EDUCATION

“Without education, a person is a nobody.”

Zhakongir, 16

Preparations for this year’s Regional Monitoring Report, *Young People in Changing Societies*, included Focus Group discussions on education issues in Latvia, Russia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. Participants included those in vocational schools and those who had dropped out of education. Young people were asked their views on such issues as the links between education and employment, on the quality of the schooling they were receiving, and, in the cases of those who had turned their backs on education, what factors influenced their decision. Individual interviews were also carried out in Latvia, Russia, and Ukraine. The views of many of these young people are featured in Chapter Three of the Regional Monitoring Report, which focuses on the school years. This chapter builds on the findings of the 5th Regional Monitoring Report, *Education for All?*

*Young People in Changing Societies* finds a mixed picture of education across the CEE/CIS and Baltics, with greater opportunities accompanied by greater inequality and exclusions. The good news is that young people are placing increasing value on education, that tertiary enrolment is rising across the region and that the share of women in higher education is mostly on the rise. The bad news is falling enrolment in upper-secondary education. The number of young people aged 15-18 opting out of school rose by three million between 1989 and 1998, from six to nine million – more than one third of that age group. The Report finds that the countries with lower enrolment rates are those lagging behind in economic recovery and reform, with a striking link between changes in secondary enrolments and GDP.

The Reports finds that creating education systems to prepare young people for the future at a time when that future is unclear is a major challenge across the region. But this makes education policies and programmes that nurture human development, social cohesion and economic growth even more important. In this new environment, says the Report, young people need educational approaches that will encourage their initiative, their critical and creative thinking and their ability to make decisions for themselves.

Click here for the discussion guidelines on education.