenkim istraživanjem bilo je obuhvaćeno više od tridesetak nevladinih udruga. Zapravo, upiti su dostavljeni na daleko veći broj udruga, no mnoge udruge nisu bile zainteresirane za suradnju s obzirom na opsežnost ankete. Drugi razlog za neprihvatanje suradnje je bio taj što mnoge udruge nisu bile u stanju okupiti na isto mjesto i u isto vrijeme potreban broj svojih članova. Dio udruga ne surađuje aktivno tijekom godine sa svim svojim članovima, već ih povremeno uključuje u projektne aktivnosti.

Rezultati istraživanja provedeni u Hrvatskoj pokazuju da mladi u Hrvatskoj (kojih je više od dva milijuna – gotovo ih je polovina od ukupnog stanovništva RH) najviše strahuju, ako zanemarimo još uvijek vrlo izražen strah od eventualnog rata na Balkanu, od nezaposlenosti i od napuštanja vlastite zemlje zbog potrage za poslom. Neizvjesna gospodarska situacija uzrokom je njihovih frustracija i osjećaja besperspektivnosti. Stupanj njihove otvorenosti prema političkim promjenama bi bio daleko veći kada bi mogućnost njihova zaposlenja i zaposlenja članova njihovih obitelji bila izvjesnija. Zbog toga su vrlo zainteresirani za uključivanje Hrvatske u europske integracije.

Ukupan broj nezaposlenih u RH u ovoj godini je 376 657 po podacima Hrvatskog državnog statističkog zavoda. Od toga je 157 505 mladih nezaposlenih ljudi, u dobi od 15 do 29 godina. Nezaposlenost je u porastu i ona uveliko pogoršava socijalni status mladih i njihov odnos prema društvenim vrijednostima.

Mladi ljudi rijetko pokazuju interes za društveno-politička zbivanja u zemlji, rijetko se aktiviraju u većem broju postojećeg i ponuđenog okvirima djelovanja, a niti stvaraju druge oblike sudjelovanja u javnom životu. Najveći ih je broj koji ne vjeruju u institucije, stranke na vlasti, autoritete.

Vrlo je malo univerzalnih vrijednosti koje respektiraju. Ponašanje im je krajnje pragmatično; polaze od trenutnih uzora i potreba. Idoli i ideali su im potpuno pojednostavljeni-osobno materijalna korist je visoko na ljestvici poželjnosti. Da bi je osigurali, poslužili bi se i nepoštenim sredstvima. Žive izolirano, bez značajnih kontakata sa drugim nacionalnim ili vjerskim skupinama.

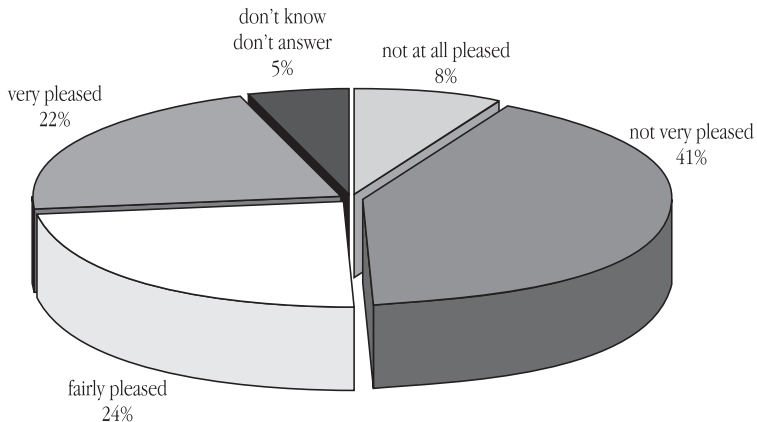
Posljedice takvog stanja su brojne i očigledne i trebat će puno vremena da se uklone ili bar ublaže. Zbog nezadovoljstva koje završava u apatiji ili okretanju prema negativnim vrijednostima mladi ljudi mogu biti podložni negativnim utjecajima i trendovima (pozitivnih je utjecaja malo). Oni ne shvaćaju da su upravo oni ti koji mogu i trebaju mijenjati političke, gospodarske uvjete života, kako u lokalnoj redini tako i na razini države. Onima koji su odabrali status quo, trebat će vremena da povrate vjeru u sebe kao pokretačku snagu. Oni koji su se odlučili za bilo koji oblik rada i suradnje u nevladinim organizacijama lakše će povratiti vjeru u univerzalne vrijednosti, ljude i ljudska djela. Svojim djelovanjem će pomoći u procesu preobrazbe društva k demokratičnijem društvu, temeljenom na građanskom sudjelovanju, toleranciji, zaštiti ljudskih prava i zajedničkoj gospodarskoj i političkoj suradnji.

Main Research Findings

General Aspects

The young people actively involved in NGOs in Croatia assess the life standard very differently, depending on the resources they possess. Almost half of the individuals who answered the questions of our survey questionnaire (49%) are not pleased with their living. Part of these people have higher education, while the other part represents the ones with less education. The common element is a job badly paid or unemployment and lower family income. The percent of the satisfied individuals is also quite significant (46 %), including both the ones with a high level of education but unemployed and the ones with lower education but a well paid job.

Figure 1: Satisfaction with the way of living

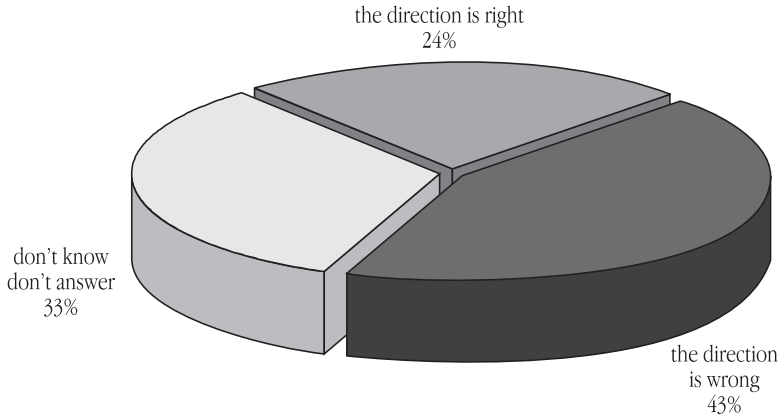


Of course, a variety of causes stands behind this attitude. The general dimension of the question was especially designed to reflect a global attitude. Thus, the operational reasons that determined the youth to evaluate the life standards as positive or negative are much more complex than the categories mentioned above.

Most of the young people involved in NGOs activities who took part in our interviews, have an hesitant attitude concerning the global evaluation of the society they live in: 33% of them refuse or

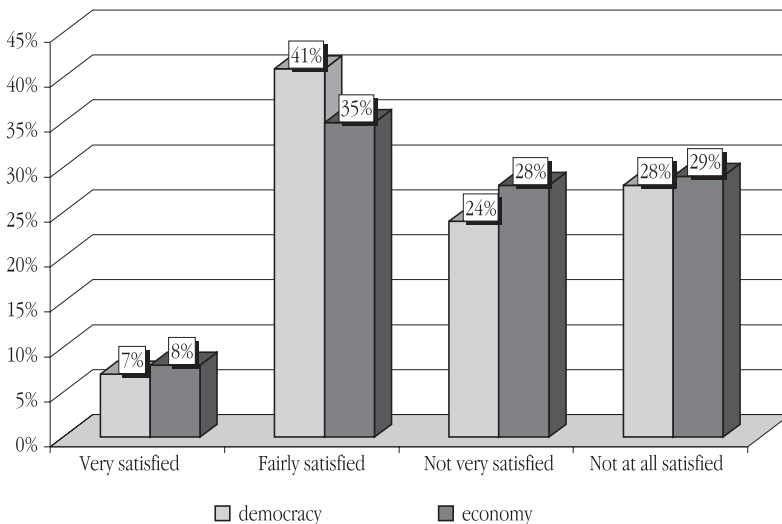
do not know to answer the question regarding the direction Croatia is on, 43% consider the direction to be wrong, and 24% consider it to be right. What are the reasons of this difference in opinion?

Figure 2: Direction the country is on



In a pure statistical overview, the ones considering that things go in the right direction are generally, as expected, the same ones with those satisfied with the way democracy and economy work in Croatia. Yet the proportion of the satisfied ones with regard to the two aspects of society (institutional- democratic and economic) is of almost half of the respondents (see fig. 3).

Figure 3: Satisfaction concerning the democracy and the economic system



Main Research Findings

These general aspects of youth attitudes towards the social-economic situation of Croatia are to great extent consequences of concrete problems the society deals with. From our focus group analyses, some problems of the Croatian society deals with have come out, at least from young people's perceptions.

A main problem (which shows up in all discussions as "cause of all evils") is that of unemployment.

Young people who finished high school can't get a job and young people with college either.

The situation is very difficult. [unemployed]

There are no free work places, possibility of further development and progress that leads to ruin. [employed]

They don't have a good picture of their future, they finish their school and stay at home, without a job. [unemployed]

Another problem is related to the precarious living conditions of the youth. The respondents pointed out the fact that unemployment is responsible for the financial conditions of the population; the lack of jobs and perspectives in this respect does not provide hope for improvements in the living conditions.

... unemployment that leads to heavy material and financial situation. [employed]

The unemployment threat generates a state of pessimism with regard to the future, the feeling of lack of perspectives for economical and social realization. The lack of perspective for professional goals attainment for a decent living determines many young people to consider emigration as the ultimate solution for their problems.

There are no free work places, possibility of further development and progress that leads to ruin. [employed]

There's a question what would I be if I finish the college. More and more youngsters go away and try to find some sense of their life. [NGO activist]

The main problem is that youngsters are afraid of the future when they think about the job and the other issues. [NGO activist]

These structural problems of the Croatian society cause a series of problems especially at the youth level: drug and alcohol consumption. It is viewed that society is the main responsible for this state of facts because it does not provide other options – jobs, locations for spending leisure time, etc.

It can be said that young people are going down in bigger and bigger problems connected with drugs and alcohol because the society doesn't leave them any better options.
[employed]

All these take place in a context of young people's lack of involvement in society life: the number of young people involved in parties and organizations is low, which leads to the fact that they do not have the opportunity to express their points of view, to raise awareness about the problems they face.

The main problem is the lack of confidence. We live in a kind of society in which youngsters are irresponsible and don't have enough knowledge. Yes, I've noticed that there are no young people in politics and I know also that my friends that they are not interested.
[NGO activist]

I think that youngsters should be conveyed of the society, but also they don't get enough room in this society. [NGO activist]

The causes of these problems are attributed to war, but also to people's mentality, to politics, as well as to young people's lack of involvement in politics and civil society:

Time after war and bad point of view of young people. [unemployed]

The political system and politicians hold an important part of the responsibility for these setbacks.

A very important influence has our government that leads our country, but so do we, young people, who don't know well enough to fight because we are not strong enough.
[employed]

My opinion is that the government has had the biggest influence because they consider that young people are not experienced enough to make progress in our country. [employed]

Today's government and young people gave up fighting for their position in society.
[employed]

School and educational system are considered to be another cause of the difficult situation of young Croatis, because school does not provide the necessary theoretical and practical preparation to enable them to be competitive on the labour market.

I think the main problem is school, because it doesn't give any perspective. [NGO activist]

Main Research Findings

Young people take part of the responsibility for the conditions they live in precisely because they consider themselves not enough involved in social activities. The young people expect others to make decisions which concern them directly, attitude that has no beneficial effects on their future.

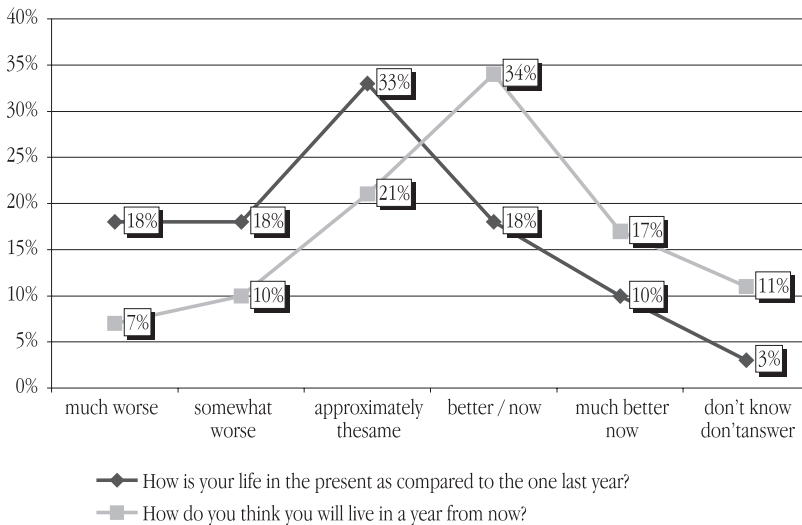
... Partly young people because they didn't fight enough for their goals and for themselves.
[unemployed]

Youngsters also expect the others to find them a job so that they could find something suitable for them. [NGO activist]

A big influence has our government, but also I think that a big influence have young people too, because they gave up their rights (rights to participate in making decisions in society)
[employed]

Even though there are some problems young Croats are confronted with in society, in every day life, they are optimistic about the future, hoping for the better.

Figure 4: Compared evaluation of life in past and future



Even if until the last year life did not change for 33% of the respondents, and life is more difficult than last year for more than 36%, there is still hope that things will be better in the future with regard to the way of living, over 50% of the respondents declaring that life will probably be better the following year.

The matter of the future is of central concern for youth. Although there is an increased optimism, in order to make decisions that may determine their lives, young people look for answers to some concrete questions. In this register of expectancies for future, the young NGO members participating in the survey in Croatia pointed out the following aspects as the deepest fears of the present:

Table 1: Deepest fears in the present

The things that you fear the most in the present are:	Percent of responses
War in the area	27
Unemployment	20
Diseases	19
Children's future	17
Prices	6
Criminality	5
Social disturbances	3
Don't know/don't answer	3

It is noticeable that the deepest fear is the possibility of a war in the area. Half of the respondents are afraid of this flagellum that has been in former Yugoslavia. The traumatic experience of war made youth sensitive to any military conflict getting closer to their country.

Unemployment remains another problem of concern to young Croats. It is understandable that this represents a main fear for youth since they lack some resources that the adult population has (i.e. reduced life and work experience, absence of social networks able to provide them with informational support/know-how, absence of previously acquired goods – houses, properties, savings, etc.)

...the situation won't be changed and the number of unemployed people will grow.
[employed]

If we take in consideration the situation in our country today, then unemployment and not getting a chance to work [is one of the main problems]. [unemployed]

On the other hand, the absence of material and social relational resources make young people more independent and, thus, more exposed to emigration, seeking jobs or, complementary, involvement in illegal or delinquent activities. It is worth mentioning the fact that emigration turned out to be one of the fears expressed in the focus groups responses, which is mostly determined by the high level of the unemployment:

I hope that I will stay in my country, and not go to foreign country searching for a job because they offer much better future. [employed]

Another important fear of the youth is related to the future, more exactly the youth's lack of perspectives.

I consider myself a lucky man 'cause I have a job, but no one knows if I am going to have this job in the future, so my biggest fear is whether I am going to stay employed. [employed]
Can my future be any better and what can I do about that? [unemployed]

Focus group participants suggested that they perceive themselves as responsible for finding solutions, considering themselves as the ones able to change the current situation. Changes can be brought and the level of living improved through involvement in activities carried out in the society, political activities, those of civil society.

I think that young people can do a lot for their improvement through hard work and good will. [employed]
We who do have a job should use all our energy to prove that we can be a part of the society even if we are young people. [employed]
Although youngsters don't have job or place to manifest their ideas, they can be included in a work of some organisations, whether they're humanitarian or familiar to them; this could be useful and help to others. [NGO activist]

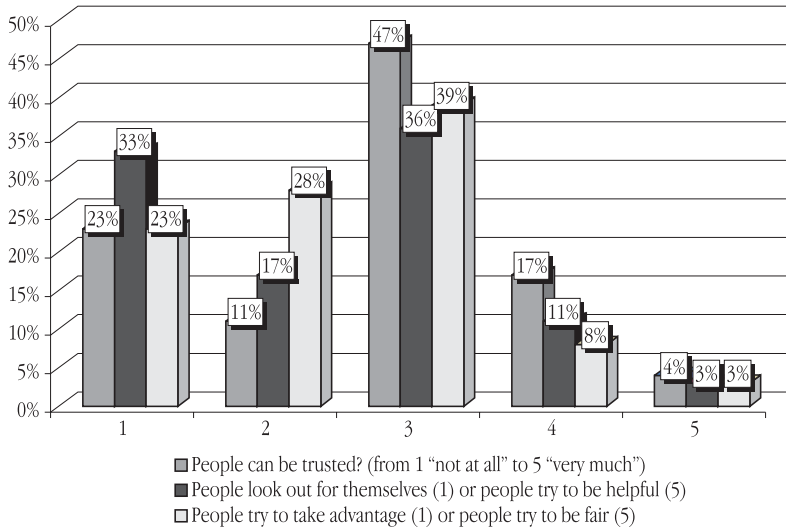
Trust and Civic Culture

Trust represents the element that ensures a high level of solidarity in society. The presence of a state of mind in which trust holds an important position is beneficial for social mobilization and for building a strong civil society. Although with deep roots in a cultural normative background, on which social practices specific to a society are embedded, trust is also an interactional process influencing cooperation and success in social goal attainment at community level.

With regard to Croatian youth's willingness to trust their peers, one may say that their orientation is rather pessimistic. With regard to general trust in people responses to "people can be trusted" question in our survey, the young subjects from Croatia can be divided into three main categories: sceptics, moderates and generous (see fig. 5). The attitudinal operationalization of trust through fundamental principles of a functional society, i.e. the norm of social exchange ("people look out for themselves/ try to be helpful") and the norm of reciprocity ("people try to take advantage/ try to be fair"), present a rather pessimistic orientation of youth from Croatia. More than half of the respondents perceive a high degree of individualism presumed to be in inter-personal relations in the contemporaneous Croatian society.

General trust can be operationalized in various ways, yet an important issue is that of the way personalized trust in social groups is distributed, attitude that stands at the basis of general trust in people. For trust is not only a consequence of moral norms, but also an effect of individuals' social experiences with various groups in various social situations.

Figure 5: Levels of general trust



For young Croats, the highest capital of trust is held by family (68% of respondents have high and very high level of trust), followed by social groups young people interact with most frequently and which can function as reference groups for them (friends, colleagues/ members of their organization: 43-46%). The answers of the survey respondents reveal a generalized tendency of distrust in the peers they do not have direct contact with, but which form a social and symbolic community (town, nation, etc.): 40-48% do not trust people of their town, region or country.

Main Research Findings

Table 2: Level of trust in groups of people (%)

	Very low trust	Low trust	Medium trust	High trust	Very high trust	Not applicable
Your colleagues	3	22	30	26	17	0
Members of your family	5	6	12	16	52	9
Your friends	4	18	31	16	30	0
Your neighbours	8	25	33	17	17	0
Members of this organization	4	15	36	25	20	0
People in your town/village	9	32	40	10	9	0
People in your region	12	36	37	9	5	1
People in your country	21	19	41	9	6	4
Ethnic minorities	14	26	35	22	2	1

Whereas trust is a good indicator for cooperation possibilities among people, tolerance is an indicator of acceptance and conflict minimization in such a diversified society like the modern one, which is confronted more and more with a mixture of values and cultures of various social groups. From this point of view, one may say that the Croatian youth's society is characterized by an orientation towards democratic values, even towards ideological permissiveness. Whereas there is polarization of youth in two sensitively equal categories – permissive and non-permissive – with regard to social distance or acceptance of contact with various social groups that hold an extreme position on the social scene (religious, political, ethnic fundamentalists, or other socially marginalized categories – criminals and drug addicts), and to accepting ideal rules of democracy, public rights of these groups, the general tendency is that of opening (with notable exception of Christian fundamentalism and of right extremism) (see table 3).

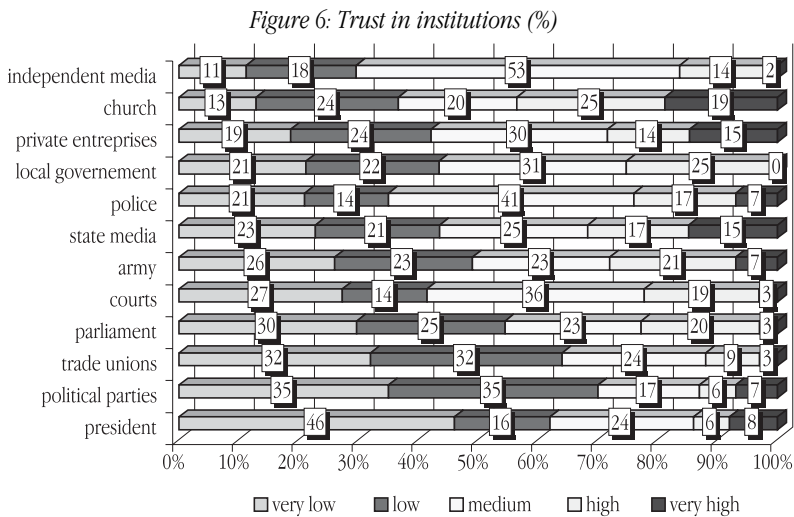
Table 3: Acceptance and tolerance (%)

	Accept as neighbours		Should be allowed to hold public meetings	
	would not accept	would accept	should not be allowed	should be allowed
Christian fundamentalists	54	46	60	40
Islamic fundamentalists	52	48	46	54
Left wing extremists	56	44	20	80
Immigrants	40	60	35	65
Homosexuals	46	54	31	69
People with a criminal record	57	43	48	52
Racists	56	44	52	48
People of a different race	24	76	20	80
Right wing extremists	53	47	56	44
People who have AIDS	44	56	24	76
Drug addicts	52	48	32	68

Relations with Institutions and with the Political System

Institutional trust is another important indicator of the social climate where youth life and activities take place. In a society in which social institutions are undergoing reform process, people's trust does not reach very high levels. Yet, the way youth relates to these institutions is also an indicator of the activity of these institutions and of their hierarchy in the public perception.

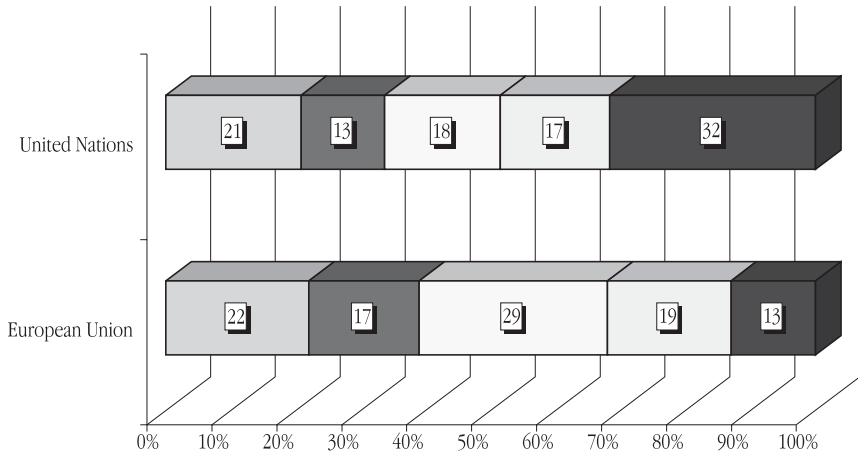
It can be noticed that in each category of institutions, youth trust is distributed variously. The institutions gathering the most negative attitude are the political parties, the President and the trade unions, and the ones gathering a positive attitude are the church, private enterprises and state media; also the independent media, although without a high level of trust, does not capitalize a negative attitude (see fig. 6).



Young Croatian perception with regard to the two of the most important international organizations, the European Union and United Nations, is a moderate one (see fig. 7). Yet, during the non-structured interviews organized as round tables, the young Croat participants emphasized the fact that the European Union is the solution to the problem Croat society is confronted with. The country's integration in the EU can provide new opportunities for the society as a whole and especially for youth – economic development and increase in the number of working places, facilitation of communication among youth for starting business, general development of society, assistance for country democratisation, free circulation of people. The European Union can provide assistance both for the economic stabilization of the country, as well as for the region, which is an essential condition for peace- which is what the young generation of Croatia wants.

Main Research Findings

Figure 7: Level of trust in European Union and United Nations (%)



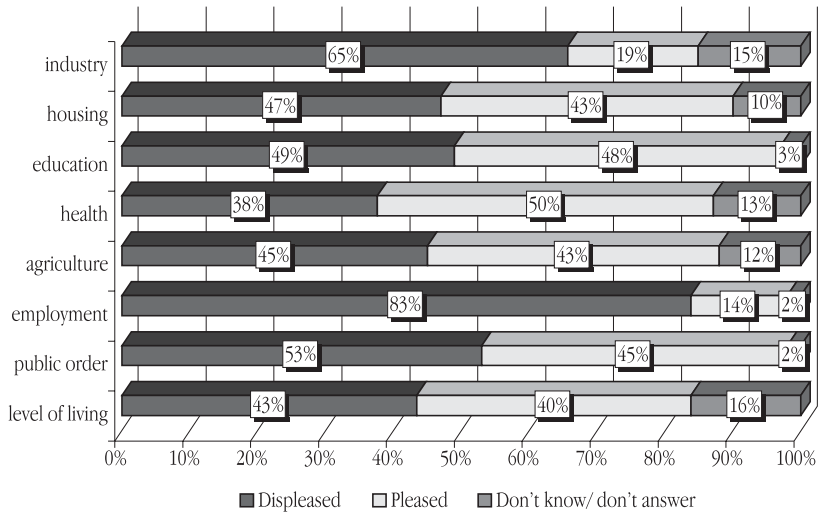
European Integration...

- It should help in progressing young people.* [unemployed]
- I think it will help to find jobs for young people.* [unemployed]
- Maybe that link brings good communication in making good business relationships between young people.* [unemployed]
- I believe that it will help in developing our society.* [unemployed]
- Maybe it would help young people to express their ideas and opinions.* [unemployed]
- Maybe they succeed to connect young people who will contribute to a better situation in our country.* [employed]
- I think that EU is O.K. I want to have a job without problems, I want to go to England, France, Italy without passport. I want to be paid by European pay. I don't see anything bad in that.* [NGO activist]

The relations of young people from Croatia with institutions that organize the society and the Croat state are not supported primarily by a positive attitude towards the politics practiced by these institutions, as some NGO activists respondents pointed out.

Youth attitude towards governmental policies in various sectors of activity is not an encouraging one. Generally they are not satisfied with the way things work, and this dissatisfaction is justified by the problems young people are faced with in the everyday life. The unemployment is a constant concern for young Croats for the society they live in. It is one of the threats of the future for the government does not practice a satisfactory solution for the younger generation.

Figure 8: Satisfaction with state (government) involvement in the following areas



The assessment of governmental activities is closely connected to the relationship youth have with the political system of Croatia and with political life in general. The way they, as civil society members, relate to politics is closely connected to their interest for politics, to their experience with political activities and accessibility to political communication.

There is low interest in political life: 84% of the survey respondents declare that they are not interested in politics. In the case that they do follow the political life, the priority interest is formed of local politics (57%) and national one (48%), yet to an important extent also the international one (39%)

Table 5: Interest in politics (%)

	Very interested	Fairly interested	Not very interested	Not at all interested
Interest in local politics	14	43	21	23
Interest in national politics	9	39	42	11
Interest in European politics	9	31	28	32
Interest in international politics	16	23	33	28

The preferred environments that young Croats discuss politics in are the family, friends and neighbourhood (see table 6). These operate as continuous political socialization environments, in which opinions taken from the media or formed as result of youth direct and indirect experience with social institutions are disseminated and evaluated.

Main Research Findings

Table 6: Discuss politics... (%)

	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Not applicable
with your friends	21	31	23	14	11
with your family	23	26	30	18	4
with your neighbours	8	36	17	35	4
with your co-workers, colleagues	9	21	35	27	9
with other member of this organization	16	15	29	34	7
with member of other organizations	8	18	37	29	8

The political dimension of Croat society is seen by youth as very important – politicians hold the highest decision-making power and therefore represent significantly important factors for the situation of youth and society. Politicians and/or government leaders are the ones that define the legislative and institutional framework in which the economy may or may not develop, whose efficient and competitive functioning may lead to the appearance of new working places for young people and other social categories.

*They [politicians] are important because they make the society. [unemployed]
...they bring decisions that are very important for young people and for the society.
[unemployed]*

*They [politicians] bring laws and rights that every person should obey. [unemployed]
I think that they are very important because they make the environment in which young
people develop and build their future. [employed]*

Young people perceive their communication with political institutions, with authorities that make political decisions as flawed. Even in the case when this communication occurs, peoples' grievances are not taken into consideration afterwards by government factors.

*I haven't had that kind of opportunity yet, but even if I had, I think that they wouldn't do
anything about it. [employed]
There is no use saying anything because anyway, nobody would listen to what I have to say.
[employed]
There is always a person who will hear you out. That's way I always fight to express my
ideas. But the only problem is that people don't take opinions of young people in
consideration because of their age. [employed]*

Yet, for young NGO activists, communication with the political sphere, with decision-makers, is possible through these organizations that provide them with the institutional framework for

expressing opinions. Nevertheless, the young NGO activists are pessimistic with regard to the echo their suggestions have for the authorities and politicians.

Like organisation we have chance to know, but young people I don't know. We have, but issue is that would our suggestions be taken in to consideration? [NGO activist]

NGO Activism

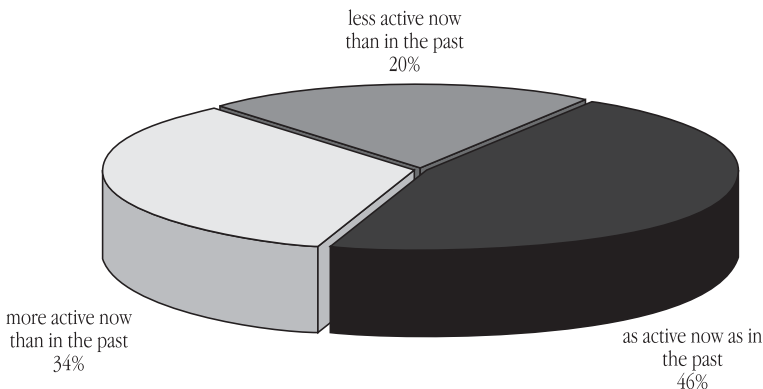
Young Croats involved in non-governmental organizations consider their activity as necessary and beneficial, signalling the need of involvement in such activities for as many young people as possible, who then may contribute to solving problems faced by the society they live in (unemployment, drug consumption, leisure, expressing opinions, etc).

That organization is very good, and I would suggest that youngsters turn in that organization because I think that that will help them in the future. [NGO activist]

I will say that organisations are good way because people in those organisations are volunteers. That means they are there without any occupations, and they are good for civil society funny!!! [NGO activist]

Youth involvement in non-governmental organizations can be an indicator for increase of the level of civic and social activism in the society they are part of. In the case of Croatia, over a third of young people from NGOs are more active in the present than in the past, and over 20% are less active. Although, the balance is positive, the increase is not that high, especially since those currently more active are the ones with constant volunteer behaviour in the past.

Figure 9: Compared level of activism



Main Research Findings

For young Croats with no direct NGO experience, this type of organizations represents an additional possibility to earn experience, if there is to take into consideration the opportunities that NGOs make available for young people to actively participate in projects.

I think that this kind of sector can make possible the involvement of young people in making decisions; ...young people gain confidence through voluntary work.
[unemployed]

Other young people consider that the non-governmental sector is not necessarily a beneficial one, because they provide assistance to a very limited number of people. And, on the other hand, there is no solution for the situation of youth from Croatia.

Not a great number of people have a great help of it because the government keeps everything to them. [unemployed]

In order to eliminate these shortcomings, the young NGO members propose a series of priorities that NGOS should focus on for the future in order to be more effective:

- **Youth involvement in diversified activities**

Involving young people as much as possible in social activity. [employed]
Involving young people that have become mature and specialized for that kind of work.
[employed]

- **Moral and social support for young people for living**

Showing young people the right way in life and supporting them in their goals. [employed]
Leading honestly young people in life. [employed]

- **Facilitating communication at the level of the young generation**

Good communication and interest in work. [unemployed]
Making connections between young people. [unemployed]

Conclusions

The situation of the youth from Croatia is characterized by a state of uncertainty with regard both to the present and to the future. The lack of employment, the precarious living conditions and an educational system unprepared to meet the requirements of free labour market generate a state of dissatisfaction and, moreover, very high social distrust in people and institutions. This rather sceptical attitude of youth towards institutions is doubled in their minds by increased dissatisfaction towards authorities' activities in almost all fields. The causes of this state of fact are identified by young people involved in our survey as belonging to the economic and social policies sectors.

Unemployment may be considered as the most worrying issue for youth from Croatia. In the light of this "threat", the danger they feel is the temptation to emigrate westwards, though many of them do not want to. One must not exclude the basic fear that persists even in the mind of the youngest Croats: the war. This flagellum that covered their country left deep traces both from economic and social perspective, and in the mentality of people. The reconstruction of state institutions brought hope. Nevertheless, as (gathered) data reveal, it appears that young people are not so confident anymore, namely because of the failure of the political system and actors that rule the country.

The solutions for overcoming the situation of young Croats rest in their hands. There is a constructive attitude that appears permanently in our interviews. One of these solutions to improve their economic and social situations consists in youth involvement in NGO activities. In youth' opinions, attracting young people in civic activities and developing a morality, mutual aid, and partnership-based climate represent the calling to which it is necessary that NGOs answer to in order to fulfil their social and public call.

Annexes

Methodological note

The survey was conducted on a sample of 970 subjects.

Focus group interviews:

Group Name	Number of subjects	Number of group interviews	Group composition
NGO activist	10	2	NGO activists
Un	10	2	Unemployed
Em	10	2	Employed

Tables

Contact with... (%)

	no contact	occasional contact	regular contact
Municipal administration or local officials	22	57	22
The city council or member of the council	27	62	10
Local parliament or local parliamentarians	29	47	24
Local political parties or politicians	39	50	11

Organization's influence on the decisions made by... (%)

	City Council	Regional Government	National Government
no influence	8	25	19
small influence	29	19	27
medium influence	29	16	25
great influence	15	16	3
very great influence	3	2	9
don't know	15	19	14
not applicable	0	2	0

YOUTH
ISSUES and
CHALLENGES
in South-Eastern Europe

The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia



Country Presentation

Macedonia, The Former

Yugoslav Republic of Geography

<i>Location:</i>	Southeastern Europe, north of Greece
<i>Area:</i>	<i>total:</i> 25,333 sq km <i>land:</i> 24,856 sq km <i>water:</i> 477 sq km
<i>Land boundaries:</i>	<i>total:</i> 748 km <i>border countries:</i> Albania 151 km, Bulgaria 148 km, Greece 228 km, Yugoslavia 221 km

Macedonia, The Former

Yugoslav Republic of People

<i>Population:</i>	2,046,209 (July 2001 est.)
<i>Age structure:</i>	<i>0-14 years:</i> 22.92% (male 243,715; female 225,349) <i>15-64 years:</i> 66.94% (male 688,484; female 681,225) <i>65 years and over:</i> 10.14% (male 92,043; female 115,393) (2001 est.)
<i>Population growth rate:</i>	0.43% (2001 est.)
<i>Birth rate:</i>	13.5 births/1,000 population (2001 est.)
<i>Death rate:</i>	7.7 deaths/1,000 population (2001 est.)
<i>Net migration rate:</i>	-1.54 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2001 est.)
<i>Sex ratio:</i>	<i>at birth:</i> 1.08 male(s)/female <i>under 15 years:</i> 1.08 male(s)/female <i>15-64 years:</i> 1.01 male(s)/female <i>65 years and over:</i> 0.8 male(s)/female <i>total population:</i> 1 male(s)/female (2001 est.)
<i>Infant mortality rate:</i>	12.95 deaths/1,000 live births (2001 est.)
<i>Life expectancy at birth:</i>	<i>total population:</i> 74.02 years <i>male:</i> 71.79 years <i>female:</i> 76.43 years (2001 est.)
<i>Total fertility rate:</i>	1.79 children born/woman (2001 est.)
<i>Ethnic groups:</i>	Macedonian 66.6%, Albanian 22.7%, Turkish 4%, Roma 2.2%, Serb 2.1%, other 2.4% (1994)
<i>Religions:</i>	Macedonian Orthodox 67%, Muslim 30%, other 3%

Macedonia, The Former

Yugoslav Republic of Government

<i>Country name:</i>	<i>conventional long form:</i> The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia <i>conventional short form:</i> none <i>local long form:</i> Republika Makedonija <i>local short form:</i> Makedonija <i>abbreviation:</i> FYROM
<i>Government type:</i>	emerging democracy
<i>Capital:</i>	Skopje
<i>Independence:</i>	17 September 1991 (from Yugoslavia)
<i>National holiday:</i>	Uprising Day, 2 August (1903)
<i>Constitution:</i>	adopted 17 November 1991, effective 20 November 1991

Macedonia, The Former

Yugoslav Republic of Economy

<i>Economy – overview:</i>	At independence in November 1991, Macedonia was the least developed of the Yugoslav republics, producing a mere 5% of the total federal output of goods and services. The collapse of Yugoslavia ended transfer payments from the center and eliminated advantages from inclusion in a de facto free trade area. An absence of infrastructure, UN sanctions on its largest market Yugoslavia, and a Greek economic embargo hindered economic growth until 1996. GDP has subsequently increased each year, rising by 5% in 2000. Successful privatization in 2000 boosted the country's reserves to over \$700 million. Also, the leadership demonstrated a continuing commitment to economic reform, free trade, and regional integration. Inflation jumped to 11% in 2000, largely due to higher oil prices.
<i>GDP:</i>	purchasing power parity – \$9 billion (2000 est.)
<i>Unemployment rate:</i>	32% (2000)
<i>Currency:</i>	Macedonian denar (MKD)

These data are taken from the site of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe.

Partner Presentation

Embassy for Peace (EPM)

Embassy for Peace-Macedonia is a non-governmental and non-for-profit making association that addresses mainly youth issues with an alternative approach that assumes grassroots initiatives in providing efficiency in the outcomes of its work.

The prime mission of EPM is to encourage young people in undertaking active part in civil society development, promotion of democracy and human rights. EPM seeks to promote multicultural cooperation in a tolerant open environment, hence determined to provide leadership for youth initiatives in institutionalized manner.

In conducting the research, Embassy for Peace collaborated with:

Urban Culture-Educational Research Center Skopje

Contact: Mrs. Nikcevska Gordana

Address: str. Alexandar Turundziev no. 67, 1000 Skopje MK

Tel: + + 389 2 624 650

nigomk@yahoo.com

Mission Statement: To put the urban culture in function of preparation of young for living into a democratic society

Macedonian Red Cross and branches

Contact: Mr. Jane Nikolovski

Address: str. Koco Racin no. 13, 1000 Skopje MK

Tel: + + 389 70 537 547

nikolovskijane@yahoo.com

Mission Statement: To improve the lives of vulnerable population trough mobilizing the power of humanity.

Резиме

Бидејќи истражувањето започна во декември 2001 г, врз резултатите од истражувањето секако влијаеја и ефектите од политичката и безбедносната криза која започна во февруари 2001 г. и која имаше поразувачки ефект на политичкиот живот и економијата во земјата. Војната, стравот од војната е примарно застапен кај младите, вистински загрижувачки фактор во Македонија. Испитаниците ги подвлекоа економско-финансискиот ефект на војната и недостигот на лична и општествена безбедност, длабоко почувствувани од населението. Тие ја искажаа потребата за зајакнување на политичкиот лурализам, демократијата и развојот на политичките елити, нарекувајќи го постоечкиот политички систем како скорешен и недоволно развиен. Младите исто така го забележија и недостатокот од младинска политика. Состојбата на недоверба во институциите на системот претставуваат влијателен извор за наголемување на корупцијата. Испитаниците ја перцепираат државата како ограничувачки фактор во слободата на изразувањето, што се изразува со низок степен на доверба во државните медиуми во споредба со довербата дадена кон независните медиуми. Комуникацијата со политичките фактори и политичката власт се смета за поразувачка, а за некои од испитаниците е сосема непостоечка. Младите сметаат дека политичарите треба да обрнат повеќе внимание кон предлозите на младиот човек.

Економската ситуација на младите и семејствата во коишто живеат го изразува фактот дека скоро и да не постои позитивна перцепција во овој поглед - 69,5 проценти од нив ја оценуваат оваа димензија како многу незадоволителна. Невработеноста и нејзиниот спектар ги принудува граѓаните, особено младата популација, да прифатат ниски работни услови кои ги нудат приватните иницијативи (ниски плати, недостиг од уплата на социјално осигурување, неформално вработување, неограничено работно време и сл.). Младите исто така го идентификуваат и недостатокот од соодветна политика на вработување која би се соочила со проблемите во општеството. Нискиот животен стандард, неможноста да се најде работа во нормални услови и да се основа семејство поради недостигот на пари се проблемите кои понатаму произлегуваат од невработеноста.

Повеќето млади мислат дека Европската унија претставува решение за проблемите со кои се соочува македонското општество. Асоцирањето во неа треба да овозможи нови можности за соработка, глобален општествен развој, отворање на пазарот и помош во демократизација на земјата. Европската унија може да обезбеди подршка за економска стабилизација на земјата и на регионот како предуслов за мир. Интеграцијата се разгледува како неопходен процес, кој треба да биде еден од приоритетите на политичките лидери.

Како решенија за излез од состојбите, младите ги наведуваат економската реформа, реформа на образовниот систем, развој на програми за стимулација на инвестициите, фискална политика која ќе ги охрабри приватните иницијативи, правилна политика за намалување на невработеноста, развој на земјоделството, повеќе внимание на младината и сл. Младите луѓе се залагаат за одвојување

повеќе средства за студентски иницијативи, за зголемување на бројот на стипендии за студентска размена, школување и стекнување практично меѓународно искуство. Од непомала важност испитаниците го споменаа и зголемувањето на нивото на активното учество на младите во општеството. Младинското вклучување и мобилизација се изгледни решенија за подобрување на состојбите во државата.

Во рамки на ваквата општествена клима, невладините организации можат да придонесат кон демократизација на општеството, да бидат достојни и активни партнери на власта, неполитичка опозиција и форум кој ќе овозможи да се слушне гласот на обичните луѓе. Па сепак, спротивно на сите овие аргументи, политичките структури не го охрабруваат развојот на овој сектор во Македонија.

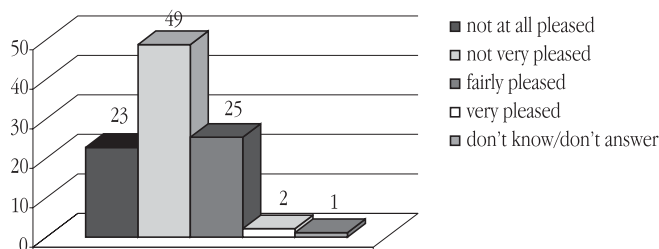
Main Research Findings

General Aspects

As the focus group respondents present it, FYROM is a society that comes out of a war that affected its economy, social relations, institutional structures and is currently undergoing an economic crisis.

According to the survey respondents, the life in the society of FYROM does not provide great satisfactions, opportunities of self-achievement and expression, as well as decent living.

Figure 1: Level of satisfaction that life provides to youth involved in civil society of FYROM (%)



Since the survey started in December 2001, it captured the effects of the political and security crisis that began in February 2001 and had a devastating effect on the country economy. As it comes out of the survey and focus group respondents' declarations, the social economic and political situation, as well as the situation in general in FYROM is not seen as good (table 1).

When analysing attitudes and opinions of the young population, it may be said that it is disappointed by the current conditions, and the perspective of a better future is not taken into account by many of them. After the armed conflicts that took place in the former Yugoslavia space, the young people, even those involved in the civil society, are disoriented and cannot say in the country which direction things go towards. 36% declare that the country is going in the wrong direction, whilst only 14.6% are optimistic perceiving the situation as good. Most importantly, 49% of the young survey respondents do not see any solution for the future and cannot express their opinion with regard to the direction that the country is going to.

Table 1: Compared evaluation of life in past and future (%)

	Much worse	Some-what worse	Approximately the same	Better now	Much better now	don't know / don't answer
How is your life in the present compared to the one last year?	28	15	43	10	2	2
How do you think you will live in a year from now?	10	12	43	9	7	19

Among the reasons of concern, the young people (both from the survey and focus groups respondents) point out most frequently five main problems they face in the society of FYROM:

Table 2: Deepest fears in the present

Things you fear the most in the present:	Percent of responses
1. war in the area	34
2. diseases	17
3. unemployment	15
4. social disturbances	10
5. children's future	9
6. criminality	5
7. prices	3

These fears can be grouped in two main categories¹. The first category includes war, diseases, criminality and social disturbances – worries that do not come out mainly of the deficit of resources. A second category comprises fears associated with the deficit of resources, typical being the high level of prices, unemployment, future of children, to which are added problems connected to education, incomes and relations, especially those useful in order to solve various problems during interaction with state institutions.

Fear of war, is the first and most frequent fear, a real concern manifested in the FYROM society of especially among young people (among the ones to be drafted). This has had and still has implications and effects on the societal functioning – youth fear of being taken into military service, the feeling of insecurity, the fear for own life, etc. Among its effects, the respondents emphasize the financial – economic side, the closing of companies, the expenses for arming caused by war (houses and plants destroyed, etc.), as well as the lack of security, deeply sensed by the population and sometimes leading to health problems (e.g. problems with the cardio-vascular system).

During the war, many people left their homes, and part of them have been destroyed so far. They do not have roof over their head. [NGO activist]

¹ Sandu Dumitru, Public Opinion Barometer, May 2001

Main Research Findings

... and there is always possibility for recruiting in the army (with the risk that you might end up getting killed). The young people should go by their one choice to be professional soldiers and not to be forced into that choice. [NGO activist]

The second fear expressed, the fear of diseases is manifested in the current case by young generations in association to war, to material deprivation that followed and to economic problems that appeared within the society. One should add to all these the state of stress, of uncertainty that the population lives in, the imminent danger of social disturbances, triggered mainly by the material deprivation, but also by the lack of ensuring the citizens' security by the state.

Unemployment, as effect of war that had considerable infrastructure destruction, is responsible for the low living conditions and the lack of perspectives and for the youth wish to emigrate. Its spectre determines many individuals, especially young ones, to accept degrading working conditions provided by private employers (low salaries, lack of official employment documents, lack of payment of social insurance, avoidance of payment for youth during trial periods, unlimited working hours etc.). The youth subjects also mention the lack of adequate employment policy to the problems faced by society, as well as the lack of professional self-achievement due to the lack of opportunities to practice the professions they were educated (trained) for. All these constitute reasons for discontent signalled by interviewed young people.

Unemployment is the worst problem. No matter if one finished secondary school or a faculty, there are no jobs available. The labour market does not offer employment possibilities. But of course, with education on the level of secondary school is more difficult to get a job. There is a "labour bazaar" where young people accept employment like moving heavy equipment or furniture for 15 DM a day. And again, this is not a permanent employment. It is awful. [student]

The greatest fear is not putting into effect the education young people have studied hardly for. [student]

Young people indicate these aspects as being very important problems of the society they live in and which they would wish solved by taking into consideration the reasons that led to the appearance of these phenomena. In this situation of crisis, – the unemployment, the lack of perspectives, the lack of parent oversight, and the precarious living conditions drug consumption provide young people with an escape, a way of spending free time, which may lead to increase of criminal acts among them.

Young people consume alcohol at every corner. Also the drug use shall be fought more intensively, because it is spreading even among 15-16 years old high school pupils. Needles of drug addicts are found in schoolyards, which is very dangerous. The state should think about this and find immediate solution, otherwise we won't have healthy youth. [NGO activist]

The war left scars that led to decrease in the level of living. The low living standard assessed by the respondents (see fig. 3), the difficulty in finding work in acceptable conditions, the impossibility to form a family because of lack of money, the lack of possibilities to save money, are problems due to changes produced by the armed conflict. The respondents also signal the fact that the young people live depending of their parents because they have no other means to support themselves.

The poverty and bad economic situation are the worst problems youth is facing. This is accompanied by the bad political and security situation also. [student]

Most of the people live under constant stress and fear, poverty is our cruel companion and people are hungry. [student]

In order to survive on the labour market, the young people signal the need for education, the one thing able to prepare them more thoroughly, taking into account the labour market economy demands and the current situation in FYROM. In the actual situation, the education, especially that from university level, implies costs that only some of the parents are able to cover, being thus an investment the entire family contributes to and does not always give results – young specialists cannot find work in the job they were trained for.

The education is a life investment borne both by the student and the parents. That means that one entire family is included in this process, financially and morally. A society, which could not succeed to put this in effect, is an unhealthy one. Moreover, it does not respect citizens (entire families) because their efforts evaporate. This generates unpleasantness among young people because, without a job, they can not justify the education investment of their family invested in them. [student]

With regard to future in general, people expect that things should go better. In the present case however, the future is seen as something uncertain, which produces fear mainly due to the inability to control, to make plans, but also due to the lack of perspectives, to hope etc. An entire generation of young people that lost hope looks fearfully at the future (for 22.8% of the survey respondents the future appears to be worse, and for 42.5% it appears to be the same).

The same problems are foreseen for the future as the ones mentioned for the present: the perspective of another war, the possibility of an ethnic conflict, the disintegration of FYROM, lack of security, unemployment, drug consumption, etc.

One day, there will be only elderly people in our country because the youth will leave. The youth is afraid of poverty and in the state of war, they are afraid of forced recruitment into the militant activities. [employed]

Main Research Findings

As for me, the unemployment problems are the worst fears. One young person experiences a variety of discriminating processes until finding a job. [student]

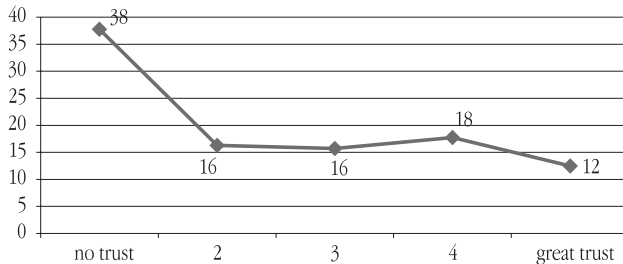
The poverty conditions won't be solved. I do not believe that there will be a way out in the next two years and that there will be more and more poor people instead of middle class people. I am also afraid of the state of war, which frightens our society. [student]

Then the cases of youth on streets smuggling drugs and weapons might become very realistic (although it is not a fiction whatsoever here). This is very frightening and I hope we won't end up like that. [student]

Trust and Civic Culture

Trust represents an important indicator of individual availability to relate and presents the societal state of mind. As fig. 2 shows, the level of this indicator is relatively low, indicating people's fear to relate, to trust one another. The only ones that can be trusted remain the family members and friends.

Figure 2: Level of trust in people (%)



Although the respondents are active within civil society, they express tolerance only towards race differences, the sick or drug addicts, immigrants and homosexuals, that is towards “normal” groups, in accordance to the ideology promoted by the organizations they belong to. All extremists (left or right wing, fundamentalists – religious extremists, racists and criminals) are considered as posing a danger to society and thus, there is the need to exclude them from the society life.

Table 3: Tolerance and acceptance (%)

	Should be allowed to hold public meetings		Accept as neighbours	
	Should not be allowed	Should be allowed	Not accepted	Accepted
People of different race	52	48	50	50
People who have AIDS	63	37	69	31
Drug addicts	64	36	73	27
Immigrants	65	35	58	42
Homosexuals	66	34	65	35
Right-wing extremists	74	25	78	22
People with a criminal record	83	17	77	22
Christian fundamentalists	86	14	80	20
Left-wing extremists	86	14	82	17
Racists	87	14	80	21
Islamic fundamentalists	95	5	86	14

Relations with Institutions and with the Political System

Generally, the Government Institution image is negative. The President and Parliament do not present trust neither for the survey respondents, nor for the focus group respondents. People tend to trust institutions with symbolic and identity value – the army, with greatest level of trust expressed, and the church, which however does not benefit of the same capital (due to ethnic-religious conflicts in the area). The environment of distrust in institutions represents an influent source for increase of corruption within the society. The state is seen as involved in limiting freedom of speech, reflected in the low trust in state mass-media as compared to the independent one (table 4).

Table 4: Trust in institutions (%)

	Very low trust	Low trust	Medium trust	High trust	Very high trust
Courts	25	38	28	4	5
Political parties	50	30	13	5	2
Police	29	30	29	7	5
Local Government	34	32	25	5	4
Army	25	20	26	14	5
Parliament	45	29	17	5	4
The President	53	26	16	3	2
Church	33	18	27	10	12
State media	39	22	25	11	3
Independent media	27	21	22	24	6

Main Research Findings

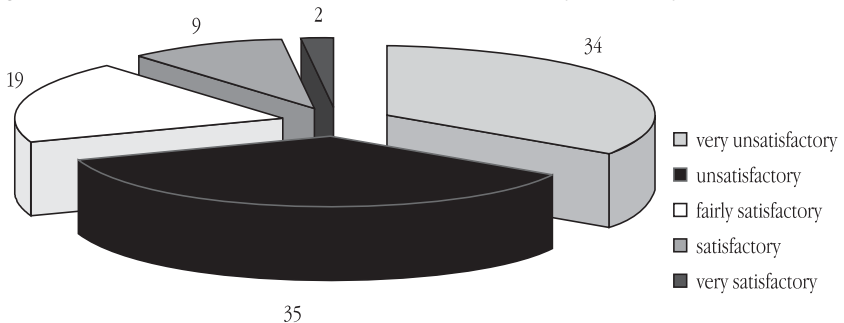
As it can be noticed from the data from table 5, democracy and economy are the dimensions the respondents are dissatisfied with. These determine decisively the other dimensions of social life, affecting decisively the way youth orient themselves in life or build their future plans.

Table 5: Satisfaction concerning the democracy and the economic system (%)

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Not very satisfied	Not at all satisfied
How satisfied are you with the way democracy works in your country?	3	6	50	41
How satisfied are you with the way economy works in your country?	7	11	40	42

The economic situation of youth and their families reflect the fact that there is not a positive perception in this respect: 69% of youth assess this dimension of life as very unsatisfactory or unsatisfactory. The effects are not of the most beneficial, firstly, there is the desire to emigrate, aspect signalled by the respondents and assessed as problem, which, in their opinion, will seriously affect the FYROM society. For many survey respondents, emigration is seen as viable and desirable solution to problems they presently face. The reasons that determine such action are: unemployment, lack of self-fulfilment conditions, lack of security, low living conditions and lack of financial resources. Of the 55% that declared their intention to leave, only 1% consider internal migration, the rest of 62% want to emigrate in the European space or further in order to increase their chances of a better life (35.8% prefer the European space, due to its proximity to home).

Figure 3: Respondents' assessment on the economic situation of their own families² (%)



In the case of FYROM, the war, as well as the new political situation have effects on the political perception. The respondents emphasize the need for political pluralism, democracy and political elite

² Scale from 1 = very unsatisfactory to 10 = very satisfactory

development, considering the current political system as young and inexperienced. This aspect is signalled also by also the survey respondents, who assess the way “democracy works in our country” as dissatisfactory in an overwhelming proportion of 91% (table 5).

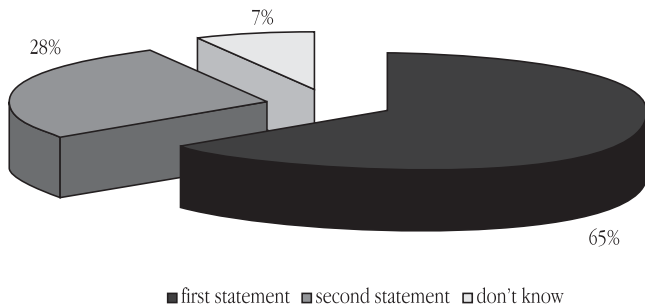
In the respondents’ opinions, the responsibility for the current situation in FYROM – the state of crisis the society is in – is the war with all that it left behind – bad economic state, blockage in democratic institution development, slowed transition to a competitive market economy.

State, transition, bad economic situation, bad system of education, bad politicians, hipper-production of staff, and also America (interfering in our internal matters) should be blamed for the situation in our society. [NGO activist]

Nevertheless, most of the responsibility is seen as belonging to the politicians – the political leaders, the politics, the government, the government policy – that follow only their own interests. The young people point out the lack of youth policies. Previous regimes are also held accountable for all that happened (war, economic crisis). Another category of actors bearing responsibility for youth problems is formed of parents, mature generations, who are not concerned with the future of the young generations, and who do not find enough time to deal with youth (especially with teenagers).

I consider that the blame for the bad situation is the crash of the old political system in Yugoslavia. I think that all former Yugoslav countries experience the same difficulties. [NGO activist]
The parents work and they are very busy. Therefore, youth is left on their own. In a poor country like ours is, it is quite impossible to build sport centres where the youth should spend some of their leisure time. Teams of people should be organized and they should work with youth, but unfortunately there are not sufficient financial means for fulfilling the needs of the activities. [NGO activist]

*Figure 4: State responsibility in economic problems of individuals
(statements: 1 – individuals should be responsible for their own welfare and
2 – the state should be responsible for everyone’s economic security)*



Main Research Findings

Young people have their own part of the responsibility, with regard to mistakes in their election options expressed for those that do not fulfil their promises. Another reason resides in the fact that part of individuals do not think in perspective when they make choices with regard to their economic, political, environmental, etc. future. As results of the survey, it can be noticed that youth involved in non-governmental organizations consider that individuals should be responsible for their own welfare (65%) compared to the 28% that expect the state to solve their economic problems. The same respondents consider the state activity as unsatisfactory especially in the areas of public order, employment and ensuring the level of living (fig. 3 and table in annex).

We are guilty ourselves. With our carelessness, for example in the field of environment protection. [unemployed]

We do not know how to choose our government [student]

The solutions formulated by youth with regard to the current state of facts involve economic reforms, reform of the education system, investment stimulation, fiscal policies that should encourage private initiatives, policies to reduce unemployment, agriculture development, youth special projects, etc.

I can note some of them here, by a non-prioritised order: strong economical reforms, export-oriented corporate policy, support of new technological revolution, reform of the education system and its harmonization with the real needs of society development policies, promotion of employment and vocational training, NGO-friendly distribution of a portion from the state budget, intensive intergovernmental international cooperation etc. [employed]

Education is perceived as able to provide solution to the current state, although state is not seen as having an effective and satisfactory action for supporting and developing this sector. The youth considers necessary to allocate funds for student initiatives, for more student internships in view of acquiring practical experience in order to be competitive on the labour market.

... job creation, harmonization of the educational system with the European experiences, opening of youth clubs as possibilities for youth participation instead of hanging around without jobs, etc. For example, the education framework should be improved in terms of introducing more practical student work, exchange of academic literature and exchange of students with other countries. [employed]

Furthermore, I would suggest to raise awareness among youth for their more active participation in the society, to be fully informed about their possibilities and duties and to provide them with the necessary communication tools. [employed]

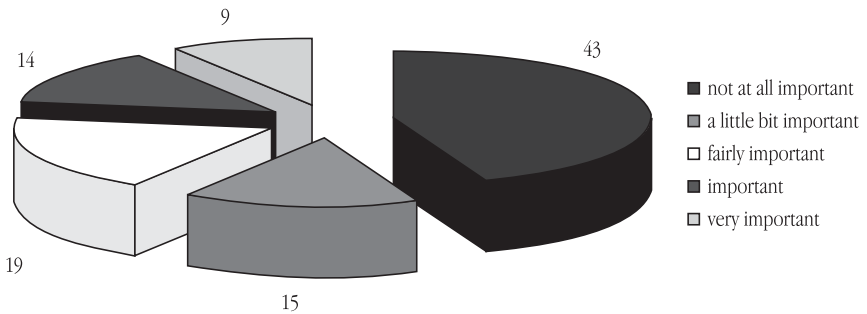
Promotion of integrated policy for production (different activities) of young leaders, more funds for student initiatives, support of housing for students, rural-urban development, tax deductions for youth NGOs, improvement of social life at national level, student exchange, intensive cooperation in implementing international voluntary services and human resource exchanges etc. [employed]

The politics dimension is seen as very important, both by the survey and focus group respondents. The political class has the greatest (legitimate) decision-making power and therefore youth have great expectations from the governance. The government are perceived as the ones with solutions to society problems, and, in the opinion of many of the focus group respondents, simultaneously responsible for the crisis situation the country is in.

Politicians are very important for the society because the global situation in the country depends on their strategy. With good policy-making they create predisposition for better and brighter future of the state. [NGO activist]

They are shaping the events that are happening in the country. It is up to their decision what will happen (war and everything else). Is it going to be better or worse, everything is up to their decisions and rules. [NGO activist]

Figure 5: Importance of politics (%)



Youth civic competence in FYROM, indicated by the respondents as a responsible act to problems the young generation deals with, is covered in the questionnaire by some questions referring to:

- frequency of discussing politics (often and sometimes 54%),
- interest manifested towards politics (very interested and fairly interested 33 %),
- participation to some form of protest (68%).

Main Research Findings

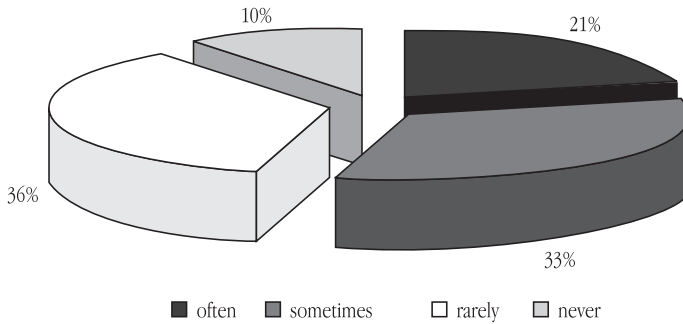
As it can be noticed from the mentioned data, young people active in civil society show interest in this dimension of society, presenting significant percentages for civic competence components.

According to the focus group respondents' answers, although the politics is responsible for the problems youth deal with, only some of the respondents consider the political dimension of society as problem, when referring to the current state of those governing the country.

The poverty and bad economic situation is the worst problems faced by youth. These are accompanied by the bad political and security situation also. [student]

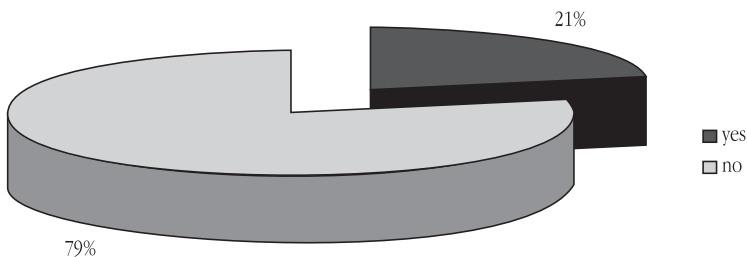
Generally speaking, if we except war or armed conflict, then I would say bad social life, unemployment, drug abuse and poverty are the worst problems youth may be confronted with. [employed]

Figure 6: Frequency in discussing politics with others



Communication with the political sphere, with political decision-making authorities is perceived as defective, for some being completely absent. Even in the case when this communication takes place, people's grievances are not taken into consideration afterwards by the decision-makers – central government or local authorities.

Figure 7: If one has contacted a politician in the last 12 months



Some of the young people, focus groups participants, state that the lack of communication with authorities can be solved by NGOs' entrance in the arena, thus ensuring the mediation between governing authorities and citizens. However, other respondents consider that not even this is possible, that the relation cannot function, this affirmation being based on their experience. The responsibility for this lack of connection between power and citizens is due to great extent to the political dimension, which does not express interest for establishing such a relationship. Nevertheless, young people consider that politicians should pay more attention to youth suggestions.

I do not think that there is a real communication on the line citizens-authorities. Few efforts were great, but nothing more. Only the NGOs put the voice and ideas of the citizens into effect. [student]

It is not true that we cannot send out opinion to the government or local authorities. But it is also not true that they take our opinions into consideration when forming the national policy. So, it is like a two-way street with a concrete wall in the middle. And the wall can evaporate if youth and citizens can be included (not only heard) in the political decision-making. [student]

The focus group participants both people active in non-governmental organizations, as well as the others signal as a problem the lack of youth involvement in political life; yet, this is not valid for the data obtained from the survey, because, as it turns out, youth involved in NGOs are politically active.

Corruption is indicated by the focus group participants as present at all levels of society, most clearly perceived at the political and government level. Nepotism, bribery, connections or political belonging are problems youth are faced with in seeking their way in life (for employment, for housing, etc). The political class is perceived as inexperienced, corrupt, ignoring the problems people run into, holding a different list of priorities, following their own interests, not considering youth problems and being responsible for human rights breaches.

We also need to solve the problem with the corruption. Corrupted politicians mean that society doesn't have any laws, economy and doesn't have anything. [NGO activist]

The corruption is the worst fear. Everything is based on corruption, so there is no competitive processes where one can express its qualities. And the whole society suffers from that. To gain a diploma, it is not up to one's qualities, but rather on connection and bribe. [student]

But our politicians have very sticky hands so that I can't say that they are good. [employed]

Nevertheless, young people expect solutions for their problems from these institutions – government, political parties. They consider that government policies may consider programs for youth, reducing unemployment among youth, ensuring closer relations between potential employers

Main Research Findings

and young graduates or young people about to graduate. The rulers are able to promulgate laws to protect youth, to punish criminality that the society is faced with, and that is manifested as a severe problem among youth, thus providing the sense of safety that people need so much.

The need to ensure education without taxes is also signalled, issue also falling in the responsibility of the government. The state is still the one which has to establish (ensure the establishment of) youth centres for adolescents to spend their free time offering them many interesting activities, and prevent them from drug abuse, joining gangs and/or committing crimes. One should add to this the organization of programs which to provide education with regard to drug addiction, alcoholism, AIDS, sexual education etc. Ensuring security is also seen as government priority, as well as stabilization of the political situation and society democratisation.

Security is the most important. People should feel safe in their country, they should have positive energy to be able to open new horizons. [unemployed]

Fiscal policies are perceived by youth as being able to provide solutions for young people by providing possibilities to purchase housing and to receive loan to start own business.

Weak youth state policy, non-sufficient education for democratic citizenship and human rights violations by the state contributed to this unpromising situation. [employed]

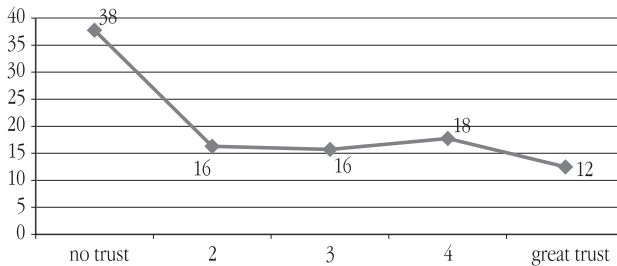
Table 6: Portrait of politicians

Features	Arguments
They are very important for society	<i>Politicians are very important for the society. A society cannot survive without politics but unfortunately it is of common knowledge that we have bad politicians. Our politicians have great desire for power and in accordance to this they are setting up their own goals and everything else is not important to them.</i>
Politicians are corrupted.	<i>But our politicians have very sticky hands, so that I cant say that they are good.</i>
Politicians do not take into consideration people's opinions	<i>I have a negative opinion of our politicians, although there are few youth representatives among them. They are still not real leaders. One cannot be a leader when not taking into consideration the voice of citizens.</i>
Politicians do not fulfil their roles and obligations toward citizens.	<i>For this situation, elected politicians are to be blamed for. They failed to fulfil the role and obligations that were given to them by the citizens.</i>

The European Union is considered by many focus group participants as the solution to the problems faced by the FYROM society. This can provide new opportunities for cooperation, general development, market opening and assistance for country democratisation. The European Union can provide assistance in the country economic stabilization, as well as that of the region (precondition for peace). European integration is considered a necessary process, which should be a priority for political leaders. The European Union must not be considered as determining the high level of confidence among youth, perhaps especially because, together with the United States, it is seen as responsible for the state of fact, for the war that took place in the former-Yugoslav space. (fig. 8).

My thinking is that the European community (especially their representatives) is guilty because of not using the international mechanisms to stop the conflict in the Balkans. It became a puzzle. For example, some of the internationals don't give a damn about the critics of international organizations for human rights. [student]

Figure 8: Trust in European Union (%)



The accession process is perceived by the focus group participants as not being a simple one, but requiring compromise, costs, efforts that should start from within the FYROM society. The accession conditions imply the need to adopt reforms in economy, in legislation, as well as the need to stabilize the country and to democratise its institutions in order to prevent a new-armed conflict. To all these, the respondents signal the need for information regarding the European Union, regarding the conditions FYROM should fulfil, need that can be satisfied by media campaigns.

For some of the focus group participants, the accession conditions imposed by the EU and the selection that takes place involve discrimination and constitute an obstacle especially for Balkan countries, which suffered from internal wars. Part of the respondents are pessimistic and do not believe that the European Union accession process is possible in the near future, mainly because of the conditions imposed in order to be considered eligible.

Main Research Findings

In this process, the only bad thing is the selection of member countries and I am against any discriminatory relations in this regard. If there are criteria, they should be the same for all. We are all equal, aren't we? We are not guilty for our past. [unemployed]
The EU has strict guidelines for accession and they should be respected and achieved through introducing of a new know-how in the administration and corporate businesses, accompanied by law amendments. All in all, it won't be an easy process for us. [employed]

Another aspect presented by the focus group participants is the low degree of youth involvement in solving problems concerning them,

... low level of awareness of youth participation by the young people themselves [student]

An important point mentioned by the respondents refers to increasing the level of youth active participation in society. They are considered as being able to find solutions to the problems society deals with, therefore, it is considered necessary to give better attention to their initiatives, to be encouraged and stimulated. Young people feel the need to be active participants in society, therefore their proposal is to carry out campaigns involving youth in the political system configuration, investing more in youth organizations. Youth involvement, its mobilization is seen as by the respondents as one of the viable solutions that would lead to overcoming the situation FYROM is in.

But the most important issue would be the advancement of youth participation in society. [employed]
Fresh ideas youth usually brings to the society shall be explored. They possess full creative capacity and interests to do something new, something different and sustainable. [student]
More space for young leaders instead of some three or four mandates of elderly politicians. [student]

NGO Activism

Within the qualitative research, subjects from non-governmental organizational environment have been interviewed, as well as young people with no involvement in this sector.

In the NGO activists' opinion, the non-governmental sector is still at the beginning, affected by the armed conflicts that took place on the territory of the former-Yugoslavia, yet with a good start.

NGOs are considered as associations of individuals who, free-willingly, aim to create, to help, being closer to people's need, which they can identify better and to which they can promptly answer. They are considered a way to society's democratisation, an aspect of FYROM of which subjects are not satisfied by the way it works. (table 5). In this frame, the need for NGOs to become government

partners is felt as necessary, even be non-political opposition or spokes groups of the citizens. The same respondents consider that youth involvement in NGOs ensure the necessary framework for expressing opinions and respecting rights, which can provide very good results, especially for the society's democratisation. Non-governmental organizations are considered as undertaking projects beneficial to youth and a particularly necessary activity. Some of the respondents refer to the negative side for NGOs, mentioning their involvement in mobilizing people to participate in armed conflicts.

I have positive attitude towards non-profits. I believe every young person shall be a member of some NGO or a student organization. This is the way to contribute towards implementing human rights. One cannot exercise one's rights unless one uses the mechanisms for their protection and improvement. I also like that some NGO employ young people. [student]

The non-profit sector is still in its baby suit in the region, yet it is a good starting point in building a prosperous society. [employed]

During the last year war, some NGO took side and even called upon people to take arms in their hands. This is not a way to implement citizens' initiatives. [student]

The focus group participants identify an important number of needs and interests in which the NGO sector should get involved. These can be found as what is signalled in the questionnaire as fears and problems the FYROM society deals with: human rights protection; peace keeping contribution; assistance provision to people who suffered from the war; mentality changes to ensure a climate of stability and acceptance, co-habitation; priority and community needs identification; initiatives with regard to minorities; emphasis on youth issues; employment reduction programs implementation; criminality reduction initiatives; civic education through mass-media; solving social issues; housing policy for homeless people; improvement in people's life standards; improvements in the population's education, especially that of youth by providing better employment opportunities; ensuring competent medical assistance.

Most of the survey respondents assess the non-governmental organization they belong to as having no influence on the local council and at the government level – neither local, not national (see annex). This indicates the fact that generally, individuals, even the best informed ones as the NGO / civil society activists, are not aware of the importance of their role as citizens and of their organization. Also, the duty of the ones holding office to consider citizens' opinions and suggestions, especially if they come formulated on institutional way, is not assumed.

The reduced capacity to influence decisions of those holding power is due to a certain extent to weak communication between organizations and power structures. The exchange of information and ideas takes place occasionally, without being institutionally regulated by either of the organizations,

Main Research Findings

NGO's or public institutions (see annex). Although the non-governmental organizations can contribute to better communication between citizens and politicians, their role is marginal in this mediation process; there is much potential to be developed in the future.

Despite the problems mentioned, the focus group participants indicate the need for cooperation among these NGOs, as well as between them and the state. In their opinion, NGOs should deal with solving problems that the government and politicians have no time or will to solve, thus ensuring complementarity to the government system.

However, the respondents consider that the government influences negatively the civil society development through its activities, thus the climate of society is not favourable to non-governmental organizations' activities. NGOs are also considered as the ones providing work, especially to young people, giving them the opportunity to acquire practical experience (through volunteering). In the opinion of some respondents, NGOs are the only ones concerned with youth issues.

[...]is spreading authority politic, neutering relaxed but chaotic and damageable international and inter-confessional relations, or ignores non-legal process of introducing the policy of another neighbouring country. [NGO activist]

[...]to improve the things which they are concerning that the regular government and politics doesn't have time or will to do it. [NGO activist]

The NGO sector is however considered as active and able to provide solutions to problems young people deal with, particularly by undertaking multiple activities for this age group. Priorities for young NGO activists are:

- monitoring activities and youth situation identification, thus acting in function of youth needs;
- living conditions improvement;
- refugee issues;
- formation of solid partnership with the government to reduce criminality in the Balkan area;
- youth assistance in finding employment;
- marginal groups assistance

Conclusions

At present, young FYROM citizens are confronted with numerous problems – amplified by the war – that affected the economy, the social relations, the institutional structures, and with a whole country that is now in economic crisis. Life does not offer them great satisfactions and they do not seem to have high hopes for the future. The youth is disappointed, confused and feels deceived. They are confronted with the spectrum of the war, with the fear of another armed conflict in which they could lose their lives and with the concern for both their personal security and of the beloved ones. In addition, the financial problems should not be ignored, the war being responsible for the economic situation of the country. Youth unemployment is a result of this state of fact and the respondents believe that because of this many young people prefer to emigrate. For other young people drug use is an escape from this world of problems. It is also a way to spend their free time but that has serious implications in the life of the FYROM society.

The responsibility for all these problems is with the politicians who are perceived to be following only their own interests. The political dimension is seen as very important in the society as it could be the first to provide solutions for the problems. The political class has the decision making power, but it is dominated by corruption, nepotism, bribery and it also lacks the experience to govern, as it ignores citizens' grievances and needs.

In the framework of this climate, NGOs are considered to be a way to democratise the society, viable and active partners of the government, a non-political opposition, the forum that could give to the ordinary people the opportunity to be heard. In spite of all these arguments, the political sphere does not encourage the development of this sector in FYROM.

Annexes

Methodological note

The survey was conducted on a sample of 890 subjects.

Focus group interviews:

Group Name	Number of subjects	Number of group interviews	Group composition
NGO activist	13	2	NGO activists
Un/Em	12	2	Unemployed & employed
STUD	12	2	Students

Tables

Direction of the country is on

Things go in a right direction in our country?	Percent
the direction is right	15
the direction is wrong	36
don't know/don't answer	49

State (Government) involvement in the following areas (%)

	Dissatisfied	Satisfied
Health	78	4
Education	79	6
Public order	86	7
Employment	88	4
Level of living	90	5

The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Organizational influence in decisions made by¹ (%)

	No influence at all	Limited influence	Fairly influent	Influent	Very influent
City Council	48	6	16	9	1
Regional Government	50	4	9	16	0
National Government	50	4	10	2	0

Contact with... (%)

	No	Occasional	Regular
Municipal administration or local officials	38	56	6
The city council or members of the council	46	51	3
Local parliament or local parliamentarians	57	40	3
Local political	62	37	1

¹ The difference up to 100 % is of non-answers (do not know / do not answer)

Y
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C
Youth
Issues
Challenges
and
in South-Eastern Europe

Romania

Romania



Country Presentation

Romania

Geography

<i>Location:</i>	Southeastern Europe, bordering the Black Sea, between Bulgaria and Ukraine
<i>Area:</i>	<i>total:</i> 237,500 sq km <i>land:</i> 230,340 sq km <i>water:</i> 7,160 sq km
<i>Land boundaries:</i>	<i>total:</i> 2,508 km <i>border countries:</i> Bulgaria 608 km, Hungary 443 km, Moldova 450 km, Yugoslavia 476 km, Ukraine (north) 362 km, Ukraine (east) 169 km

Romania

People

<i>Population:</i>	22,364,022 (July 2001 est.)
<i>Age structure:</i>	<i>0-14 years:</i> 17.95% (male 2,054,323; female 1,959,196) <i>15-64 years:</i> 68.51% (male 7,605,751; female 7,715,434) <i>65 years and over:</i> 13.54% (male 1,255,880; female 1,773,438) (2001 est.)
<i>Population growth rate:</i>	-0.21% (2001 est.)
<i>Birth rate:</i>	10.8 births/1,000 population (2001 est.)
<i>Death rate:</i>	12.28 deaths/1,000 population (2001 est.)
<i>Net migration rate:</i>	-0.6 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2001 est.)
<i>Sex ratio:</i>	<i>at birth:</i> 1.06 male(s)/female <i>under 15 years:</i> 1.05 male(s)/female <i>15-64 years:</i> 0.99 male(s)/female <i>65 years and over:</i> 0.71 male(s)/female <i>total population:</i> 0.95 male(s)/female (2001 est.)
<i>Infant mortality rate:</i>	19.36 deaths/1,000 live births (2001 est.)
<i>Life expectancy at birth:</i>	<i>total population:</i> 70.16 years <i>male:</i> 66.36 years <i>female:</i> 74.19 years (2001 est.)
<i>Total fertility rate:</i>	1.35 children born/woman (2001 est.)
<i>Ethnic groups:</i>	Romanian 89.5%, Hungarian 7.1%, Roma 1.8%, German 0.5%, Ukrainian 0.3%, other 0.8% (1992)
<i>Religions:</i>	Romanian Orthodox 70%, Roman Catholic 3%, Uniate Catholic 3%, Protestant 6%, unaffiliated 18%

Romania	Government
<i>Country name:</i>	<i>conventional long form:</i> none <i>conventional short form:</i> Romania <i>local long form:</i> none <i>local short form:</i> Romania
<i>Government type:</i>	republic
<i>Capital:</i>	Bucharest
<i>Independence:</i>	1877 (from Ottoman Empire; republic proclaimed on 30 December 1947)
<i>National holiday:</i>	Unification Day (of Romania and Transylvania), 1 December (1918)
<i>Constitution:</i>	8 December 1991
Romania	Economy
<i>Economy – overview:</i>	Romania, one of the poorest countries in Central and Eastern Europe, began the transition from communism in 1989 with a largely obsolete industrial base and a pattern of output unsuited to the country's needs. Over the past decade economic restructuring has lagged behind most other countries in the region. Consequently, living standards have continued to fall – real wages are down over 40%. Corruption too has worsened. The EU ranks Romania last among enlargement candidates, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) rates Romania's transition progress the region's worst. The country emerged in 2000 from a punishing three-year recession thanks to strong demand in EU export markets. A new government elected in November 2000 promises to promote economic reform. Bucharest hopes to receive financial and technical assistance from international financial institutions and Western governments; negotiations over a new IMF standby agreement are to begin early in 2001. If reform stalls, Romania's ability to borrow from both public and private sources could quickly dry up, leading to another financial crisis.
<i>GDP:</i>	purchasing power parity – \$132.5 billion (2000 est.)
<i>Unemployment rate:</i>	11.5% (1999)
<i>Currency:</i>	leu (ROL)
<i>These data are taken from the site of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe.</i>	

Partner Presentation

Civitas Foundation for Civil Society

Mission

Civitas Foundation for Civil Society aims to stimulate local and regional development. When talking of development we mean a process by which the members of a society increase their personal and institutional capacities to mobilize and manage resources to produce sustainable and justly distributed improvements in their quality of life consistent with their own aspirations.

Background

Civitas Foundation for Civil Society was founded in October 1992. The main reasons for its founding was the need to enhance the local government capacity and to stimulate citizens' involvement in decision making and local governance.

How do we understand to fulfil our mission?

In order to fulfil our mission, Civitas has set the following objectives:

- to develop and implement local and regional development programmes
- to develop relations between local government and population, to support local initiatives
- to organize specialized consultancy in various fields for local governments
- to organize training courses for local public officials, both elected and appointed
- to support the establishment and functioning of non-governmental organizations

For this, we act through our two offices from Cluj-Napoca and Odorheiu Secuiesc, located in the north-western and central regions of Romania.

Principles and ideas guiding us in our activities

- Sustainability
- Competitiveness
- Respect for the principles of good partnership
- Public – private partnership development
- Innovative and holistic approach

Regional coverage and target group

The beneficiaries of the services provided by Civitas include:

- local government institutions,
- non-governmental organizations, and
- other institutions/organizations involved in local and regional development processes.

We cover the regions of Transylvania, more exactly three development macro-regions (formed of 16 counties) – marked 5,6 and 7 on the map. In this area, we work with small-sized localities and rural localities.

Based on our experience, we can claim that the main development agent in these communities is the local public administration, and the main financing source of community development is again the public administration (either from local or county level). Unfortunately, there is certain restraint from the part of the investors towards making investments in these communities and international financing programs are not very known in these communities either. In addition, there can be also mentioned weak aspects in relation to the infrastructure capacity – weak transportation and communication networks. With regard to the human resources acting for local development, especially in the case of local public administrations, we should mention the reduced capacity to attract and maintain qualified personnel, thus the human resource capacity being well under the necessities to promote development. In conclusion, the development potential of communities decreases proportionally with the statute and characteristics of localities. In the same order of ideas and as consequence of the above, financial, material and especially human resources (of the various administrative structures) are, in their turn, in accordance with the position occupied in the institutional hierarchy.

We thus consider as fully justified to support and assist these (predominantly rural) communities, where the development level is low and the financial, material and human capacities do not rise to the level of existing needs. The choice of type of assistance we should provide is determined also by the fact that there are many resources that are not used adequately at the level of each of these communities. Given the role played by the local public administration in community development processes (in most cases as the main development agent) and the importance of increasing the management capacity of LPAs, they are the primary development agents we work with.

Services

Civitas has organized its services in two components:

- **training in the fields:**
 - operational and strategic public management,
 - human resource management,
 - communication in institutional management,
 - local and regional development,
 - local community financial management
- **consultancy and assistance in:**
 - elaborating local or regional development strategies,
 - elaboration of project applications for financing,
 - human resource management, personnel policies,
 - local finances and financial management,
 - legal assistance in issues of administrative law,
 - institutional communication, public relations.

Up until now, we provided such services free of charge. In order to be able to provide high quality services in such regime, we carried out fundraising activities and grouped the services into programs: long-distance education (SEDAP) and consultancy (PRICAP). The reason for such an initiative resides in the fact that our target group does not have yet financial resources to acquire such services and the state services cannot cover their needs in such circumstances.

The training program in the form of long-distance education (SEDAP), and the consultancy (PRICAP) program are completed by active assistance in innovations. When providing active assistance in innovations, we contributed to the creation of micro-regions, on the consideration that working together on several issues would facilitate solving common problems. In this respect, we can mention the formation of the micro-region FOCOS, formed of five communes near Cluj-Napoca, Cluj county and assistance for Felso Homorodmente, a micro-region formed of two communes and a small town from Harghita county. In such cases, our active assistance involved also the elaboration of regional development plans for these micro-regions.

Moreover, assistance in innovations also covers sensitive areas, aspects otherwise less considered, such as environment protection in development. In this respect, we promote environmental issues in development, and assist in elaborating local sustainable development strategies which take in consideration this issue.

In the last four years, we implemented 26 projects. The number of beneficiaries was of 1500 local elected and appointed officials, of whom 600 participated in long-term projects involving consultancy and training provision, involving frequent contact. The number of experts that were involved in our projects was of 90, specialized in the areas mentioned above. The average annual turnover for the last four years was of 115 000 Euro.

Directions for the future

Considering that the level of development is well below the European Union standards, in which Romania aims to integrate, we are acting towards supporting visible and sustainable improvements. We shall continue with the previous program, and further undertake fundraising efforts for their financing. In addition to continuing the training and consultancy service provision, we aim to make proposals for improvements in the functioning of local public administrations, such as the introduction of the community facilitator / local development officer function in public administration.

Moreover, we intend to continue our activities while also conducting research with regard to the role of local public administrations in local and regional development, in order to further identify needs in local and regional development, aspects that needs improvement. Such initiative will enable us to refine our service provision offer and satisfy at a higher level our target group needs. Moreover, we would be able to advocate for such improvements by governmental structures in charge.

Recent publications

In order to adjust our service provision to local needs of the target group, we developed a series of training booklets, in the form of long-distance education pack, made available to the trainees both in electronic and printed format. Given that our target group covers a multiethnic geographic area, with significant percentage of Hungarian ethnics, our training materials are also available in Hungarian, as follows:

Călin Emilian Hintea, Călin Ghiolțan:

Public Management I. – Strategic Management in Public Administration
available in Romanian

Călin Emilian Hintea, Cristina Mora:

Public Management II. – Operational Management in Public Administration
available in Romanian/Hungarian

Dan Tudor Lazăr, Adrian Mihai Inceu:

Financial Management in Local Communities
available in Romanian

Marius Dodu, Ciprian Tripon:

Human Resources Management in Public Administration
available in Romanian/Hungarian

Vasile-Sebastian Dâncu:

Communication in Institutional Management

available in Romanian/Hungarian

Călin Ghiolțan, Márton Balogh, Ioan Hosu, Dacian Cosmin Dragoș:

Local and Regional Development. Theory and Practice

available in Romanian

In addition, we also published in collaboration with Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Centre for Regional Studies, a book called: Regional development and research – available in Romanian and Hungarian – comprising the research papers presented during a bilateral seminar in the summer of 2001.

We also publish an informative newsletter, “Infociv”, distributed to local development agents from several counties of Transylvania, where we have been active and established contact during our activities.

Partnerships

In the last ten years, during our activities, we have established partnerships with several county and local councils from Transylvania.

Among our academic partners, we mention the long-term collaborations with the Department of Public Administration, Babes-Bolyai University, and with the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Centre for Regional Studies.

In addition, we have cooperated with several non-governmental organizations and provided assistance to small private enterprises, in our efforts to encourage and develop public-private partnerships in the communities we work with.

Rezumat

Investigația sociologică realizată în rândul tinerilor din medii organizaționale a urmărit identificarea aspectelor problematice cu care aceștia se confruntă în perioada tranziției.

Dat fiind faptul că populația care a fost supusă investigației a fost formată în principal din tineri din sectorul nonprofit, rezultatele nu pot fi extrapolate la nivelul întregii populații de tineri din România. Dimensiunile principale ale investigației au vizat în principal să surprindă atitudinile și opiniile tinerilor referitor la modul în care aceștia se raportează la spațiul politic, economic și organizațional românesc, mai mult am încercat să vedem cum este percepută activitatea derulată de sectorul neguvernamental nonprofit.

Cea mai gravă problemă pentru subiecții cercetării pare să fie lipsa de perspectivă, foarte puțini sunt cei care mai cred că viața lor poate să se schimbe în bine într-un viitor apropiat. Astfel, șomajul sau nivelul de trai scăzut reprezintă cele mai grave situații cu care aceștia se confruntă. Cele două fenomene sunt percepute ca principalele cauze ce determină pe mulți dintre tineri să emigreze în țări Occidentale. Emigrarea pare să fie soluția pe care cei mai mulți dintre tinerii sunt dispuși să o adopte pentru a se realiza profesional și/sau material.

În opinia respondenților performanțele scăzute din economie și nivelul de trai scăzut reflectă incapacitatea elitei politice sau manageriale de a soluționa situațiile de criză ale societății românești. În acest sens, pe lângă ineficiența celor care ne conduc, corupția din societatea românească va frâna dezvoltarea societății românești.

Referindu-se la rolul organizațiilor neguvernamentale în societatea românească, opiniile tinerilor sunt puternic polarizate. Chiar dacă majoritatea apreciază ca pozitivă contribuția acestora la consolidarea proceselor democratice, există însă și poziții care arată că există un grad scăzut al vizibilității și credibilității în rândul opiniei publice. Colaborarea ONG-urilor cu autoritățile publice sau cu politicienii este încă departe de a fi o practică obișnuită pentru activiștii din organizațiile neguvernamentale.

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General Aspects

The present situation of the Romanian youth is perceived mainly in negative terms. The lack of perspectives and the insecurity of tomorrow put in question the quality of the act of government and, more often, the quality of the political leaders and of the managerial elite to administer the present state of fact. The economic reorganization specific to the period of transition is often associated with insecurity and frustrating situations. Many of the political and economic changes in the society are incomprehensible to the majority of the people, especially when these changes bring about shortages and insecurity. Under these circumstances, the young survey respondents and the focus group participants disapprove the way economy and democracy work in Romania.

Questioned about the most difficult problems they are facing, the youth indicates the lack of jobs and the lack of perspectives. After they finish their studies, the youth is encouraged to apply everything they learned in school. In the opinion of the focus group participants, once hired, the youth are integrated into a hostile environment, one that does not allow achievements according to their real potential. Up to this moment, neither society, nor the employers are too much willing to provide material help or to encourage the young graduate.

The lack of possibilities to apply what has been learned, what one has been trained for, that is theoretically there are possibilities, but practically it is very difficult to find a working place or start in life and in career. Because firstly the material dimension is not ensured and neither the society ensures innovation. At least the employed or the environment one integrates in is hostile. [NGO activist]

The aggravation of the economic situation represents one of the causes that encourage and generate the migration phenomena. Apart from the precarious economic situation, the youth also mention the lack of normality frames within which they could act; this fact underlies attitudes of mistrust concerning the near or distant future. In this context, the youth appreciate as justified their decision to leave for countries where, at least from a financial point of view, they would have better chances to succeed. Some of the respondents sustain that they would choose to live here if the Romanian society offered decent way of living and they are astonished to notice that the government does not do almost anything to prevent from emigrating the youth with a high degree of training.

A situation that is frequently pointed out by the youth with average or high qualification is the following: the youth perceive it as humiliating to accept jobs requiring less qualification than they acquired in school or in fields that have nothing to do with their professional training and interest. Under the circumstances, at least on the labour market, the youth do not have many opportunities to affirm their competence and expertise. Moreover, the received remuneration cannot provide the financial independence that they would like to have.

From the perspective of a young person, I would say: "Yes, I am sorry, I don't have money, that is the problem. I don't have money, I don't have employment perspectives, it is very bad in this country. Disgrace. I'd go westwards." [employed]

I think that the most offensive thing for us, for youth, is the fact that one prepares for a certain profession, but cannot practice it. And then it appears the phenomenon, still on what we were talking about, disintegration, centrifuge force of breaking from society and leaving to places where one can work . . . And the problem is like this: society invests in us a certain capital of time, energy, money, resources and you cannot, because the society won't allow you to, demonstrate that you can repay what has been invested in you.
[student]

Apart from the structural problems that affect the proper functioning of the economic system, the youth also mention other causes that lead to mistrust in the democratic institutions and in the rule of law. Among them, the traffic of influence and corruption that the youth have to face whenever they compete for a job. Getting a job, access to housing and other facilities are easier to obtain if one belongs to a group of privileged people (groups of influence by the political and business environments).

In the next few years, only those who have money will be privileged. You do not get a good job unless you have money. That working position is offered to you in the West, not in Romania. The jobs are limited from the point of view of their quality.. After that, there are other problems, such as housing. There are many other things to which as young person you do not have access to. Either because you do not have the money, or you cannot get in for various reasons, because you are not part of some group – privileged – politically.
[student]

When questioned about the causes which have led to the present negative state of fact, the young focus group participants pointed out some of the possible causes: corruption in the Romanian society, the disfunctionalities in the economy and last but not the least, the poor performance and

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the inefficiency of the political class. A segment of the managerial and political elite is labelled as having mentalities and visions that are out-dated and not at all performant and that can be the cause of most of the things going wrong in the society.

A distinct category of causes identified by the youth would be the great difference between the youth expectations and the Romanian realities, meaning that the youth hopes are much too high as compared to what the Romanian society is ready to offer at this point. The youth are permanently evaluating their situation as compared to the situation of the youth from Western countries. Some of the respondents admit that this type of comparisons is exaggerated and they do nothing but emphasize the youth's frustration and state of unfulfillment.

So, I think that a problem faced by youth could be the contrast between hopes and expectations that everyone has among youth nowadays and the reality that strikes them or which they see after having finished their studies. [student]

Maybe it is out of place to say it, but it is the heritage of the system up to 1989. Most of the decision-makers, have grown up in a generation that has educated them in a certain way. They cannot think otherwise. So, these have been the people that ruled us and are still ruling us. [student]

The second problem is corruption. It is huge, it is at a level that puts us first in Europe. It is impossible to do something if there is corruption. Because (the country) cannot develop and you cannot. Romanian state has cut and still cuts all the possibilities of the youth. [student]

Table 1: Satisfaction with state (government) involvement in the following areas (%)

	Very displeased	Displeased	Pleased	Very pleased
Level of living	25	64	10	1
Public order	14	57	28	1
Employment	29	59	10	1
Agriculture	29	61	9	1
Health	33	56	10	1
Education	26	53	20	1
Housing	29	58	11	1
Industry	32	59	8	1

The respondents' appreciation regarding the government involvement in the most important problems in the society are mostly negative and the highest scores relate to the public order. On the other hand, the respondents appreciate those of the institutions that contribute to their security and well-being. Apart from the above-mentioned causes, the extended transition period and the transition fiascos in the last 12 years seem to have affected people's trust and optimism regarding a better life in

the near future. The youth realism and also a new approach between youth and society would make a real contribution to change in better. Apart from society's structural deficiencies, the youth also point out the lack of an approach to support the society's development processes. The lack of individual and institutional strategies, which to function as role models for the youth, most often induces attitudes of apathy and lack of expectations among the youth. The transition of the post-communist societies cannot be reduced exclusively to the economic aspect; it also includes the transition of the system of values according to which a society is structured. The interviewed subjects believe that the post-communist period has greatly disesteemed the merit system principles regarding selection and competition. In this moment there is an inversion concerning the scale of values.

The polarization of the society at the two extremes (the very rich and the very poor) represents one of the most probable scenarios anticipated by the respondents.

I think that one of the problems may be prolonged transition. That is in the '90s everybody had hopes or bad patience, but as years went by, people started to see that those from the countries around us started making jumps westwards, started to progress, to have some successes, but us. [student]

We practically no longer have a value system now to which to relate. After the '90s, this value system that we had before, good, bad, as it was, was turned up side down. To us, everything that is abnormal tends to be considered as normal now. [unemployed]

That this is the most important problem: the lack of educational models and mostly the lack of cultural models. [NGO activist]

The lack of perspectives, the low incomes, and the low trust in state institutions decisively contribute to youth de-motivation and to reducing the options for a better life. Apathy and non-participation of most of the youth add even more to the above-mentioned state of discontent and low trust. One of the concepts that were lost in time after the 1989 Revolution is the sense of community, the trust in the others has been seriously shaken and everyone thinks of his / her own welfare. Freedom is very frequently perceived as a burden as for many, this "freedom" has caused only problems: unemployment, poverty, drugs, violence, etc. Moreover, the focus group participants believe that it is more and more difficult to find a group to integrate in.

The solutions that the interviewed people suggest mainly concern more active youth involvement in the difficulties they are confronted with. In order to solve the problems of poverty, corruption and distrust, and apart from the individual's pro-active attitudes, the involvement of governmental and non-governmental institutions is also required. Economic development is considered to be the only way to provide viable solutions for the problems that the youth in Romania faces.

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Table 2: Deepest fears in the present

The things that you fear the most in the present	Percent of responses
Prices	25
War in the area	24
Diseases	14
Unemployment	10
Criminality	7
Social disturbances	12
Children's future	3
Don't know/don't answer	5

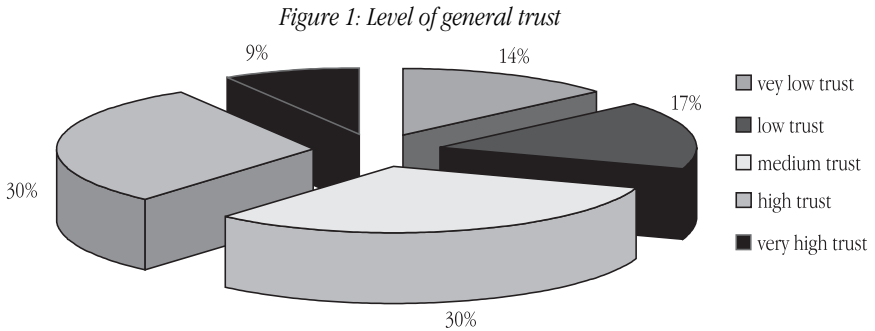
The involvement and the support of the state are instrumental at least for a certain time. The sudden withdrawal of the state from many sectors was a disaster for many of the economic and social sectors. Instruments and action frameworks are required to provide at least minimal support for the youth's social, economic and political integration in the Romanian society. Many of the youth problems are strategic problems for the development and the existence of a society. Also the state presence and involvement in sectors and activities such as education, health, family support, professional integration of the youth, etc. is a common practice. The gathered survey data show that the questioned young people are fairly discontent with the government politics in most of the sectors that should provide support for the youth.

I say that the state's lack of institutional involvement in youth matters is a fundamental fact that led to the present situation. Youth programmes have to be done for their economic welfare, they have to be granted bank loans, all sorts of investment of the kind have to be done. Why? Because then you support them in changing their mentalities and attitudes concerning the latest realities and problems. . . [employed]

(We need) more investment in studies, in training. Because we have people with real abilities and many of them could change something. As for the state, no, the state doesn't determine them to stay in the country, as it doesn't offer them anything. And they study, go abroad and will become people of the nation where they go. And we lose important people because the state doesn't know how to invest in them and how to appreciate them. And thus we lose. [student]

Trust and Civic Culture

In general, a positive environment of trust enables collaboration among people in order to achieve the society's vital goals such as common welfare and well-being. The gathered survey data show that there is a fairly high level of trust: more than one third of the respondents have high and very high trust in the others.



This general assessment of trust is transformed into real trust, reflected in attitudes towards certain groups or categories. Trust in the others is the consequence of the general attitude concerning world and life and also the result of the individuals' social experiences with different groups and in different social situations.

Table 3: Acceptance as neighbours the following groups (%)

	Accept as neighbours	
	Would not accept as neighbours	Would accept as neighbours
Christian fundamentalists	26	74
Islamic fundamentalists	39	61
Left wing extremists	33	67
Immigrants	9	91
Homosexuals	22	78
People with a criminal record	40	60
Racists	49	51
People of a different race	6	94
Right wing extremists	31	69
People who have AIDS	12	88
Drug addicts	36	64

The youth's degree of tolerance is a very important part of the civic culture. There are high levels of tolerance to be noticed concerning persons who belong to a different racial or ethnic group (emigrants or people of other race). On the other hand, the individuals and the groups who diverge from or infringe upon generally accepted rules in the community or in the society do not enjoy the same level of tolerance. The persons involved in criminal activities, the racists and the extremists of any type enjoy the lowest levels of trust. The high levels of trust represent premises for the decrease of conflicts and tensions between different social and ethnic / racial groups. The acceptance of the diversity in contemporary societies reduces the situations of tension among groups of different cultural backgrounds.

Relations with Institutions and with the Political System

The transition of the Romanian society is not only an economic or political one, but also a transition involving the systems of norms and values, both at individual and group or society level. The economic, socio-political transition means "change", and for many this equals insecurity. Apart from this "change fear", the transition period in Romania proved that the political and managerial elite is incapable of providing solutions at most of the difficult problems people are confronted with in this moment. Whether it concerns incompetence, corruption or indifference for the problems of the people they lead, the respondents consider that a change in better of the youth situation is a matter requiring time. They also think that it is hard to believe a set of laws and measures would immediately and radically change the Romanian youth's condition. On the other hand, it has to be said that the politicians after 1990 have promised, in return of the citizens' votes, to insure their well-being in a relatively short period of time. And every time this "well-being" turned out to be nothing but an elective promise. The repeated promises of the politicians and their unfulfilment have caused a change in attitude regarding the politicians and the institutions where they carry out their activities. The respondents' realism and pragmatism make them believe that there is no such thing as "miracle politics" to lead to an immediate well-being. A careful, more critical analysis of a politician's declarations and actions may contain after all some positive aspects, meaning that these critical approaches can provide alternative solutions for youth problems.

The leaders' and the youth's indifference, the individualism and the peers' lack of empathy are the signs of the weak cohesion and low trust existing in the Romanian society.

I think it is all about the indifference of the leaders. Their indifference, our indifference regarding the peers' problems. Everybody thinks only at himself/herself. [student]

I think that they can't find their place in the society anymore. It is hard to find a group to belong to. [student]

The functioning of the democratic system is possible only when the citizens have the possibility to influence actions at political level. Between the expectations of the population and the initiatives of the political class there has to be some constantly open communication channels, so both actions could undergo modifications and adjustments. The reforms promoted by the political class must create a more functional society and not generate situations of crisis or blockages. Youth distrust in the political class reflects the disruption between the political system and the citizen, this distrust testifying for the present crisis of the political regime. The consequences of this disruption between the individual and the political system can be one of the most serious and we make reference at less participation in the political life or less social support for the democracy's basic institutions. The social support insures the legitimacy of every government; the existence of open communication channels between the political class and citizens reduces the negative perceptions of state institutions. The respondents' opinions concerning the political class illustrate the above-mentioned facts. The politicians are most often perceived as negative value and behaviour models. The negative perceptions are the result of unfulfilled promises in the election campaigns and also the result of the politicians' low interest in the problems of common citizens.

A politician will never speak his mind. Because if he does that, of course he has to tell the truth as it is. He will never say that. Never. And they will always create false problems so as to catch your eye and divert your thoughts from the real problems. [student]

For most of the time, the agenda of the political class does not include many of the common citizens' expectations. The respondents mention the fact that politicians are only interested in the promotion of their own interests, this also being reflected in the laws they vote. These laws are unclear, they oppose one another and thus favour corruption. The respondents consider this corruption phenomenon to be the cause of all evil.

If the Romanian state created these conditions, passed a clear and strict legislation, without any possibility of interpretation, corruption would decrease. No doubt. First, there is corruption because of the legislation. Because of the poor legislation. It is amazing. A law can be interpreted in many ways so as to fit your interests. If you really want that, you can. [student]

Apart from these deficiencies of the political class, the respondents think that the low civic participation of the citizens represents one of the drawbacks of the Romanian society. Civic and political culture is still in their first phases of development and citizens' participation in the local and national government's processes are rare practices among the citizens. All these aspects are pointed out by the youth, the interviews standing as evidence.

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I think that a change can take place from downward to upward and not the other way round. But the individual cannot change a system. The groups, possible. [employed]
The political parties don't represent us anymore, and I don't know if it mattered to have a party of the youth or ... maybe it would be better. [student]

The low trust in political parties and in the institutional system determines some of the respondents to state that a reform of the political institutions is essential. The reform of the political space has to be done taking into consideration the economic realities or the dominant system of values in the Romanian society. One of the suggestions proposed by the youth would be to revitalize the present political class with young people and to elaborate new social policies.

We have the legal and concrete means to help in this moment. By who we are. This is it. [employed]

First, adequate social politics and only then we have to change the mentalities. To change them. Regarding the development of the next generation. [student]

When they have a mandate, the political parties should grant more attention to the youth, and the central authorities more various and more numerous programmes to support the youth. [student]

The political parties should promote more the young people, they should bring more capable young people in the front line. The local authorities should make youth programmes, grant larger sums for the needs of the youth and the NGOs should also allocate sums for the same reasons. [student]

According to the survey data, the respondents' interest in politics is low, more than 60% of the survey respondents state that they are little interested or not at all interested in politics. If in the case of the question regarding interest for politics in general the answers show little interest, the questions concerning specific aspects of political life prove a higher interest of the youth.

Table 4: Interest in politics (%)

	Very interested	Fairly interested	Not very interested	Not at all interested
How interested are you in politics?	9	29	47	15
Interest in local politics	13	36	40	11
Interest in national politics	14	40	36	10
Interest in European politics	14	36	38	12
Interest in international politics	13	36	39	13

The low interest in politics and the distrust in the present political class represent two premises to be taken into consideration when attempting to find explanations for the low trust in institutions such as political parties, the Parliament and the Presidency. On the other hand, institutions like the

church and the army are on the first places when it comes to trust. The market economy institutions (private companies or privatisation processes) are still far from gaining positive appreciations from the majority of the youth (see annexes).

A distinct chapter referring to institutional trust concerns trust in the Euro-Atlantic institutions. The Euro-Atlantic integration process that Romania is engaged in represents for most of the Romanians a ray of hope for a better life. The opinion polls carried out at national level show the fact that the majority of the population supports both the EU and the NATO integration. As for the politicians, the steps for integration in the Euro-Atlantic structures have become many times essential elective topics that are exploited in a manner to increase the popularity of a party or a political figure. The perception that most of the people have with regard to the integration processes is the result of political declarations and mass-media analyses. The positive measures concerning integration (e.g. no visas are required for Romanians travelling in the European space) induce positive reactions among citizens, while the austerity measures imposed by the European representatives determine rejection attitudes regarding these integration processes. In this framework, the respondents' opinions concerning the European institutions and the integration process are strikingly polarized. Some of the statements of the focus group participants assess the integration process as positive, but there is also criticism regarding this initiative.

Romania's accession in the EU is perceived as an important matter, as a necessity, especially from an economic point of view. Criticism appears when it comes to the high costs of the integration or Romania's place and role inside the new structures. The youth consider that Romania will be placed somewhere in the background as long as the economy is not competitive; many youth fear the risk of becoming just a sale market for West European economies.

I think that we need to go in this direction of integration because we cannot afford to self-exclude ourselves. Of course there are advantages and disadvantages. But if we weigh these two, the balance clearly points in favour of the advantages. [student]

EU is undoubtedly the future in Europe. It is not possible to stay outside of EU, it is not possible to stay outside of NATO because this is the way. And personally, I and probably all of us would be guaranteed that eventually, probably by the time we are there democracy and the first step, transition is over. It is true. There may be some disadvantages. We may not see them now, but we shall. In my opinion, 99%, up to now, there will be advantages. [student]

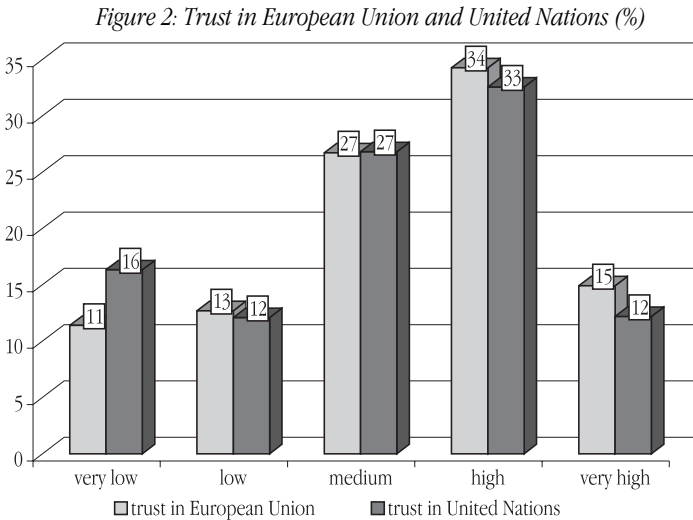
Many respondents are disturbed by the fact that the EU has too many demands for Romania and that the European bureaucracy is as full of red-tape as the Romanian one.

The survey data show that the youth are rather moderate when it comes to EU integration: only 12% of them say that they have a lot of trust in the EU. The same moderate attitudes are expressed

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with regard to the United Nations. These types of attitudes are determined by the fact that during recent years, they notice only the fact that there are all sorts of demands coming from international institutions, but their everyday life has not undergone significant changes in better.

*Many times the European bureaucracy is bigger than the Romanian one. [employed]
The first thing that comes to my mind: we get rid of some bars and get other ones. I think.
My opinion. EU and all this is a sort of tyranny, in between inverted marks. And I refer to many things that are imposed to us. And measures. I don't know what else to say. [student]
I don't think that entering the EU solves our problems. There will be only changes, but I don't believe in the myth like that, belonging to the EU or to what ... They are very large, like that at high levels, they sound good, they are forms of control, but among regular people like us I don't think we feel something. [student]*



Although in this period everybody is focused on the integration process, people are still not sufficiently informed about the costs and the benefits of becoming EU member. The government is responsible for the good or the bad results of the integration processes and it is also the government that should adopt measures to support the economic development and to eradicate corruption, thus also increasing people's living standards and the chances for EU accession.

NGO Activism

The fall of the communist regime in 1989 is the moment when we assist at the rebirth of the non-government non-for-profit sector in Romania. The Ceausescu regime did not allow the functioning of any organization or group under political control. The distrust and the suspicion concerning everything and everyone represented one of the constant elements of the communist regime. The lack of debates concerning society reform projects before 1989 had later on repercussions on the post-revolution Romanian society. The political system after 1990 started from the idea of the individual's free association. The first years after the revolution brought about a rapid increase in number of non-government organizations. Some of them succeeded to impose themselves as important actors in the Romanian's society reorganization or reform processes. However, most of them failed to prove that they have something to say in their role of intermediaries between the citizens and the state institutions.

Although the general situation of the sector has much improved, there is still a long way to go until the third sector becomes a serious partner of the political system and a promoter of participatory democracy. After 1990, some of the Romanian youth have had the chance to work and carry out activities inside the NGO sector.

The focus group participants believe that the liberty of association is very important. The role of intermediary between citizens and public authorities, the possibility to emend decisions of local and central authorities are the most important functions of the non-government sector.

The right to association of youth is a good thing. Not like before '89 when we could not register such . . . such thing. [unemployed]

Sponsorship made by some large foundations either to small businessmen or who want to open one, then those, amounts and scholarships granted to students, then the help given to students through materials made available to them, I mean, I refer now to a couple of larger foundations. [student]

I think that the main positive aspect is the fact that they exist. The fact that they were allowed to exist. So, their existence is a positive aspect. The fact that, in some parts, they have the role to check on certain parts of state structures that do not function as they should. And they have the complementary role to help in certain areas in which the state institutions do not function as they should. I mean, it is premature for now, with the level of development they have, to talk about positive and negative aspects. Probably in the future practice will prove if the positive aspect prevails or. . . But for now, it is definitely a good thing the fact that they exist and try to function. [employed]

Another important dimension of these organizations that the young focus group participants make reference to concerns the effectiveness of some organizations or the fact that they are more

Main Research Findings

accessible for those who need material and logistic support. The availability to get involved or to support individuals or communities represents a positive model that stimulates participation and trust in the others.

I think that foundations and organizations can work very efficient. It is also in their interest because this is what they support themselves from – the people have a good image of themselves. They are easily accessible. The red-tape is not so big as in the case of state institutions. [student]

But what I see, what I saw is that, if you are careful and with the eyes open, you can have many advantages if you do to an association and ask for help... More than if you expect from state help, for example. [student]

I know an organization, of course, and I like their motto. They help many people and in the same time, they learn them to help others in their turn. And I like it. [student]

Even if these last twelve years have brought about a spectacular increase in number of NGOs, this development is only a quantitative one; there is a significant difference from the point of view of the quality. Among the negative aspects identified by the respondents we can mention the fact that NGOs have not succeeded yet to impose themselves upon the public space, most of the organizations remaining unknown to the beneficiaries. On the other hand, there is no collaboration practice yet with local authorities or with representatives of political parties.

And I think that this is one of the mistakes of the NGO sector, which has not managed to express opinions or make leaders of opinion. [student]

Table 5: Contacts with... (%)

	No contact	Occasional contact	Regular contact
Municipal administration or local officials	20	54	26
The city council or member of the council	22	52	26
Local parliament or local parliamentarians	56	36	8
Local political parties or politicians	54	35	11

Another negative aspect is that many NGOs are just formally established and they carry out no activities at all. The lack of transparency in managing funds is a serious accusation brought to the NGO sector, this fact contributing to the decrease of the citizens' level of trust in these organizations. It is difficult to say what is the amplitude of this phenomenon, but it is certain that some of the NGOs are perceived negatively.

Yes, there are many foundations and organizations that have been established for the sake of being established. They do not have such great power, so they are not over the entire country, to help the individual, for they don't really have the possibility to help the society. [student]

They use foundations and organizations, I don't mean all, but many of them are just a front behind which many things happen. [student]

Even if there are certain deficiencies in the functioning of the non-profit sector, the respondents believe in a future that will bring changes in better in the framework of this sector. We have to admit that its development is possible only if the activities and the programmes of these organizations involve persons with initiative or people with innovative ideas. Moreover, some of the participants believe that what is indeed necessary is to increase the professional level of those who work in NGOs. All these structural changes are difficult to accomplish from one day to another. Values such as civic spirit and voluntary participation have lost from their consistency. During the communist regime, voluntary participation was many times associated with propaganda politically coordinated by the communist party. It takes time to change these negative representations of participation and volunteering and to develop a mature civic culture. There are however some directions that the NGOs should follow in the near future: more active youth involvement, development of the relationships with the public institutions, the use of qualified persons in public relations activities, etc.

To develop professional courses and work with youth [employed]

Need of professionalism of activities, of methods, of relations with state institutions...

I think that the strategies of action should be diversified. [NGO activist]

In the category of advantages we can mention the fact that these organizations seek people with ideas, people with initiative, and sponsors them, finances them to put their ideas in practice. [student]

Social protection in general. As complementary action, which was I was saying, to be interested and say the ability that the specialized organs have and for them to intervene exactly where there are disfunctionalities. And complete those gap spaces. The environment protection could be dealt by certain parts of the environment that are based only on specialized organizations, and there are also other areas. But I think these two are of priority. [employed]

Among the structural deficiencies we can also include the subjects' observations concerning the use of a language that contains many clichés and standard wording. Many organizations do not have a clear strategy, they cannot specify exactly which are their goals and action priorities on short and medium term. If earlier we made reference to the lack of communication with public institutions, now we have to add that most of the time, there is a constant competition instead of a relationship

of collaboration among NGOs. Certainly, there are limited resources these organizations compete for (especially concerning fundraising), but this competition does not have to fragment or to affect in any way the image and the credibility of the sector.

Another reproach that I would make would be the blocking into a rather limited language and some patterns of activities. [student]

...Lack of culture with regard to the fact that, unfortunately, most NGOs and within NGOs there is lack of objectives, of goals towards what should be done within the NGO.

[NGO activist]

Lack of volunteerism, lack of lobbying culture, which I think lacks very much in Romania and it's a shame. [NGO activist]

Conclusions

According to the survey data analysis or the focus group data analysis, the situation of the youth in Romania is problematic. The most frequent causes of discontent concern the political arena and the present political class. Many of the respondents hold responsible the political elite of the last 12 years for the precarious state of the Romanian society. The portrait of the politician is a negative one – as negative as the perception of most of the state institutions. The youth economic situation generates a state of discontent and concern among the subjects. The bad functioning of the economy is thought to be caused by the structural deficiencies inherited from the communist period, but also by the incapacity of the managerial elite to find viable solutions for the economy problems. Given the circumstances that the youth seem not to be able to lead a normal life (unemployment, lack of confidence that the situation can improve in the near future), many of them seriously consider the possibility to leave the country, emigration being one of the most severe phenomena among the youth.

At the basis of every political and economic problem is corruption, a phenomenon mentioned by everyone as being present in all the fields and at all social levels.

Regarding the integration processes in the Euro-Atlantic structures, we may say that these processes are perceived with trust and with the hope that they will contribute to solve the socio-economic problems that the youth is confronted with nowadays.

The youth perception of the NGO sector reflects both positive and negative aspects. The need of a more active involvement in the life of the community, the establishment of partnerships and communication channels with local authorities or with political decision-makers, the inter-sector cooperation, the increase in transparency of the non-government sector towards the public, the encouragement of civic participation and volunteering would be some of the challenges identified by the youth in the framework of the research.

Annexes

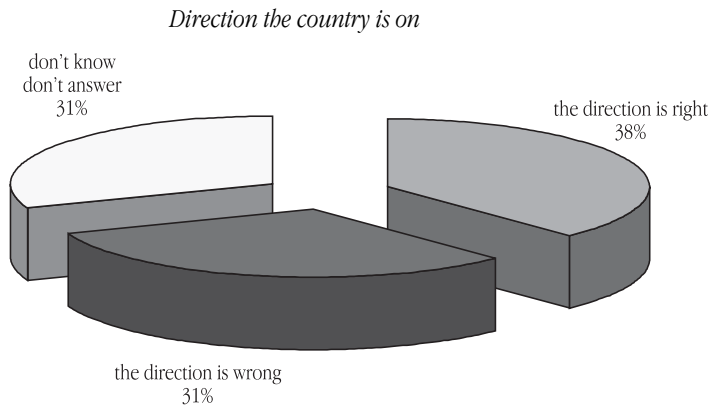
Methodological note

The survey was conducted on a sample of 994 subjects.

The focus group interviews were conducted as follows:

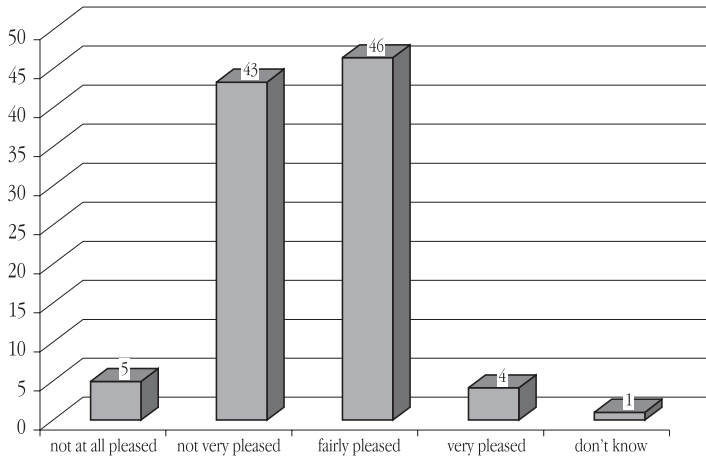
Group Name	Number of interviews	Number of subjects	Group composition
NGO	2	14	NGO activists
UE	2	14	Unemployed & employed
STUD	2	14	Students

Tables and figures



Annexes

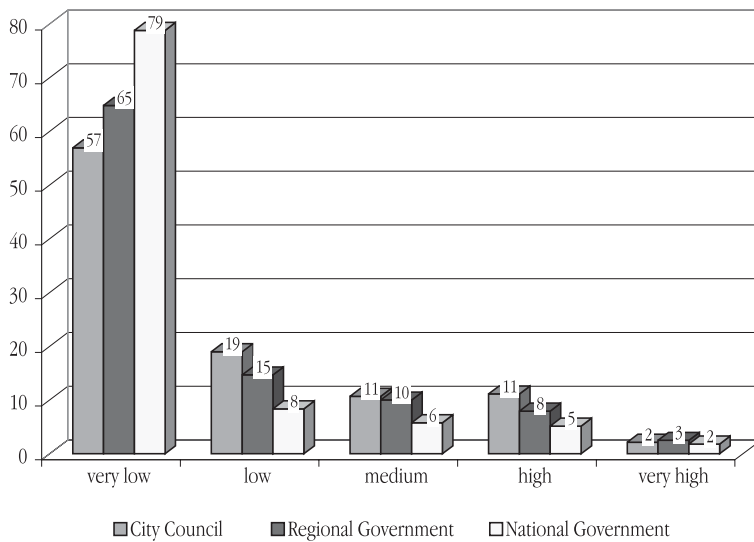
Satisfaction with way of living (%)



Trust in institutions (%)

	Very low	Low	Medium	High	Very high
Courts	13	18	32	30	7
Political parties	32	30	25	11	2
Police	14	18	33	28	6
Local authorities	11	18	37	29	6
Army	20	16	27	26	11
Parliament	29	24	26	17	4
Church	17	11	23	31	18
Trade unions	22	20	28	27	4
President	29	21	31	16	2
Private enterprises	17	19	30	26	8
Independent media	20	20	35	21	4
Privatisation	28	22	28	17	5

Influence on decision-makers (%)



YOUTH
ISSUES AND
CHALLENGES
in South-Eastern Europe

Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

Federal Republic of Yugoslavia



Country Presentation

Yugoslavia

Geography

<i>Location:</i>	Southeastern Europe, bordering the Adriatic Sea, between Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina
<i>Land boundaries:</i>	<i>total:</i> 2,246 km <i>border countries:</i> Albania 287 km, Bosnia and Herzegovina 527 km, Bulgaria 318 km, Croatia (north) 241 km, Croatia (south) 25 km, Hungary 151 km, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 221 km, Romania 476 km

Yugoslavia

People

<i>Population:</i>	10,677,290 note: all data dealing with population is subject to considerable error because of the dislocations caused by military action and ethnic cleansing (July 2001 est.)
<i>Age structure:</i>	<i>0-14 years:</i> 19.8% (male 1,095,905; female 1,024,123) <i>15-64 years:</i> 65.3% (male 3,415,728; female 3,553,343) <i>65 years and over:</i> 14.9% (male 681,559; female 906,632) (2001 est.)
<i>Population growth rate:</i>	-0.27% (2001 est.)
<i>Birth rate:</i>	12.61 births/1,000 population (2001 est.)
<i>Death rate:</i>	10.54 deaths/1,000 population (2001 est.)
<i>Net migration rate:</i>	-4.71 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2001 est.)
<i>Sex ratio:</i>	<i>at birth:</i> 1.08 male(s)/female <i>under 15 years:</i> 1.08 male(s)/female <i>15-64 years:</i> 0.96 male(s)/female <i>65 years and over:</i> 0.75 male(s)/female <i>total population:</i> 0.95 male(s)/female (2001 est.)
<i>Infant mortality rate:</i>	17.42 deaths/1,000 live births (2001 est.)
<i>Life expectancy at birth:</i>	<i>total population:</i> 73.5 years <i>male:</i> 70.57 years <i>female:</i> 76.67 years (2001 est.)
<i>Total fertility rate:</i>	1.75 children born/woman (2001 est.)
<i>Ethnic groups:</i>	Serb 62.6%, Albanian 16.5%, Montenegrin 5%, Hungarian 3.3%, other 12.6% (1991)
<i>Religions:</i>	Orthodox 65%, Muslim 19%, Roman Catholic 4%, Protestant 1%, other 11%

Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

Yugoslavia

Government

<i>Country name:</i>	<i>conventional long form:</i> Federal Republic of Yugoslavia <i>conventional short form:</i> Yugoslavia <i>local long form:</i> Savezna Republika Jugoslavija <i>local short form:</i> Jugoslavija
<i>Government type:</i>	republic
<i>Capital:</i>	Belgrade
<i>Administrative divisions:</i>	2 republics (republike, singular – republika); and 2 nominally autonomous provinces* (autonomn pokrajine, singular – autonomna pokrajina); Kosovo*, Montenegro, Serbia, Vojvodina*
<i>Independence:</i>	27 April 1992 (Federal Republic of Yugoslavia or FRY formed as self-proclaimed successor to the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia or SFRY)
<i>National holiday:</i>	Republic Day, 29 November
<i>Constitution:</i>	27 April 1992

Yugoslavia

Economy

Economy – overview: The swift collapse of the Yugoslav federation in 1991 was followed by highly destructive warfare, the destabilization of republic boundaries, and the breakup of important interrepublic trade flows. Output in Yugoslavia dropped by half in 1992-93. Like the other former Yugoslav republics, it had depended on its sister republics for large amounts of energy and manufactures. Wide differences in climate, mineral resources, and levels of technology among the republics accentuated this interdependence, as did the communist practice of concentrating much industrial output in a small number of giant plants. The breakup of many of the trade links, the sharp drop in output as industrial plants lost suppliers and markets, and the destruction of physical assets in the fighting all have contributed to the economic difficulties of the republics. Hyperinflation ended with the establishment of a new currency unit in June 1993; prices were relatively stable from 1995 through 1997, but inflationary pressures resurged in 1998. Reliable statistics continue to be hard to come by, and the GDP estimate is extremely rough. The economic boom anticipated by the government after the suspension of UN sanctions in December 1995 has failed to materialize. Government mismanagement of the economy is largely to blame, but the damage to Yugoslavia's infrastructure and industry by the NATO bombing during the war in Kosovo have added to problems. All sanctions now have been lifted. Yugoslavia is in the first stage of economic reform. Severe electricity shortages are chronic, the result of lack of investment by former regimes, depleted hydropower reservoirs due to extended drought, and lack of funds. GDP growth in 2000 was perhaps 15%, which made up for a large part of the 20% decline of 1999.

GDP: purchasing power parity – \$24.2 billion (2000 est.)

Unemployment rate: 30% (2000 est.)

Currency: new Yugoslav dinar (YUM); note – in Montenegro the German deutsche mark is legal tender (1999)

These data are taken from the site of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe.

Partner Presentations

Libergraf – Regional Centre for Civic Initiatives

About us

We are a TEAM, the group of young people, activist, who wanted to spread ideas of open, democratic society in our country.

We started at 1997. as antiwar group of young peoples. After 4 years of existing, “Libegraf” has become respectable NGO in Western Serbia, and wider in whole third sector in Serbia.

Today, Libergraf has six full-time personnel and about 20 assistants and associates.

Organization

Libergraf is the regional center for strengthening civic society and democracy in the region of Western Serbia, established in 1998, by the group of young people, activist, who wanted to spread ideas of open, democratic society in local community.

Our mission is strengthen civic society trough public education, promote fundamental human rights, minority rights and democracy.

The main activities of Libergraf are organizing lectures, seminars, round tables, conferences; multimedia programs, showing documentaries; purchasing books and magazines in order to inform and educate the citizens on the basic principles of an open democratic civic society.

Past and Current Projects

Increasing civic participation at the local level

Project “ Increasing Civic Participation At The Local Level” includes the number of educational seminars, town meetings, lectures and multimedia performances the aim of which is increasing pro-civic activism in Serbia and promoting people’s knowledge of the basic principles of democratic processes, civil responsibility and human rights.

Position and responsibility of journalists in local media

This project included quantitative researches about the position of journalists and media in local community including all important information about them, level of influence of media on local community and problems encountered by local media.

Which local government do we need?

This was the joint project of 8 NGOs from Serbia with the aim to define and research major problems of local government in 8 towns of Serbia, as well as to suggest possible solution in order to advance development of the local community.

Umno, uzice network of NGOs

Major purpose of the project was the advance of the network of civil participation that would lead to easier and efficient accomplishing of the aims and purposes of each NGO and common goals of all NGOs in this region.

We still laugh

Workshops for children refugees from Bosnia, Croatia and Kosovo, as well as for other children imperilled by a dysfunctional family situation and poverty.

G.O.T.V. – Folk the vote

Libergraf's project "G.O.T.V – Folk The Vote" is regional campaign with the aim to increase civil awareness about the election rights as one of fundamental rights of democratic society. The goal of the campaign was the turnout of the largest possible number of voters in this region, through several project activities.

G.O.T.V. – Folk the vote / part two

Regional campaign which targeted the population of four towns in the Region (Uzice, Pozega, Sevojno and Priboj) as well as four villages in the vicinity of Uzice, those that had a feeble turnout at the elections in September 2000.

It's time to change a time

The main goal of the project is to encourage active participation of the young in creating and improving the quality of entertainment and cultural contents for the young in Uzice and also the influence in changing the attitude and habits related for the late evening go out's. This project includes number of cultural, sports, music, art and other programs in aim to increase activism of young in Uzice.

Campaign for responsibility of local government

Project includes campaign for responsibility of local self-government and local policy –makers, transparency in their work, research on the subjects such as trust and confidence in local government, pre-elections promises and real achievements of political parties that run local government in this term, and specific results in functioning of local government from the citizens point of view, increasing better communication and feed back between local government officials and citizens. That will be establish through media campaign, grass-root campaign (placards, leaflets), TV and radio shows and through interviews and public polls surveys, and meetings with the citizens and local government officials as a kind of direct democracy, now in power only in Switzerland and in some municipalities in New England, USA.

Development problems of nongovernmental organizations of the western serbia an sandzak and creation of civic society within borders and multiethnic regions

This project site is the territory of towns Uzice, Pozega, Prijepolje, Nova Varos, Priboj, Kosjeric, Arilje, Bajina Basta, Ivanjica, Lucani, Cajetina

The objectives of this project are supporting development of the third sector in West Serbia and Sandzak through foundation of nongovernmental organizations, with organizational, technical and program aid from the Regional Center for Civic Initiative “Libergraf” and Forum of Civic Action “Forca”; influencing the enhanced level of the civic engagement aimed at making the institutions of democratic society in each local community; establishing cooperation with representatives of the local government and private entrepreneurs and influencing the local policy making through conveying the experience of the NGO activities; organizing the regional conference of nongovernmental organizations in order to define most important directions of development of the West Serbian NGOs.

The activities of this project are: encouraging the citizen based groups to engage in civic organizing by the means of local media (TV and radio stations in respective towns). The activists of “Libergraf” and “Forca” take part in TV and radio programs. The topics are refer to following issues: the role and the importance of the NGOs, their development in Serbia and Yugoslavia, their methods and fields of work; Organizing one-day seminars in all towns with interested citizen based groups to explain the ways of citizens affiliation, to give the general data and the basic literature of NGOs, project writing and strategic planning; creating documents centers or databases about the towns appointed for the project realization. The created databases would comprise all relevant information of demography, economy capacities, social structure of the population and current problems of the communities; Two-day seminar held in Uzice with two representatives from organization from 9 towns appointed by the project. The goals of the seminar are to increase the knowledge of participants in the fields of the relations between NGO’s and political parties, local government, trade unions, media.(Advanced level) and seting up the development projects for each organization which will be presented on the conference; simultaneous action in all towns.

Conference “New Strategies for New Time”

Objectives of this Conference are development of the civil sector in West Serbia and Sandzak trough establishing the common course of non-governmental organization’s development, strengthening of the role of NGOs in the acceleration and reinforcement of democratic changes, fight against the corruption and liaison of the NGOs and public sector.

The regional core group of NGOs in western Serbia and Sandzak , which was formed as the outcome of this project, will represent the initiator of democratic and economic reforms in this region, monitor and report on the work of authorities during the transition process.

Micro Credits (Micro financing)

In January 2001. began our cooperation with the Greek NGO European Perspectives (office in Kragujevac) on the Micro financing project.

During the first phase of this project, which lasted for four months, two members of our organization completed the training in micro crediting organized by European Perspectives and lectured by Mr Braca Dimitrovski from Micro Fins organization in Belgrade.

Cities included in this project are: Kragujevac, Nis, Smederevo, Kraljevo, Uzice, Pozega, Kucevo, Velika Plana, Paracin, Krusevac, Leskovac and Pirot.

Second phase of this project includes analysing the current situation in all municipalities NGOs included in this project come from, and creating data base for those communities. Result of this activity is printing the book named “Civil society and sustainable development: working out of civil local development plans for Serbia”.

Objective of this project is empowering of Serbian economy by micro financing. Distribution of micro credits to small firms represents the driving force for revitalization of significantly ruined economic sectors in our country.

During 2002. distribution of micro credits to private firms interested in this form of cooperation was start.

Promotion of pluralism by empowering NGOs and civil society in Serbia

During year 2002. realization of this project in cooperation with European Perspectives (office in Kragujevac) and 14 other Serbian non-governmental organizations should begin on the territory of Serbia.

Objective of this project is to improve the capacities and development level of the civil actors and social groups that are active in local, regional and state level in Serbia, and to help them to acquire constructive and effective positions in the transition process our country is going trough.

Cities included in this project are: Kragujevac, Nis, Smederevo, Kraljevo, Uzice, Pozega, Kucevo, Velika Plana, Paracin, Krusevac, Leskovac and Pirot.

Target groups for this project are the most important actors of civil society, including NGOs, local authorities and management, local and state media and the public in general.

Partner Presentations

Basic activities of this project are: training about 30 participants; meetings aiming improvement of awareness and conscience of social life principles; workshops on NGO regulations, partnership relations between actors of civil society, participation and presence of the media and their relations to NGOs; creating data-base; printing series of bulletins; number of accompanying TV and radio broadcasts. This project will be realized in the next two years.

Economic reforms and privatization

The campaign is intended to support the new reforms initiated by Serbian government in its overall efforts to attract foreign investments and stabilize economy. The campaign message is that new people in the government and public institutions will do their best to improve economic situation in Serbia by introducing the privatization concept. The campaign will consist of a TV documentary, PSAs, public lectures, posters, leaflets; will pass through Uzice, Arilje, Ivanjica, Pozega, Priboj, Prijepolje, Priboj, Nova Varos and Bajina Basta. The slogan is "Privatization is not fear, but chance".

Better law for better life

This project site is the territory of towns Uzice, Pozega, Prijepolje, Nova Varos, Priboj, Kosjeric, Arilje, Bajina Basta, Ivanjica, Lucani, Cajetina

Project includes campaign for responsibility of local self-government and local policy –makers, transparency in their work, pre-elections promises and real achievements of political parties that run local government in this term, and specific results in functioning of local government from the citizens point of view, increasing better communication and feed back between local government officials and citizens, as well as promote a new local Self-government law. That will be establish through media campaign, grass-root campaign (placards, leaflets), TV and radio shows and meetings with the citizens and local government officials as a kind of direct democracy, now in power only in Switzerland and in some municipalities in New England, USA.

Our guest lecturers were:

Alexandra Posarac – World Bank Expert

Julie Mostov – Drexel University Professor Philadelphia, USA

Obrad Savic – Belgrade Circle

Zarko Paunovic – CRNPS Director

Vesna Pestic – CAA Director

Vojin Dimitrijevic – Bg. Center for Human Rights director

Miroslav Hadzic – Center for Civilian-Military Relations

Predrag Markovič – G17+

Zoran Vacic – Center for Liberal-Democratic Studies

Our Donors:

NED - National Endowment for Democracy
Open Society Fund
Olof Palme Center
USAID/OTI
Freedom House
Danish Council for Refugees
Balkan Community Initiatives Fund
U.S. Embassy Belgrade
European Commission
Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Section for International Cooperation and Development –
HELLENIC AID.

Children’s Creative Centre “Oasis”

CCC “Oasis” is the child and youth focused organization which exists from 1999., with the mission to improve the life of children and youth in Montenegro through promotion and protection of child rights. We are running several serious projects funded by our major donors Save the Children UK, Save the Children Norway, Open Society Institute Montenegro, like Club for Youth and Children, Youth Advisory, different educational and creative programmes for children and youth, local raising awareness campaigns on child rights in general and specific topics related.

Children’s Creative Centre “Oasis”

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Asocijacija za Demokratski Prosperitet – ZID

Association for Democratic Prosperity – Zid (ADP – Zid)

Organization’s History and Profile

Since its establishment in 1996, ADP-Zid has been very active in important and sensitive areas of independent media, citizen participation, regional cooperation, civil sector development, and advocacy.

From the very beginning, one of ADP-Zid’s goals was promotion of freedom of speech. Publishing the monthly magazine “ZID” was among our first activities. The magazine “ZID” has had a great impact on the large public and, therefore, has significantly contributed to the performance of democratic reforms in Montenegro. The magazine “ZID” constitutes an alternative perspective. It provides the people of Montenegro with a reliable and objective information about various issues at the local, national, as well as regional level.

ADP-Zid considers the citizen participation in community development and decision-making at local as well as national level as essential for the success of democratic reforms and improvement of quality of life. We consider voluntarism as crucial to boost citizen participation and our Volunteer Center is the first one that has been established in Montenegro (2001).

ADP-Zid considers that the democratic transition of Montenegro is closely related to regional cooperation and integration. ADP-Zid participates in two regional networks including the Citizens’ Pact for South Eastern Europe and the South East European Youth Network (SEEYN). Participation in these networks’ activities has enabled us to exchange ideas and experience with other network members. ADP-Zid has extensively used the lessons learned from this cooperation to improve its programs.

ADP-Zid’s civil sector programs and activity have two main goals: strengthening of the civil society and supporting alternative cultural initiatives. In this framework, we consider that the collaboration with other non-governmental organizations is very important to achieve these goals. ADP-Zid also works with individuals and independent artists to empower them and contribute for the development of their communities.

ADP-Zid has contributed to the implementation of various advocacy initiatives. Partnering with the American ORT, the Foundation for Development of Democratic Rights (FDDR), and the Albanian National Training and Technical Assistance Resource Center (ANTTARC) for the implementation of

the Montenegro Advocacy Program (MAP), ADP-Zid has significantly increased its involvement in the field of advocacy. MAP is a three-year USAID-funded program that aims at strengthening the capacity of a core group of Montenegrin NGOs to effectively conduct public policy advocacy activities. NGOs throughout Montenegro will benefit from training, technical assistance, and financial grants that aim at strengthening both the organizational capacity and advocacy skills.

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Pregled

Imajući u vidu situaciju u Srbiji poslednjih godina, rezultati dobijeni ovim istraživanjem oslikavaju pravo stanje stvari među mladom populacijom kod nas.

Generalno gledano, mladi u Srbiji nisu zadovoljni trenutnom situacijom u zemlji niti brzinom reformi koje su započele smenom Miloševića 2000. Situacija u kojoj se Srbija našala početkom devedesetih, raspad SFRJ, ratovi koji su se nizali jedan za drugim tokom devedesetih, stalna represija režima, nesposobnost opozicije da smeni Miloševića, na kraju i bombardovanje Srbije od strane NATO pakta ostavili su najveći trag na mladima. Procenjuje se da je oko pola miliona mladih naпустило Srbiju i otišlo na zapad u potrazi za boljim životom u poslednjih 12 godina. Napori koje su mladi učinili u promenu režima i započinjanje demokratskih promena u zemlji su ogromni. Svi protesti protiv diktature i rata započinjali su velikim studentskim i učeničkim demonstracijama u Beogradu koji su, ne retko, trajali i po više meseci. Na kraju, najveći pritisak na opozicione partije da se ujedine u borbi protiv Miloševića i najžešće kampanje vođene su od strane NVO čiji su najveći broj aktivista činili mladi.

Brzina promena koja je započela 2000. te ne ide ni putem ni brzinom koju su mladi očekivali. Političke partije, koje sada čine vladajuću koaliciju, više su zaokupljene neprekidnim međusobnim borbama i podelama nego rešavanjem gorućih društvenih problema. Demokratske institucije, parlament, vlada, sudovi, predsednik, ne izgledaju ozbiljno u očima mladih i ne pridobijaju njihovo poverenje jer su mladi i dalje na margini društva, bez zaposlenja i perspektive. Ovakva situacija se među mladom populacijom opisuje «KORAK NAPRED, DVA KORAKA NAZAD». Institucije od poverenja su, najpre crkva pa Vojska Jugoslavije, ne samo kod mladih već među celokupnom populacijom Srbije. Veliki doprinos tome, pored slabog učinka vlade, imaju ratovi kao i još jedan veliki problem koji je narastao tek posle promena, ato je ekstremni nacionalizam i javljanje novih ekstremističkih pokreta.

Rezervisanost prema EU i ostalim integracionim procesima je još jedan proizvod dugotrajne izolacije naše zemlje, kao i sukoba sa NATO paktom. Međutim, mladi na integracije gledaju kao na neminovan proces koji će našoj zemlji doneti više dobrog nego lošeg. Veliku zaslugu u tome imaju i NVO koje su najbliže i građanima ali i EU i drugim međunarodnim organizacijama. Programi edukacije i kampanje koje su NVO sprovele okupile su i edukovale veliki broj mladih koji su nastavili da budu aktivni građani svesni svojih prava i dogovornosti. problem koji se javlja u korelaciji NVO – običan građanin nastao je i još uvekje prisutan još iz vremena diktature, u tadašnje vreme rad NVO je bio polulegalan. Tadašnja vlast je imala restriktivan odnos prema

NVO i njima videla velikog protivnika, pa su one delovale van institucija države. Situacija se trenutno popravlja, uskoro će biti donet novi zakon o NVO, organizacije i donatori sda zahtevaju transparentnost i javnost u poslovanju.

Sve u svemu, trenutna situacija u zemlji nije idealna, niti onakva kakvu bi maldi želeli. Ono u čemu mladi vide šansu za svoj uspeh jeste tranzicija i otvaranje zemlje, nadaju se i veruju da će u takvoj zemlji moći da uspeju.

Main Research Findings – Serbia

General Aspects

The recent history of Serbia registered tragic events that do not need further comments. The state of the economy and the general situation of Serbia is not of nature to create high levels of content among the population, even less among young people, who are generally known for the critical attitude towards the society they live in. The political changes occurred after the end of the Milosevic regime put the political life on coordinates that promised the normalization and democratisation of the Serbian political life. These changes have strong international impact. We aim to see in the following pages the extent to which the unfavourable social political context from Serbia is reflected in the systems of attitudes and values of the young generation.

The survey and the focus group interviews conducted on young people from non-governmental environments attempted to give an overview of the expectations and hopes and to make an inventory of some of the most important problems specific to this age category.

The subjects' answers regarding the general situation of youth emphasize the structural problems faced by the Serbian economy, unemployment being the most severe phenomenon confronting the youth from Serbia. As in other former communist states, young people indicate that many of the individuals expect interventions and protection that should be provided mainly by the state. The permanent threat of poverty, the youth impossibility to manage without parents' help are some of the opinions expressed by the focus group participants, their declarations underlining the sombre perspective that many young Serbs face.

There are so many young people here not doing anything and they are still living with their parents and materially depended on them. [student]

Young people want money, but there is no possibility to earn it. They are passive; they sit around waiting for the government to find the solutions for their problems, and in reality, that's not possible [NGO activist]

I'm afraid of the poverty, and if I'll succeed in finding myself in that whole new system, after the transition. The people are afraid of the things they don't know. [NGO activist]

I am partially aware of what awaits for me in the future, and that's why I don't see my future here, at least I hope so. I'm afraid of the future here in this country. [student]

Some of the respondents condemn the passive attitude of many young people, their lack of initiative and fear to fight to change their life for the better. The lack of perspective, the apathy and poverty are causes that determine the emigration of youth from Serbia. Although some of the respondents consider that some of the things have changed for the better in Serbian society, the youth situation is still far from satisfactory. The political changes from the last years, Serbia's opening to the world positively motivate some of the young people, making them hope that the future may bring something good for them. Trust that things will change for the better represents one of the positive aspects frequently found in the respondents' opinions.

*I think that youth has its own place in the society, and fights for it. [NGO activist]
... be gap between our wishes and possibilities. We are unable to fulfil our wishes in this country. [employed]*

My biggest fear is that all my friends will leave this country, in search for a better life, and that I would stay here, alone, because I never want to leave. I feel that I belong here. [employed]

The situation seems to be a little better in these past two years. But the young people are still not aware of their possibilities, and the opportunities. [student]

The marks of the past are still present in the memory of the respondents: the fear that the "evil" – the communism – may return and the fear of war are tops among the fears expressed by the respondents. The anomic situations from Serbian society, the lack of moral or axiological reference points, financial impotence are the prerequisites determining the increase of deviant behaviours among youth. Drug consumption and criminal activities are mentioned among the most severe behaviours of this type.

The world has changed, and everything is revolving around money and we all became materialists. People less and less worry about spiritual issues. And that all includes drugs, unemployment and criminality. [unemployed]

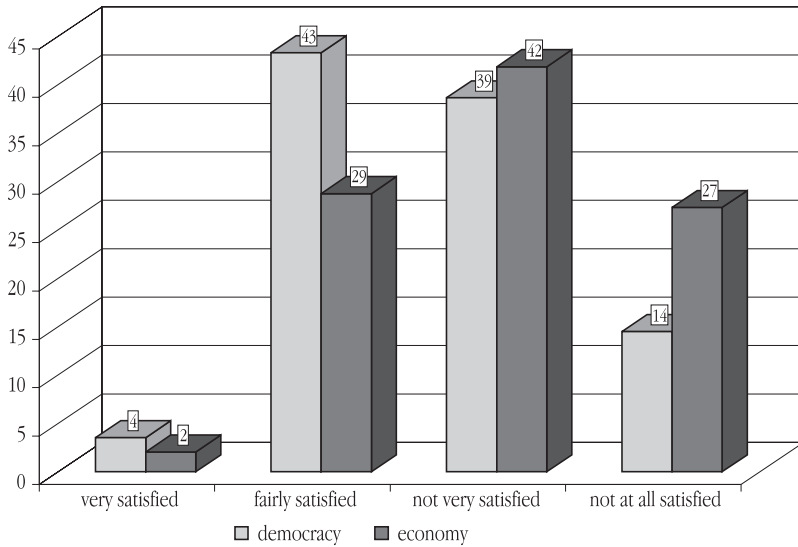
I fear that those dark forces could return to rule in this country, which would definitely result with more young people leaving this space... This didn't stop [student]

Entirely in the past two years, but we hope for the better. [unemployed]

The bad economic situation is identified as the main cause for the negative state young people are in; however, authorities, the mass media and the nationalistic propaganda from the last ten years are held accountable for the economic and social crisis of the Serbian society.

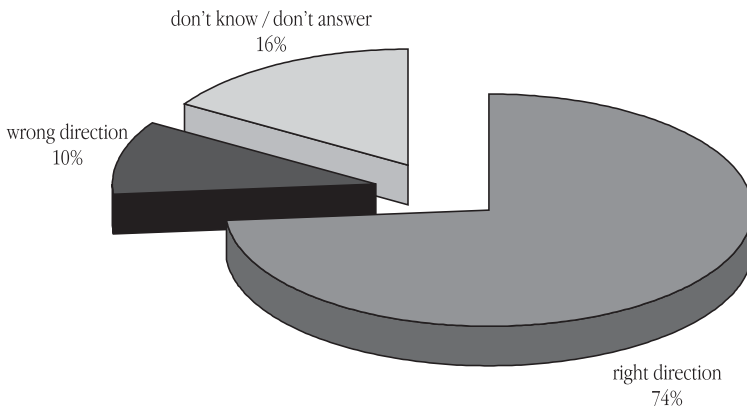
Main Research Findings

Figure 1: Satisfaction concerning the democracy and the economic system (%)



The higher level of trust in democracy (45% of the survey respondents) indicates that the political component seems to be working better than the economic one (the level of satisfaction with the functioning of the economy is barely over 30% of the survey respondents' answers), at least in the present.

Figure 2: Direction the country is on



The hope of some respondents that the future will bring normality is accompanied by another important observation: the ill-fated consequences of the past will not be so easily and very soon forgotten:

If a man had been to hell for ten years, he wouldn't have been able to forget it and stay the same... Maybe we think that we have forgotten the things that happened, but there has to be more time, and surely there have to be some consequences. ...hope is important, but it is not sufficient in our case. We definitely need something more, some money and investments in order to start living normally. [unemployed]

Trust in the present government, the hope that things can change for the better represent another part of the positive attitudes that came out during the focus group interviews. The fact that 74 % of the respondents assess the direction things are on as positive supports the presupposition that at least the investigated population category trusts and supports the current political steps made in the Serbian society towards democratisation and reform. The increase of civic activism and stronger presence of youth in the public space are some of the attitudes that youth should adopt in order to change for the better the society they live in.

The only positive thing we have is the youth. The only one... I believe in this government, I think that they are capable in doing that, they believe in us [unemployed]

Maybe we should return to the villages. Or take more part in the process of transition. [unemployed]

The biggest problem is lack of morality, the poverty and big differences among people, and I don't have in mind just the material ones. [student]

I wouldn't want the reforms to stop... Milosevic along with his mates, followed by the lack of culture and moral... We ourselves are to blame. [employed]

In the opinion of some respondents, the passiveness and low civic participation are integrant part of many young people's views on life; this sort of attitudes was generated by negative life experience vis-à-vis civic activism and trust in others and / or state institutions. School and mass media should contribute to great extent in forming new attitudes as basis for the new system of values – yet both institutions need serious changes or structural reforms.

I can't say anything new... the political situation and the people who, in the past fifteen years, haven't been able to socialize and go out at all... [student]

Young people should and must be accustomed to work and earn money... it's a completely new culture in our country, because nowadays youth thinks that money can come over night, and that's impossible. Order, work and discipline. [employed]

Our school system and the media, they have a big influence on our society, and they should be improved. [employed]

They are surrounded with lots of problems, and they don't see them as problematic, because they grew up with them, they don't know for better things. And that's why they don't try hard to change the situation and the problems. [student]

Trust and Civic Culture

The communist legacy of the last decades is responsible for the altering of social relations and the moral decay of society. As in other countries of the South Eastern Europe, the project of the totalitarian communism meant excessive politicisation of all aspects of public life; moreover, the public space invaded the private sphere. The total state control in the public space, as well as the quasi-total control of the private sphere and of social relations represent major causes in creating negative attitudes towards main state institutions. On the other hand, the freedom obtained by individuals within democratic systems was interpreted as opportunity to maximise and protect the private sphere or personal interests. Individualistic tendencies should be seen as normal reactions since individuals have been deprived of such manifestations for several decades. The state of war present for a long period of time determined individuals to adopt strategies of life that would ensure survival, the lack of security and distrust in others being important reference points for strategies of survival and adaptation to anomic situations.

The obstacles... Every process of transition hurts no matter where it is going on... The obstacle is that people here fear for their own existence, and they resent the reforms. It is understandable. [unemployed]

The mind of people is the obstacle. We have to decide what our priorities are: reforming the economy or being nationalistic. [unemployed]

Creating a system with good laws which could provide our country with new capital that would then bring new work places and jobs... everything would develop normally after that. [unemployed]

Their goals are clear. But they turn out to be ridiculous because of the condition in what this country is, and therefore they should adjust their plans to that. [student]

Any normal state depends on its laws, and the only law our people understand is the law of money. So we need to wake up first. Then we need to start working, because we are not yet accustomed to it, and youth needs motivation, motivation, motivation. We have to activate more if we want to see some results. That's it. [unemployed]

I think that we have that opportunity, in global, with the authorities, media, politicians etc. The problem is that nobody bothers to present his own ideas to someone. Many of us have good ideas and suggestions, but we don't have the strength to go further... In our minds, we won't have to do anything, someone will just come to us and ask to bear our ideas... just like that. [employed]

Unfortunately, they are important. I find them capable enough, but only for themselves, not for the people. If we who sit here now decided more, I think that it would be a better situation for all of us... [employed]

Relations with Institutions and with the Political System

Youth way of relating to the institutional system should be seen in correlation with the trust they put in the political system or in relation to the trust in others. State institutions performances, especially their contributions to individual or collective welfare represent arguments that support youth (lack of) trust in the institutional system. Of course, positive results of state institutions increase youth confidence in them.

Table 1: Trust in institutions (%)

	Very low trust	Low trust	Medium trust	High trust	Very high trust
Courts	36	34	23	3	4
Police	41	23	22	10	4
Local government	23	30	39	6	2
Army	34	17	30	14	5
Parliament	31	24	34	9	2
Church	32	16	28	14	10
Trade unions	33	17	42	7	1
The Presidency	33	25	30	9	3
Private enterprises	26	32	30	10	2
State media	41	19	31	7	2
Independent media	29	12	24	29	6
Privatisation	9	31	43	16	1

Basic democratic institutions, the parliament and the presidency accumulate the lowest level of trust capital. This situation may be explained through the extremely low level of trust the survey respondents grant to political parties and/or to the political class in general.

Although political parties are not granted high level of trust, the subjects' interests for politics is rather high (see the annex). The interest for domestic and international politics represents the first step towards youth civic activism in the public space. Even if there is discontent reflected in low trust that youth have in democratic institutions (Presidency, Parliament), youth hopes are nevertheless linked to the political elite. The focus group respondents expect that politicians create democratic institutions and conditions for their functioning.

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They are important in our society, like in any other society... I don't believe that democracy is an inborn thing, every politician wants to rule as an autocrat, the point is in creating a democratic society with normal people in it. [unemployed]

We need some competent clever people who know what they are doing, in economy, law, marketing... The politicians in our country are not important, there are a few men who rule, and the rest of them are just existing on the scene... [unemployed]

The church, the police and the army are the institutions holding the highest levels of trust of the respondents; these institutions are the ones that contribute to great extent in ensuring a climate of safety and trust among the population. Trust in institutions specific to market economy is generally low.

According to focus group interview answers, the low level of youth trust in fundamental democratic institutions can also be accounted to bad communication between government officials and citizens. As it comes out also of the survey data, the interviews reveal the fact that the respondents expect the political class to fulfil the commitments made during election campaigns.

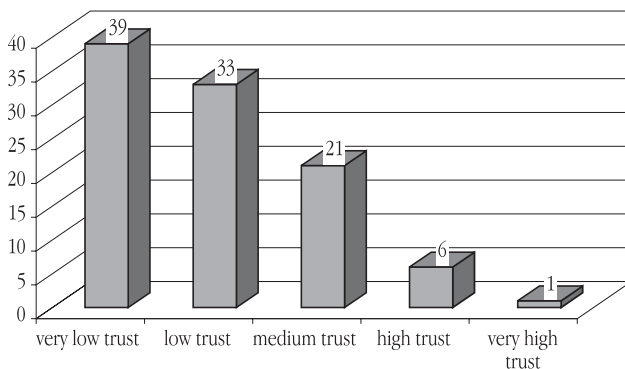
First of all, I am not informed of the aims of our government... There are so many people saying different things on the same subject, that I don't understand anything anymore, they are saying that there will be lower taxes, but I don't see the results at all. Maybe I'm not trying to be informed enough. [employed]

They have a big role in creating our lives. But at the first place they have to begin working in the interests of us the people and not for their own good. [student]

I like all the new politicians. They are all promising some real things, they are not telling us fairytales. But we shall see... [student]

Well, generally the aims are reasonable and realistic, but the question is are they going to be achieved completely... I think that they are, I don't know if anybody agrees with me, but I think that our present standard is better than it used to be. [unemployed]

Figure 3: Trust in political parties (%)



The European Union and the United Nations are two of the international institutions that implement multiple programs or activities in Serbia. The trust that respondents credit these institutions with is rather low (during and after the wars that torn apart former Yugoslavia, these two institutions had very active roles). Nevertheless, Serbia's opening to the world is assessed as positive by many young people, this representing a challenge to the same extent. In the respondents' opinions, bringing the society and economy to European standards may bring both positive and negative things. The activities undertaken by European and United Nations institutions are viewed as part of the globalisation process, which scares some of the young people because they do not think that the society they live in can successfully cope with values and practices imposed by globalisation.

I don't have any opinion; it's all very unknown to me. Every integration is good, but one should be very careful, whom should be integrate with, one mustn't run blindly for Europe and the world. [student]

The first thing on my mind is globalisation. It's O.K. for those who live in organized societies, but I don't think it's such a good idea for the poorer countries. [student]

Even if some of them are more resentful to these processes of modernization and social changes, entering the globalisation processes is perceived as unavoidable.. A better knowledge and understanding of the costs and benefits that accompany these processes would lead to reducing the sceptical attitudes.

It would be good to join them, but I don't know how informed our people are of the matter, and how prepared we are to join the EU at all. [employed]

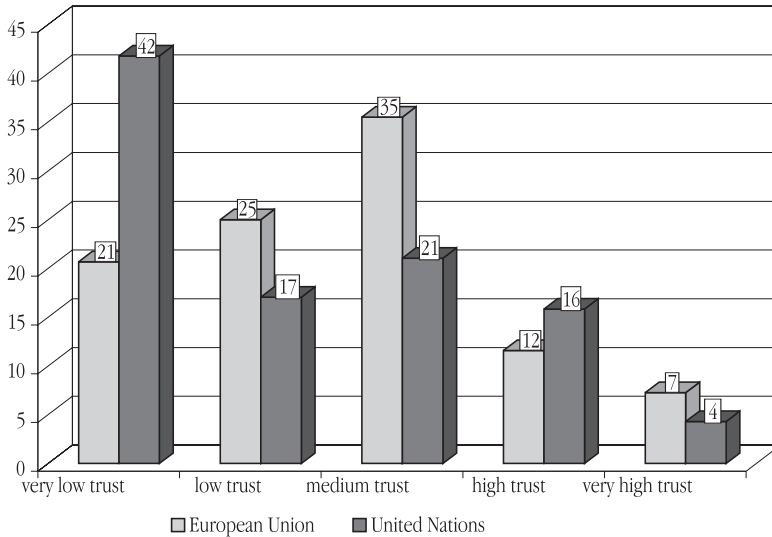
I don't know if there can be any reasonable aims in this country. We are still a virtual state, with a virtual government, there had to be bigger results of their work in two years. The results they present to us are not sufficient. [unemployed]

Individually, we don't have the opportunity to change anything with our ideas. We can express our thoughts by voting for a politician, or by joining a party, but I don't like that. [unemployed]

We should definitively start from the educational system, and there are lots of things to be done. [student]

I get to know more and more people included in NGOs every day, so I hope that they will listen to my advices more. I would like to see people in charge respond more on requests of people who put them in those positions. [employed]

Figure 4: Trust in European Union and United Nations (%)



NGO Activism

The role of NGOs in the construction of democratic societies is unanimously recognised in mature democracies. The options of citizens' organization or association in non-governmental organizations were strongly limited during times of communist ruling. The falling of communist regimes also meant the reappearance of civil society, with the mission to mediate relations between citizens and state. Some of the respondents assess as positive in the case of Serbia the appearance and the role played by these organizations. The protection of citizens' rights, strengthening democracy, the control of state institutions, raising awareness and civic responsibility represent some of the tasks for NGOs. But the initial impetus and efficiency seem to have been lost over time.

When they first appeared on our political scene they were a very positive thing because they were the only ones that did anything concrete. But after that, now, there are so many of them and they're loosing their effect. [student]

... raising the cultural and social consciousness, and educating people, not only the young but the old ones also. [student]

Those who are capable and have fresh ideas should be brought out in the foreground, and should be given the opportunity to work. [student]

A major problem related to the existence of NGOs is that most of the respondents don't know exactly what such organizations do. NGOs are not very visible and people do not know what NGOs do, therefore they cannot participate in the activities NGOs propose to citizens. The communication flows between NGOs and citizens are still defective, the insufficient communication and reduced youth involvement have negative results in the development and impact of these organizations on the life of the Serbian society. In addition to civic activism, NGOs are important socialization agents especially for youth, who can thus actively participate in debating or correcting situations of maximum interest to them. The social and economic reform processes of the Serbian society can be accelerated if the civil society constructively participates with concrete ideas or projects.

Certainly there are some organizations that are dealing with that, but the people are not informed enough of those things. There are mechanisms but they are not used well enough
[student]

My suggestion to the NGOs is to become more reachable, to advertise themselves in the medias, in order to activate and encourage more and more youth... I'm not saying that they are not reachable enough, but people in our country are specific, they need more encouraging than that... And it's a good thing to work in and with them, you are able to express your ideas and earn some money, too, to make friends and socialize more...
[employed]

One of the fundamental values standing at the basis of the NGO functioning is represented by volunteerism. The idea of volunteer work or community work has been completely devalued; consequently, we see today a weak use of this potential held by the community. As one of the respondents remarks, NGOs should nurture on new bases these practices and values. Volunteerism is not one of the strengths of the third sector from Serbia, at least in the present. In the category of negative aspects, the respondents pinpointed the weak influence that NGOs have on government actions.

Most important, in my opinion, is the control of the government... there is nothing more important at this moment, and that should definitely be done, though I don't know how big your influence in that field is. And young people must activate themselves more; those men sitting in their offices for ages won't bring anything good to this country. [employed]

I think the problem is that the people here are not very well informed about NGO. There aren't a lot of people here that know what they really are. Mostly, they have a wrong vision about it, they think that NGOs are some organizations that get money from the foreigners, and don't do anything. But, as a member, I, think it's a very positive thing, any civil organization is a good thing. I don't see anything bad about it. [NGO activist]

I think that there should be more and more volunteers, because our people are not used to working for free, not being paid. [employed]

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The lack for transparency or the insufficient communication with citizens contribute to maintaining a climate of distrust with regard to activities or to the way the funding of various programs is used. The diversification of the types of activities and programs is among the NGO priorities, these programs having to answer to problems that young Serbians face. The priorities relate to fighting drug consumption, reform of the educational system, in the sense of adjusting the content of formal education programs to realities of the transition period, and changing the mentalities and attitudes that youth have towards the world they live in.

To tell the exact truth, the NGOs get a lot of money, right? I think that their work is not presented well enough in the media. My suggestion would be to do it more carefully, because people don't know much about their activities. Or maybe I don't watch TV enough.
[unemployed]

Positive sides about the NGOs are that they include and activate a lot of young people, they are able to leave the country and show the world our way of thinking... Negative sides are about the money and the people who use their influence or their positions in the NGOs for the wrong purposes. [unemployed]

The NGOs should wake up the consciousness of people, no matter of the age... They could all be occupied on different matters, it is not efficient if every NGO does the same things.
[unemployed]

Table 3: Contact with... (%)

	No	Occasional contact	Regular contact
Contact local officials	25	64	11
Contact city council	33	51	16
Contact local parliamentarians	30	63	7
Local political parties	37	54	9

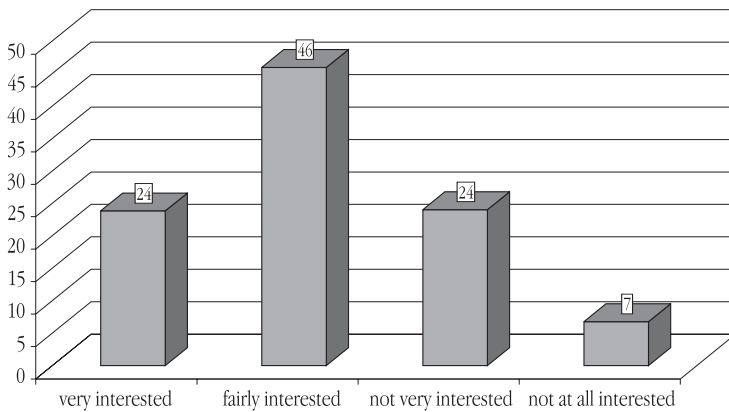
The system formed of nongovernmental organizations represents an important element that, together with political parties, configures the public space. The collaboration with the political system or with local or central authorities is essential for the functioning at normal standards of democratic societies. In the absence of such communication channels or of functional partnerships, NGOs have difficulties in getting their point across with regard to their objectives and role in society. The survey data show that these contacts with institutions and political parties are still far from satisfactory. This relation should be based on exchange of ideas or debates on important societal problems, at least as far as the relation with the political system is concerned. In new Central and Eastern European democracies, the relations between NGOs and political parties are based on competition or mutual indifference, there is no agenda shared both by politicians and NGO activists.

The lack of partnership and collaboration between NGOs and the political system is based on one side by NGOs' lack of initiative, but also the lack of reaction from the political sphere. The democratic exercise is new to all; in order to have good communication with representatives of authorities and those of the political sphere, the need for skilled NGO activists is essential.

The Greeks "invented" democracy, and we long for it even nowadays. And I think that NGOs are a modern product that will help us reach that democracy. And it's a perfected way to reach it. It brings to a decentralization of the problem, which means that through NGO people could get more aware. [student]

And NGOs should professionalize more and to build stronger organizations. [NGO activist]
I don't know much about NGOs, but I think that they are positive because they are a bond between ordinary people and some institutions, they connect those two sides. The negative side is that they are really not fully affirmed, so people don't know enough about them. People think that there is an abuse of money inside them. [employed]

Figure 5: General interest in politics (%)



Main Research Findings – Montenegro

General Aspects

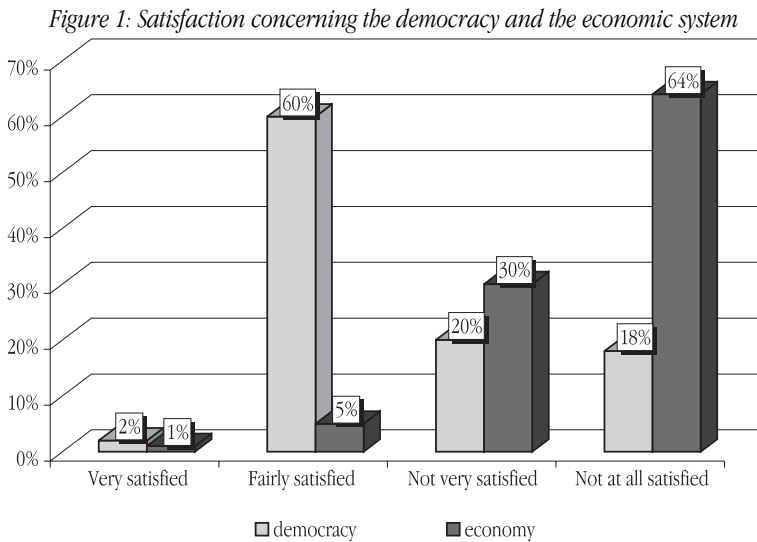
The study will approach the Montenegro situation from the perspective of the socio-economic indicators that characterize the living standard specific to this country, and it will also take into consideration the subjective evaluations and their life expectancies. The youth, a population segment with specific needs and behaviours, have a sharper critical sense whenever they evaluate the socio-economic politics offer that the governments put into practice. And this situation occurs as the aspirations specific to their age and to the idealistic culture are much higher and the life projects more daring and schematic. From this point of view, the youth in Montenegro confirm the minimal hypothesis of a culture of discontent specific to the young generation, especially when they volunteer in social projects, in other words when they are active in the NGO sector. This is the case of the interviewed youth in the framework of our inquiry. Except for the sociological assumptions that could argument the previous statement, let us have a short but enlightening look at the empiric data gathered through the questionnaires used in the research.

Most of the focus group respondents from Montenegro (67%) declare themselves very pleased or not pleased at all with their way of living; however, almost an equal proportion of these young people (65%) agree that their country is on a right direction of development. The paradox is neither apparent, nor easy to explain. Even if most of the youth consider that Montenegro is indeed on its right way, this estimation is not directly determined by the way the youth evaluate their own living conditions. In other words, among those who believe that the direction is a good one, 78% are discontent with their way of living, while among the youth who state that the country is heading on the wrong direction only 64 % are discontent (see the annex).

It seems that this situation has a multifactor explanation that, at this point, we do not intend to develop in detail. In short, however, we can say that, on one hand, the youth's evaluation of the political, social and economic situation of the country uses totally different criteria than the ones evaluating their own life: if in the first case the most important are the political criteria (the democracy functions, so the direction is good), in the second, the criteria related to everyday economic needs is essential. This distinction can be also noticed in the youth's evaluation difference concerning the political component of the society (democracy) versus the economic one, a difference shown by fig. 1. On the other hand, it seems that in judging the society's present situation an important role is played

by the youth's perception of the contrast between the present state of the society they live in – characterized by a relative social political normality – and the situation a few years ago when the lack of democracy and the threat of the war were everyday realities.

Hence, if democracy in Montenegro functions in such a manner that it satisfies 62% of the NGO active youth (one of the basic arguments of the evaluation that concludes that the direction of development is good), the situation is not the same regarding the economy: 94% of the respondents are not satisfied with the way economy works in their country (see fig. 1).



This state of discontent concerning the economy is also the result of the youth's everyday problems and experiences. Confronted with a period of major social changes, the youth live with maximal intensity the game of opportunities. As for their professional present and future, they are not judged by using only principles, but also very concretely, sometimes with pessimism. This situation occurs as most of the time, in the youth's perception, the game of opportunities means lack of opportunities and an insecure, bleak future. The analysis of the recordings made during the focus group interviews with young NGO activists reveals that the nature of the problems they are confronted with is as serious as their pessimistic evaluation.

The main problem is, as anticipated, the lack of opportunities, especially in finding a job that could ensure them a decent life in the future.

The situation in the country is burning – problem for us, the youth. I think that the last few years were very hard and without of any kind of chance for all young people. With

Main Research Findings

sanctions, without economical support and possibility to travel, meet and inform of new people and countries, other young people, and of course exchange our experiences.

[unemployed]

First, I would say that I don't see any kind of perspective in the near future. I don't see how to start a family, what to live on, where to live, in what kind of society will my children grow up.

[employed]

My greatest fears connected with future – having no exit from this situation.

[employed]

Youth's perception concerning the lack of opportunities in their own country has its origins in the unemployment threat, that closes any perspective for them and that practically nullifies all the professional training efforts made throughout the years. What is even more serious in youth opinions are the social outcomes of unemployment: delinquency, prostitution, drug traffic and consumption, etc.

I am only thinking about who is going to give me a job tomorrow when I finish my faculty, who will give me a flat, buy a car if possible... Actually, the greatest problem is what will I do tomorrow.

[NGO activist]

... Then unemployment. Unemployment makes them go to the streets, what leads to the rest of problems. What are those problems – drug addiction, criminality and prostitution. Those are the socio-pathological things youth meet; those things are the result of unemployment and material lack of safety. So, everything starts from bad living standard.

[NGO activist]

The fear of unemployment and the lack of a decent future are the source of other two fears that worry young NGO members in Montenegro: the distortion of society values and the inadequate behaviour of youth.

Firstly, the re-setting of the social values simultaneously with the liberalization of the economic, political and social life generates a state of disorientation among the youth. The cultural-value models are overturned by the population's necessity to adapt to the "rules of the free market", and this happens because there isn't a coherent system of values (compatible with the Montenegro traditions), able to keep up with the rapid political and economic changes of the '90s. In this situation, the confusion and the resentment of the youth are understandable.

Well, disordered system of values in society... People who should be our ideal are totally put away, and mafia, criminals and lot of other who don't deserve some fancy position, actually hold it. That's the reason why today just that people are models for youth.

[employed]

I think that, probably our greatest problem is inverted set of values. If I decide to make something of my life, and not just me, but any average young person will chose the easiest way, and he or she believes that it's the fastest way to get money and security as well.

[student]

The second problem that the youth in Montenegro face is even more severe. The lack of jobs able to provide the necessary income for self-support and that could answer to the needs for professional self-fulfilment or generally human fulfilment leads youth to drug addiction and delinquency. These problems that can destroy their personal life and generate major social unbalance are in one way or another the outcomes of unemployment.

Generally, I would agree with those who said that unemployment is the main problem. That can explain the rest of problems in society, drug addiction, and alcoholism. Those are all consequences of unemployment, which is on high level. [NGO activist]

Drug traffic and addiction, the state of apathy among the youth and the increase of the criminal wave cannot be kept under surveillance by the authorities that find themselves practically incapacitated to deal with these events. Drug consumption is adopted by the young generation as a solution for the economic frustration and the lack of licit activities that can provide the necessary income for survival.

Besides, I consider that one of big problems is illegal drugs. Of course, society allows it, as much as the authorities that probably get some material profit. On the other hand, the authorities do nothing to prevent all of this, so we could say that every day we have more and more young people who consume even the strongest illegal drugs, it is not alarming. I have to stress that, as I know in Montenegro, there is no institution that works on medical treatment of drug addicts, or help them in any way. But the good think is that recently some NGO work on prevention of drug addiction in primary schools, so still I am optimist, and I hope this problem will be granted better attention. [employed]

It seems that the best solution at hand for the youth to overcome this state of frustration and fear is to emigrate. The wish to make their dreams come true in a world completely lacking the problems specific to their country turns the solution to emigrate into an utopia – but what wish is not idealistic in its essence? Moreover, it is important that this wish is a sufficient reason for those who believe in it to put it into practise. Especially since they consider it as their only solution!

I agree with the opinion that the situation in the state is what hits us the most. The only solution I see is to go abroad. It is obviously the only solution, although I notice that it is a wish of most of the young people. [unemployed]
The war, of course. It contributed to the economical dropping of the state, then dropping of system of values, moral and now we are here. [employed]

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It is also the war that created a state of serious unbalance in the way society functions as a whole, and in the various activity sectors. The consequences of the war are to be found everywhere in every day's life of the people: the need to survive has changed their lives, their occupations, the way of living they were once used to; the world has changed for them – and they all share the same fault, according to one of the interviewed young people.

The war and everything besides means: crises, poverty, sudden standard fall, and the loss of the middle class. People started to work on different ways, by doing different jobs to survive. But, after the period of sanctions people go on dealing with illegal works, so it happened that educated people have to go in the streets and sell cigarettes to live, or if they don't do that, they are simply on level to survive and nothing more. For the whole situation we blame politicians, although we are guilty, too, because still we are those who have lived here in this country, and who should do something to make things better. [employed]

The social conflict, in its armed (war) or civil form (social disturbances) is still one of the most important fears and reflexive preoccupations of the youth in Montenegro. The fear of conflicts capable of overthrowing the social order (quite fragile anyway) and of making innocent victims leads the youth to believe that war is even more important and threatening than any other aspect of life – even more than it is unemployment, diseases or criminality (see table 1), aspects that the youth consider to be essential for their future (see the previous paragraphs)

Table 1: Deepest fears in the present

The things that you fear the most in the present are:	Percent of responses
Social disturbances	32
War in the area	29
Diseases	14
Children's future	8
Unemployment	7
Dont know/don't answer	5
Criminality	4
Prices	1

In the respondents' opinions, the ones responsible for this situation are difficult to identify. Perhaps the most equidistant and probable answer was given in an elegant and evasive way by one of the young people:

We are all responsible. Young people are responsible, too. We don't think about our future. We are too passive. And politicians are very guilty. They bear blame for this situation. [student]

In spite of all, for the youth, the government holds the greatest responsibility for the situation the country is in, a responsibility that was undertaken with the acceptance of the elective mandate.

As expected, the problems and the fears identified by youth can be solved, but the solutions foreseen are related rather to government activities. To reform the education and to change the present mentalities – these are possible solutions that can lead to improving the educational and cultural system and to emerging from the state of apathy that the society in Montenegro is in.

Maybe because we are conscious of our situation, and of our chances, the youth, maybe it can be in some way stimulating. [...] I think that the work market should be adapted to the educational system or eventually the education system should be changed. [employed]

Encouraging the youth to become more involved in economic activities and creating a market to give them opportunities to find a job in their field are the specific grievances of the youth.

In my opinion the most important thing is to give an opportunity to youth to be able to find a job in it's profession, when they finish with education, any kind of. [employed]

Trust and Civic Culture

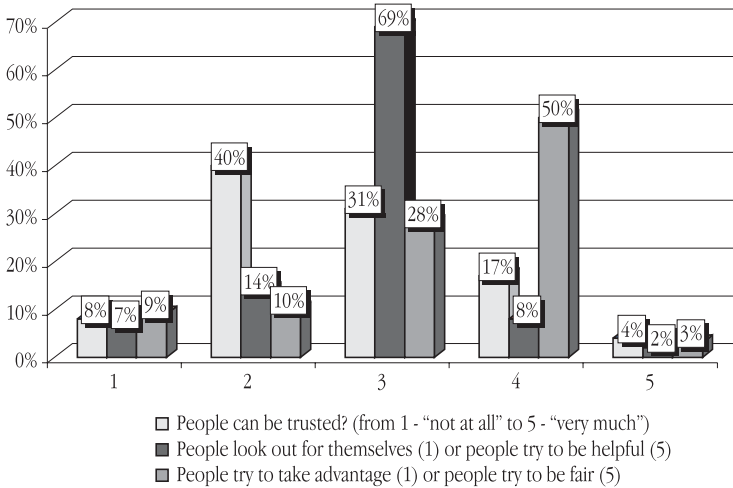
One of the key aspects that are the basis of social cohesion and the good functioning of the civic society is the confidence among community members. Without going into theoretical details concerning this aspect, it can be said that a positive attitude of trust makes possible collaboration among the people so as to achieve the society's vital goals like welfare or collective well-being. In the case of the NGO youth in Montenegro, there is a moderate level of trust: although almost half of those inquired (48%) believe that people in general are not trustworthy (compared to 21% who consider that people are trustworthy), more than half of them (53%) believe that the relationships in general among the people try to be fair (compared to 19% who believe the contrary).

The apparent contradiction between the two types of answers can have, in our opinion, a simple explanation suggested by the answers to the third question: 69% of the respondents believe that people are neither selfish, nor altruistic. Therefore, even if most of them consider that people are not trustworthy, as a subjective relationship, it does not mean that they do not believe in the fairness of people in general, especially as the fairness factor is strongly influenced by the existence and the functioning of the social principles and juridical norms. We believe that this form of real trust in something as important as fairness is extremely constructive for the consolidation of a healthy environment of social cooperation.

Regarding the way trust as general evaluation is transformed into genuine trust, personified into the attitude towards certain groups or categories, (as trust is not only a consequence of a general

attitude towards life and the world, but also a result of the individuals' social experiences with different groups and in different social situations), the attitude adopted by the participants to our inquiry is reflected by table 2.

Figure 2: Levels of general trust



As seen, for the youth in Montenegro, family is the most trustworthy (80% very high trust). As expected, the more the social distance increases, the less trust there is: except for the family, the youth has very high trust in friends (70% very high trust). Concerning the other categories proposed in our chart, the level of trust decreases more and more.

Table 2: Level of trust in the following groups of people (%)

	Very low trust	Low trust	Medium trust	High trust	Very high trust	Not applicable
Your colleagues	2	49	13	22	14	0
Members of your family	6	2	1	11	80	0
Your friends	1	7	5	16	70	1
Your neighbours	2	42	25	16	13	2
Members of this organization	1	1	51	20	24	3
People in your town/village	2	8	19	61	8	2
People in your region	4	46	18	23	5	4
People in your country	4	46	24	20	4	2
Ethnic minorities	7	42	26	16	3	6

An important aspect regarding youth civic culture is the degree of tolerance for different categories of people characterized by certain cultural or behaviour singularities that are supposed to diverge from generally accepted norms. If trust is a good indicator of the co-operation possibilities

among people, tolerance is an indicator of the acceptance and minimization of the conflicts in such a diversified society as the modern one, more and more confronted with the normative and cultural amalgam of the different social groups.

Table 3: Acceptance and tolerance (%)

	Accepting as neighbours		Should be allowed to hold public meetings	
	Would not accept	Would accept	Should not be allowed	Should be allowed
Christian fundamentalists	52	48	63	37
Islamic fundamentalists	59	41	62	38
Left wing extremists	48	52	51	49
Immigrants	21	79	27	73
Homosexuals	79	21	83	17
People with a criminal record	81	19	85	15
Racists	93	7	92	8
People of a different race	16	84	25	75
Right wing extremists	59	41	60	40
People who have AIDS	37	63	15	85
Drug addicts	52	48	45	55

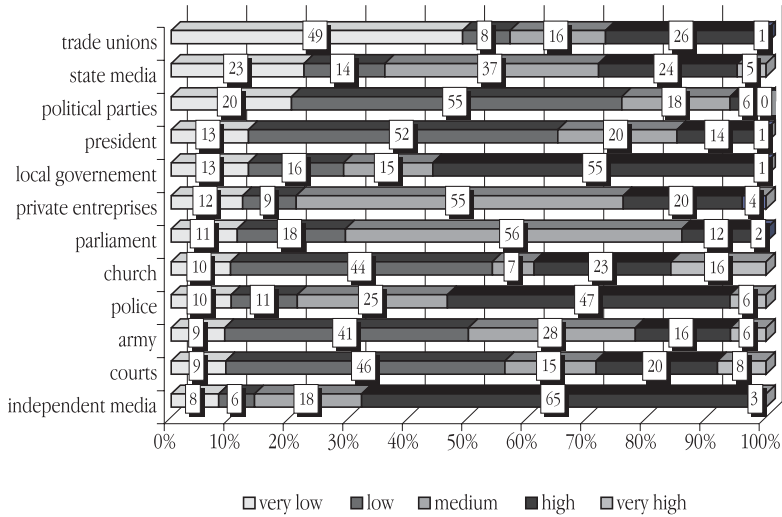
From this point of view, the young NGO members in Montenegro seem to be extremely open towards the disadvantaged social categories (see table 3), whose only "fault" is that they are ethnic minorities in difficult life situations due to a collective or unhappy individual destiny (it is the case of people of a different race, immigrants or people who have AIDS). Their degree of acceptance is very high. At the opposite end, there are those who threaten – at least at a symbolic level – social order and personal security (physical and moral) of the respondents: racists, people with a criminal record and homosexuals. This type of answers regards stereotype attitudes towards certain social groups, but, in our opinion, we do not have to jump to conclusions, at least because one elementary rationality (that is already common in contemporary social psychology): there is no implicit or causal link between the respondents' attitude and the way they would act if put in real life situations (without taking into consideration the cultural environment in which these stereotypes function).

Relations with Institutions and with the Political System

The relationship of the youth with the most important institutions of the state in Montenegro is built on a foundation of civic trust. The most credited institutions are the ones that meet the basic needs of democracy, the way perceived and understood by the youth in South-Eastern Europe: independent media, local government and police-information, participation in local governance and individual and community security. What seems to be a cliché in this area is the attitude towards the political institutions, the most discredited forms of authority being the president, the parliament and the political parties (see fig. 3).

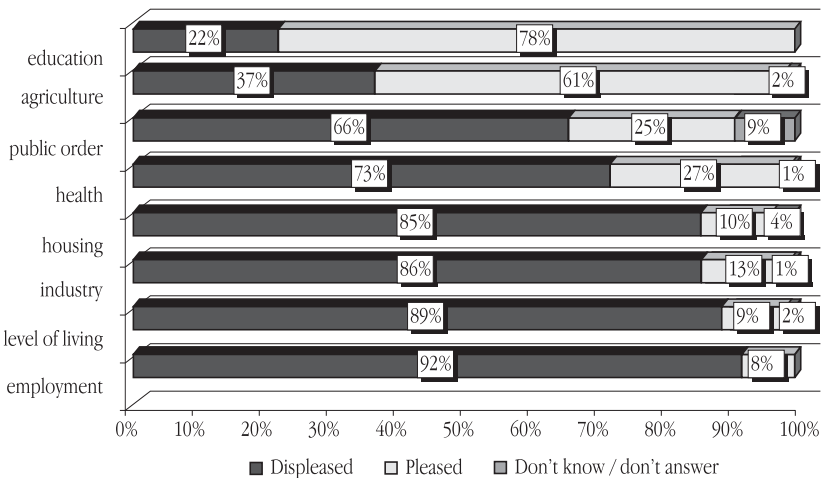
Main Research Findings

Figure 3: Trust in institutions



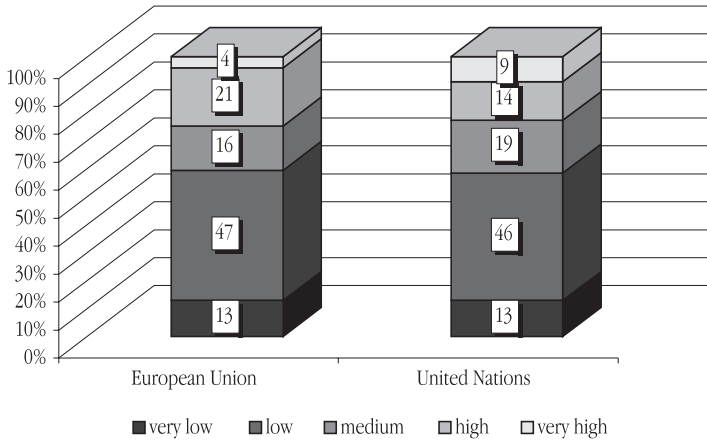
The attitude of the youth towards the institutions responsible of the nation's management is directly linked to the way they evaluate the performances of those institutions in their activity fields. Concerning the central government institutions, the evaluation that the youth in Montenegro make is a positive one only for the education and agricultural sectors. As for the other sectors of government activity involving jobs, living standards, industry, habitation, etc., there is a rather high percentage of dissatisfied respondents (see fig. 4).

Figure 4: Satisfaction with state (government) involvement in the following areas



Youth perception with regard to the two most important international organizations, the European Union and the United Nations is rather a negative one. More than half of the respondents (60%, respectively 59%) have low and very low trust in these organizations. (see fig. 5).

Figure 5: Level of trust in European Union and United Nations



Certainly, there are various explanations for this situation, however, the data we gathered do not enable us to give an full and complete set of answers. On one hand, there could be the conjuncture factors, such as the traumatic experience of the war, the attitude of these organizations towards Yugoslavia, the internal ideological counteraction, but just the same these percentages can be the simple result of other structural variables: for example, the more the respondents' level of formal education level increases, the more increases their trust in the EU. Meanwhile, their trust in the UN does not vary significantly.¹ This explanatory suggestion becomes evident if we take into consideration the answers of the focus group respondents (the majority being persons with high education). Although the general attitude is a positive one towards the EU, the detailed opinions are different. On one hand, the youth believe that the accession of their country to the EU would be a positive change. The invoked reasons are various: beginning with the material advantages and up to the changes that Montenegro has to make in order to accede to the EU, changes with beneficial results (changes in the legislation, in the economic politics, etc.). On the other hand, the accession process also implies a certain state of subordination and obedience of the candidate countries, a situation that can lead to identity frustration among the youth.

In my opinion there are two aspects – positive and negative. Positive is that they have some standards, and if we want to enter, we have to change the laws completely. We have to change the complete law structure. It means that it is again some policy of pressure,

¹ A detailed and pertinent analysis would require operations that do not belong in this general description.

Main Research Findings

because they make big changes in relation with our law. It is negative, because it is some kind of pressure on states. Positive is that they will finally make us do and change something. [unemployed]

Or, very eloquently expressed by one of the interviewed people, the fear to lose the cultural identity, the values and the traditions determines some of the young people to become vigilant with regard to homogenisation and globalisation – seen as the outcome of the political and economic integration process.

I consider that the European influence in Montenegro is positive, as much as in all the European countries, but I think that every state has to keep its identity. Anyway, the thing that representatives of EU are trying to change for 100% everything that existed not only in Montenegro but also in any other state – is a negative side, so the identity should be kept. Everything else is positive. I consider that wherever they are; they always work on the same things. Whatever they do, they do it on the same way, without regarding to differences in culture, nationalities, tradition or anything else, but they attempt to change something from its roots on the way they consider is good, positive, and usual. Wherever the European Union is, it doesn't change conscience, but it brings money. [employed]

On the other hand, the evaluation of the internal and international institutions' activities is directly linked to the relationship the population has – and in this case the youth – with political life in their country or with international politics. The way they, as civil society members, relate to politics is connected to their interest in the politics, to the experience in political activities and to the access to political communication.

In the case of the youth in Montenegro, a very high interest in local politics can be noticed (75% of the respondents are fairly interested and very interested) and for European politics (72%), while only 40% show interest in national politics.²

Table 4: Interest in politics (%)

	Very interested	Fairly interested	Not very interested	Not at all interested
Interest in local politics	19	56	21	4
Interest in national politics	13	27	49	11
Interest in European politics	6	66	23	5
Interest in international politics	5	58	30	7

Regarding political life, according to the survey data the information sources most often used by the youth in Montenegro are the newspapers, followed by audio and video means and particularly the

² It has to be noticed that the questionnaire being standardized, the subjects were not asked if by national politics they understand federal politics or that of the state of Montenegro. Accordingly, any interpretation in this respect may be hazardous and therefore, we will not make any presumptive speculations.

political news section of these media. The increased frequency of information thus reaching the public satisfies rather a function of information in real time for a category of people with an increased need in this respect (under 20% of the respondents). Although less frequently used, such means as radio and television shows and the Internet are preferred by a larger number of respondents who use them at least once a week.

Table 5: Frequencies of informational activities regarding politics (%)

	Everyday	3-4 days a week	1-2 days a week	Less frequently	Never
Reading the political content of a newspaper	18	19	7	51	5
Listening or watching news programmes on radio or TV	15	24	13	45	3
Listening or watching other programme about politics and social affairs on radio or TV	9	7	64	13	7
Using the internet to obtain information about politics and society	12	15	48	13	12

Political life has its own place in the daily activities of the youth. Politics and the citizens' interest in this field are everyday aspects of life quite important for the people of Montenegro.

...politics is involved in every sector of our life and it is very sad, I must admit. We shouldn't take care of politics so much, but it's tragic that every step in our life depends of our political opinion. You can't do anything if you aren't politically determined.
[NGO activist]

Politicians and politics are very important for our society. From my point of view they are too important. On every election there are 80 % of voters. We pay too much attention on politics, which is not normal. That's not the case in other countries. Even children know everything about politics... [student]

In youth opinions, politicians are extremely important for the society. Unfortunately, politicians are described from a negative perspective, as their political opportunism orients them rather towards their own interest and gaining power, than towards accomplishing their promises and the political programmes proposed to the nation. The portrait of politicians made by the youth in Montenegro is a very negative one. The topics that are very frequent in the organized focus groups refer exclusively to negative features of the political class.

Youth suggestions for the authorities are gathered around the same idea: mobilizing the political class to find the best way to improve the living conditions of the citizens in Montenegro.

They should understand they are not here for the authority, but for their people, the modest population, and that those populations gave them the power. [employed]

I would advice the authority to remember that we are here, and they are there because of us, and to stop giving promises, do something! [unemployed]

NGO Activism

The NGO sector represents a field of activity that holds an essential role for the youth in Montenegro. On one hand, those involved in the activities of these organizations (the members) consider that this sector is very useful for the society as it represents the most appropriate environment for the manifestation of the civil society, a common voice of the citizens that opposes the political authorities.

I think that nongovernmental organizations are completely OK, because they have a freedom of speech, the freedom of expression, they do some things that are needed in this society. I think it should be more of those who work to lead this society to some better ways, and people who lead the state should have communication with non-governmental organizations in order to know how to support the healthy spirit of the society.
[NGO activist]

The youth who is not part of this NGO system also perceive these non-profit organizations as a way to change the society.

In my opinion, in NGOs are mostly people who want to change something, to learn, to make some positive steps forward together with the society, and use the energy they have. Because, they have the opportunity to travel worldwide, to meet other people and other systems, so that they see what's wrong here, and so that they learn some good things and try to apply it here, because here we have a lot to do. [employed]

On the other hand, those who are not active in this sector, although they admit the achievements of the NGOs, have certain critical attitudes both regarding the large number of NGOs that exist only on paper and towards certain organizations that, under this denomination, carry out other types of activities than declared.

It's a good thing that NGOs exist, but the bad one is there are so many of them. We found on the Internet that there are organisations like Organisation of waiters, etc., and all of them say they are doing something, but they are not. Frankly, I think they are doing money laundry. I did not think about whether founders care about where their money goes.
[student]

Very often NGOs are used for some other things, and it is very difficult to get money from donors, and the most important thing is that the only privilege of the NGOs is that they get money. [student]

Another critic concerning NGOs takes into consideration the lack of co-operation among them and the lack of a common strategy to solve the social problems they are concerned with.

There isn't some kind of organization that gathers them, but they are working alone not knowing what the others are doing and maybe, they are working on the same problem. It's wrong to have enormous vanity and envy among them, especially among women's NGOs that are always talking about helping endangered women but, they're not connected and they don't co-operate. [student]

In order to improve the NGO activity in Montenegro, the young focus group respondents made a series of suggestions and proposals that can be summarized in some main topics:

- Awareness raising and mobilization of citizens is one of the calls and duties of the NGOs regarding civil society. The society in Montenegro can solve the problems it is confronted with and it also can become politically active in order to make the necessary changes for a better life, firstly by making a civic education of the population and the development of an initiative culture and freethinking.

... awareness raising, developing the culture of living. [...] So, NGOs should educate citizens; tell them what can they do when they want to change something, and how. [...] To train the people and simply tell them what are their rights, and what are their duties. And to show them that they have rights to change something, that everything doesn't depend exclusively on the authority and the politicians, and that citizen can contribute to make changes in the society. [employed]

- NGOs should become more involved in actions concerning human rights, improvement of living conditions and continuous monitoring of the government activities.

NGO should fight for the human rights. NGO should take care about citizens, not just to tell "stories for the kids". It means to control the government and to try to improve the living standard. [student]

- NGO co-operation and a common strategy of action are necessary for their social activity to have a considerable impact and to reach its humanitarian goals.

Main Research Findings

NGOs are too much occupied with politics. There is a big competition between them too, which is not good for the whole society. They should unite their forces and become partners.

[student]

- The suggestions arising from the NGO field mainly concern the field of education, both inside and outside the school, and also the social problems of the under-privileged categories that are in a precarious situation due to the lack of resources and old-fashioned mentalities.

Education, which you can get abroad, isn't better, when you compare that to the education you can get here. We shouldn't change our school programs here, but relations between teachers and pupils, professors and students. [NGO activist]

I think that they should do something about the education. It should be the priority. Then ecology and changing of experience, changing of young people, first of all. I think that is the most important thing. [NGO activist]

One of the priorities is the question of the social position of women and children. That position has changed during those years, but it is still on the low level. And the question of the homeless is very important. And the position of the young people, too. [NGO activist]

Conclusions

The youth from the Yugoslavian Federation live, independently of their will, in a context of social and economic transition, of changes in values and mentality specific to countries from South Eastern Europe. The problems young Yugoslavians are confronted with on macro-social scale, and also in everyday life, represent a major challenge for the enthusiastic and idealistic spirit of the age. Poverty, unemployment, the overturn of traditional moral values, the deepening of deviant behaviours (drug trafficking and consumption) induce pessimism and lack of security in the social climate; moreover, they create a youth culture of distrust and of belief that there are no chances for the future. In addition, the experience of the war and the permanent fear of this flagellum and of its social consequences, the present state of the economic reform, the lack of a culture of participation and civic responsibility determine young people to have a critical attitude towards political and government institutions. Therefore, a behavioural constant among subjects is represented by the wish to emigrate westwards, where young people believe that equal chances and promises of decent future are more than election promises, they are also moral principles and concerns of the entire society.

Nevertheless, when evaluating the state of the society they live in, as compared to the previous regime and to war, the young subjects from Yugoslavia emphasize the changes in better that occurred in the last years. The democratisation of the society and improvements in the economy, but especially

the feeling of social solidarity are elements that make them hope in the possibility of finding solutions for solving the country's problems as well as theirs. The solutions young people propose address rather the rulers' political will (educational and economic reforms, dynamization of market economy and of labour market); such solutions also cover to a considerable extent the need to develop civil society and improve communication in the public space between the political area and citizens, through the civic organizations that represent the latter category.

In opinions of the Yugoslavian youth, NGO involvement in public life should have as major targets the defence of citizens' rights and the mobilization of society members to participate in decision-making related to the community they belong to. In order to achieve the previously mentioned targets, it is considered necessary to eliminate conflicts of interests and communication drawbacks among NGOs active in the Yugoslavian area, to increase the cooperation among these organizations in view of creating civic spirit in the population and in view of rational building of a civil society able to work with the government. Under these circumstances, young people believe and hope that both the problems specific to their generation and the overall society problems can be solved and that the Yugoslavian society will re-enter completely among European democracies.

Annexes

Serbia – Methodological Note

The survey was conducted on a sample of 653 subjects.

Focus group interviews:

Group Name	Number of subjects	Number of group interviews	Group composition
NGO activist	10	2	NGO activists
Un/Em	13	2	Unemployed & employed
Student	14	2	Students

Tables

Interest in politics (%)

	Local politics	National politics	European politics	International politics
Very interested	27	26	29	37
Fairly interested	39	41	31	31
Not very interested	23	19	22	14
Not at all interested	10	13	18	18

Frequencies of informational activities regarding politics (%)

	Everyday	3-4 days a week	1-2 days a week	Less frequently	Never
Read the political content of a newspaper	34	26	12	24	4
Listen to or watch news programmes on radio or TV	27	28	25	20	
Listen to or watch other programmes about politics and social affairs on radio or TV	23	20	33	22	2
Use internet to obtain information about politics and society	25	14	15	43	3

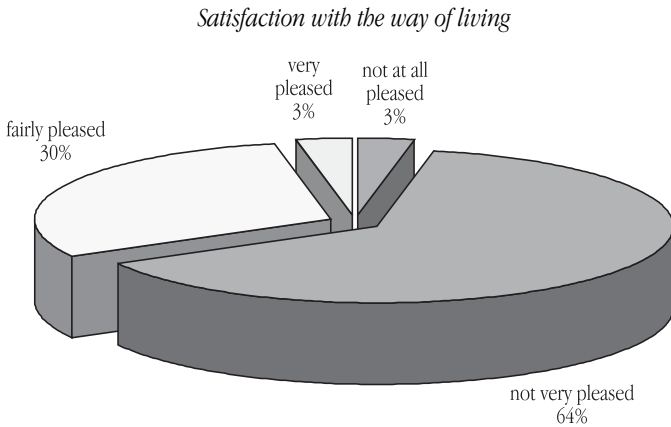
Montenegro – Methodological Note

The survey was conducted on a sample of 353 subjects.

Focus group interviews:

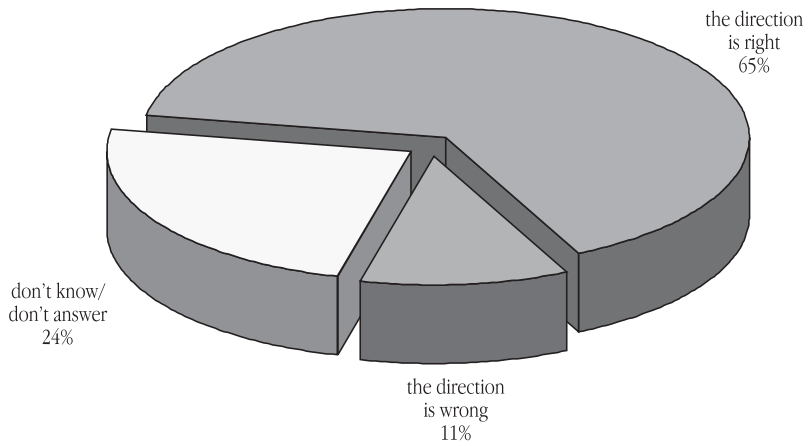
Group Name	Number of subjects	Number of group interviews	Group composition
NGO activist	13	2	NGO activists
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Student	15	2	Students

Figures



Annexes

Direction the country is on



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Study Conclusions

The new social, political and economic context in the European ex-communist countries, after 1990, was the background of profound changes both at individual, group and society level. The most obvious ones have been in the system of social norms and values that contribute to decision-making at individual level.

The present research has identified two major patterns of change. The first views individualism as value and practice used by individuals in their relation with other people or with the society. The second one regards the individuals that need to be provided the social support of their society or community. Individualism – Communalism is a set of values that contributes to the construction or re-construction of individual identity. The value the individual adopts or the predominance of one of the two patterns mentioned above determines a specific type of relation of the individual with the group.

The present-day social background that the youth relates to is mostly the same in all former socialist countries. Some constant features shape the common system of norms that the youth are subject to. These structural factors are:

- The state help for young people diminished much (for instance, they have not been supported in finding jobs after graduating from high schools or universities any more);
- The difference among young people, from the point of view of their social – economic status (some of them, yet not very many, belong to the privileged; the greater number is that of the disadvantaged; they feel inferior to those who can benefit from their superior position);
- The disappearance of youth organizations that united young people on a large scale. Until 1989, the ex-communist countries had one or two national youth organizations that were state controlled. After the falling of the communist regime in Eastern Europe, many new organizations of young people emerged in order to represent many more interests and preoccupations.

The expectancies and attitudes of the youth towards their social-economic environment are reflected by the diversity of opinions they have.

The present research has identified a set of common problems that characterizes all countries in South Eastern Europe. According to the data provided by the research, the NGOs representatives are to set up a regional strategy meant to improve young people's standard of life. More than this, the results of the research portray also the policymakers as having a key-role in this process.

The main findings are:

- There are very few optimistic statements among the youth and the general feeling is that of mistrust. The problems seem to be overwhelming and too complex for the society to solve;
- SEE region is characterized by much poverty, unemployment and very poor social services;
- The most pressing problems are the economic and political ones. The individual is dissatisfied with his/her present status and the perspective does not seem better.

Unemployment is the main problem which young people are confronting. The main concern is for the proper standard of life – which seems hardly achievable;

- The confidence in the political system is very low. Local authorities are perceived as inconsistent. There is very little belief in the politicians' honesty and goodwill and the ruling elite (the political or managerial one) is seen in the same spirit;
- There is a general distrust towards the political and administrative institutions. Governments and Parliaments are considered responsible for the youth problems. The local and central authorities have no clear vision on how to overcome the present crisis;
- Because of the lack of trust in present or future improvement, the immigration of young people in Western countries is the most frequent solution they find;
- The role and the position of international institutions, such as UN and EU, generate ambivalent attitudes. These institutions are seen as instances that request too much and offer much less or, on the contrary, the European integration process is perceived as contributing to economic prosperity and political stability;
- The private sector and privatisation are shown less confidence also;
- The struggle against corruption is one of the common preoccupations in all SEE countries. This phenomenon undermines the authority of the political class or of state institutions.

The NGO phenomenon has been paid much attention during the investigation. The researcher believes this sector has an important role in the construction of a democratic society as it speaks on behalf of citizens against political authority. Through the undertaken projects, NGOs represent an alternative to governmental policies in most various fields. The young people who do not belong to the NGO system consider that a non-profit organization can be a solution for the better changing of society. Although the NGOs are thought to consolidate democratic societies, they are viewed as too numerous or less transparent as far as their activities or funds are concerned. At present, the influence of NGOs is perceived rather marginal and unimportant. They have little influence on authorities or public policies.

Another weak point of NGOs is the poor cooperation among them as well as the lack of a common strategy of solving social problems they concern themselves with.

Some of the elements of a local or regional strategy, meant to improve the present-day activities of the NGOs, are as follow:

- To make people conscious of the importance of NGOs in civil society;
- To get more involved into activities regarding the improvement of the standard of living and in the continuous monitoring of governmental activities;
- To collaborate more intensively with governmental institutions;
- To provide more social services and expand their field of activity;
- To cooperate with many other NGOs, in order to increase work efficiency. Cooperation can lead to more transparency, implicitly to confidence in the non-profit sector.



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The basic idea that determined the conducting of the present study was that, subsequent to this project, we can provide a general image on the status of youth from South Eastern Europe, especially of youth from non-governmental environment proximity. This study aims to be a starting point in view of implementing youth policies which to make possible improvements in the situation of youth from this region.

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Udruzenje Nezavisne Omladine UNO – Bosnia and Herzegovina

Society and Information Foundation – Bulgaria

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Children's Creative Centre "Oasis" – Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Montenegro

Libergraf Regional Centre for Civil Initiatives – Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Serbia