



# HUMAN DEVELOPEMENT REPORT CROATIA 2004



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Dear Reader,

The sixth Croatian Human Development Report that you now have in your hands is made through a process of interaction and consultation with young people all over Croatia. But more than that: young people themselves wrote it and decided upon the decisive issues concerning their status and future. The report represents thus views on human development from the perspective of young people: how they insist their future should be shaped by all who can influence it.

Significantly the authors do not only address the politicians and civil servants (but they should certainly take note of the many policy recommendations) but also themselves. Several recommendations are made on how young people can and should exert influence over various dimensions of sustainable development by more active participation, above all by active involvement in the political processes. At the same time the authors endorse the National Programme of Action for Youth, wishing it to be implemented.

The quality and relevance of the report is derived from the convincing manner in which the youth groups and individuals who prepared it have positioned themselves once more as a partner of the State. Thus this new Croatian Human Development Report features participation by young people not only in the unique process of its preparation but also presents them as serious partners in the follow-up concerned with its implementation: "Let's do it together" in the spirit of an open and all inclusive democracy.

The report may appear a deviation from previous Croatian Human Development Reports prepared by Croatian scholars and experts but that is not really true: after all, who is more qualified and more *expert* than those who write about themselves and their aspirations and who define so clearly the critical issues that they want to be dealt with in true partnership with others? And that not just for their own benefit but also for a qualitative improvement in the democratic practices of an entire nation that is fast moving on the road towards the European Union. As such the preparation of the 2004 Human Development Report has been a unique exercise in participatory, inclusive democracy.

The concept of sustainable human development is essentially one of widening of choices and of broadening participation in a truly people centered society. UNDP Croatia is proud to share with you, the interested reader, a document that shows ways of how this may be done, and as such deserves your attention.

Cornelis Klein  
Resident Representative, UNDP Croatia



# PRO LOGUE

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Reports (HDR) present a compelling discourse in the development of thinking, defining problems and articulating possible solutions not only in individual countries (or regions) that the report analyses, but increasingly on a global level. The report addresses various themes with relation to problems that individual countries face, but all have development as the core frame of reference.

UNDP Croatia, in cooperation with the Institute of Economics in Zagreb, up till now have made five reports which analyse overall human development in Croatia. In the sixth report, however, the UNDP decided to focus on youth in Croatia, judging that youth and their status in the country is one of the key questions to development and foundation to further enhancement of Croatian society.

The Croatian government in the year 2002 adopted the National Programme of Action for Youth (*Nacionalni program djelovanja za mlade* - NPDM) which represented an exhaustive and comprehensive study on the state of youth and identified goals for future activity in enhancing the position of youth. Hence, Croatia does have an existing work strategy for youth and with youth. The question being asked is: are these goals being fulfilled, or rather, are the planned activities taking place?

In the same way the question may be asked as to why another report on youth, since the current one is of quality and relevance and more importantly, accepted not only by the state, but by the young? The answer lies in the nature of this Report which doesn't merely repeat generally accepted strategic goals, but positions youth as partners of the state in their realization, which represents an important step forward in relation to a common perception of youth as recipients of activities created from above. The aim of this report is to highlight and support a proactive approach to life and work for every individual,

especially young people that, as said, are stepping into life and learning to deal with life's experiences and problems.

Childhood is in the main characterized by a high level of, firstly parental, and secondly social protection. Entering the youth, which we regard to be between the ages of 15 and 29, young people are confronted with a reduction of primary care and an assumption of their capacity to learn to behave in a responsible way towards themselves and their surroundings. While parents and the society maintain significant influence on young people's development, the relationship changes into partnership as young demonstrate independence and responsibility in their lives. However, the path to greater independence is not always recognized nor encouraged. In a society whose large parts still nurture strong traditional values<sup>1</sup>, young people are not being prepared for the increasing challenges facing Croatian society on its path of integrating into the developed world.

As with NPDM, this report highlights the need for partnership between the youth and the government that would enhance the position of the young and also stimulate improvement in society as a whole. However, state structures, even those dealing with youth, are burdened with every day activities and often lack time and energy required for realizing a qualitative partnership with the youth. Furthermore, problems also arise from the attitude demonstrated by some within the government that it is above ordinary people which further slows down the partnership-building process.

Democracy assumes a high level of social participation and almost unlimited freedom of association, except that which is against the national interest of the state. With respect that Croatia is a democratic state and has young people that are the driving-force of development, youth's activism should be encouraged and supported as a way for them to learn new skills and develop into responsible citizens.

Hence, if NPDM represents a top-down approach in resolving problems and improving the status of youth, then the initiatives from the youth represent a bottom-up approach. The combined energy of these two approaches leads to a qualitative partnership and is a guarantor of realizing strategic goals.

In order to facilitate the partnership, respecting the state's efforts in resolving problems and improving the status of youth, the UNDP decided to give space in this HDR to the young people to present themselves as a responsible partner to the government in implementing the NPDM and as an independent force demonstrating the spirit of democracy whose activism changes theirs and consequently the world of their fellow citizens as well.

As seen in the second chapter of this report, the biggest concern young people have in relation to the NPDM is the fear that the document will not be implemented. Since Croatian independence, this is the first document that comprehensively addresses the problems of youth and ceases to treat them as a group of deviant behaviour but rather positions them as equal interlocutors. Youth's distrust towards government is caused by years of misunderstanding and lack of communication. The NPDM has partially changed this perception into the one of optimism and trust. Every impasse, every silence on the part of the government causes suspicion as to the real interests of the state with reference to the young in which all swear to, but who are at the bottom of the priority list as far as the state budget is concerned.

Change of government causes difficulties in establishing a functional authority, but it is unacceptable in a modern democratic society to use governmental turnover as an excuse for months of "silence" with respect to endorsed national goals. Of course, it is not forgotten that Croatia passed through a difficult period of attaining independence and creating conditions for a

<sup>1</sup> Furio Radin: "Vrijednosne hijerarhije i strukture"; Vlasta Ilišin, Mladost, odraslost i budućnost u Mladi uoči trećeg milenija (Zagreb, Institute for social research, 2002.)

The aim of this report is to highlight and support a proactive approach to life and work for every individual, especially young people that, as said, are stepping into life and learning to deal with life's experiences and problems.

normal life. However, as these problems have in the main been addressed, the state must now offer a development strategy as to how today's youth will be capable of facing the challenges that await the Croatian society in the future.

As a way to encourage youth's pro-activity and responsibility, this HDR gave them complete freedom in producing the report: experts, scientists, activists, and participants and moderators of the focus groups. Young people were included in every segment of work on the report and as such it represents their authentic product.

The report you are reading carries a message which young people have sent about themselves. Other than the introductory part which gives a scientific framework to the research on youth, the remainder of the report relates to youth activism and to examples of youth's influence on their surroundings. The dynamics of creating this report deserves a short address because it shows how the process of learning intensifies when youth themselves get the chance to create and produce. Originally, the idea was to define key issues that concern the young people through the conduct of the first round of regional focus groups. These identified issues would then be tested on a larger sample throughout Croatia to confirm their relevance and discard those which failed the larger sampling. A second round of focus groups would interpret the attained information, after which the report would be written.

However, as complete freedom of work was secured in creative brain storming that followed the first round of focus groups, it was understood that youth problems were in fact the same as those identified in literature and by scholars in earlier researches, which led to a credible expectation that the testing on the larger sample would only confirm the same results. The working group agreed that of primary importance was to offer solutions rather than repeat the diagnosis.

A detailed research of the youth action scene was conducted in order to find examples of youth initiatives that resolve one (or more) problems within one of eight categories that came out from discussions within the focus groups<sup>2</sup>. To our general surprise (and joy), a large number of examples were found. The real challenge became not the identification of positive examples, but their selection amongst the variety found throughout Croatia. The criteria for selection was based on analysing answers to the following questions: what is the youth initiative about, who carries it out, who are the users, what are the aims and the results? Furthermore, what is the relation of a youth organisation with the community and the public in general? What is its added value, sustainability, what are the sources of project financing and obstacles encountered?

Presented examples are a small part of what exists in Croatia. All examples could not be shown, nor was that the aim. The aim was to inspire other young people to do something for themselves, encourage a proactive approach to life and present young people who do that. This report should be looked at as a compilation of examples of *best practice* that is to serve young people, the government and the society at large as a reference of information and inspiration.<sup>3</sup>

The first part of this report has a scientific framework for current youth status and results of the first round of focus groups. The second chapter explains the dynamics of relations between youth and state and their role in creating the NPDM, which as earlier mentioned, has been endorsed by the youth. The following chapters present examples of *best practice* and a short conclusion of the report. The last chapter contains results of the second round of focus groups and policy recommendations for the government and local authorities, public institutions, non-governmental organisations and for youth themselves as a direction for further actions. To those familiar with

<sup>2</sup> See first chapter of this report

<sup>3</sup> Complete list of examples can be found on [www.undp.hr](http://www.undp.hr)

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NPDM's content or generally informed of youth problems, many recommendations will not sound new, but it is important to stress that the goal was to present what the youth deemed important. If some policy recommendations reiterate those contained in the NPDM, this should be understood as an additional emphasis to already planned activities and therefore expect that they will come to the top of priority list of policy makers.

— fundamental social, demographic and economic indicators —





# FUNDAMENTAL SOCIAL DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Transition countries are exposed to increased risks of social differentiation or a fall in the level of social security. They are also exposed to new risks: organised crime, adolescent delinquency, drug addiction, human trafficking and sexual abuse for commercial purposes. The reasons for the said trends, amongst else, can be found in the delay in the education process; the difficulty in finding a first or permanent job; the complicated conditions to obtain material goods (e.g. regular income, loans, home ownership etc.); and finally, the marginalisation of youth in decision making processes (National Programme... 2003; Tivadar, Mrvar, 2002). We hope that this study will assist in pointing to the problem faced by youth and that it will lead to significant socio-political changes, and changes that are necessary. Even research methods require change as research about the youth is quite rare and therefore does not allow any monitoring of the situation and of course, with that, there can be no basis for efficient changes. In this study, we endeavoured to encompass relevant research material about youth in Croatia in the past five years. The reason we decided to deal with such a long time period lies in the absence of recent research about individual topics.

If we consider our starting point to be, that youth include young people between the ages of 15 and 29 then data taken from the 2001 Population Census indicates that youth form 20.25% of the total population of Croatia. This is a decrease of the portion of youth by 3.5% over a period of forty years. In 1961 that category formed 23.76% of the total population. In addition to this transformation of the age pyramid, another noticeable trend is quite vital in the last decade of the 20th Century, in that youth have become the poorest age category of the population in countries of Central and Eastern Europe (*National Programme...2003: p.25*). The list of all the causes of vulnerability amongst youth is extensive, however, the following are the most common reasons and mentioned with the most consensus (*Youth Vulnerability...*, 2002: p. 2):- 1) insufficient life and work experience; 2) risky behaviour; 3) insufficient knowledge and understanding of reality; 4) need to express themselves in peer

WHAT WILL THE FUTURE BE LIKE?	%
Very good	20,9
Good	64,0
Neither good nor bad	11,3
Bad	3,1
Very bad	0,8

Table: Comparative view of the perception of one's personal future  
\*Source: Youth on the Eve of the Third Millennium

groups; 5) emotional and psychological sensitivity; 6) economic dependence; 7) social role and status.

According to the 2001 Population Census, the total population decreased by 2.6% (from 4,784,460 to 4,437,460) compared to 1991. The natural birth rate also decreased and there was drastic fall from an already alarming rate of -0.6 to -0.9. According to the latest data obtained from the State Bureau of Statistics, the Croatian GDP amounted to \$ 6,226 per capita. Based on international categories for transition countries where (\$ 4.30 per capita per day), represents the absolute poverty rate, Croatia's poverty rate is relatively low (about 4%). However, research conducted by the State Bureau of Statistics in Croatian households indicates that almost 10% of the population lives below the absolute threshold of poverty. Two groups are dominantly represented amongst the poor:- a) lower educated (about 3/4 of the poor live in households where the breadwinner has only primary school education or no education at all); b) the elderly.

The relationship of the young towards the future is a significant indicator as is their relationship towards their own youth as well as to the prospects they believe society offers them. Research conducted of attitudes held by young people about their own future (*Youth in Croatia*) indicated that generally, young people see their own future in a positive light. The optimism felt by the young about their future is encouraging however, fundamental changes are required so that their optimism can grow to enable them to become involved in the future of their society. Young people do not exist in a vacuum but are part of the wider society.

Research of perceptions of social problems (Youth on the Eve of the Third Millennium) resulted with the following order of the largest social problems (expressed in percentages of interviewees who opted for a certain social problem): unemployment 60%; economic problems 51%; criminal activities in transformation and privatisation 32%; social differences 24%; alcoholism, drug addition etc. 22%; crisis in morality 17%; low valuation of labour and knowledge 16%; disrespect of human rights and liberties 14%; organised crime 12%; unemployment,

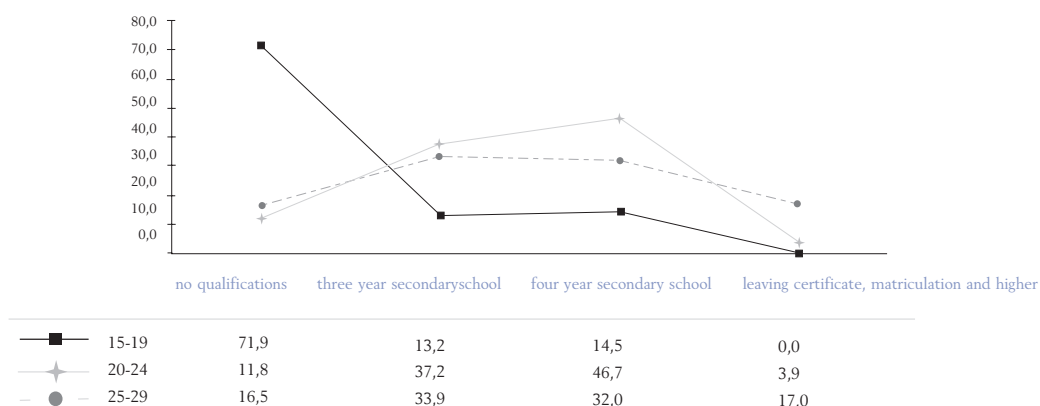
lack of discipline and irresponsibility 11% non-existence of true multi-party system 9%; housing problems 7%; education system 6%; environment pollution 6%; international relations 4%; religious problems 1%. The eruption of unemployment and economic problems in the fore clearly indicates that young people are well aware of the fact that the basis for social progress lies in economic stability. It was surprising however, to see the low percentage of young people who were dissatisfied with the education system which was similar to the results obtained from focus groups where young people placed education only in sixth place of their priorities.

#### YOUTH AND THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Judging the data obtained from researching the population of the young in Croatia in 1999<sup>5</sup>, almost half (44.6%) aged between 15-29, are currently involved at some stage of the Croatian education system. For those who had already left the system their living conditions depended on the level and quality of their qualifications that they obtained in that system. Parallel to that was the accelerating rate of technological progress in post-industrial societies where there was a tendency for an increasing number of jobs to require higher levels of education. The repercussions of this are such that each successive generation is more highly educated than the previous. (See graph)

A great deal more interest is roused by the relatively new trend which has now emerged in Croatia - the lower level of educational achievement by males (see graph). The explanation for this new tendency leans mostly on the presumption of the influence of structural changes on the labour market (weakening of heavy industry and growth of the service sector), as well as women's movements for equal rights. Nevertheless, the changes that occurred have already led to changes in relations between gender and vocation because some traditionally male areas are now dominated by women which is particularly the case with bio-medicine and social-humanities profiles (Haralambos, Holborne, 2002: p.857). Traditional differences remain in the secondary sector: three-year secondary school is

<sup>5</sup> It is interesting that in all age groups, women completed high-school more often than men. This does not mean that women always dominated in high school enrolments because it is logical to presume that men would more often continue with their studies which then decreased their number in that category where the highest education obtained as matriculation. Nevertheless, it is certain that after World War II, there have been more women at high school than men. This is supported by the fact that the



still highly preferred amongst males while females are more oriented to four-year secondary education.<sup>5</sup>

The problem that is not treated sufficiently in our country and some institutions in fact, close their eyes to, is the premature departure from schooling. It is concerning that youth, particularly adolescents, do not complete secondary school. This group is particularly vulnerable in society because it is exposed to the risks of poverty (limited employment opportunities) as well as the development of socially unacceptable behaviour. The main reason for premature departure from schooling is related to poor conditions to start with, i.e. poverty and inadequate conditions to continue with education. There are great differences in enrolment rates for higher education: according to data by the Department to Decrease Poverty and Economic Policies with the World Bank, from 2000, 8.4% of the population falls into the category that lives below the national poverty threshold; not one young person from that group attended senior secondary school or a institution of higher education and only 10% of them attended some form of technical school (Croatian: Study..., 2000: pp.6-11). Rural areas are also burdened with an entire spectre of problems that increase the likelihood of premature departure from school because the choice of schools is insufficient and transport communications are inadequate to satisfy the needs of the young. Inadequate and ineffective care by society is also expressed in numerous problems faced by the young with difficulties in development or disabilities and youth from minority communities, particularly the Romany. The problem of insufficient involvement of social services and the local community is also pointed out in creating the mechanisms of social support and integration services (Croatian Education Report, July 2000; National Programme..., 2003: pp.26, 43).

Participation in compulsory primary education was equal to 98%. However, available data relating to secondary education is expressly ambivalent. According to data from the Ministry of Education and Sports, contained in the National Programme of Action for Youth, almost 95-97% of primary

school pupils enrol into secondary school, while about 85-90% of students complete secondary school within the set period (National Programme..., 2003: p.14). However, other sources<sup>6</sup> indicate that the percentage of students participating in secondary school education is closer to 63-65% (according to research of the young conducted by the Institute for Social Research in 1999, where 61.5% possessed some form of secondary school certificate). The truth is probably closer to the latter number. This unfortunately cannot be verified due to the given circumstances where systematic measuring does not exist for those who departed from primary or secondary schooling. The methodology used to calculate that number is simply based on the number of pupils who did not finish a particular school year compared to the total number of pupils.<sup>7</sup>

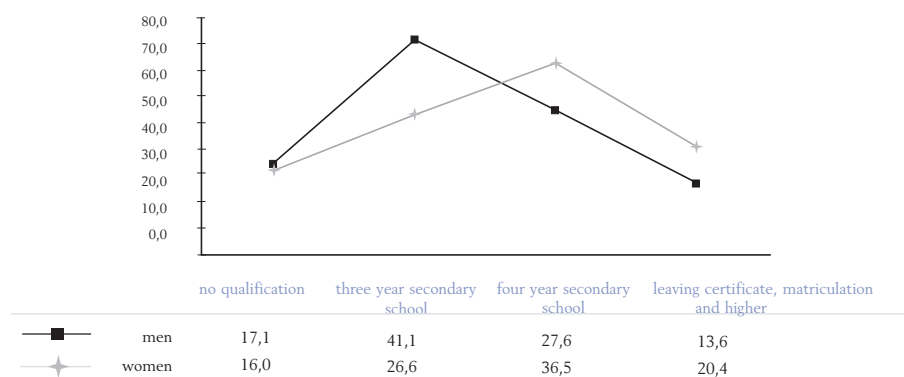
At the beginning of this millennium, 31.3% of the young between 20-24 enrolled in some institution of higher education. Each year about 120,000 students enrol into Croatian universities. According to available data, 33% of those students who enrol, in fact complete their studies (of whom only 8% graduate within the period foreseen). For example, about 20,000 students enrol each year at the University of Zagreb. However, only 4,500 of them graduate requiring an average of 7-8 years (*Country Report: Croatia*, 2001: VIII; Matković, 22 March 2002).

Budget investments into science and higher education amounts to \$ 14 *per capita* - around 11 times less than in the fifteen European Union countries. Only 12 people of 1,000 have higher education qualifications. It is estimated that in the past twenty years, between 120,000 and 140,000 young educated people left the country (Mrvoš, B., 23 March, 2001). As an illustration, it is interesting to note the percentage of young people who use computers which in the population of youth between 15-24 amounted to 69%. The majority of youth use computers at home - 77.8% in fact, while second place is at school with 6.1% (*Youth in Croatia*).

It is necessary to mention some documents that offer a plan of action to resolve the problem in Croatia's education system.

## scientific corner

first generation born after 1950 the number of highly educated women was equal to men. As far as post-graduate qualifications are concerned however, this process was much slower up until the sixties when there was a turnabout. From that age cohort there is a trend for more women than men to obtain academic levels, master's and doctorates (2000 Statistical Year Book: p.99).



*The Croatian Education System for the 21st Century Project* could ensure Croatia coming closer to European education standards which is important with regard to establishing its place in a united Europe. The project emerged from the combined results obtained from the *Conception of Changes in the Education System in Croatia* and the document entitled *Education and Upbringing - White Paper on Croatian Education*. *The Croatian Education System for the 21st Century Project* establishes priority measures to meet the following objectives:- 1) to improve the quality of education and increase the level of education qualifications of the population; 2) to adjust the system to European models both in vital structural elements and internal organisation; 3) to remove barriers that do not allow access to education and free movement within the system; 4) to upgrade the system and increase its efficiency in relation to its “users”; 5) to create a programme based on curriculum and to enable pupils to gain useful knowledge and to develop basic skills and literacy; 6) to relate the system with the labour market, better education and capable workers and to create conditions for easier employment; 7) to develop pluralism, democracy and active participation in civil society. However the *Project* never saw the light of day.

With its *Declaration of Knowledge*, the Croatian Academy of Arts and Sciences points out that Croatia needs knowledge to pull it out of the circle of less developed countries and to prevent the deepening of its current technological delay. The first step on the path to social knowledge is to develop education and science towards world criteria of quality. While developing education focus should primarily be given to improving the quality of teaching methods and adequate content. The *Declaration of Knowledge* stresses that budget spending for science and education in EU countries amounts to 8% of the GDP (2% for science + 6% for education). That percentage should be obtained in Croatia as soon as possible and should be a priority in development policies and in that way confirm Croatia's European aspirations.

According to the report by Vedrana Spajić-Vrkaš, education and upbringing for a democratic society and the promotion of differences in Croatia is faced with vital barriers. The first is the concept of education and upbringing because new, wider, integrative concepts of education and upbringing have still not been introduced in theory nor in practise. This problem is haunted with educational policies which are not rational, all-encompassing, harmonised or consistent and they do not have clearly defined priorities. There is also no active or existent strategy being implemented that clearly defines measures and mechanisms to achieve well set educational objectives. Evaluation methods are unsatisfactory. Instead of exclusive focus on controlling the input of data, care should be directed to controlling results. Circling opinions of the urgency for change is passed into inefficient legislature and strategies of relevant decisions for the education system. We can conclude that Croatia is a typical transition country that still lacks rational, coherent, consistent, active and long-term education policies.

#### YOUTH AND EMPLOYMENT

Unemployment is one of the most serious social problems we are faced with today, especially in transition countries amongst which is Croatia. The growth of the unemployment rate in Croatia is caused by the problems existent in Croatian society aided by the structural economic crisis. Unemployment in the context of it being a problem of youth has specific repercussions where in the long term its influence prevents young people from taking an active role in society. The step into the so-called adult work is more and more complicated because institutionalised education is lasting longer and longer. Modern technological changes require a more flexible and qualified labour force while economic movements result in cyclical causes of unemployment which, above all, affects the young. Along with finding it more difficult to be included in professional work, young people delay setting up their own family. Interviewees noted that the most significant cause of unemploy-

<sup>6</sup> These are mostly data that come for foreign institutions that deal with education and that are located in Croatia, e.g. National Observatory. Their reports usually note the number of 63% of pupils (Country Report..., 2001; Developing Common..., 2003; Key indicators..., 2002), while the ETF report notes around 25% of premature departure from school (Regional seminar..., June 2000: p.5).

<sup>7</sup> For example, as far as Zagreb is concerned, a number of up to 150,000 aged between 15-29 left in primary school! Up to around 10% of pupils left technical school, the resident psychologist noted (Jokić, Vukadin, 7 May 2003).

The problem that is not treated sufficiently in our country and some institutions in fact, close their eyes to, is the premature departure from schooling.

The unemployment rate amongst the young is alarming because according to HZZ in 2003 there were 36.6% unemployed youth.

Unemployment in the context of it being a problem of youth has specific repercussions where in the long term its influence prevents young people from taking an active role in society.

ment was the government's inefficiency (37.1%); repercussions of the war and aggression against Croatia (30.8%); fall in production and insufficient economic development (2.4%); huge retrenchments of workers in the wake of privatisation (25.9%); and high taxes and contributions on salaries (25.4%), (Štimac-Radin, 2002: p.237).

According to data from the Croatian Employment Service (HZZ) in 2003 the general unemployment rate amounted to 18.6%. the International Labour Organisation (ILO) standardised this figure to 14.1% unemployed. The unemployment rate amongst the young is alarming because according to HZZ in 2003 there were 36.6% unemployed youth. From 2000, there was a mild conversion with regard to gender represented amongst the unemployed:- In 2000 there was 1.5% more women unemployed while in August 2003, there were 2% more men unemployed (2000 Year Book; Analytical Bulletin, 2003). A comparison of the unemployment rate amongst youth between European countries and Croatia leads us to the conclusion that the situation to employ youth in Croatia is alarming. For example, Austria has an unemployment rate amongst youth of 7.2%; Slovenia 14.8%; Germany 9.3%, Czech Republic 15.4% (*Analytical Bulletin*, 2003).

Most concerning is the relatively high portion of unqualified workers in the unemployment rate of youth seeing that in Croatia, this category has limited access to education and lawful work (a very high portion of unqualified workers work on the "grey market"), and there are no direct measures to motivate their employment. The category of unemployed youth who are educated is dominated by graduates in social and humanities sciences which is caused by the massive enrolments in these faculties while at the same time, the labour market not being able to absorb all graduates from social-humanities fields. Another problem is the lack of availability of financial support for entrepreneurial initiatives. A lack of working experience is often the cause of unemployment amongst youth because employers usually consider inexperienced workers as unwanted. The insecurity of the market position of people who are looking for their

first job is reflected in the fact that young people have a greater probability of signing working contracts for a defined period compared to more senior employees.

A comparison of general unemployment indicates that unemployment amongst the young is characterised with short term unemployment. Considering the duration of unemployment, lower qualified workers wait longer to find a job as do pupils who have completed four year secondary school (mostly matriculate students from high schools - 12-18 months). These are followed by semi-qualified workers (6-12 months); youth with senior secondary education (6-9 months); and higher education qualifications (3-6 months).

A noticeable lack of dialogue between social partners is evident as is co-operation between social partners which is still at an elementary level while the influence of individual social partners that can be realised through negotiation often depend on the quantity of political power they possess. Co-operation between the education system and employment system and labour market is insufficiently strong and does not assist pupils and students or guide them to efficient professional orientation in the process of seeking a job. Currently the system of professional orientation exists only within the HZZ however, this should be made available through the education system. It is a well known fact that all problems are better solved (and prevented) if they are approached in phases and through co-operation and monitoring institutions as well as every single individual. The system of monitoring in Croatia is not sufficiently developed and as such the assistance and support youth can expect at the moment is most inadequate.

Passive behaviour of the unemployed towards the job seeking process is an exceptional characteristic of the unemployed in Croatia. The poor mobility of the labour force is largely the result of traditional mentality expecting "one job for their entire life". The unemployed in Croatia are often not willing to utilise the instruments at their disposal in seeking a job - they expect to be given a job and not that they should seek for one. For example, In August 2003, 77.4% of those registered, were wiped

	“a chance for us”	“from uni to work”	“a job for veterans”	“from the classroom to the workshop”	“learning for a job for all”
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01.03.2002.-					
30.09.2003.	2.495	844	2.230	118	4.573

Table: Number employed persons by individual employment subsidy programmes  
Source: By 30 September 2003, 35,999 people were employed through these programmes

out of the HZZ Register of Unemployed because they found employment and up to 22.6% due to inactivity (not attending group information sessions or individual counselling, rejecting jobs offered and other forms of lack of co-operation with their employment adviser) (Matković, M., 2003).

Croatia's competitiveness on the international market has been greatly decreased with the “grey market”. The “grey economy” or black labour market in Croatia consists of 25.30% of the GDP. Of that, it is estimated that one in every three Kuna is earned on the black market and 120,000 people each day work illegally (Bohutinski, 2003). Most black market labour is conducted in construction, ship building, trade, servicing sector & tourist services. The informal sector most often offers low qualified positions and usually employ young people and once they are caught, find it difficult to find a way out with the potential repercussion that the “grey labour market” results in the diminishing qualifications. The longer it takes to find a job and the longer a person is unemployed, they find it harder to find a job because their skills have deteriorated leading to moral and psychological damages.

In Croatia subsidies for employment on the macro level is viewed from the perspective of the entire employment system. The most common approach which either increases the need for the labour force (demand oriented approaches) or improves employment mechanisms for the long-term unemployed. In 1998 (the programme lasted for two years) and early 2002 (this programme is still in force), the Croatian Government introduced the Employment Subsidies Scheme. The packet included three measures directed toward motivating employment of several age groups (as well as being used to employ youth). One such measure was directed to motivating employment for middle aged or elderly people while two other measures were directed to motivating employment of the young (From Uni to Work or From the Classroom to the Workshop). Measures that can be used to inspire the employment of the young are:- 1) From Uni to Work - employers offered subsidies to employ highly educated people up to the age of 27; 2) From the Class-

room to the Workshop - offered subsidies to employ Qualified Tradesmen and Highly Qualified Tradesmen who had been registered with the HZZ for more than six months or had or would finish school within the next school year and were less than 30 years old; 3) Learning for a Job for All - offered subsidies to introduce people to jobs that they had been doing for less than a year; 4) A Chance for Us - subsidies directed to employing disabled persons with limited employment abilities; 5) A Job for Veterans - a target group of unemployed veterans and widows and children surviving veterans killed in the war.

To date the most effective measure was Learning for a Job for All, however, we have to take into consideration that the said measures were not available to all age categories or levels of qualifications and so we cannot draw any general conclusions that this was the most useful measure to motivate employment of the young. Nevertheless, it is surprising to see the relatively low number of employed persons resulting from those measures geared exclusively towards those younger than 27 (From Uni to Work), or rather, those under the age of 30 (From the Classroom to the Workshop), which employed a total number of 3,339 from the start of the programme. (See table).

#### YOUTH IN TRANSITION SOCIETY

Virtually the rule is that young Europeans are decisive in their support of democracy, what is more, they wish to participate in it. However, mistrust is prevalent towards institutional structures. Young people are today less loyal than in the past, to traditional structures both politically and socially (e.g. political parties and unions) and so their involvement in democratic dialogue is at a lower level. This however, does not mean that young people are not interested in social life. The majority indicate a clear desire to participate and influence decisions that relate to society but they wish to do so on a personal and independent level, outside archaic mainstream structures and mechanisms of participation.

In a survey conducted (*Youth on the Eve of the Third Millennium*), young people indicated that they belonged to some

Membership or activity in organisation or association	%
Sporting association or group	33.2
Cultural or entertainment group	22.2
Environment protection group	15.7
Youth group	14.4
Union	11.7
Human Rights Organisation	8.9
Political party	8.3
Peace movement	7.4
Women's rights group	6.4

Table: Types of activism for youth  
\*Source: *Youth on the Eve of the Third Millennium*

form of sporting or cultural - artist group (See table).

Organisations tied to activists, such as political parties or peace organisations are ranked low. The survey led to the conclusion that young people do not consider politics as an integral part of their everyday lives, nor do they consider political power as one of the most important elements of social power. Their attitude towards politics can be considered ambivalent - participation in politics is considered necessary but they do not recognise the negative influence of their lack of participation towards their complete social position.

It is interesting to see in what way young people spend their leisure time. The most common activity amongst youth in their free time is:- meeting with friends and/or their boyfriend/girlfriend 76.5%; watching TV or a video 70.9%; listening to the radio 65.2%; going out to a coffee bar 58.1%; listening to rock bands 55.3%; taking part in family or household tasks 48.9%; reading newspapers 46.0%; going to discotheques 33.5%; going to parties 31.0%; reading books 29.0%; sleeping or lying around 26.8%; going to church 22.2%; going on picnics and walks 22.0%. Less common activities are: - going to the cinema 21.1%; playing computer and video games 18.7%; listening to folk music 18.2%; active sporting activities 16.2%; going to sporting events 15.2%; going to concerts 14.9%; listening to classical music 11.1%; playing the lottery 8.2%; going to the theatre 7.3%; visiting art exhibitions 5.8%; visiting public lectures 3.2%; involvement in humanitarian actions 2.9%; political activities 1.6%. (Data from *Youth on the Eve of the Third Millennium*).

Using psycho-physical stimulants are questioned as part of leisure time for the young simply because the use of narcotics and other substances usually take place during free time. An analysis of psycho-pharmaceutics indicate that the most common are tobacco and alcohol, followed by drugs and finally, heavy drugs (See table).

In the survey of the perception of problems faced by youth (*Youth in Croatia*), youth stated that their biggest problem was: - socially unacceptable behaviour (58.8%); unemployment (48.6%); low living standards (36.4%); and the *brain-drain*

(20.4%). Education (12.1%) and the lack of interest for social and political issues (10.8) were ranked relatively low. These results are connected to the analysis of the perception of the most responsible institutions to resolve the problems of youth, ordered as followed: - young individuals themselves (51.7%); parents 47.9%; the government 47.2%; schools or universities (22.8%); and the media (11.4%). These results are slightly incoherent to preferred measures to resolve problems of the young, i.e. 55.3% of youth expressed their interest for equal opportunities in education and employment for all youth; 50.9% opted for stronger penalties for narco dealers and limits on the sale of alcohol; 33.6% believe that youth should be secured the opportunity to participate in decision making at all levels; 29.8% desired an education system that would be closer to life needs. Perhaps the situation would be clearer if we noted the order of social values of youth \$ keeping in mind that we only listed those values where the number of responses exceeded 90%. Responses indicated that 96.3% wanted a healthy environment; 95.3% wanted equality for all and peace in the world; 93.9% wanted human solidarity; 93.4% opted for the rule of law and freedom; and 90.1% wanted social justice. We could mention economic security which gained 87.5% compared to national feelings which only 59.3% opted for. The survey included data about characteristics that were important to social progress in Croatia where adaptable behaviour (95.1%) was in first place, followed by competency (85.9%); personal advocacy (89.0%); good "ties" (84.3%); and a university degree (73.0%).

Research into Croatia's accession to the European integration processes was conducted within the *Youth on the Eve of the Third Millennium* study and indicated that the strongest advantages that the young see as part of this process was of an economic nature:- to enable more rapid and better quality economic development in Croatia and a higher standard of living. The group of the most common responses included claims that relate to the democratisation of society; the young highly ranked the issue of human and minority rights and the possibility of democratisation of Croatia's society in general. The young



Number of interviewees who use or tried psycho-active substances	(%)
Alcohol	88%
Tobacco	77%
Light drugs	37%
Psycho-pharmaceuticals	26%
Heavy drugs	10%

Table: Use of psycho-active substance

\*Source: Youth on the Eve of the Third Millennium

also expect personal benefit from Croatia's accession to the EU, primarily for better employment opportunities and better education. The least expressed attitudes are those that refer to possible threats to Croatia with its accession to the EU such as the fear of losing its cultural, political and economic independence, or the loss of identity.

The frustration resulting from not being able to fulfil one's working role by the young is understandable as an important factor of socialisation in the transition process of young adolescents into adults but also too the apathy that takes hold of youth and is manifested in avoiding social and political involvement and the loss of trust in important institutional systems as well as the increased readiness to leave the country to seek work. By mid 2003, 150,000 young educated people left Croatia (*Developing Common Approaches...*)

An objective basis for the social definition of youth is the specific place that this socio-demographic group has in the system of social reproduction and development. Youth are defined as a subject that emerges on in the process of social reproduction and not only material production but distribution too, exchange, consumption and production of humanity itself and human intellectual and physical resources. One of the most serious repercussions of an ageing population is the brain drain that relates to the loss of the ties between the generations, not only in the sense of losing the link to transfer value templates of a certain society but also in the sense of disrupting the existing template of care for the elderly (inter-generational solidarity) which threaten the pension system which in our case is reflected in the fact that for each person employed there are two inactive members of society.

In conclusion, the socio-economic situation in Croatia today is vitally determined by problems of sub-investments, de-industrialisation and high unemployment. Younger generations are encompassed by these processes at the very beginning of the productive period of their lives. The way out of this situation is by investing in science and to reform the education system and labour market. The young are society's fundamental resource

and the pre-condition for development of society on the whole. As such the young have all the right to seek older generations for support and recognition of their needs and aspirations.

### SURVEY OF FOCUS GROUPS

All the data in this section of the study cannot offer all the relevant data required because they lack a qualitative dimension. As such research of focus groups produced material that can help us gain a more complete set of information about the situation of youth in Croatia. Methodologically we divided participants into pupils, students, members of non-governmental organisations, unemployed and employed, endeavouring to have the same number of participants per region and members of all the mentioned groups. We need to mention that there are some methodological differences in the work with the focus groups. For instance, only the youth in Istria and Kvarner and northern Croatia offered such an association to the notion of youth whereas advantages for youth were mentioned in north-west Croatia and Dalmatia. Generally, we could say that youth ranked problems relating to this period of life in the following manner: 1) youth and the economy; 2) participation of youth in the local community; 3) leisure time activities for youth; 4) informing the youth, communication, media; 5) marginalisation of youth; 6) education; 7) health; 8) conflicts, violence, discrimination. This classification was our guide in writing the chapters of this Report and each of these topics will be dealt with in a separate chapter. It is interesting that youth ranked education in sixth place only. A partial explanation can be assigned to that fact that youth do not relate some problems to their age group such as, unemployment, with education, i.e. they are not apt to a deep view of the problem and valuing the education system as the basis for economic progress. It is also possible to look for an explanation in the research results of the attitude of youth towards education (Baranović, 2002: pp.206-218), which point out that youth are aware of the limited scope of the influence of education to resolve their life problems and the fact that education is simply not valued enough in Croatian society. However,

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we must point out that one of the main reasons for this ranking of problems is of a methodological nature. Namely, youth participating in the focus groups reacted in an impulsive manner, and listed problems by association. As such they listed the greatest problems as being those that they experienced themselves in everyday life as being the most problematic, i.e. unemployment, participation in society and the way they spent their free time.

In presenting the results of the focus group we will start from the advantages young people relate to their age. Youth in northwest Croatia see their advantages in: - easier opportunities to change their qualifications; computer know how and not being burdened with the past while youth in Dalmatia mostly like the fact: - that they are living at a time when society is becoming aware of the needs of youth, and that they have the opportunity to participate in that process; that they belong to a generation that could change things; family and physical security compared to the situation abroad. These results show that young people are aware of the time they are living in and that they have potential to change the current situation for the better. The following text will show what changes, appropriate to their problems faced by the young, are required.

As an illustration of the youth world, we can use the association of the notion of youth that young people from Istria and Kvarner used as well as northwest Croatia (Zagreb) which at this level already point out some differences, primarily in the greater optimism felt by young people in Istria and Kvarner. The order of the said associations from Istria and Kvarner are: - changes, independence, education, entertainment, optimism, laughter, brightness, future, motivation, tolerance, mutinous with a reason, sub-cultures, passivity, misunderstood, creativity, curiosity, ideals, mistakes, courage, potential, beauty, escaping reality. Associations by the young in northwest Croatia were: - freedom, unemployment, naivety, entertainment, uninterested, apathy, mutinous, initiatives, future, ideals, society, drugs, R'N'R, sex, curiosity, puppies, boredom, laziness, pregnancy, influence. Brainstorming certainly resulted in a rich span

of notions that young people relate to their social status. Other associations are represented which positively evaluate the position of youth such as those that make us aware that young people are in an unfavourable position as well as those that point to the critical relationship toward their own age group.

The majority of the results from the focus groups related to problems faced by youth in Croatian society. The results show that there is a core of problems that are on the main part the same in all regions. However, there are some vital differences between regions in ranking these problems. This finding has essential significance in creating youth policies because due to the regional differences, a varying approach must be applied. In eastern Slavonia the greatest problem preventing youth on their path to independence is unemployment. Even though less than 25% of individuals' claims related to the economic situation and the remainder of claims referred mostly to how to spend their leisure time, young people noted that the greatest problem they faced was unemployment. Youth noted that the only alternative they had for employment was seasonal work in the building industry or catering services. Due to the situation where the unemployment rate in Slavonia-Baranja County is the highest in Croatia, all 18 participants of the workshop stated that they still lived with their parents. This just confirms the fact that there is a trend in Croatia to prolong the socio-economic dependence of young people. Looking at it from a macro perspective a surprisingly large number of statements about the problem of spending free time came from eastern Croatia. However, we need to consider that the young come to self realisation in their free time and that during this time they express their preferences that are perhaps thwarted by official institutions such as the education system. This is why it is quite defeatist to hear claims that there is no creative way to spend free time, that youth do not know what to do with themselves and that one of their greatest problems is boredom. The problem of poor communication amongst youth is prevalent too, particularly amongst various sub-culture groups where conflict is always possible seeing that the number of places to go out in and spend free

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time is limited. There is a problem too with the lack of basic infrastructure, i.e. poor transport connections which is why young people are not as mobile as they desire. There is also the problem of youth being involved in political life because as one participant said, "everyone has some sort of animosity to young people who join any political party". Because of this the problem of youth participation in the local community was ranked in third place. Health was ranked fourth and mostly relating to the problem of addiction. The high unemployment related to the lack of spending good quality time in free time lead to templates in behaviour that lead to apathy. This problem is related to the underdeveloped system of information and communication between the young themselves and with government institutions as well as between youth in general and youth organisations. Education was ranked in sixth place and young people objected to the archaic education system, inappropriate and over extensive requirements of formal knowledge as well as the lack of adequate conditions to good quality education. Young people ranked individual problems such as discrimination of national groups and premature marriage in last place. One of the conclusions of this part of the survey is that young people have lost their trust in government institutions. The extent of the repercussions to future progress this lack of trust can have is quite clear because without trust there can be no co-operation.

We can commence the presentation of the results obtained from surveying youth in northwest Croatia with a comment of one of the participants that today there is too much emphasis in society that youth must realise the identity imposed upon them without any help so that young people can have faith in themselves. This reminds us of a statement by participants from eastern Croatia about the loss of trust young people have in institutions of the society. Young people in northwest Croatia pointed out as a priority to resolve their problems with the problem of the media and communications; the economy and unemployment; participation in society and prejudices; conflict and violence. The greatest criticism in regard to the media related to the

opinion that young people are fascinated with entertainment which does not involve any efforts as well as to their uncritical attitude towards information. They objected to the media not being interested in the problems of the young. However, the young themselves were not spared criticism because they too often reverted to passiveness. Their objection to education was related to the poor communication between teachers as well as the inadaptability of school programme that insisted on formal knowledge. There has been much talk in Croatia about the increase in violence in schools - amongst pupils and between pupils and teachers. In support of this we have a statement by a young person from northwest Croatia about the growth of prejudice in wider society towards youth (young people are not serious and lazy) and young people towards their peers belonging to different religious confessions or members of minorities (the most noticeable is the problems of the Romany). Young people wish to change the system of education, amongst else with the introduction of new contents such as the prevention of addiction and risky behaviour. It is encouraging to see that young people show a desire to change things because in some spheres they have begun to lose their motivation. With regard to youth participation in the community that young people note as a problem that is rooted in prejudices by society towards youth, is the lack of success by some youth initiatives and the unwillingness to offer financial support to the young.

Young people in central Croatia (the survey was conducted in Karlovac) focussed on several problems. The first of these was the lack of information available to youth and the lack of access to information. Some of the causes for this are: technological illiteracy; deliberate blockade of information due to interest as well as the lack of initiative by youth. The second problem is the inadequacy of institutions to address youth problems due to their institutional time-consuming steps in a decision making process (slowness and lack of appropriate funds needed for implementation of youth projects). There is also a problem of not understanding the concept, purpose and potential of non-profit organisations on behalf of public servants and the wider

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public which leads to an even higher expression of lack of motivation and an inactive youth. The third problem is health within which the biggest concern represent the use of drugs and alcohol. Youth in central Croatia understand this problem as being caused by the non-existence of leisure time activities for youth combined with their incapacity to resist various trends. The education system does not offer the basis for complete development of young people. Statements made by youth from central Croatia stressed the social level while economic status was a

little neglected which does not mean that young people in central Croatia are not burdened with the problem of unemployment and economic dependency.

The young in Istria and Kvarner saw one of their largest problems in the general fall in values in society which according to them, started about 15 years ago. There has been a growth orientation towards material goods and succumbing to trends which not only relates to the sphere of entertainment but, for example, on religion too. The second problem is the lack of sporting activities available for the young because clubs are not financed sufficiently, lack of infrastructure, disorganisation and sporting activities are poorly available in schools. Here too we see an apathy and disinterest amongst the youth. Youth do not know how to value their own worth. They are not aware of their opportunities, and society is not doing anything to change the situation. Unemployment and the general political-economic situation in this part of Croatia too did not leave youth indifferent. They too fear the lack of prospect and being

drowned into an indifferent mass. Youth in Istria and Kvarner are amongst the few young people who expressed the desire to improve the quality of sporting activities. It would be interesting to investigate why this difference occurs.

Youth in Dalmatia agreed that their greatest problem was the lack of opportunities to use their time creatively which leads to youth spending time on streets and in some cases to drug addiction. The economic basis to develop creativity was also present in this region. Youth are unsatisfied with their unemployment and feeling of uselessness that individuals felt. Youth in Dalmatia combined education with information sharing into a very wide category that included inadequacy of education, patriarchal family relations, condemnation of sexual freedom and inadequate sexual education. This group of young people expressed their dissatisfaction with conservatism and traditionalism that created pressure and did not allow self realisation of the individual. These problems are evident at the family level and institutional. Traditionalism and frustration lead to a growth in violence. Young people believe we are faced with a true epidemic. Youth in Dalmatia recognised that the root of anti-sociality and loss of values, amongst else the lack of motivation and interest for change - led to them falling into an enchanted circle.

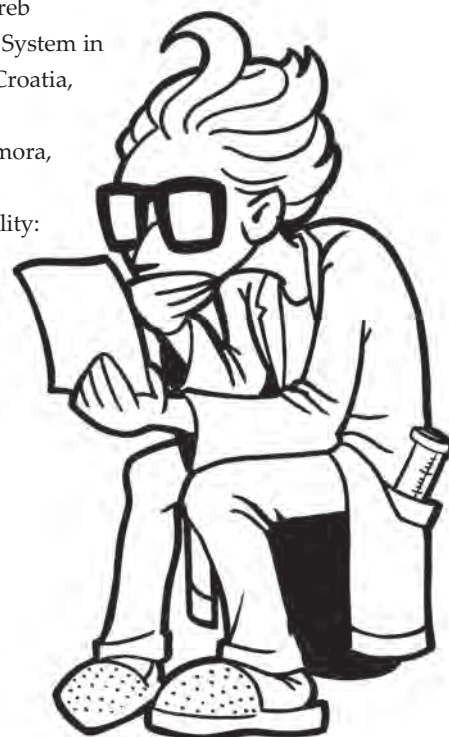
The survey of the focus group showed a great level of coincidence with the results of the scientific research on the population of youth. The problems faced by youth are very serious. Young people have many interests however they feel a great dose of frustration because they lack the resources required to achieve their desired objectives. Young people have the impression that wider society and the government do not have sufficient understanding or the will to take the step that would mean going forward but instead their efforts are directed to *ad hoc* solutions. This situation can only lead to apathy amongst youth and creates an enchanted circle that must be broken if Croatian

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society truly wishes to effectively utilise all its potential for the well being of the entire community.

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# YOUTH AND THE STATE

## INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK OF YOUTH POLICY IN THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA FROM 1990 TO DATE

Article 62 of the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia (RH) determines the responsibility of the state to protect youth and to create social, cultural, educational, material and other conditions that will promote and enable the fruition of the right to a dignified life. Numerous oscillations can be noticed in national youth policy from 1990 to date. These oscillations are related to the changes in the general political-institutional system in the entire country however, they are also related to the turbulent events taking place amongst certain umbrella youth organisation that together with the government were to create and promote national youth policy.

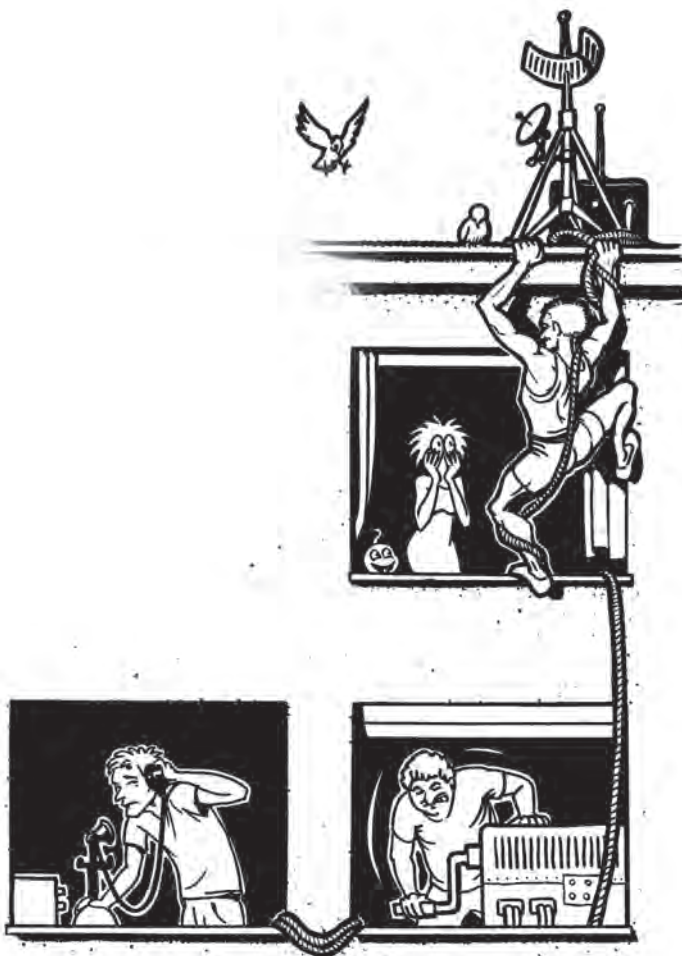
When we refer to the institutional framework of youth policy in European Union countries, there are three key elements:- the executive body at the national level responsible for youth (ministries or lower ranking government bodies); the national youth council as an advocate and partner to the government in implementing youth policy at the national level; and local youth councils with the same role but as partners to the local and regional government in implementing youth policy.

## STATE BODIES AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUTH

The Croatian Government Council for Youth (*Vijeće za mlade Vlade Republike Hrvatske*) is the first national inter-portfolio body established to co-operate with youth. It was founded in 1993 and consisted of twenty members, six were from umbrella youth organisation. In 1997, the government abolished the Council and in January it set up the *State Institute for the Protection of the Family, Maternity and Youth (DZZOMM)* which was a state administrative body with one department and one employee responsible for the care of youth. At the time, youth organisations intensified their co-operation with the Sabor (Croatian Parliament) Committee for the Family, Youth and Sport. In the second half of 1998, the Croatian Government founded the Government Office for Cooperation with Non-Governmental Organizations as a direct link between the Government as the highest executive body and civil society organisation – including youth organisations.

With the change in government on 3 January 2000, a new era began with youth becoming involved in the decision making process in RH. The Croatian government obliged the DZZOMM to create a *National Youth Policy Document*. Following their participative role in creating the document, at its session of 2 October 2002, the Sabor supported the draft - *National Programme of Action for Youth (NPDM)*. The Croatian Government adopted the NPDM at its session held on 16 January 2003.

With the change of government in November 2003, we have a new institutional framework. The DZZOMM no longer exists in its former structure but instead the *Ministry for the Family, Veterans and Inter-Generational Solidarity* was set up which includes activities related to youth.



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## NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL

The *National Youth Council* consists of various local and national youth organisations in some country so that in its capacity as an umbrella organisation it can represent youth and youth organisations at the national level in dialogue with the Government. Recent history of Croatia's youth sector – from 1990 to date – is marked with three larger attempts to establish some kind of an umbrella organisation. The *National Alliance of Croatian Youth* (*Nacionalni savez mlade•i Hrvatske*) was founded in 1991 with 16 national youth organisations as members however, in an effort to depoliticise umbrella organisations in early 1992 it was decided that youth branches of political parties should not be full members but associate members. The National Alliance of Croatian Youth was in 1995 accepted in the *Council of European National Youth Councils* (CENYC), which represents a platform of the *European Youth Forum* (EYF). Nevertheless, in 1996 everything seemed to take a turn for the worse and political parties interfered in the change of leadership and changed the association's name to the *Croatian Alliance of Youth Groups* (*Hrvatski savez mladeških udruga - HSMU*). Everything culminated with the departure of the majority of member organisation from the HSMU and with the HSMU being excluded in 1999 from the European Youth Forum.

After the change in government in 2000 an alternative to the HSMU was founded – the *Croatian National Youth Council* (NSMH) however, this association too did not last too long. Because of its intransparent activities and failure to conduct annual assemblies it lost the majority of its members and its legitimacy. Following several diplomatic errors and conflicts it lost its credibility before the government and all relevant international institutions and international youth organisations.

Comparatively with the process of creating a national youth policy document, the DZZOMM in association with several youth organisations, initiated the process of networking youth organisations into a new umbrella organisation. *Croatian Youth Network* (MMH) was founded late 1992 by 55 youth organisations, but still did not fulfil its role of being a true national youth council such as those that exist in the EU. The reason for this was the dissatisfaction of several members with the networking process who then decided to be passive members; a certain number of members as well as the entire youth sector is faced with the problem of the lack of capable people to lead it. The main reason for this being that the number of the elected management of the MMH has been in reality halved. The fact remains that Croatia still does not have a national youth council that is a full member of the European Youth Forum (EYF). Membership to that regional umbrella organisation brings with it new opportunities for the young and youth organisations in Croatia.

## LOCAL AND REGIONAL YOUTH COUNCILS

Even though local and regional youth councils are a constant practise in the majority of European countries, the Republic of Croatia still does not have a legally regulated system of local and

regional youth councils. One of the well known acts by international institutions dealing with this topic is the *European Charter on Youth Participation in Life of Municipality and Regions* adopted by the Council of Europe in 1992. Croatia has been a member of that institution since 1996. The charter regulates the obligation for local and regional governments to adjust their regulations in order to enable the participation of youth in decision making. The second most important document that should be mentioned in this context is the *White Paper* by the European Commission “*A New Impetus for European Youth*” and if Croatia wants to accede to European Union, it should adopt the Paper as well as certain other European Union standards relating to youth participation in decision-making processes regarding youth.

While initiating the process of networking youth organisations the DZZOMM also initiated a debate process in an effort to create and have the *Law on Youth Councils* adopted. That processes culminated in June 2003 when the bill received consensus by the majority of youth organisations with a few minor adjustments and should have been submitted into legislative procedure. However, feedback from the Croatian Government was not positive due to the additional costs required to open a new administrative register intended exclusively for youth councils registered at the local or county level. Administrative explanations prevailed over involving youth in decision-making processes. In December 2003 a new debate was opened with the co-operation of the *Alliance of Associations of Cities and Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Croatia* (*Savez udruga gradova i Udruga općana Republike Hrvatske*) to discuss the Law. This process is still continuing.

## THE EMERGENCE OF THE NATIONAL PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR YOUTH

The Council of Europe initiated the development and creation of the *National Programme of Action for Youth* as part of Croatian accession to the European Union. The Croatian Government was assigned the task to regulate the position of youth – as the future power of social development.

The task of writing the National Programme of Action for Youth (NPDM), was adjusted to European standards and was assigned to the *State Institute for the Protection of the Family, Maternity and Youth*. More than seventy young people and over 30 youth organisations were involved in the process of creating the National Programme. A proposal of the programme was created by a working group of the DZZOMM which was formed with a total of 80 members (9 sub-groups by areas of the programme) and state government bodies, experts and scientists as well as youth representatives.

After drafting the first official programme, the idea was to involve youth through a campaign *Join In* (*Uključ se*) where they could contribute their opinions, add new proposals or evaluate what had already been written. The public campaign endeavoured to include 1,000 young people in the process of writing this document before it was submitted to the Sabor and Government for

adoption. However, the campaign came too late. Due to the poor *timing* and insufficient communication, the Sabor adopted the bill before the results of the campaign was collected and analysed. The campaign nevertheless proved to be a good idea and motivated young people to actively include themselves in the debate about the problems of youth and proposed models to resolve these problems.

By using a specially designed computer programme, this was the first time that an official state document could be directly created by those who the document affected – Croatian youth. The usual practise was that strategic documents such as these were adopted within ministries or at closed sessions of the Government while their implementation was left up to the relevant ministries and other state bodies. “When we were given the opportunity to participate in creating this programme, we realised that this would be just a another piece of paper if we did not allow young people in Croatia to learn about its existence. We also wanted to check that what we had written and were seeking funding from the state budget related to the real needs of youth. This resulted in the idea to initiate a public campaign by which the document could be accessible to as many young people as possible and to give them the opportunity to change what they wanted to. We were fortunate that the entire process of the National Programme was headed by two wonderful women from the DZZOMM (Dejana Bouillet and Ivana Kanceljak), who managed to find the funds for this “revolutionary project”, said Andrija Vranić, a member of the first working group and the mastermind behind the campaign and co-ordinator of information points (CMS).

The campaign was organised so that as many publicly accessible computers were made available (in secondary schools, faculties, libraries, open universities, cultural centres, youth organisations and clubs) with a specially designed programme that contained all the documents forming the national programme as well as a survey that would assist in choosing priorities, comment on the proposed measures and propose ideas for new projects targeted to youth at the local and national level. On the other hand, TV and radio spots were recorded and a web page for the campaign so that the public would receive the message that these computer programme existed at “info-points” and as many young people as possible were called to offer feedback information relating to the NPDM. The info-points were set up in 115 towns in Croatia. The campaign lasted from 20 September to 20 November 2002 and over 1,600 comments were made by youth around the country. The results of the campaign served as an indicator of the success of the document and showed that the NPDM was truly written for youth and that it catered to its needs.

Contents of the document or what does the programme offer us?

- *The Croatian National Programme of Action for Youth* declares clear and long-term determination to create social, educational, cultural, material and other conditions for the permanent well being of youth and their active, total and responsible participation in society.

Programme determinants:

- National youth policy
- Strategy for implementation of national youth policy
- Action programme (measures)
- Recommendations to non-governmental organisations and local and regional self-government

With the Programme the Republic of Croatia, with an objective insight into the circumstances in which its young citizens (15 to 29) live in, set its programme objectives for the activities to rule all political factors towards youth in the period up to 2008. With the adoption of the NPDM, the Croatian Government obliged itself to realise the following strategic objectives as soon as possible:

- advance legislature that relates to the needs and problems of youth;
- define tasks for individual portfolios, relevant government bodies and public institutions in fulfilling international, constitutional and legislative obligations for the Republic of Croatia relating to youth;
- improve the quality of life for all its citizens, particularly youth, keeping in mind their interest and in line with European standards and best practice models;
- include as many young people as possible in the decision making process about the needs and problems of youth;
- introduce new blood to managing social structures;
- mobilise all potential in society, particularly the young and most creative members of the community in creating new material and spiritual values for open and sustainable development, active role in the European integration processes and development of a democratic society and a rule of law;
- create conditions to reaffirm youth in Croatia, decrease their emigration (brain drain) and motivate return of emigrants and their integration into Croatian society;
- develop constructive and partner like relations with youth NGOs and local and regional self-government bodies in the aim of achieving the objectives of well being of youth.

The NPDM's *Working Plan* sets the basic tasks for state government bodies and organisations to implement the National Programme and calls on local government bodies and all non-governmental organisations and civil initiatives, but also other stakeholders such as religious communities and political parties, to mutually motivate joint action to contribute towards achieving objectives leading to the well-being of youth in the following areas:

- education and information
- employment and entrepreneurship
- youth social policy
- health protection and reproductive health
- active participation of youth in the community
- youth culture and leisure time
- civil society development and voluntary work
- mobility, information and counselling

The entire National Programme of Action for Youth can be found in an electronic version on the following Web page [http://www.dzzomm.hr/PDF/npdm\\_hr.pdf](http://www.dzzomm.hr/PDF/npdm_hr.pdf)

The measures contained in the NPDM were truly directed to improving the status of youth in Croatia and this is the first document in Croatia that is all-encompassing with regard to youth. It analyses their problems, offers solutions, obliges certain state institutions to implement these solutions in reality. Some of the measures are truly revolutionary and are in line with the most contemporary European trends. The NPDM itself shows just how participatory the entire process of creating the document was, i.e. that for the first time, youth in Croatia were given the opportunity to offer their recommendations to the government with regard to resolving priority problems faced by youth in Croatia. Where the NPDM failed however, was neither in the process of its adoption nor in its contents but its implementation which simply did not follow once the Programme was adopted.

### IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The National Programme of Action for Youth should be implemented in the period from 2003 to 2008. In the fifth chapter of the NPDM there is a Working Plan that determines a total of 110 measures that need to be implemented in that five year period with the aim of creating conditions for the well-being of youth and their active participation in society. According to the provisions of the Working Plan to implement the set 110 measures, 32 various government bodies have been assigned tasks even though since the change in government after the elections, many of these bodies have been changed and have different names now.

The largest number of measures relate to the education system, higher education, health, social welfare and entrepreneurship and as such the relevant portfolios are most often responsible for the measures noted in the NPDM. Most of the measures relate to the former Ministry of Education and Sports (now the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports) – 31 measures and the former State Institute for the Protection of the Family, Maternity and Youth which is now a department within the Ministry of the Family, Veterans and Inter-Generational Solidarity – 25 measures. Here it has to be mentioned that in 2003 the DZZOMM employed only a few people.

The fourth chapter of the National Programme of Action for Youth described the funding to implement the NPDM. The Republic of Croatia has ensured funding from the state budget required to realise the National Programme in the way that each of the relevant ministries or bodies are to include relevant activities in their budget plans in line with the operative plan determined to implement certain measures or activities.

Realisation of specific tasks is planned to be implemented in cooperation and partnership with local and regional government bodies, where they will participate in funding according to their financial ability and needs of the local community. In order to realise certain measures contained in the National Programme, with the Government's approval, the project coordinators can sign contracts with international organisations and other interested donors.

Coordination of the implementation of NPDM's Working Plan was assigned to the said DZZOMM, however in December 2003

(after the parliamentary election) the DZZOMM was abolished and partially transferred to the newly formed Ministry of the Family, Veterans and Inter-Generational Solidarity and now the Ministry is responsible to implement the NPDM. All government bodies responsible for measures contained in the Working Plan are obliged to adopt operative plans for individual measure within six months of the adoption of the NPDM. Each operative plan needs to describe implementation activities, the dynamics of the implementation (time frame), responsible bodies, funding required, foreseen sources of funding, implementation indicators and indicators of success. The DZZOMM encompassed all the operative plans for all the relevant bodies in the united document, the Implementation Plan of the NPDM which was proposed to the government in the autumn of 2003.

For the purpose of implementing the NPDM and some other objectives, the Croatian Government founded *Council for Youth* (*Savjet za mlade*) which conducted its first session on 30 October 2003. However, unfortunately, after this session, not one regular meeting was held again and following the parliamentary election the body was abolished.

The National Programme foresaw that an evaluation of the NPDM would be implemented by expert teams consisting of representatives of the Government, expert institutions, NGOs and local self-government bodies. The body responsible for co-ordination of the implementation of the NPDM (previously the DZZOMM, now the Ministry) is responsible to submit an annual report to the government explaining the dynamic of implementation and the achieved results. The report is due 15 March for the previous year.

The new state body responsible for youth, the Ministry for the Family, Veterans and Inter-Generational Solidarity announced that it would continue with youth policy commenced by the previous government. The new government would continue with implementing the National Programme of Action for Youth where the previous government and the State Institute for the Protection of the Family, Maternity and Youth had come to. *Savjet za mlade* was abolished due to procedural reasons and currently a new body is being appointed with the same members to continue to co-ordinate the implementation of the NPDM and inter-portfolio youth policy. Those responsible in the Ministry have declared that in addition to implementing the NPDM that they would triple the number of staff working on youth issues in national government bodies and to request increased budget funding for youth. It will continue to finance youth clubs and will open a government foundation to finance youth organisations. News received from those responsible in the relevant government bodies are encouraging but due to bad experiences in the past, youth organisations are taking this news cautiously and will be convinced when the NPDM begins to be implemented in earnest.

youth and the economy





קִרְבֵּי עֵרָה לֹא־יִסָּפֵר

# YOUTH AND THE ECONOMY

According to focus groups, unemployment and a difficulty in finding an appropriate job represent the biggest problems. Inadequate educational system is one of the main reasons causing these problems, but youth themselves should assume some responsibility for this situation because they do not play an active role in their own lives and they hope to achieve big results without investing too much of their energy. Croatian society is facing changes affecting attitudes and awareness of youth, and young people are beginning to understand that formal university education is an important, and in many professions only the first step towards finding a job and furthering one's career. The concept of lifelong learning, that is, of constant professional development, is the path young people should take in order to achieve professional maturity and bring Croatia closer to labour market standards around the world.

Although many things in this area depend on individual initiative, the state can and must do more when it comes to systematic implementation of aforementioned types of education so as to include a larger number of young people.

Youth are forced to live with their parents even in their late 20s because they are unemployed. Some find this situation convenient, but most young people find it frustrating because they are not financially independent, which is a condition for an independent life. A sense of independence gives a sense of security in terms of one's own place in society, and in extreme cases lack of independence can lead to different behavioural disorders, criminal activities and drug addictions.

A possible way out of the "cage" of dependency is provided by ZUM from Pula, a non-governmental organisation providing incentives for employment and professional development of young people. It was founded in 2001 when a group of young people were brought together by a common problem – unemployment. They knew they did not want to do the usual jobs available<sup>8</sup> to them and that good jobs were hard

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got any work?

A friend of mine went to Belgium and founded a company there in just 45 minutes. Here it's a huge administrative process.

to find, so they decided to find new ways of finding employment and to encourage young people to become actively involved in the process. This goal is achieved through four programme activities:

- establishing relationship between employers and employees through joint work on projects.
- practical workshops ( how to write a CV and prepare yourself for a job interview )
- acquainting youth with the activities of a local community
- international cooperation (professional internship abroad)

ZUM tries (and succeeds) to show the employers that youth have the knowledge but lack the practice and experience. How do they do it? For example, ZUM organizes a forum between entrepreneurs and young experts, in cooperation with faculties and institutions of higher education in Pula, with the Croatian Chamber of Commerce and the Croatian Chamber of Trades and Crafts, as well as with the city of Pula and local government of Istria. At these forum companies have the possibility to meet educated and ambitious young people willing to work. If a company has a project and at these forum they find a person with required professional qualifications, that person is put in charge of the project, and final results are presented at the next meeting of entrepreneurs and young experts.

In the last two years ZUM organisation has helped 15 young people to find work this way. The number may not seem large, but considering the resources and capacities of the organization, the results are commendable<sup>9</sup>.

In addition, in the last two years ZUM has organized 15 workshops with an average of 15 participants in every workshop, focusing on the process of finding a job – from how to apply for a job and write a CV to how to prepare yourself for a job interview.

Recognition of ZUM in the community is shown by the fact that the project is funded by the local government and

municipal authorities trying to improve communication between young people and the state through round-table discussions, forums and lectures. At the moment ZUM is starting a project of education of the recently established Council of the Young People of Pula, and the expected results in the future are an increased data base on young people and greater recognition of ZUM among young people and entrepreneurs in particular. One of the obstacles that the organisation encounters is the fact that companies are not used to finding employees in this way, as well as the conservative nature of companies which do not accept challenges easily. However, a positive example is set by one businessman who provided the funds for the premises and the equipment for the whole year. The funds for ZUM are provided by international foundations and state institutions, and of great strategic importance are the funds provided by the city of Pula and Istria local government, as well as the Istra Development Agency. The biggest problems that the organisation faces are sustainability and the fact that there are no full-time employees, so that all the work is done at a volunteer level.

Despite the difficulties, ZUM is given as an example because of their commendable initiative. The issue of unemployment cannot be solved by a handful of enthusiasts, and in order to find a solution there should be a co-operation between the two principles, the one “at the top” and the one “at the bottom”; there should be a cohesion between individual initiatives and the model of national economic policy on employment and education.

The solution is as complex as the problem, but the fact that through focus groups youth have pointed out the issue of unemployment as the problem of most importance shows there is awareness of the problem as well as inability of youth to do something about it. Bearing in mind the context in which we live, the example of ZUM can surely give encouragement to

<sup>8</sup> For example, working in a cafe etc.

<sup>9</sup> AIESEC organisation uses a similar method, but only for students studying economics, who are recruited as young and inexperienced by companies in search of young talents. But work of ZUM organisation is particular in that it does not include only students of economics but all young people looking for work.

Everyone is looking for experienced young people. I really don't see where that is possible.

young people searching for appropriate work to join similar initiatives or start new ones at the local or regional level. One possible solution is to start initiative at the bottom level which would act as mediators in finding jobs or actually hiring people. By acting locally and creating a positive environment and cooperation between young people, businesspeople and local authorities, it is possible to find a way out of the virtual lack of prospects that young people are facing.

Another example of a similar model is given by a student organisation E-student<sup>10</sup>, whose goal is to put in touch top students from the Graduate School of Economics and Business and top companies doing business in Croatia. It was founded by a group of students and teaching assistants of the Graduate School of Economics and Business in Zagreb with a goal of providing students with additional knowledge and skills, not provided by the present system of formal education, but expected at workplace or in future professional life. Before starting the organization the founders wanted to first find out what the leading people of 1000 biggest Croatian companies thought of an organisation like that.

In November 2003 they sent them a letter announcing such an organisation would be founded and offering cooperation. Replies arrived very quickly, and their reaction was a very positive one, which encouraged the founders to start with the organisation as soon as possible. E-student started in March 2004 with a pilot project, which meant they had a well-defined programme and services of E-student (with the co-operation of businesspeople); it also meant it would include a smaller number of users. The purpose of the pilot project is to do some research and lay groundwork for the launch of a complete programme at the beginning of October 2004. The idea of the organisation is to single out best students at the Graduate School of Economics and Business in Zagreb and provide them

with additional education with the help of businesspeople through 5 complementary programme in terms of content:

- Non-formal lectures, workshops, work on business simulations;
- Mentoring;
- Practical experience;
- Trainee status (with the possibility of employment)
- Organized tours of companies.

In that sense, E-student will act as an intermediary agency between the educational and business systems, that is, between students and future employers, offering both sides the best of both worlds. So far E-student has had a cooperation with the Business Research Institute, a couple of Croatian companies and the Croatian Employment Service, the Croatian Employers' Association and Department of Psychology at the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb.

Another way of finding appropriate employment is offered by the first Croatian *job search web site* as a free medium for employees and employers, [www.moj-posao.net](http://www.moj-posao.net).

Even though it is not a project on youth and it is profit-oriented<sup>11</sup>, MojPosao (My job) deserves to be mentioned in this report because it has helped many young people to find work, and at the same time it represents an example of innovation and compliance with the principles according to which the market works. Transparency and efficiency on the Croatian labour market are characteristic of this *site*.

MojPosao started its activities towards the end of 2000 and its aim was development of the concept of on-line recruitment in Croatia. The aims of the web site are: insuring liquidity on the Croatian labour market, with a minimal use of resources and time of employers and employees; quick and simple access to job vacancies, despite the material barriers; more efficient way of finding personnel; transparency and liquidity in the

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got any work?

<sup>10</sup> [www.e-student.hr](http://www.e-student.hr)



The fact that often confuses the participants of the focus groups is that the employers often look for young people with experience, but they don't have anywhere to gain it. So, what we have then is a hopeless situation where young people are put in a position where they cannot get a job if they lack experience and they lack experience because they cannot get a job without that experience.

process of employment; cutting the costs of the employment process; insight into the labour market.

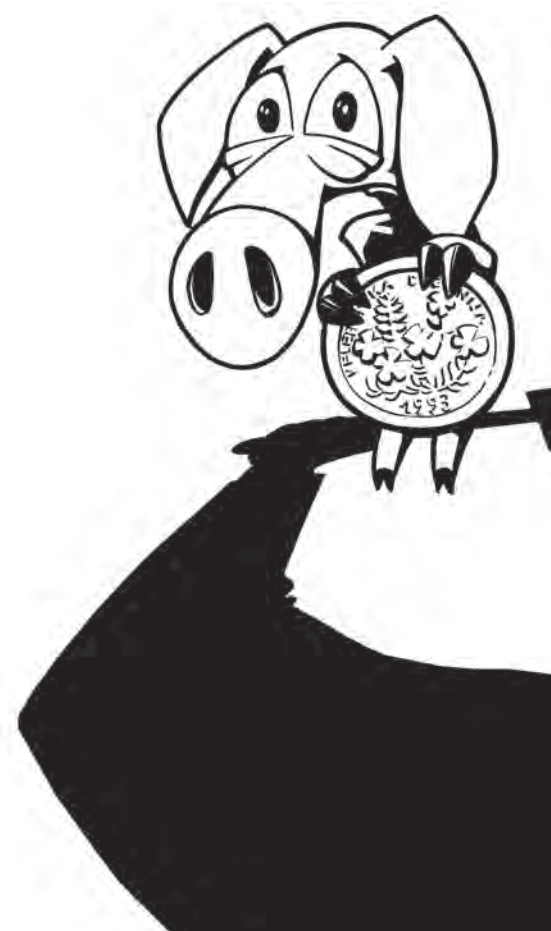
So far MojPosao has over 51, 000 registered users, 4, 000 out of which are employers from small and medium-sized companies, and all other leading Croatian companies. Between 10 ,000 and 15 ,000 (*Daily Unique Visitors*) visit the site on a daily basis.

MojPosao has published a book "I want a better job! A guide to a smart way of changing jobs", which contains all the necessary information: from how to write a professional CV to complete professional development. MojPosao works as a mediator, finding employment in Croatia and outside Croatia, and helping young people to find employment and/or further their career. Besides this basic function, youth are offered

professional advice on how to enter the labour market and be competitive, as well as legal counsel relating to labour legislation.

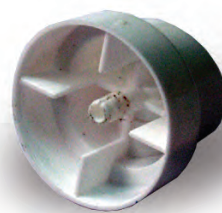
The simplicity and efficiency of this model is what young people find great. As much as we emphasize the complexity of economic problems, as well as the complexity of solutions, results of a well-organised company disprove that and suggest that very often solutions are like Occam's razors, the simplest solutions are usually the right ones.

The aforementioned examples make the problem of employment less complicated , because they show that part of the solution to the problem of employment is an increased level of transparency and the access of wider public to specific information related to employment.



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youth participation in the  
local community





WHO  
asked me?



GOLD



# YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The concept of youth participation in the activities and development of a local community is very simple and it is based on a decision according to which youth take part in a decision-making process in a more restricted sense, as well as in the development of democracy in a community, state and society where they live. Even though there is a general agreement on this issue in Croatia, in practice things look rather different.

For that reason, in Croatia at the present, there is a long list of failed projects and initiatives for youth, apathy and indifference are a common thing for them. There is a low percentage of participation in the activities of schools and communities, as well as low motivation to take initiative and make changes. Young people seem discouraged by the processes done in their name, which have not secured a place for them in the centres of power and decision-making processes. Fortunately, Croatia is on the road to developing mechanisms for these processes, and young people are aware of the fact that this will take some time, so they are taking the matters into their own hands.

When youth consider the social and political situation in Croatia, they often feel helpless so they are looking for ways to get involved and participate. Politicians, as well as other distinguished members of a community, often ignore them, thus creating an atmosphere of distrust and scepticism, and making youth passive and withdrawn.

Experience of activists shows the potential of young people who are ready to act in order to meet their needs and interests, unfortunately that potential often goes unrecognised. They are dedicated and committed young people who participate in the development of their community, building trust, communication and opening a dialogue between opposed groups of youth, between young people and authorities as well as between young people and society in general, so as not to be considered a marginal and left out group, but respected members of that society.

A research carried out in 2001, *Youth Activism in Croatia*<sup>12</sup> as well as other reports and assessments conducted by other NGOs in the last couple of years have shown that initiatives of young people encounter major problems, but nevertheless they still manage to be active and influential.

Youth activism is a type of participation we are talking about here, where activism means a positive active involvement of a person or a group, having a common goal and affecting a wider process of social changes towards a better society, peace, equality and justice. The role of a civil society, including initiatives of young people, is of utmost importance for development and improvement of tools for activities leading to those changes. It means that young people can be empowered<sup>13</sup> to improve their conditions, start self-learning processes, educate others, and finally to reform and transform the system in which they live.

Active participation of youth in a local community empowers them to become citizens who are willing, skilled and aware of their responsibility, strength and power to influence the society they belong to. We would like to show you some good examples of how it is possible to start changing a local community and include young people.

**KUTINA** – [www.nm-kt.hr](http://www.nm-kt.hr)

Independent Youth of Kutina (NMK) represent a group of young experienced activists who were not satisfied with the situation in their town. During the elections in the year 2001 they put together an independent list of young people willing to work on the development of the community in Kutina. The results were revolutionary: 5.8 % of votes, which secured them a representative in the City Council, and one member on the Committee for Youth in the City Council of Kutina. Although they had the shortest and the cheapest campaign in the history of the electoral system in Croatia (1,000 KN provided by their own resources), they managed to win in Brunkovac constituency. Since the HDZ-HSLS-HSP coalition is in power in Kutina, the representatives of NMK do not participate directly in the activities of the local authorities, but as an opposition they try to make the local government successful and efficient.

Determined to carry out specific actions and projects, they soon became aware of the need to register their organisation, which they did towards the end of 2002. Since then they have worked on many projects, and they are open to new members and ideas, as well as different kinds of co-operation. Activists of NMK emphasize they do not represent any political option, and their only interest is to create better living conditions for youth in Kutina by promoting tolerance and human rights.

Their active participation in the community where they live raises awareness of how important it is to have democratic elections and prevent manipulation of politicians during election campaigns.

NMK achieves its goals through different projects and initiatives (cultural, entertaining and sports events, programmes for non-formal education, publishing etc.). They collaborate on a daily basis with different people at the level of a local community, as well as at the state and regional level.

So far they have achieved remarkable results by carrying out several major and important projects for different target groups, dealing with issues such as: *Playgrounds not ruins* – campaign to reconstruct destroyed sports grounds in Kutina; *Noise against prejudice* – creating and raising awareness of discrimination against HIV positive people and of education on HIV/AIDS; *Gender equality* – educational programme intended to create and raise awareness of discrimination; *Healthy Community* – project on environmental protection, intended for children; *What to study after high school* – project on the possibilities of studying at different faculties and preparation for changes; *Equal rights – equal responsibilities* – educational programme on human rights.

Youth of Kutina have been recognized and accepted in their local community as a group of dedicated and determined young people whose goal is to meet the interests and needs of young people. Around 3000 people take part in their events and campaigns, usually covered by the media. They are planning to run in the next local elections, and no matter what the outcome, they will continue their work as an organization with great prospects, although passivity of young people in Kutina remains one of their biggest problems. Another obstacle they have to face, despite good results in the elections and active participation in the activities of the local authorities, is the fact that older colleagues do not take them seriously and often refuse to cooperate. Their expenses are not big owing to a virtual office, meetings in informal places, volunteer work and support they get from another initiative of youth in Kutina called KCM (Cultural Centre of Youth) and their club *Baraka*.

**BARAKA**, a well-known alternative culture club, was founded by the Cultural Centre of the Youth of Kutina ([www.kcm.hr](http://www.kcm.hr)) with a main goal of creating conditions in

<sup>12</sup> Centre for Peace Studies in Zagreb, in cooperation with Care International B-H/ CRO

<sup>13</sup> To empower young people means to give them access to knowledge, tools and skills which can help them meet their personal and social needs, and at the same time build their competence for future.



which young people can express themselves, as well as offering cultural events/ possibilities for the young people in Kutina and surrounding areas. Since its beginnings the KCM has been organizing cultural events mainly for alternative culture, as well as public discussions and other campaigns in the local community. They have also been presenting young local artists by publishing fanzines, books and CDs.

Their activities and dedication have been well received by the young people who regularly follow and take part in their activities, as well as by members of the community with whom they co-operate well. They especially emphasize the cooperation with the municipality of Kutina which is one of their sources of funding for the implementation of projects. Owing to the persistency of some people and understanding of municipal authorities, in 1996 the municipal authorities of Kutina provided the KCM with location known as *Baraka*, soon after that a maintenance team was set up (HCM – Hard Core Youth). It was the first time the youth of Kutina were given their own, independent space, which they could use to express themselves creatively, to socialise and do many other activities. *Baraka* is an old, abandoned military building which KCM was given the right to use the in a very poor condition. They made enormous efforts, making sure there was electricity, repairing and renovating the walls, windows and the entire space, guided by their vision of, as they say, the first independent free zone. By doing this they knew they were making the space not only their own but of all future generations of young people in Kutina. The club is self-sustained, nevertheless

additional funding is needed if some headway is to be made. The biggest problem, according to the people of the KCM, is inappropriate working space as well as space for meetings and planning.

*Baraka* is one of the first and best known alternative culture clubs in Croatia. It is used for practice, learning and concerts of young bands. A large number of bands from Croatia, as well as from neighbouring countries, and the world have performed in *Baraka* (Austria, Italy, Brazil, Serbia and Monte Negro, Slovenia). In addition to concerts, many performances, exhibitions, music nights, amateur theatre, discussions and public forums are held there. *Baraka* hosts an annual music and sports festival *Organized chaos* (this year held for the 9th time in a row ).

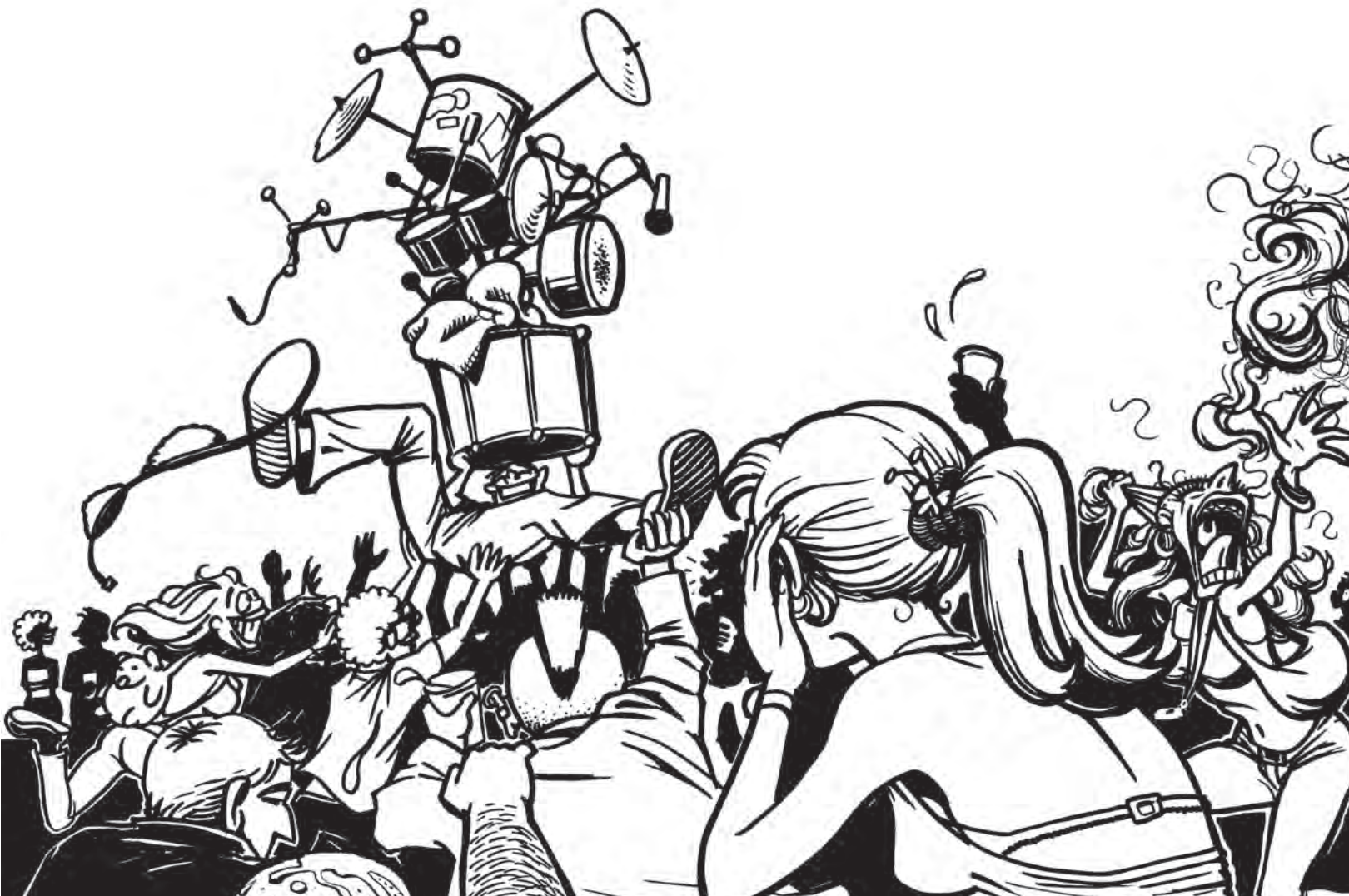
The activists of *Baraka* say it is surprising that they have built such a good and well-known club in a relatively short time. For a number of years *Baraka* has been offering the ONLY alternative in Kutina, and together with the Independent Youth of Kutina they have been promoting peace and tolerance.

Kutina is a town where young people have, to some extent, managed to win their right to take part in the life and development of their local community. They have reached both, the centres of power and decision-making processes, as well as users, gaining their support. The example set by this town shows that money is not the most important thing, and that with enough effort and motivation people can move from election speeches to a position of decision making and creating.

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who asked me?

They don't take you seriously, "You are still young, you don't know"









There isn't an adequate space where the young could gather, although the town does have spaces available.

# LEISURE TIME ACTIVITIES FOR YOUTH

Problems related to the lack of leisure time activities for young people and areas for creative self-expression of the young, as well as lack of cultural programmes, especially those originating from the focus groups, are fundamental in their essence precisely because it is the mode of using and quality manner of spending one's free time that are in question. For young people, the shaping of their free time is certainly one of the basic segments of their everyday life, from the classical boredom and flipping TV channels to taking a walk into town. Nobody doubts that the young have enough free time on their hands; although somebody who would doubt the fact that the young are creative and that they wish to use their free time usefully could still be found. Contrary to their belief, most young people agree with the fact that there does not exist a sufficient number of programmes and areas which could help them adequately fill the emptiness in their lives.

For example, if you are not a member of the mainstream generation with a taste in commercial music, nor do you enjoy crowded, stuffy spaces such as discotheques and most cafés, then you are left with little choice. Is there really no alternative? Of course there is, but one should know where and how to look for it.

If this is the feeling that prevails in Zagreb, just imagine what it must be like in the smaller communities; an indicator of some statements given by the young people who participated at the focus groups held at Vukovar, Karlovac or Pula. If you do not have the possibility to express your own creativity in the right way and you spend your time inadequately, there is an increased possibility that you will spend that time in socially less acceptable ways.

What are the needs that the young seek to satisfy, then? Are those needs of a cultural or sub-cultural nature, and what is it that the young really want? One of the answers is a project called Clubture ([www.clubture.org](http://www.clubture.org)), which has developed from a fundamental idea of "culture as an exchange process". Clubture gathers many non-profit and non-institutional organisations, clubs and initiatives related to the cultural projects and programmes in Croatia. The member

organisations are involved through joint programmes and projects. A jointly defined programme is planned and financed on a yearly basis. The purpose of Clubture is strengthening of an independent and non-profit cultural scene, with a special emphasis on connecting the clubs/alternative scene as well as other various initiatives resulting from this co-operation.

Clubture is a project that functions as a network and a programme exchange platform. What makes it different from the other networks, is the fact that Clubture members are all those who participate in the programme exchange. Connecting of various NGOs and initiatives are encouraged, with a special emphasis on the independent youth clubs which offer a different cultural product. The strengthening of sectors and the recognition of the wider public are being encouraged up to the governmental institutions on a national and local level, as is the cooperation between different parts of Croatia stimulated through information exchange, various contacts and partnerships. Action is also being taken on the policy level – by creating fields on the non-institutional scene, or in other words, on a completely new type of cultural production. The network is dynamic and not hierarchically based, i.e. not based on a centre that co-ordinates the work of all the members, but every action planner – a member – develops his/her own network.

Today's level of co-operation is based on several interconnected levels, both on programme and co-operative level, with a common tendency and characteristic of developing and implementing joint projects. It should be specially mentioned that the focus is placed on the co-operation of small NGOs, which has proven to be more effective than co-operation between some big organisations.

#### CLUBTURE FUNCTIONS ON THREE LEVELS:

- According to the line type, within which an organisation offers a type of programme that consists of 3 content units. For example: a play, an exhibition and a concert, where an exchange of contents is encouraged.
- According to the type of projects, which demand a full partnership, minimally two complementary organisa-

tions which work on a project from the start, while a condition are 3 content units regardless of the geographic differentiation.

- The festival segment – content is divided onto several towns where partner organisations exist.

The number of lines which have not been realized is smaller than 10%, while 37 programmes and over 500 events have been realized during a period of two years, for a relatively small amount of money. Currently, the network comprises of 40 organisations.

The biggest drawback of the network is the weak capacity in the infrastructural context, i.e. there is a lack of staff and space. While the first problem is in general easily solved through the arrival of new, young and creative people, the problem of space is possible to solve only by intense lobbying of the local government. Until today, generally speaking, the local authorities in Croatia have not shown enough understanding while dealing with the problem of youth organisations. The visibility of the network is weak because it is not persisted upon it, as much as it is, in turn, insisted upon the visibility of some of the organisations that make up Clubture. Nevertheless, the network is a recognised active participant of the community when taking into consideration the positioning of the scene<sup>14</sup>.

What is especially fascinating is the gamut of activities and events that Clubture deals with. From instances such as



<sup>14</sup> Clubture has its representative in the Council for Youth of the Government of Croatia (Savjet za mlade)

dancing, performing arts, new media and technologies, visual culture, modern art, theory and comic books up to urban youth culture in general. Beside that, the fundamental *differentia specifica* is the manner in which things are being organised, characterised by self-organisation and especially strong, open and transparent system of co-operation between young people. As the network is mainly financed by the “Institut Otvoreno Društvo” (“The Open Society Institute”), the future of Clubture is seen in the spreading of cultural activities and networking on the regional level of the whole southeast Europe.

#### “DOMAĆI” - [WWW.DOMACHI.HR](http://WWW.DOMACHI.HR)

The working out of youth programmes on a local level, which is in many ways specific and demanding, has been mastered quite well by “Domaći” (Locals) from Karlovac – a NGO working on the projects of development of the civil society, both individually and in cooperation with the other NGOs and institutions. “Domaći” tries to make a progress in the local community development – in the field of non-formal education, culture or quality spending of one’s free time. The NGO was established with a purpose of raising the general awareness, encouraging and active participation of the members of the local community in the development of potentials and increasing the life quality of the young.

The target group are not only the youth, but also children, youth organisations and initiatives, groups working with children and young people, as well as teachers, professors and parents. Such an interdisciplinary and multi-acting individual approach has proven to be successful. The goals of the organisation are: connecting homes, schools and other entities in the local community with a purpose of reaching common goals; stimulating citizen initiative for a better position of children and youth, involving children and youth in the life of the community. From a multitude of activities the following should be singled out: organizing seminars, lectures, platforms, workshops, round tables and conferences; the analysis of needs within a community and research of the existing models of cooperation between home, school and other relevant institutions. The co-operation between NGO

and three secondary schools in Karlovac is very important, as is its co-operation with fifteen primary schools.

Activities of special importance to the community are:

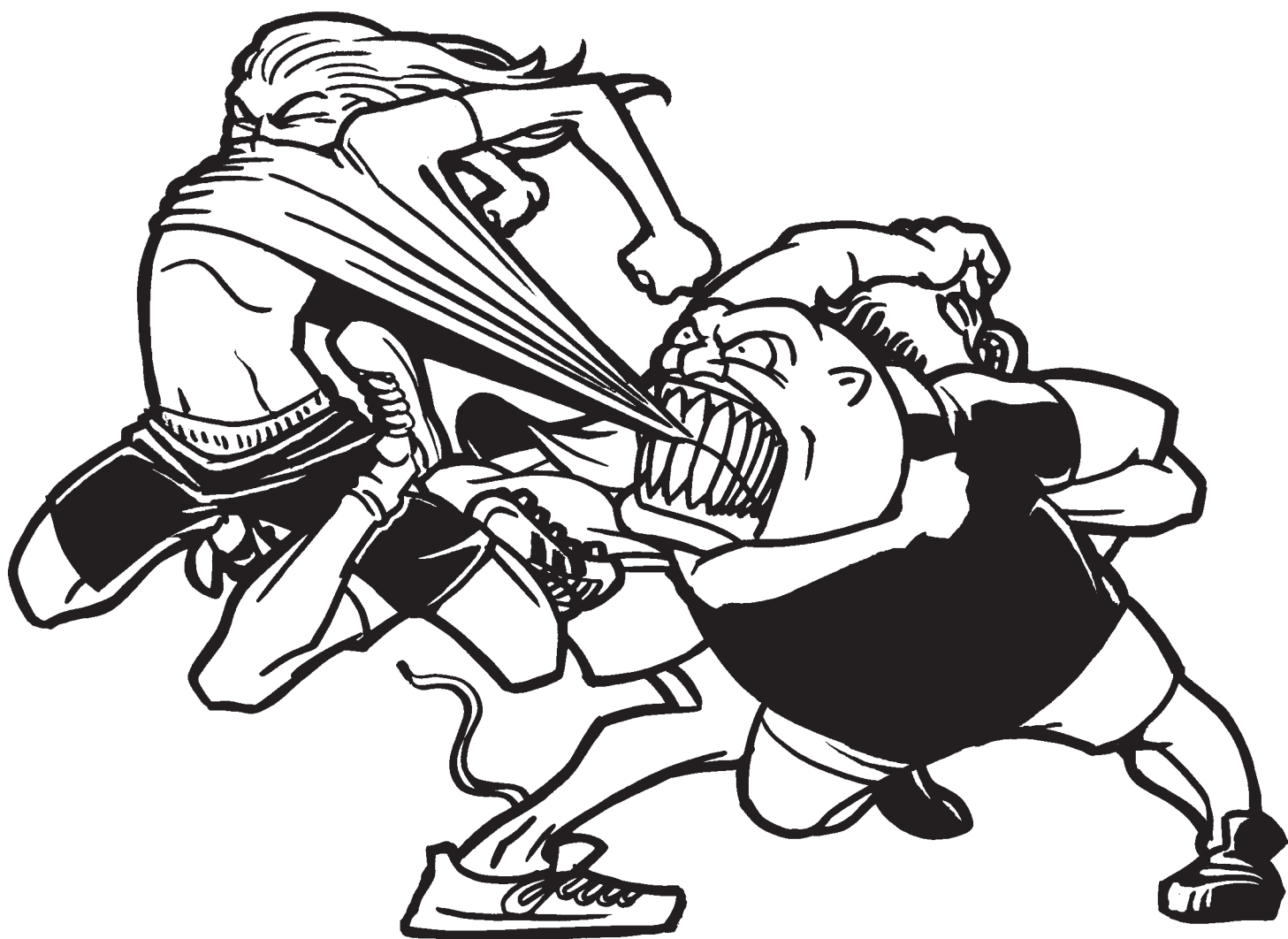
- Education of young people in the Sisačko-Moslavačka County
- Organisation of teacher training seminars
- Involvement of parents and other members of the community into the functioning of the extracurricular activities and the giving of financial aid
- Various activities on a wider geographical area (municipalities of: Vojnić, Glina, Plaški, Gvozd, Petrinja, Hrvatska Kostajnica, Slunj and partly Karlovac

Perhaps the most interesting project is the Youth Centre/ Karlovac where “Domaći” signed a contract with the Karlovac Secondary School of Chemical Technology, and with permission from the Karlovac local government, whereby they have been allocated for use 280 m<sup>2</sup> of space owned by the aforementioned school. Activities going on at the centre are: non-formal education, presentations, platforms, film projections, concerts, exhibitions etc.

The third positive example is the Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing Students Club known as “KSET”, a well-known youth venue located in a part of Zagreb called “Martinovka”. In KSET one can attend some of the best concerts in Zagreb and its surroundings, and everyone can always find something to their taste. Rock, ska, punk, hip-hop and drum’n’bass are but a few different music styles continuously promoted by KSET. In case when there is no concert, there is a variety of other activities and events which can be seen or participated in for a price of 5 KN – if you present a student ID card, popularly called “iksica”. If you don’t have the student ID on you, the price is 10 KN. All of the activities in KSET are the result of activities carried out by a few different sections: photo, video, mountaineering, computer, technical, disco and music.

All of the above mentioned examples – Clubture, Domaći and KSET are a complete realisation of the solutions to the problem of the lack of quality in youth activities and events, as well as useful spending of their free time, while at the same time they present a guideline on how to continue when these matters are of concern.





— informing the youth, communication  
and the media



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# INFORMING THE YOUTH COMMUNICATION AND THE MEDIA

The ability of finding complete and reliable information among the multitude of information we are bombarded with daily, is not an easy job even for the experienced, let alone the young who mostly lack experience and do not have the knowledge of how to filtrate information. The ability to articulate one's own opinion through the media, which is in great part commercialised, is even harder, especially for the young, the majority of whom suffer from a constant lack of money. Besides that, the youth in Croatia still have a limited access to the information and communication technologies such as the Internet. The following two examples present initiatives where the youth have created their own media and found a way for their voice to be heard.

**STUDENT RADIO** (The Student Radio) – 100,5 MHz  
[www.radiostudent.fpzg.hr](http://www.radiostudent.fpzg.hr)

It was one autumn afternoon, in the now “long gone” 1996 that the “Student Radio” (“The Student Radio”) began broadcasting to the tune of the song “Ordinary World”. This is the only student radio station in Croatia and the only student electronic media. Its important role arises exactly from that fact; the role of educating and increasing awareness of the social values among the students and the young. It had started as a project of the Faculty of Political Science and Journalism at the University of Zagreb, and it was only last year that it was registered as a student organisation. The students of journalism, as well as all other students and young people interested in working on the radio, have an opportunity to try out their skills on “Student Radio”, where they can learn how to work on radio-stations as well as on other type of media in general. Currently there is only one person on the Radio that is employed on a full-time basis, while about 90 people are constantly active in various editorial offices throughout the year. During the seven years of broadcasting, the Radio has educated and influenced its listeners through promoting the values of a democratic



TV programme forms a consumer society..., they programme children to buy their products.

society, tolerance and respect for human rights and freedoms. The Radio Programme consists of programmes of an informative, cultural, educational, special thematic and music character. The priority is given to the student related themes and issues as well as the ones connected to the lives of the young people in general. The third sector is also being promoted. In future, they plan to be heard in all the student cafeterias, dormitories and centres in Zagreb. To put this plan into effect they have also received financial aid from the European Union CARDS Programme<sup>15</sup>.

The student media have not been very successful in the last ten years, and that is why, pressed by numerous problems, they have been shutting down. Nevertheless, "Student Radio" has been operating continuously for seven years, in spite of all the problems. It would be great if similar radio stations existed in other university towns in Croatia, but for the time being, that is not the case. Perhaps the situation is such as it is because the Faculty of Political Science and Journalism exists only in Zagreb, although these should not be the main obstacle. "Student Radio" is also the only radio in town that is continuously trying out something new when it comes to music, and that is why its part in the promotion of new experimental music styles is irreplaceable.

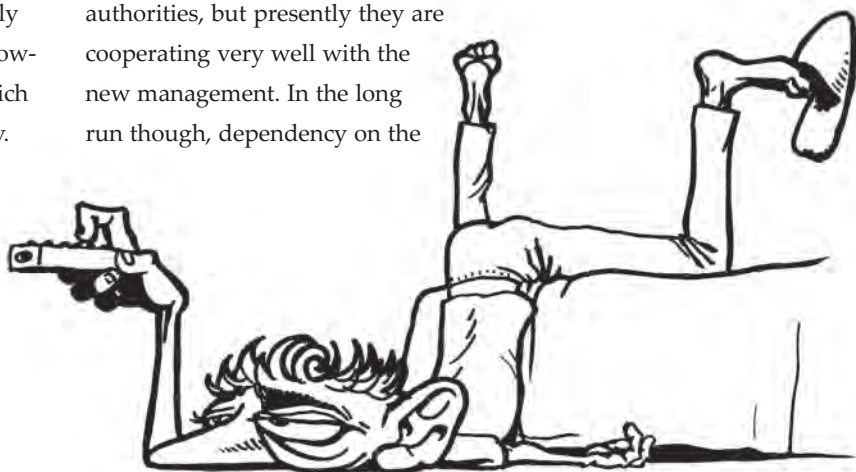
Students in Zagreb are in great part poorly informed about "Student Radio". Sometimes it is even the case that the students of the Faculty of Political Science and Journalism are not aware of its existence, whereas there are cases where some of the older citizens are well familiarised with it. The recognition of the "Radio" in the general public depends mostly on the strength of the transmitter, and on how many people actually listen to it on a daily basis. Other media have lately been showing interest in the work carried out by "Radio Student", which is a sign that it has become "more visible" in the community.

As far as financing is concerned, the Faculty covers all office expenses, while other expenses (about 100,000 KN)

are met every year by the government funds for student organisations. One of the problems related to the financial sustainability is that the law allows Radio Student broadcast of no more than 3 minutes of advertisements per hour, while the commercial radio stations are permitted to air 9 minutes, which they exceed even further in reality. The current plan is to use up those 3 minutes, but that requires an increased number of listeners and a constant media promotion of Radio Student in the community.

Although they had first begun broadcasting using only a 50-watt transmitter, the biggest problem remains to be a weak transmitter (now 300-watt). In comparison, "Otvoreni Radio" (Open Radio) has got a 5000-watt transmitter. Here it should be mentioned that the other non-commercial radio stations in Croatia, the religious "Radio Marija" (Radio Mary) and "Katoli-ki radio" (Catholic Radio), have a 5000-watt transmitter. Having such a weak transmitter is the reason why Student Radio can sometimes be heard in a car 30 km from Zagreb, but not on the main city square or on the premises of the Student Centre. They have already addressed the authorities several times in order to acquire a licence for a stronger transmitter, but have been repeatedly rejected by the State Telecommunications Institute and the Electronic Media Council with an explanation that there simply isn't an available location in the city.

Radio had launched its own web page in March, which also offers the possibility of "radio-streaming", i.e. listening to the radio through the web page on the computer, which helps solve, if only in part, the problem of the weak transmitter. In the beginning, they had experienced problems with the Faculty authorities, but presently they are cooperating very well with the new management. In the long run though, dependency on the



<sup>15</sup>CARDS is an aid programme for the countries of the West Balkans

The young can get to absolutely anything on the Net, but most of our young people don't have the possibility to get some actual quality information. Very few people use the computer at home; I'm referring to the Internet. In our country there is still a problem of poor information accessibility.

Faculty management board always makes future uncertain.

"Student Radio" co-operates quite a lot with other non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and tries to present their work to students and the youth. On the other hand, the cooperation with the University of Zagreb is limited, although it should be in the best interest of the University to accept "Student Radio" as one of its strategic media partner.

The Radio also supports other student media initiatives, the number of which has been continuously increasing as to date. The Radio is not officially a member of any international network of similar radio initiatives, but for years they have had a successful cooperation with for example, the *Deutsche Welle Radio*.

To many people in the today's society it seems that the students do not exist as a homogeneous social group and that they are not the driving force ("*spiritus movens*") of social changes. That situation becomes clearer when we consider a well-known fact that they do not have their own media. Strong student media is necessary for the creation of student identity and their pro active social engagement.

**FADE IN** – " A Fantastically Good Institution " [www.fadein.hr](http://www.fadein.hr)

FADE IN is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) with 20 active members and 4 full-time employees, which functions as a video-production centre for the civil society in Croatia. FADE IN produces video materials based on social themes: documentaries, socially engaged promotional messages, TV series and coverage on topics such as values and problems of the civil society. This institution originated from the NGO called "Attack", in 1999, and it was first named the "Activist Video Centre". In the year 2000 it was registered as an independent NGO with a goal of increasing the visibility of the civil sector in the media, especially NGOs that are active in the domain of human rights, women's rights, the youth culture and environmental protection. In the beginning the main activity was production of coverage for a TV show called "Dobro jutro Hrvatska" (Good Morning Croatia), which still lasts today, and

the production of a TV show called "Treći sektor" (The Third Sector) that was aired by the CCN TV station.

Some of the activities that have been realized by Fade In since the year 2000 include about 200 TV coverage, for "Dobro jutro Hrvatska", dealing mostly with the current activities of the NGOs and about 30 episodes of a TV series "Direkt" (Direct) which has in a way become a trademark of Fade In. This series presents "ordinary" young people who tell the stories of their lives, describe their everyday problems and the way they perceive life in general. The special filming style used has also become a trademark of Fade In and it includes unusual filming angles and often zooming in, the intention of which is an attempt at changing the established views and standards of the national TV. The "Direkt" series has been broadcasted on national TV every fortnight since October 2002, but there is a problem concerning continuous changing of its broadcasting time.

Fade In also produces promotional film footage for NGOs and state institutions, for example the State Institute for the Protection of Family, Maternity and Youth, the Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs, the Student Centre, etc. They have also produced TV video clips for several social civil campaigns such as the "Uključi se" ("Join in") – an invitation to the young people to participate in the development of the National Programme of Action for Youth. The Fade In cooperates primarily with NGOs, but also with the state and international institutions that deal with the issues relevant to the society. They plan to further develop the existing programmes and focus more on the longer forms such as documentary films which would explore some issues in greater detail. They also plan to strengthen the cooperation with the youth NGOs and to educate them on how to start their own media production. In September 2003 they have started a new programme called "Fade In Green" with a goal of increasing the visibility of NGOs that encourage and work on environmental protection, as well as on raising the level of ecological consciousness among the citizens.

About a half of the Fade In funding comes from international donations. The second half is allocated from the government funds for NGOs and from the national TV network for the production of the series "Direkt" and the footage filmed for "Dobro jutro Hrvatska". Up to now, they have not, nor do they plan to produce commercial videos for the private sector. In the future they see their financial sustainability in the payments they will receive from various NGOs for the production of their promotional films. The greatest difficulties they have encountered so far are related to the search for funding that would enable them to get adequate office space and make possible the realisation of new projects like the "Fade In Green".

At the film festival "Dani hrvatskog filma" (Days of the Croatian Film), Fade In was awarded the best producer prize and in 2004 Fade In's film "Ciganjska" (Romany) received three prizes. The best animated film, the best music and the best montage. All of the above proves that Fade In is a really fantastically good institution which not only changes the standards of the national TV through its unconventional approach and a range of socially important topics, but whose production has also been very highly rated from an artistic point of view.



— marginalisation of youth —

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vlasnička  
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40 po

I'm here!

Medijama vlasnička koncentracija medija ostane  
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# MARGINALISATION OF YOUTH

Young people perceive the marginalisation they experience by their social surroundings as one of the facts of young people's status in the society, which was also confirmed by the research and the focus-groups reports. Marginalisation is manifold and proceeds on several social system levels. Primary, marginalisation applies to young people in general, to the actual inferiority in the social stratification system and to specific forms of exclusion based on the permeability of societies age limit (society, in our case, being rather impermeable). On other levels, besides generalities, additionally appears the marginalisation of those young people who belong to diverse sub-cultural groups. Furthermore, young people have to face the marginalisation belonging to the parental environment (for example, the rural one), additionally burdening their already difficult situation with additional marginalisation based on age and possible sub-cultural "protrusion". The case is similar with other marginalized groups, which include both young and mature people - for example, disabled persons, minorities (the Romany) or members of the same-sex unions.



Due to the traditional consciousness and the traditional patriarchal cultural heritage (well described in the best works of Croatian ethnology, like the one authored by Dunja Rihtman-Auguštin), youth have to face the individual psychological and social processes, which make their position more difficult and have an effect on different forms of marginalisation. In Croatia, the autonomy and growing-up issue, as well as the separation from the parental home issue, are accentuated on both culturological and economic levels, resulting in the fact that youth, always experiencing the same age difference, stay under the same roof with their parents for a long time, where potential successful dealing with culturological and psychological barriers to independence, still does not include the actual,



i'm here!





The young are not given the opportunity to show what they know, because those who are in position to give them that opportunity don't think it's worth it...



economic and housing independence. If we were to search for the traditional consciousness in the public dimension, if we were to analyse the media world and the dominant public discourse regarding young people, then we would be able to understand the way in which the transitional and the capitalistic elements have empowered the possibilities of labelling and stigmatising youth, especially in the light of the bare and brutal media sensationalism. In fact, youth most often appear in public as participants in the deviant phenomena. In public, perception of the youth culture is most often characterized by stereotypes and prejudices. Threatening campaigns are present in Croatia as everywhere else in the world. Sometimes they resemble the textbook examples, especially when the media hysteria really wishes to reintegrate certain lost values of parental/dominant culture, pointing the finger to the "common scandals", that is, to young participants in sub-cultures and kindred phenomena. The entire complex world of musical and other mediation of someone's life style, experiments with finding one's own identity through music, clothes, slang, attitude - the media sensationalism most often reduces all that to sex, drugs, violence, cults, extremisms, vandalism etc., resulting in the fact that, apart from the profitable business endeavours, youth cultures are topics with prevailing "criminal" character in the Croatian public.

The marginalisation young people experience by their environment, especially in the case of sub-cultures, social movements or certain life styles, is based on fear and intolerance towards the other and the different, and stigmatisation, labelling and even demonising of numerous youth cultures leave no space for the optimistic view or the expectance of crucial turning points in this area. However, there are positive examples and shifts in another direction, when young people indeed attempt to take their



destiny in their own hands, to act against the manifold marginalisation and consequently to set models of a different approach.

#### RECYCLED FARM "THE VUKOMERIĆ GROUP"

The Recycled Farm project started in the year 2000, and was truly enlivened in 2001. It is a group of young people, known as The Vukomerić Group, belonging to the non-governmental organisation Z.M.A.G. (Green Network of Alternative Groups). Young people, born in urban centres, with average an age of 22 at the time the project started, both sexes equally represented, decided to focus their energy to the Recycled Farm project as the open educational centre. On a disused piece of land of around 1,820 acres in a Vukomerić village near Zagreb, they decided to create a permacultural, ecological agricultural husbandry, an area for the information exchange and knowledge transmission, a home to people involved in the project and a place to support other sustainable projects.

Around thirty people in the headquarters, and the same number of friends and supporters who have always been ready to help, were all given a possibility to realise their dreams when they were donated an old, moveable, wooden house, characteristic for the Croatian Turropolje region. Everybody participated in the transfer and worked on the new roof, and the recycled farm gradually acquired the intended appearance. In the 2001-2003 period, the group learned about the permaculture (concept of the permanent, considerate, ecological agriculture) and the ecological architecture, developing their own vision of the recycled farm as the open educational centre, which, apart from the house, should also include gardens, a greenhouse, a solar collector and a windmill energy system, liquid waste clearance system, small lakes (bird baths), and ensure enough space for friendly and other kind of visits, parking space for vans and other vehicles





Our good ideas are often criticized and neglected (for exp. a park for skateboarding). Our ideas cannot be put into action because those who decide cannot be reached.

transformed into moveable homes, etc. During those two years, members of the Vukomerić Group were acquiring and exchanging experiences and connecting to other similar groups abroad; they were working on the farm, planting seedlings, preparing compost bins and hot beds, carting soil for the ecological growth of food. After two years, they felt ready to organise workshops for other people, and, in accordance with their principles, to distribute knowledge and skills free of charge.

Thus, workshops on creation of permacultural gardens in towns were held on the roof of one building in Zagreb. Furthermore, they organised a workshop entitled "How to make the eco-soap"; another workshop where participants learned how to create a solar cooker; and yet another one teaching the creation of a solar collector. Besides organizing free workshops in the town or on some other locations (Žumberak) for the town people, the Vukomerić Group is also active in their new local community - in cooperation with the local government and the young Peace Studies students, a project of reconstruction of the old, caved-in bridge, connecting the Vukomerić village with the neighbouring Dubranec, was initiated.

The Vukomerić Group members were demonstrating a strong wish to fight marginalisation even before the creation of the Recycled Farm project. Many participants were active in projects and activities of non-governmental organisations like *Attack* or *Zelena akcija* (Green Action). Furthermore, a considerable number of them started their own activism on scenes



inspired by movements in music (punk, reggae etc.) and independent fanzines, promoting values of "new social movements" (peace, ecological, feminist, squatter...) from the mid-eighties of the past century, which were renewed in Croatia on the mentioned scenes in the mid-nineties. The Vukomerić Group is not a protagonist that simply escapes the town and goes to the country, it is a considerably more complex, interactive model of redefining the urban and the rural in Croatia, where people wish to be outside the town, but close enough, in order to help the town heal the wounds caused by the violent urbanisation.



Trying to resolve the trap of marginalisation of sub-cultural groups in town, the Vukomerić Group, with their own activity and activism directed towards the active ecological consciousness materialized in the work on a recycled farm, also became a significant protagonist in one already marginalized milieu (Vukomerić), where young people do not stay but aim at the town. For that reason this represents an example of spontaneous actions of young people against marginalisation, consequently resulting in a double profit - for the town scene of sub-cultural groups and the example of the "do it yourself" activism, as well as for the marginalised rural environment, in which the Vukomerić Group started presenting a new model and direction of development. It is a kind of development returning to the rural, but on the ecologically based principles, with values and main beliefs like the consensus in making decisions, gender

i'm here!







A problem that is especially important is the marginalisation of the young disabled people. They are completely neglected and sometimes don't even have the possibility to go to school or to the university, because they cannot reach them physically, and the institutions or the community do not recognize the problem.

equality, cooperation with nature and others, in contrast to the existing competition and destruction of nature.

**KORAK** (The Step): Organisation of physically disabled students



The Vukomerić Group, with their active approach towards themselves and their surroundings, succeeded in surmounting certain barriers, which are directing many young people to the margins of the society or to the consumer's "free time" oasis. Thus it became an ecological and social protagonist of a different relation between town and village. On the other hand, students in wheel chairs had to face different types of barriers, some of them being visible and material - architectonic. *Korak* (The Step), founded in 2002, together with *Šišmiš* (The Bat) Organisation of blind and partially sighted students, started the fight for public recognition of the problem and for the actual changes that would smooth the progress of studying at the University and the everyday life of physically disabled students in general.

With their first appearance in the public and first projects of this independent organisation, a "snowball" slowly started to roll, which led to the current wave of enthusiasm and activism. The situation today, when public shows more consideration for problems of physically disabled students, was preceded by the two-years long efforts of *Korak* and *Šišmiš*. To make a step out of the margins meant to print leaflets and posters, to proclaim



"the year of disabled students", to create a WEB site, to start an "open telephone", to organise a conference on the quality of life of disabled students, to found a project of the "office for physically disabled students", to fight for the transport of students, for university enrolment quota, scholarship possibilities. At the first conference of *Korak*, there were 17 members and on the second one the number increased to 74! They are active throughout Croatia, with regional centres in Osijek, Rijeka and Split. They took upon themselves an enormous endeavour, from forming the database providing basic information on university education of disabled students, to creating a vision of founding the Centre for Physically Disabled Students. Today, we can see the results of a two-years long struggle - in better understanding of the public, as well as in the actual premises of the Office for Physically Disabled Students, and in announced financial grants for transport and educational equipment. At the exact time this report was written, activists of *Korak* and *Šišmiš*, as well as their colleagues - students, were all protesting against blocked sidewalks, managing to gather several hundred people at the protest, which had a positive response in the public. Increased strength visible on faces of members, new prospects of going to school and facing reduced architectonic barriers at the University - all that could have been felt in actions of these organisations, as the actual result of self-organisation and efficient fight against marginalisation.



education and youth

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I graduated from the Naval School in Dubrovnik. In the four years I spent there the only time I have ever seen a boat was when we would take one and go rowing down the street. This is unimaginable abroad. I am a navigator and I don't have anything to do with the engine and the overall technical side of things. I did my practical training on the turner's lathe. I learned how to weld and grind, things which I will never need in my line of work, while on the other hand I have never been on a ship.

# EDUCATION AND YOUTH

Youth spend a majority of their time in a formal educational system where they acquire knowledge and many important social skills. The Croatian educational system focuses on providing great amounts of information and little attention is directed to the development of critical thinking. Teachers and professors often base their approaches on sanctioning rather than on motivating students. Methodology applied in secondary and higher education is generally out-dated while technical conditions are often inadequate. All of these problems are reflected on the quality of education in Croatia, which is not up to European standards.

Non-formal education reposes on different principles and it is very often attractive for youth. Approaches and methodology in non-formal education motivates youth towards critical thinking and self-initiative and nurtures proactive approaches to life. Due to restricted resources however, non-formal education cannot be a panacea for all existing problems in formal education.

Examples, which are to follow, are only some of the possibilities in which formal education can become more relevant, stimulating and acceptable.

## ECONOMICS BUREAU-TECHNICAL SCHOOL IN BJELOVAR

*Website school* <http://www.economics-school-bjelovar.htnet.hr/>

*Website students* <http://skole.htnet.hr/ss-bjelovar-505/skola/>

Perhaps it isn't the oldest of the seven schools in Bjelovar, however, for experimental programmes, the number of additional school activities and modern approaches extended to students, it has definitely become the most established secondary school in Bjelovar and one of the most successful schools in Croatia.

During every class break music is playing which the students select, educational programmes such as "free from class days" are planned by student and teacher consultation, students are encouraged (instead of punished) to decorate walls (graffiti)



I graduated from the School for Electrical Engineering and during those four years the only actual training I had was digging holes so they could set the posts in them. Then we also learned how to make a metal protractor in a factory; what do I have from that?

in their classrooms according to their own ideas/likes. This is not all....

“Free from class days” include a variety of workshops and lectures, which are held by well-known Croatian professionals in the fields of trade, science, culture and others in society. They are held every year before the spring holidays for three days, followed by extensive evaluation from visiting students about the quality of lectures and lecturers, if the themes were interesting and so on. “Free from class days” were first held in 1993, started by the current school principle Vojislav Kranželić, who is greatly responsible for the great reputation the school enjoys in Croatia and abroad.

“Trade practice” is one of the many electives at the school. A combination of theory and practice allows students to learn the requirements for founding a company, management, teamwork, business communications (telephone, fax, e-mail), business creativity, etc. There isn’t any classical lectures, however, the majority of subjects are learnt through simulations in real companies. Through role-play students are most effectively prepared for work in a real company and develop skills in presentations, improvisation and creativity. The training companies from the Bjelovar School have won several awards in international competitions of student companies.

This school is one of the five in Croatia, which participates in a project named “Community Centres”. The project is coordinated by the “Forum for Freedom in Education”, a non-governmental organisation, which among other activities holds workshops and lectures for teachers. This is to familiarize teachers with new methodologies in education for democracy and other social topics, which are lacking in the formal educational system. Bjelovar school through the project “Community Centres” opened its doors to Bjelovar citizens offering them classes in foreign languages, seminars for parents and a number of other beneficial programmes for the community.

Additional information about the school and other current activities i.e. BLEŠ magazine, a theatre group and School Yearbook, can be found on one of the best websites of secondary schools in Croatia.

SUBJECT “CIVIL SOCIETY” IN X. HIGH SCHOOL IN ZAGREB <http://www.deseta.hr/>

An elective subject “civil society” was introduced in X. High School in Zagreb in autumn 2001. The initiative for such a subject came from the current school principle Roksanda Smolčić-Krnić. Already in the first school year 2001/2002, the subject interested a large number of students requiring two classes. The lecturer from the beginning has been Ivan Zoretić and in 2002 Krešimir Gracin joined him. “Civil society” consists of two school hours weekly for students of 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade. The lessons are usually formatted as a debate over social topics such as, addiction, abortion, homosexuality and also political topics such as the war in Iraq. This develops student skills in discussion and also encourages knowledge of current social topics in Croatia and the world. Themes are chosen by professors in the first half of the school year and by students in the second. Occasional guest speakers with relevant experience in civil society hold lectures, or students may go on excursions to visit institutions and NGOs.

In the school year 2003/2004, 4 groups of 30 pupils attended the subject, which indicates a great interest; keeping in mind that “civil society” is an elective subject. It should be pointed out that the Institute for Educational Promotion and the previous Ministry of Education extended support for the initiative by educating teachers with numerous literature in methodology and themes. Principle Smočić-Krnić announced that the elective subject would be offered to students the following year and would continue while there is interest.

Future planning would include NGOs holding lectures and would have the opportunity to present their work to inter-

What is good about the non-formal education is that the knowledge is gained in a creative manner; it's not boring like in school.

What I like best is that one can express one's own opinion, which is not the case during the formal education.

ested students and hence build their membership. Knowledge about civil society creates active young citizens who are encouraged to participate in existing NGOs or start their own initiatives and contribute to society in Croatia.

E-SCHOOL OF PHYSICS <http://eskola.hfd.hr/>

E-school of Physics is an Internet site, which particularly serves students of secondary schools and students of natural science. This site strives to present physics in an interesting and attractive way. Users interact with multi-media information technology, which may lead to interest in natural science. E-school of Physics is a project led by the Croatian Physics Association from 1988 and is one of 5 electronic schools included in the project run by the Croatian natural-sciences association. Each electronic school was designed through co-operation of science groups, as was the E-school of Geographies established through the co-operation of the Croatian geographic community.

E-school of physics was realized by a team of scientists from universities and institutes, secondary school teachers and professionals from the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport. When students visit the website, they enter the "science bank" which contains descriptions of household experiments, scientific problems (exercises to conduct, answers to questions, interactive physics, news and links to other science web sites). Students can interactively communicate with a professional via e-mail.

E-school offered students what a majority of schools and institutions could not – direct, fast and effective access to scientists and answers to many question related to physics which rotate in the heads of secondary students, or students are too shy to ask their teacher or teacher that hasn't got the time. All this in a visually attractive way which develops fantasy, creates "hunger" for knowledge and generates another 10 questions and puzzles. It has gone a step ahead as it offers students inter-

communication and offers interesting on-line projects which students can be a part of (e.g. Which law of physics did Roberto Carlos succeed in order to kick a goal at the 1997 tournament and what effects a ball to travel, or the forest fire simulation project).

The project is financed by the ministry, various institutions and international donations. E-school of Physics has received many awards, including the best website in the category of education from the magazine VIDI. It was also proclaimed the best Croatian website for learning and education at the UN World Summit on Information Society in 2003 in Geneva.

The web site notes about 10,000 visitors monthly, which for Croatia is an impressive figure. E learning is becoming a larger trend in the world as it offers cheap and effective approaches to education. It eliminates geographic obstacles by means of telephone wires. E-school is one of the few initiatives in e-learning in Croatia and its success encourages new initiatives.

THE STUDENT OMBUDSMAN PROJECT AT THE FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAGREB  
<http://pauk.ffzg.hr/studprav/>

The student ombudsman project at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Zagreb is a project conducted by the Students' of Sociology Club Discrepancy. The project has started in September 2001 with an initial grant from the Forum for Freedom in Education, and in the year 2002/03 it was supported by the Faculty of Philosophy, Ministry of Science and Technology, Open Society Institute and Forum for Freedom in Education in total amount of 56800 KN.

The student ombudsman should do what its name implies – protect student rights. The aim of the project is to protect students' rights at the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb and educate the student representatives in skills relevant for

The teachers impose their authority upon us, they threaten us with bad marks if we don't listen to them; if they start giving us bad marks we'll be quiet in their classes and won't even pay any attention. In that way we are demotivated from the teachers themselves. They don't motivate us.

their mandate and effective representation of students at the faculty. Resulting from the project was the creation of a website, which for the first time had publicly released regulations for students at the Faculty of Philosophy. The regulations were demonstrated in a clear manner, allowing students to familiarise themselves with their rights – e. g. complaints on grades, repeating exams, changing lecturers and so on. The greatest benefit for the students is the possibility to contact the student ombudsman on-line or by e-mail and the possibility to visit the office for students' rights personally (3 days in the week) for further first hand information.

Tight cooperation was established with faculty administration in solving a number of problems students are confronted with. Cooperation has been established with the student ombudsmen at the Faculty of Law and Faculty of Political Science in Zagreb, which are the only other active student ombudsmen on campus. The costs of the student ombudsman project are minimal (one qualified paid person and the office), and all the students of the Faculty can benefit from it.

PROJECT "MOVEMENT", Darko Lovrić and non-governmental organisation "Horizon" <http://www.horizont.hr>

As a first year student at the Faculty of Economics in Zagreb, Darko Lovrić was unsatisfied with the concept of secondary school education he had completed and believed that it prepared students to become only passive members of society. In April 2001, Darko created with the assistance of NGO "Horizon" a project named "Movement" in order to try to organise youth, students and professionals with similar aims and objectives to act as mentors for youth in secondary schools. The aim was that mentors would help change the insights of students about education and introduce them to NGOs which they can become part of. The mentor also presented them options for further schooling and gave information on opportunities for non-formal education. Also offered was the educational concept,

which involved development of skills in communication, economics, inter-personnel relationships and other skills necessary for personnel capability of each student. This educational concept has been tested on a small scale in one secondary school in the spring. Achieving impressive results, the Ministry of Education extended assistance to the project financially and permitted replication of the model in other secondary schools.

During the summer 2001 a project team was formed, whose members completed training to become mentors and in September the project was implemented in 4 secondary schools – 3 in Zagreb and 1 in Pula. More than 1300 volunteer hours were invested till summer 2002 in coordinating the project and 1000 students and 24 representatives were involved in the project. In autumn 2002 "Movement" continued, this time with complete financial support and professional leadership directing the project. Manuel [ol and 10 mentors continued their volunteer work in 10 secondary schools, in 10 cities throughout Croatia. Mentors in every school worked with groups from 30-50 students. At the end of the school year 25 projects had resulted which the students had created (e.g. students in Varaždin with local government assistance formed a youth centre). "Movement" is one of the few initiatives, if not only, which was initiated and led by youth in the field of education, and that has run for a few years and that at a national level. This initiative for the first time brought experienced youths from the civil sector into secondary schools to act as mentors to new generations of young activists. That's how "movement" initiated many new projects, whose results were important in introducing non-formal education to secondary schools, but also for youth participation in society and the civil sector. Darko Lovrić in 2002 was awarded the "International Youth Action Award" for the project "Movement". That award is given every year by one of the biggest youth networks in the world, the "Global Youth Action Network", for individuals that through volunteer work mark outstanding results with youth.

youth and health







# YOUTH AND HEALTH

Health problems among young people are primarily linked with the problem of drug addiction and problems with reproductive health. Here we are concentrating only on the problem of drug addiction, or more specifically, “dance drugs”, the case here being mainly *ecstasy*, *speed* (amphetamines) and other substances popular among younger population on *techno-rave parties*.

As they say in Špica – the NGO for a healthier sub-cultural scene – the problem, and also the motive for founding the NGO was the fact that some people who attend rave parties get “wasted”<sup>16</sup> too much, and spread negative vibes. The beginnings of [pica go back to the year 2000, and the basic programme activity, as well as the problem of young people, has remained the same – educating the youth on *techno-rave parties*. Users are youth aged from 16 to 25, and the objectives of the NGO are “popularisation and the deepening of understanding of the sub-cultural scene, reduction of real risk related to the use of drugs and other high-risk activities on the scene, as well as promotion of creative potential within the *rave/party scene*”. It is in the application of the *harm reduction* method that the singularity of the activities of this NGO becomes evident.

According to the definition of Alex Wodak *harm reduction* refers to measures which have for a purpose the reduction of damage related to drug use, and which do not necessarily entail reducing consumption. In short, *harm reduction* is the approach that tries to identify, measure and minimise negative consequences of drug use. This approach is controversial and suspicious to many people because it does not cultivate the typical stigmatisation and mystification of drugs. On the contrary, it accepts the existence of drugs as a given condition, as well as the young who use it, but at the same time it raises awareness among young people about the damage that drugs cause. In this sense, minimising the damage is more useful than trying to permanently (violently) remove the damage. The basic characteristics of the *harm reduction* programme are: pragmatism, humanistic values, focus on damage, balance of expenses and benefits, and the hierarchy of goals. Some *harm reduction* programmes are: exchange and availability of needles and injecting equipment, substitution programmes, education of drug users and the so-called *outreach* work, cooperation with the legal system, areas of tolerance, programmes for reduction alcohol induced damage, programmes for reduction of nicotine



The phrase “stay healthy” shouldn’t be just a well-intentioned phrase. We should work on it through special education present in our fundamental education system.

induced damage. There are several organisations which apply this approach (for e.g. Help from Split, Terra from Rijeka etc.), but what makes Špica different is the preoccupation with the problematics of dance drugs and separation of heroin scene from the *techno-rave* scene.

For years, Špica has been acting on the field by setting up stands in visible places during rave parties, and by sending their volunteers (aged from 17 to 30) who help the endangered to overcome the withdrawal caused by drugs. If, for example, a young person shows signs of weakness or nausea, or simply does not feel well from being too “high”, Špica volunteers quickly notice the problems and go into action typical for “peer” volunteers. This activity varies from a simple conversation and bringing some water to the person, to reacting in severer cases such as in case of loss of consciousness. A “peer” can be anyone who shares similar views of the sub-cultural scene, and anyone who completes the education for giving out that sort of help, the importance of which is immeasurable for saving a young person’s life since it is given before the arrival of the ambulance.

They also have a 0-24, non stop open telephone help line for all those in need of help or information. Calls vary from angry fathers who accuse them of promoting drugs, to extremely serious calls at 4 o’clock in the morning in the situation when someone has fainted and is in need of immediate help, and others are panicking. Over the phone the volunteers of Špica explain to the present what needs to be done, so that by a short phone conversation they can help solve a potentially fatal situation.

Špica deals with almost everything related to techno-rave sub-cultural scene, with a special emphasis on *harm reduction*. They publish a free of charge *newsletter* P.L.U.R.<sup>17</sup> (Peace, Love, Unity, Respect), which is about electronic music, parties, and other programmes connected to the scene. There is

a special emphasis on leaflets which can be found on parties and which contain everything about specific drugs – from the chemical substance, to the effects and side-effects of drugs, and information about what to do in case of symptoms induced

by drug abuse – that is, information which can literally save a life. Špica is especially successful in its *harm reduction* strategy because it is completely adjusted to young people who are by nature suspicious. It is well known that classical methods of drug suppression, such as raids or banning parties, are unsuccessful or even counterproductive.

The indicators of Špica being recognizable are not only numerous text messages or frequent calls during weekends, but also the fact that the newsletter PLUR is snapped up and that people are asking for an extra leaflet. Also, there is good cooperation with the competent state institutions, and in the national strategy for fighting addictions there is a line about the need for the use of *harm reduction* projects.

The biggest obstacles are caused by finances. Špica is financed through state institutions and international foundations, but the amount obtained is not always enough for the implementation of planned activities. After several years of existence, the NGO still doesn’t have its own premises (although they have asked on several places), and it also does not have any employees. A lot of problems arise with the organizers of parties who, in search of the highest possible profit, decrease the level of safety. It is a well known story that on rave parties there is no drinking water in the toilets because with that they are trying to increase the sales of expensive drinking water at the bar. Because of this, Špica has created “a proposal for rules for introduction of standards in the organisation of dance events”, and also five basic rules which create safety: prevention of crowds, appropriate temperature and ventilation, availability of drinking water, other measures of preventing heat stroke, and overall safety. However, combat against the desire for profit and extra profit is constant and difficult.



<sup>16</sup> “Abuse drugs” or “destroy themselves”

<sup>17</sup> The motto of the rave generation from the beginning of the nineties

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conflicts, violence, discrimination

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Being different does not mean being worse than everyone else.

# CONFLICTS VIOLENCE DISCRIMINATION

Post-war and transitional period in Croatia and neglecting the youth as a specific group caused sustainability and transition of prejudices, discrimination and violent behaviour pattern among the young. Social and political context in Croatia does not yet provide sufficient support from the institutions, and there is no awareness and willingness among the citizens for the active involvement in the change of this situation. Willingness of government institutions to deal with the issue of discrimination and violence, especially in the war affected area, does not offer systematic and methodical work on promoting the values of non-violence. The climate which suppresses and approves violence, pre-supposes violence as a legitimate way of dealing with conflict, which may result in a long-term adoption of these value patterns by the young.

Although the situation has improved in the past few years, there is a strong sense of nationality generating separation, prejudices, discrimination, non-tolerance and conflicts within the society, as well as among the young people. In the same way manifestations of xenophobic, violence, racism and discrimination on all levels (religious, age, gender, sexual orientation, etc.) have been noticed in the social environment, which inevitably influences their attitude and value formation.

Frequently young people find themselves under the pressure of latent, and some where explicit violence, prejudices and stereotypes they can not deal with in an affirmative and adequate way, which results in their want to find out more about the way of dealing with these problems.

This context requires the work on affirmation, promotion and implementation of values and ideas of the civil society, culture of non-violence and tolerance, human rights, dialogue, cooperation and trust as well as arousing the awareness for possible social change. It is important to inform and stimulate young people to get involved, to question and educate themselves about value based work and life in order to contribute to social improvement. These issues are the main focus of the organisations like CESI and Theatre of the Oppressed.

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start from yourself



CESI (Centre for education and counseling of women) [www.cesi.hr](http://www.cesi.hr)

CESI is a women' non-governmental organisation that deals with building gender awareness, promotion of women rights and offers support and education to all civil initiatives. Many of the direct or end-users of their services are young people as well as professors, educators and members of the medical profession. CESI has been working with the youth and for the youth since its foundation, when the need for working with younger population became evident during the first experiences in implementing the programme of prevention of violence in the family.

The organisation was founded in 1997 by women activists and members of peace initiatives as a reaction to the violation of human rights, especially women and minority rights, the problems of militarism, nationalism and the fall of economic standard in the post-war years. There are 10 active members and a number of associates and volunteers who contribute to the realisation of the organisation's goals.

Within the programme "Building Gender Awareness" their work includes a few segments: researches, education and informing, promotion and publishing. They set up a web site SEZAM (Sexual education for young people) and shot a video film for the youth *To je nekako ravnopravno* (It is somewhat equal) in cooperation with FACTUM and Dana Budisavljević.

The goals of this programme include promotion of gender equality, promotion of knowledge and skills through non-institutional educational programmes, promotion of the values of non-violence, tolerance, solidarity and gender equality and introduction of appropriate sexual education and the education of gender equality in schools. These goals are realised through encouraging voluntary work of the young with the young, through informing the public about the problems of sexuality and violence among the youth, through professional training of

the experts working with the youth, and through active cooperation with the institutions, non-governmental organisation and civil society. The aim of the direct work with the young is their education about the issues of gender and sex, violence in adolescent relationships, human rights, reproductive health, sexuality, and co-education - the work of the young with the young on these issues.

Some of the accomplishments of CESI organisation are: creative programmes for the education of the young for promotion of relations between sexes, implemented and evaluated pilot programmes gender/sexual education in 18 secondary schools in Croatia, textbook *Sex and Gender Under the Magnifying Glass*, campaign launched with the aim of introducing adequate sexual education, education about gender equality in schools. More than 9500 young people are involved in their educational activities, and the professional training of educators is conducted in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia and Monte Negro. Numerous volunteers are involved in implementation of the programmes, and educators organise workshops on the relationship between sexes in different schools in Croatia. The edition *The Significance of gender in the Attitudes and Sexual Behaviour of Croatian Adolescents* published the results of the research FMen, women and sexuality. Expected results are an integration of their programmes within the official *curriculum* in the near future.

Their programme working with the young (Building Gender Awareness) was the first comprehensive and methodologically diversified programme of that kind in Croatia. All CESI programmes are based on research, and young people are included in the evaluation of their results. Special qualities of their way of work are their educational and informative editions and their web site SEZAM where they provide information for the young people that is not available elsewhere. The confirmation of importance, benefits and need for this kind of

We come into all sorts of stupid situations, like the one where you are asked to leave a coffee bar on account of your accent or language. We can't live together and still be apart. We don't want to live in fear of walking into the "wrong" café.

work is evident from evaluations, forums and research in which young people participate.

CESI's programmes and work is recognised in the community due to its quality, continuity, scope of activity which results in an increased interest for participation in different programmes, search for reading materials and invitation for the organisation of workshops. There is constant work on the transmission of knowledge and skills to the people working with the young. They work on expanding the capacity and knowledge, searching for associates, professional training of educators and lobbying. The aim of the organisation is directed towards transmission of knowledge to specialists who work in institutions (schools) with young people, so that the organisation can focus on further research and work with educators.

CESI is mainly financed by foreign foundations, about 75-80%, and among the social institutions they got means from the government office for NGO sector, and currently they are partly financed by the Ministry of education, culture and sport. Part of the means is obtained from the private sector, 5-15%, depending on the interest for certain projects.

There is an opinion within the organisation that the themes they deal with are not perceived as important in the society. General impression or feedback is that the situation is positive and that there is no further need to deal with these issues. The reason for facing such reactions might be in Croatia being dominantly patriarchal society with the resistance among civil population, government and church authorities towards certain issues, for example question of abortion and contraception. Another problem they encounter is how to arouse interest and encourage male professors for joining their programmes. Besides the fact that there are fewer male professors, they are also less interested for education and participant in the activities conducted by CESI. They have good experience with schools and members of the medical profession they dealt with, as well as with institutions and organisations concerned with human

rights. They realised a good co-operation with the former Institute for the protection of family, maternity and youth, while formal co-operation with the school system institutions has been rated as one sided and poor, which is interpreted as a lack of interest and inability to recognise mutual objectives. In their researches and activities they have been working with Dubravka Maleš and Aleksandar Štulhofer from the Faculty of Philosophy. They have also realised a good co-operation with the Faculty for Social Work, which as an integral part of the subject *Work in community* sends 2-3 students for the one-month practice to CESI. Students from abroad come to six months practice from the organisation FIT (Foundation for International Training).

#### THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED - CULTURAL CONFRONTATIONS

Theatre of the Oppressed was founded by Augusto Boal, the director and drama pedagogue, some forty years ago. The original idea was to cause the mass reaction of peasants and workers deprived of their rights and to regain their hope of being able to do something for themselves. Boal's project gained success, became extremely popular and spread all over the world.

Themes of the performances of the Theatre of the Oppressed are taken from the life of the local community. What differs them from the rest of the theatre performances, and one of its main characteristics, is an active participation of the audience, who by asking questions, giving instructions or taking over the acting roles, direct and change the course of the action providing alternative endings. In each story there is an oppressor who can not be changed but he can be asked different questions, and there is also an oppressed person (or persons) whose behaviour and way of reacting can be influenced.

The goal of the Theatre is to speak openly about different problems and through interactive relation with audience raise awareness for these same problems. This style of work on non-

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start from yourself



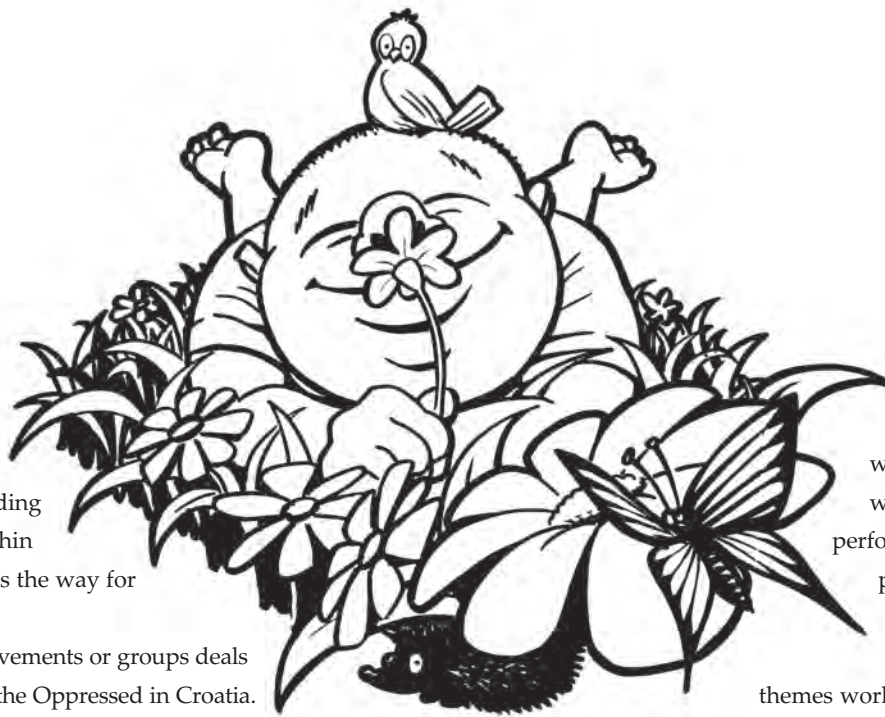
violence and social change contributes to better understanding of the problems within society and provides the way for dealing with them.

A couple of movements or groups deals with the Theatre of the Oppressed in Croatia.

Nataša Govedić i Vili Matula manage workshops in Zagreb called *Workshop of Cultural Confrontations - Theatre of social critique*. Workshops are held once a month or once in two months in different theatres. In Karlovac, there is a movement KRUG (Theatre Citizens Direct), and there are also groups in Pula (Within Istrian National Theatre) and in Rijeka. All performances deal with the current problems of their communities. These performances are not only performed at different theatres but can be held on various places where people gather (schools, cultural centres, organisations, youth clubs, etc.), and one performance was held in a pub.

KRUG from Karlovac represents the movement of the citizens including the members of amateur theatre group and the people from NGO sector. There are eight active members, occasionally more, but all are volunteers. They have existed for a year and a half and give regular performances once in two months in the theatre *Zorin dom* which offers them no fee for using their premises. Tatjana Farkaš was the initiator of the Theatre of the Oppressed in Karlovac, but she has always had support from Nataša Govedić and Vili Matula from Zagreb.

Their engagement and motivation for their work comes from: their ability to influence the changes in the society; encouraging individuals to take the initiative; motivating people; exposing injustice and violence in the society and the relation of power and weakness; stimulating freedoms (of thought, expressing, choice, choice of sexual and gender identity), stimulating forms of dialogue and cooperation.



KRUG has been working with the youth and it deals with their problems in its performances. The themes are prepared in advance, but the participants can also suggest them. Some of the themes worked upon so far are violence

between the youth, generation gap, problems of culture and the people involved in the culture, problems of health institutions, problem of waste manage in Karlovac, problems of marginal groups, problems in families, injustice in schools.

Theatre of the Oppressed is not the project which entirely deals with youth, but a high percentage of the youth visit it especially when the themes interest them. The survey conducted among the young confirms the need for this kind of work and social engagement. The members of the group have gone through different education and training and constantly transmit their knowledge on their colleagues through mutual work or additional training. For the purpose of sustainability of this project they even hold ordered workshops and use the acquired funds for their further work. The problems they encounter, due to the lack of the capacity, are affirmation and more qualitative presentation of their work and goals to public, and the problem poses poor co-operation with the local authorities that fail to recognise them as potential partners in their work for the community.

Their work has been recognised in schools that frequently take part in their workshops. They are trying to establish a good partnership with the schools. They have been co-operating in similar movements inside and outside Croatia, among which is an international organisation of Boal's theatres. They have had a number of performances with Vili Matula and Nataša Govedić as well as with the movements from Rijeka and Pula.

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policy recommendations

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# CONCLUSION

The results of our research suggest that young people in Croatia are still at the margin of crucial social events, which directly results in pessimism, apathy and fundamental indifference for broader social community and happenings within it. Those, who have managed to overcome this instinctive negative attitude, are characterised by positive experience they gained in their community, primarily within their family and school, and later elsewhere. By being persistent, they courageously and intelligently use resources and create new ones, they build partnership and make the reality of their community more beautiful.

Young people in Croatia are in the same situation as other young people world-wide – they are passing through the stage when they start to form as real persons, they search for their status in the society and start their own life path. The route they will choose is not only their own responsibility and the responsibility of their parents, but of the society they live in and within which they will soon be initiators of progress. We are amazed at the fact how sluggish state and society are in recognising that young people are potential they must invest in, if they later expect something from them. Unless the Croatian society does not set up strategies of involving the young into the centre of social attention there is no need to be surprised if in the near future reports with this subject. Where have all the young people gone?

One Part of the solution lies in the relation of three elements – the youth, the society and the state. Different researches show that there is a critical point that demands open and transparent interaction of all three elements in order to move forward. More than ever, young people need to show initiative and take over the role of *spiritus movens* of the society, which on the other hand, must recognise young people as a precious resource of new and quality ideas. The state must provide conditions to enable this kind of interaction, it should act as a channel and guarantor of social cohesion.

Young people live here and today and have no time listening to long explanations of what are the reasons why their life and future are subjected to higher interest. They are here, ready to work, ready to join in. Unless they come across an open door, they will go to the one opened elsewhere. It's up to you to estimate what's their share in responsibility and what are the societies.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The aim of the second round of the focus groups organised in April 2004 in Split, Zagreb, Pula and Vukovar was an estimation of the selected positive examples by the participants, that is, they tried to judge whether, in their opinion, those examples solved one (or more) problems identified in the first round and tried to provide suggestions for the improvement of the position of the young people. In the first round of the focus groups young people illustrated their situation in Croatia and ranked the problems according to their importance. The goal of the working group was not to interpret those results, though they are extremely interesting and might be the theme of more detailed analysis in a future research. The aim was to present what young people thought and felt. The results of the second round are not censured and interpreted in that way, but are transmitted with a previous textual processing.

Most of the policy recommendations in the second round were directed towards education, which can be interpreted as a result of instinctive belief that education is a key to progress and that improvements in education are sociably more acceptable, more transparent and "easier" to manage from e.g. promoting alternative styles of living. No matter what the motives were, the fact is that the participants in their recommendations for the activities which would improve the position of the young, in more than 80% of the cases, chose activities closely connected with the changes in education, and that clearly illustrates the importance of education for the progress in Croatia.

The list of policy recommendations is only a part of the recommended. For easier reference and use of space, the members of the working group chose the most innovative and the most substantial while the full list as well as list of recommendations can be found on the web site [www.undp.hr](http://www.undp.hr). In brackets, besides recommendations participants suggested the responsible individuals (stakeholders) for carrying out the activities. The stakeholders are not only different ministries but also non-governmental organisations, youth, public administration and local and regional authorities. However, they are not the only ones who can and must participate because the invitation is directed to all and does not mean that the other stakeholders do not carry certain responsibility.

## EDUCATION

-Introduce evaluation of teachers and school curriculum by the students and ways of taking into consideration their suggestions and critique.

(Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, Institute for Educational Promotion)

-Introduce IT systems into all primary and secondary schools in Croatia and introduce free on-line formal educational programmes and certificates with a free internet access

(Ministry of Science, Education and Sports)

- Introduce IT education in the school curriculum from the 4<sup>th</sup> grade in primary schools (knowledge of basic computer programmes, use of e-mail and internet)

(Ministry of Science, Education and Sports)

- Introduce models of simulation in the curriculum at every faculty (Faculty of Economics – firms, Faculty of Law – moot-court...)

(Ministry of Science, Education and Sports)

- Organise presentations of NGO programmes in schools (one lesson per week) through presentational activities or non-formal education

(Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, non-governmental organisations)

- Create catalogue of non-formal programmes offered at local or national levels, and promote co-operation between schools and non-governmental organisations

(Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, NGOs)

- Create programmes stimulating greater mobility among faculties inside Croatia and exchange with the students from abroad.

(Ministry of Science, Education and Sports)

- Form a student council in all secondary schools representing the interests and needs of the young; provide the ways for implementation and monitoring of co-operation.

(Ministry of Science, Education and Sports)

- Provide the criteria and the ways of evaluating and monitoring (in co-operation with NGO representatives and specialists) for certification of non-formal educational programmes

(Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, NGOs)

- Promote socially beneficial work through the school system and introduce ways of evaluation, e.g. registering within the record of voluntary activities

(Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, NGOs)

- Introduce sexual, gender and education on reproductive health in schools, organise professional training for educators who will lecture these segments, and introduce performance monitoring into evaluation of these programmes

(Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, Institute for Educational Promotion, NGOs)

- Introduce a larger number of elective subjects in schools and faculties, so that a student can choose a subject according to his ambition or interest

(Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, NGOs)

- Introduce into formal system of education non-formal educational principles such as: team work, avoiding ex-cathedra lectures, promoting discussion and debate, critical thinking and creative expression, tolerating other people attitudes (especially when differing from the professor's), workshops etc.

(Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, NGOs)

- Involve students in the work on the reform of educational programmes and introduce principles of democracy into decision making process of their concern (enable them to participate in the decision making process through democratically elected representatives, referendums, petition, ...)

(Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, NGOs)

- Provide support and help system for the ones who stopped their education

(Ministry of Health and Social Welfare)

## ECONOMY

- Stimulate implementation of "career days" on faculties

(Ministry of Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship; University; Ministry of Science, Education and Sports; firms, public institutions)

- Introduce system of transparent employment in public administration according to clear criteria of ability and knowledge (Regional and local self-government, Ministry of Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship)

- Initiate entrepreneur centres for youth (employment centres together with educational (professional training and additional education) and promotional programmes organised in co-operation with local self-government, employers, schools and NGOs (Ministry of Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship; public institutions, entrepreneurs and firms, NGOs, regional and local self-government)

- Legally regulate practical training (internship) during education, in business sector and in public administration, as well as, recording that experience into voluntary record (in accordance with the law on volunteers)

(Ministry of the Family, Veterans and Inter-Generational Solidarity, Ministry of Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship, firms and public institutions)

- Implement programmes of stimulation for the youth: programmes of assigning non-refundable means, investments for the entrepreneurship of the youth/business plans (initial capital) and provide more affordable credit lines for firms founded by the young, provide affordable credits for the purchase of a first apartment, increase means for entrepreneurship of the youth (The Government, Ministry of Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship, development agencies, banks, regional and local self-government)

- Create the means of monitoring the needs on labour market and determine the number for enrolment (that is, the number of vacant places per year)

(Ministry of Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship, Ministry of Science, Education and Sports)

- Provide support to NGOs that deal with employment of the youth i.e. providing them free use of city owned premises.

(Regional and local self-government, National Foundation for Civil Society Development)

- Provide free training of the skills necessary for employment and which are insufficiently present in educational programmes (writing CVs and letters of correspondence, active search for job, communication with business partners, etc.)

(Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, faculties and schools, Croatian Employment Service and other employment agencies)

- Provide financing of additional education to unemployed persons, e.g. programmes of non-formal education organised by the NGOs (in case it's possible regarding the qualifications of an unemployed person) and voluntary work (e.g. in NGOs or public administration services) which will be valued.

(The Government, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare; Ministry of Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship)

#### **YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY**

- Educate and inform young people about their rights especially concerning their participation in the society

(primary and secondary schools, NGOs, media)

- Lay down the obligatory quotas of young people in political parties and mandatory representatives of young people within governmental authorities – 20% of the members of parliament should be under 30 and 20% of the members of the Government.

(The Government, political parties)

- Assign free use of premises to youth organisations and financially support NGOs and youth clubs: include financing of local youth organisation activities within the city budget.

(Regional and local self-government, Ministry of the Family, Veterans and Inter-Generational Solidarity)

- Support (institutionally and financially) main youth organisations and other NGOs implementing the programmes of non-formal education

(The Government, Regional and local self-government, Ministry of the Family, Veterans and Inter-Generational Solidarity; National Foundation for Civil Society Development; Ministry of Science, Education and Sports)

- Introduce annual awards for the best young activist or young person with the greatest contribution to the community

(National Foundation for Civil Society Development)

- Conduct reforms in educational system: introduce subjects/ education about human rights, civil society, voluntary work, non-violent conflict resolutions into all schools and organise, monitor and evaluate them in cooperation with non-profit sector

(Ministry of Science, Education and Sports; schools)

- Improve and adopt Youth Council Act so that there are clear directives about functions, responsibilities and obligations as well as of rights of the council, and clear directives about the decisions in the local self-government which can not be brought without consulting and approval of the council. The council must include

all youth groups ranging from secondary school, faculties, NGOs, unemployed and employed.

(Regional and local self-government, Ministry of the Family, Veterans and Inter-Generational Solidarity; Croatian Youth Network, Ministry of Justice, youth organisations)

- Assign to young people out of use city premises, e.g. former barracks, for temporary use with the option of lobbying towards permanent settlement.

(Ministry of Defence, the Government, Regional and local self-government)

- Estimate and publish in a transparent way financing of the NGOs from local budgets, evaluation of their success and defining of clear criteria for financing regarding the social development plan of that particular local self-government.

(Regional and local self-government, the Government, National Foundation for Civil Society Development, European Commission)

#### **LEISURE TIME ACTIVITIES FOR YOUTH**

- Open schools during the weekend for the NGOs which would implement programmes for youth

(Ministry of Science, Education and Sports; schools)

- Develop and support summer voluntary working camps

(National Foundation for Civil Society Development, NGOs)

- Offer support to the existing and opening new youth hostels.

(Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of the Family, Veterans and Inter-Generational Solidarity)

- Increase funds for financing young artist and open up more premises for promotion of non-established artist.

(Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, youth organisations, city tourist boards)

- Restructure Croatian Youth Network and define concrete programmes dealing with affirmation of youth

(Croatian Youth Network)

- Open whole day free spaces in primary and secondary schools for leisure (cyber café, sport halls, books, newspapers) coordinated by the youth

(Ministry of Science, Education and Sports; schools, youth organisations)

- Organise public transportation between distant places and coordinate it with transportation timetables according to the needs of the youth

(Ministry of the Sea, Tourism, Transport and Development, Regional and local self-government, Public transport services)

#### **INFORMING THE YOUTH, COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA**

- Instruct young people about the model of filtrating (selecting) information, through special media and communication workshops.

(youth organisations, media, schools)

- Publish results of NPDM (National Programme of Action for Youth) (Internet, TV, radio, schools and faculties)

(media, Ministry of the Family, Veterans and Inter-Generational Solidarity)

- Introduce wireless Internet to faculties, student dormitories, and giving lap tops to the best students.

(Ministry of Science, Education and Sports; schools; Ministry of the Sea, Tourism, Transport and Development)

- Create independent, non-profit media for youth, newspapers, radio shows, TV programmes – on national and local level – assign frequency for radio programmes improving media activity of the youth and civil initiatives.

(NGOs, Regional and local self-government, the Government, Telecommunications Council)

- Set up real-time video walls with audio interface at the main city squares that could be used by citizens for the real-time communications between cities. Provide young people the use of media spaces like billboards on crowded places in the local community which would be free of charge and open for messages, advertisement, and approve more areas for graphite

(Regional and local self-government)

- Introduce DSL (Digital subscriber line) technology to student dormitories and subsidise it for the young. It's necessary that DSL becomes a standard for building apartments (flats)

(Ministry of Environment, Urban Development and Construction)

- Set up info-centres with Internet, newspapers, brochures, leaflets, magazines and books in the places with no libraries.

(Regional and local self-government, Ministry of the Sea, Tourism, Transport and Development)

## MARGINALISATION OF YOUTH

- Assign responsibility to each minister, mayor, prefect and district prefect to have his/her office open (at least two hours monthly) for the young to listen to their proposals and presentation of their ideas (also by e-mail), and appoint at least one person in the regional and local government who would be in charge of the communication with the youth.

(Regional and local self-government, the Government)

- Implement education and campaigns about significance and tolerance of diversity, e.g. education about social inclusion, raising awareness of the youth about the rights of the disabled persons.

(Ministry of the Family, Veterans and Inter-Generational Solidarity, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Ministry of the Sea, Tourism, Transport and Development, NGOs, Croatian TV)

- Stimulate inclusion of socially excluded persons into the work of youth organisations

(youth organisations, Croatian Youth Network, organisations of socially excluded)

## YOUTH AND HEALTH

- Introduce education about different kinds of disabilities and rules of behaviour towards the disabled people.

(Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Ministry of Science, Education and Sports)

- Finance and promote harm-reduction programmes, educate volunteers and introduce those programmes to schools, youth clubs, medical institutions, media, etc. There is also a need for informing the youth about the effects of drugs, alcohol and smoking in a manner which is adequate to youth.

(Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Ministry of Science, Education and Sports)

- Provide urban development plans with areas for sport and recreation, green areas and cyclist's paths.

(Ministry of Environment, Urban Development and Construction)

- Implement education about drug effects, HIV and AIDS and involve doctors and medical institutions into educational programmes in schools, but also set up free condom vending machines in schools and other gathering places of youth.

(Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Ministry of Science, Education and Sports)

- Warn youth through programmes and campaigns about the danger of speeding and driving under influence of alcohol, but also providing alternatives, e.g. cheaper taxi fare by 30% on Friday and Saturday night for the young.

(Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Ministry of Science, Education and Sports)

## CONFLICTS, VIOLENCE, DISCRIMINATION

- Organise long-term educational campaigns about non-violence including all segments of society relevant for upbringing and education of youth (parents, teachers, specialists, social care centres, (introduce detailed campaign in media).

(Ministry of Science, Education and Sports)

- Conduct education for parents about the education and upbringing of children, and bringing together teachers, parents and the youth as a community (teacher-parent meetings where not only grades are discussed but the possible ways of organising the teaching process by introducing new contents, e.g. issues of tolerance etc.)

(NGOs, Ministry of Science, Education and Sports)

- Organise activities of reforestation and similar actions with groups including the youth from different parts of Croatia (Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, Ministry of Environment, Urban Development and Construction)

- Implement formal and non-formal education about violence and violence curves, education about non-violence, promote gender equality, promote values of societies in peace through school curriculum, enable multicultural/intercultural education as an alternative to religion (catechism) in school curriculum, e.g. through method of Theatre of the Oppressed.

(Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, NGOs)

