World *YOUTH* Report 2003

The global situation of young people

UNITED NATIONS

Department
of
Economic
and
Social
Affairs

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Note

The Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat is a vital interface between global policies in the economic, social and environmental spheres and national action. The Department works in three main interlinked areas: (i) it compiles, generates and analyzes a wide range of economic, social and environmental data and information on which States Members of the United Nations draw to review common problems and to take stock of policy options; (ii) it facilitates the negotiations of Member States in many intergovernmental bodies on joint courses of action to address ongoing or emerging global challenges; and (iii) it advises interested Governments on the ways and means of translating policy frameworks developed in United Nations conferences and summits into programmes at the country level and, through techncal assistance, helps build national capacities.

Young people make up almost a fifth of the world's population. Close to 85 per cent of the 1.061 billion young men and women between the ages of 15 and 24 live in developing countries; Asia accounts for the majority, with 60 per cent of the total, while another 15 per cent call Africa home, and approximately 10 per cent reside in Latin America and the Caribbean. The remaining 15 per cent of youth live in developed countries and regions.

Many of the world's young people are doing well. They grow up in cohesive, caring societies that prepare them for a responsible and productive existence. Today's youth are better educated than ever before and have acquired an unprecedented level of knowledge of the world around them. In addition, they are arguably the healthiest group of people ever to have lived on earth. Young people stand at the threshold of a promising future, poised for leadership at the family, economic and societal levels.

Alongside these achievements and optimistic hopes exists a parallel reality that is far less pleasant and increasingly pervasive. Many young people continue to suffer poverty, discrimination and inequality, and far too great a number still lack access to proper education and health services. Most of those who become infected with HIV/AIDS are in their teens or early twenties. Some fall prey to early pregnancy or become involved in drug abuse and delinquency. In many areas, rampant unemployment dulls their ambition and undermines morale, and civil conflict can have a particularly devastating effect on the young.

The present publication seeks to address these two themes that characterize youth, exploring the hope, ambition and potential that exists in this context, while at the same time examining the elements of vulnerability, danger and lost opportunities.

This review of the global situation of young people is based on the findings of the Expert Group Meeting on Global Priorities for Youth, held in Helsinki from 6 to 10 October 2002. Organized by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs in collaboration with the Ministry of Education of Finland, the Meeting brought together a multidisciplinary group of participants from Government, academia, youth organizations and the United Nations to address all aspects of young people's lives in today's complex world and to identify new directions for effective youth policy. Sincere appreciation goes to the Government of Finland for its financial support of this endeavour.

Preface

The outline of this book is based on the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond (available at www.un.org/youth). This United Nations blueprint for youth action encompasses the principal set of guidelines for youth policies to be implemented by the Organization's Member States. Adopted by the General Assembly in 1995, the Programme focuses on ten areas targeted for national policy attention and provides a framework for measuring and evaluating achievements. These areas of concern are addressed in part one of the present publication.

Part two of this book highlights five new priority issues that have emerged since the adoption of the World Programme of Action almost a decade ago. In the mid-1990s, few could have predicted the enormous impact globalization, information and communication technologies, HIV/AIDS, conflict and intergenerational relations would have on young people.

The World Youth Report 2003 intended to contribute to the development of strategies that give young people everywhere a real opportunity to become independent and responsible global citizens. As stated by the Secretary-General on the occasion of International Youth Day, 12 August 2003:

> ***"Young people should never be seen as a burden on any society, but as its most precious asset."*** ■
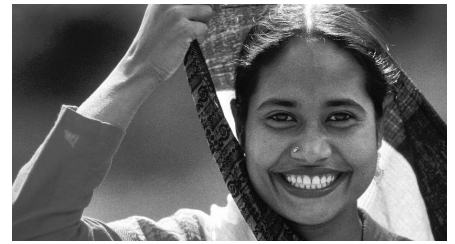
Foreword

This report has been prepared through the collaboration of academics, young people and United Nations staff.

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Technical Note

In this publication, the term "youth" refers to all those between the ages of 15 and 24, as established in the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond. The term "young people" may be used interchangeable with the word "youth" in the text.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADHD	attention deficit hyperactivity disorder
AIDS	acquired immune deficiency syndrome
ATS	amphetamine-type stimulants
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
COVORPA	Committee of Volunteers for Reforestation and Environmental Protection
CVCD	Cambodian Volunteers for Community Development
DDR	(Programme on) Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
DDT	dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane
ECOMOG	Economic Community of West African States Military Observer Group
EFA	Education for All
EMCDDA	European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction
EU	European Union
EWS	early warning system(s)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
G-8	Group of Eight (major industrialized democracies)
GEM	gender empowerment measure
GDP	gross domestic product
GLBT	gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender
GNP	gross national product
HAART	highly active antiretroviral therapy
Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
HIPCs	heavily indebted poor countries
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICT	information and communication technologies
IDPs	internally displaced persons
IEC	information, education and communication
IDU	injecting drug user
ILG	International Learning Group on Youth and Community Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IRN	Independent Radio Network (Sierra Leone)
IT	information technology/ies
LSD	lysergic acid diethylamide
MTCT	mother-to-child transmission
MNC	multinational corporation
MSM	men having sex with other men
MYSA	Mathare Youth Sports Association
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	non-governmental organization
ODCCP	United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OROSW	Operation Reach Out Southwest
PCB	polychlorinated biphenyl

PID	pelvic inflammatory disease
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RTI	reproductive tract infection
SLYAP	Sierra Leone Youth Advocate Programme
STD	sexually transmitted disease
STI	sexually transmitted infection
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TVET	technical and vocational education and training
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDCP	United Nations International Drug Control Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPE	universal primary education
VCT	voluntary counselling and testing
VET	vocational education and training
WEI	World Education Indicators
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association

Priorities for OVERVIEW: Global Youth Policies

This introduction is provided to create a general context for the different chapters in the publication.[1] It focuses on four particular areas, including the normative basis of global youth policy, the meaning of youth as a transitional concept, the reasons for considering global issues specifically in terms of how they relate to youth, and current trends emerging in the global youth policy discourse. This chapter also reviews the history of United Nations youth themes and priorities, explains how the World Programme of Action for Youth functions as a policy framework, and outlines the prospects for, and possibilities deriving from, a global youth policy.

INTRODUCTION

This publication provides an overview of the global situation of young people. Its purpose is to highlight the major challenges and opportunities youth are presented with today and to review key global youth issues. The publication's 15 chapters highlight particular areas of concern and derive from the collection of papers presented at the United Nations Expert Group Meeting on Global Priorities for Youth, held in Helsinki from 6 to 10 October 2002. The first 10 chapters focus on the priority areas identified by the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, adopted by the General Assembly in 1995. The remaining five chapters address some of the newer issues that were later identified as additional priorities for youth and were adopted by the United Nations Commission for Social Development in 2003.

Young people between the ages of 15 and 24 total almost 1.1 billion and constitute 18 per cent of the global population. Youth and children together, including all those aged 24 years and below, account for nearly 40 per cent of the world's population.

Young people face many challenges today. Although in some parts of the world they are better educated than ever before, 133 million youth remain illiterate. Young people must also deal with increasing insecurity in the labour market; they now comprise 41 per cent of the world's unemployed. Some 238 million youth live on less than $1 per day. An average of 6,000-7,000 young people become infected with HIV daily. Girls and young women continue to face discrimination and violence and in many parts of the world lack access to reproductive health services. Young people are also involved in armed conflict, with estimates indicating a total of more than 300,000 child soldiers around the world.

Young people can be dynamic agents of social change, taking an active role in combating these problems, but they must be given the right tools to work with. The United Nations has long recognized that the world's youth are a resource for the advancement of societies; indeed, they are often the leaders of social, political and technological developments. Young women and young men should be seen not as a problem but as a force for change, and in keeping with this perspective, youth policy should be viewed not so much as a means of addressing problems associated with young people but as a means of ensuring their participation in the building of their communities and societies.

According to Ola Stafseng, an operational youth policy model includes three components or dimensions:[2] (a) national youth policies, which are by nature cross-sectoral; (b) cross-sectoral youth policies, which must be integrated and coordinated by bodies in the public and civic spheres; and (c) public youth policies, which should be conveyed through programmes, plans of action and other such vehicles at the State level. A new subdimension that might be incorporated into the third category is youth policies formulated by global communities and actors, including youth-oriented local and international NGOs.[3] The role of the

United Nations is to replicate and promote these dimensions, in line with its priorities, and to take the initiative in making youth policy truly global.

This youth policy structure presents a positive challenge for youth research, as a new kind of expertise is required that combines academic research and applied empirical analysis with active social participation in the development of youth policy and youth work at the national and international levels. This indicates the need for continuous dialogue between different actors in the youth field.

One possible problem may relate to the dominance of a particular research perspective; even the authors of the present chapter have an inherently youth-research-oriented[4] and Nordic[5]—and therefore quite Western—analytical approach. There is a risk that the interpretation of youth issues and needs could become one-sided, and that a youth agenda could be built on the basis of experiences in developed countries and the Western conceptual mechanism. This would be especially ironic, given that 85 per cent of the world's young people live in developing countries;[6] this simple demographic factor alone is enough to define global youth policy as being fundamentally a question of development.

THE NORMATIVE BASIS OF GLOBAL YOUTH POLICY

The key instrument of global youth policy is the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond,[7] adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1995—the tenth anniversary of the International Youth Year. The World Programme of Action signified the intensification of the United Nations' commitment to young people, and an international response to the call for more effective strategies aimed at meeting the needs of youth and addressing the challenges they would encounter in the next millennium. It seeks to empower young people and promote their participation in all areas of society. At a more practical level, it contains guidelines for the development of national youth policies and for the monitoring and evaluation of results.

The normative basis for youth policy is broadly rooted in the overall purposes and principles of the United Nations, and the fundamental basis of such policy is the United Nations Charter. The purposes of the United Nations, as set forth in the Charter, are to maintain international peace and security; to develop friendly relations among nations; to cooperate in solving international economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems and in promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; and to be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these ends.[8] In the 1990s, the Secretary-General of the United Nations condensed these objectives into three key themes: peace, development and democracy.[9]

A close look at the historical development of the United Nations youth agenda indicates the relevance of the three fundamental Charter-based themes to youth policies. Starting in 1965,[10] peace became the theme most closely connected with youth policy; in subsequent decades participation and development were also recognized as key themes of a global youth policy.[11] The General

Assembly designated 1985 International Youth Year and identified the goals of participation, development and peace as priorities. These three interrelated themes continue to reflect the overall objectives of World Programme of Action.[12] The International Youth Year established a baseline for social and political thinking on youth matters and, most importantly, pointed States and communities in a specific direction that allowed them to demonstrate their concern for their young people in concrete terms and to enable youth themselves to influence the course of their own lives.[13]

The declarations and programmes of United Nations global conferences constitute another normative basis for global youth policy. The priority areas of the World Programme of Action built upon the policies introduced at summits and conferences held in the early 1990s.[14] For example, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, June 1992) provided an impetus to target the environment as one priority area in the Programme, and the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, September 1995) helped lead to the inclusion of a priority area focusing on girls and young women. The World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen, March 1995) contributed to the identification of a number of the Programme's priority areas including education, employment, health, and hunger and poverty.

The ten priorities of the World Programme of Action, clearly reflecting the global agenda established by various international instruments, include the following:

- Education
- Employment
- Hunger and poverty
- Health
- Environment
- Drug abuse
- Juvenile delinquency
- Leisure-time activities
- Girls and young women
- Participation

The global agenda has continued to evolve since the adoption of the World Programme of Action, and additional youth policy themes have emerged. The United Nations Millennium Summit, the General Assembly special sessions on HIV/AIDS and Children, the Second World Assembly on Ageing, and several follow-up conferences to the world summits have been held since the original priorities were established, and these new developments have led to an expansion of the normative basis of global youth policy, reflected in the following five additional priorities (adopted by the United Nations Commission for Social Development in 2003):

- Globalization

- Information and communication technologies (ICT)

- HIV/AIDS

- Conflict prevention

- Intergenerational relations

Priorities such as those listed above raise questions about the relevance of articulating youth issues on a global level. How well do these priorities apply to the youth of the world, who comprise many different subgroups rather than a single demographic entity? This question makes an analysis of life transitions and the life course extremely relevant.

YOUTH AS A TRANSITIONAL CONCEPT

Within the United Nations System, and in all its statistics and indicators, young people are identified as those between the ages of 15 and 24. It is assumed that youth, as a phase of life, takes place within these boundaries. Young people are grouped together to form a sort of statistical entity, which makes it possible to produce comparative data. These boundaries are not static, however.

Youth, as a concept, varies from culture to culture and from one society to another. Alice Schlegel and Barry Herbert[15] in an anthropological publication based on some 200 different field studies, describe transition rites[16] in pre-industrial societies.[17] The two authors found that in more than half of the societies studied, the progression from childhood to youth, especially for boys, involved some systematic rite of passage. These rites have symbolic significance in that, simply by participating in them, an individual achieves a new status and position. It is also a matter of genuine community action; the new status gains validity only through community recognition.

Life-course rituals are also present in complex societies, although the arrangements are not as clearly defined as in pre- and non-industrial societies. Age group boundaries have become blurred in Western culture. This is often believed to be related to the homogenizing—but simultaneously individualizing—effects of universal education and popular-culture consumerism. The boundaries defining the transition from childhood to youth and from youth to adulthood are shifting, and the crossover into each new stage is now manifested in different ways than before.[18] The ritualized events marking the progression from youth to adulthood are changing and losing their earlier significance, as an individual's status and position do not change with the partial rituals of the consumer culture in a way that classical ritual theory would define as signalling a clear transition.[19]

This confusing and sometimes contradictory[20] landscape notwithstanding, the idea of transition, or the theory of life-course transitions, is a viable mechanism through which the nature of contemporary youth and the process of becoming an adult can be understood and described. The ritual transition theory thus has a contemporary utility in both a United Nations and a broader context. From an economic and social perspective, youth is a special phase of life between childhood and adulthood. Richard Curtain gives the concept a bit more depth,[21] asserting that youth is a complex interplay of personal, institutional and macroeconomic changes that most young people (other than those in wholly traditional societies) have to negotiate. Globalization is reshaping life-phase transitions and relations between generations,[22] and the changes that young people must negotiate do not occur as predictably as in the past. Defining youth globally according to some exact age range is therefore an awkward task. The age range 15-24 is often used by the United Nations and others for statistical purposes, but in many cases this distinction is too narrow.[23] In some developed countries, for example, the male transition to adulthood, in terms of achieving the economic and social stability that comes with steady employment, may extend into the late twenties. For some men in developed countries who have not completed secondary school, the transition to stable work could take up to around age 35.[24]

Curtain does not directly promote van Gennep's ritual theory but addresses different dimensions of youth transitions. He suggests that it is possible in many societies to identify four distinct aspects of young people's movement from dependence to independence, as follows: (a) leaving the parental home and establishing new living arrangements; (b) completing full-time education; (c) forming close, stable personal relationships outside of the family, often resulting in marriage and children; and (d) testing the labour market, finding work and possibly settling into a career, and achieving a more or less stable livelihood. According to Curtain, this characterization applies to both developed and developing countries; demonstrating the capacity to contribute to the economic welfare of the family is a key stage in the journey to adulthood.[25] These transitions are interconnected; leaving home and setting up one's own personal economy require an independent source of income, and to reach this stage a young person generally has to have acquired qualifications and to have succeeded in demonstrating his or her skill in the labour market or some equivalent subsection of society.

Young people, when faced with uncertain employment prospects and financial insecurity, are likely to avoid establishing stable personal relationships, postpone marriage, and/or put off having or accepting responsibility for children. More extreme social behaviour in response to limited or non-existent economic prospects may include engagement in illegal activities such as drug trafficking, violent crime or gang warfare. Poor economic prospects may also contribute to anti-social behaviour, including exposing others to the spread of HIV/AIDS through the practice of unsafe sex.[26]

The outline presented by Curtain, which can be called the transition model, exposes the problems of moving from one developmental phase to another, in particular those challenges relating to the fundamental life questions faced by young people growing up in developed countries. The role of youth policy in this sort of framework is to create favourable conditions for success by preparing young people for the roles and responsibilities of adulthood.[27] If this concept is tied to the idea that childhood and youth are valuable stages of life rather than just instrumental way stations on the journey to adulthood, the model takes on a whole new meaning. Youth policy then becomes not only a source of guidance towards adulthood, sent down from above, but a means of providing or ensuring the requirements for a safe and productive life for children and young citizens.[28] This entails viewing children and young people as subjects in every respect, not only at the personal level but in society as well, participating in decision-making and the debates surrounding it.

What sort of society does the transition model apply to? It appears to presume the existence of established labour markets, but what about the labour market structure in developing countries, where 85 per cent of the world's young people live? If there are not established labour markets, are there transitions? In other words, how does this model relate to societies whose members do not automatically think of their lives in terms of settling into a career, as do educated middle-class people in Europe and the United States, for example? The limits and possibilities of a transitional perspective must be considered.

Curtain acknowledges that the transition model "is focused on developed countries and therefore needs further elaboration to take into account other countries."[29] The relevant issue in these sorts of interpretations of youth is that the general problem of transitions relates specifically to the process of becoming independent. This idea is clearly expressed in the *Jordan Human Development Report 2000*, which places emphasis on the series of transitions "from adolescence to adulthood, from dependence to independence, and from being recipients of society's services to becoming contributors to national economic, political, and cultural life."[30] Viewed in this context, becoming independent is one of the most significant aspects of youth; moving from the childhood home to one's own place, letting go of one's parents and acquiring a spouse, and making choices after one's compulsory education regarding continuing education and/or career moves are all part of one of the most dramatic life changes a person experiences.

Youth policy ties into this process, since raising young people to make the right choices and take effective control of their own lives and social commitments constitute one of society's highest priorities in terms of ensuring its preservation and development. The need for a youth-specific policy arises since it is not a question of protecting children or helping adults who have already achieved some permanent position in their work and have families to care for, but of supporting the life processes in between.

In general, therefore, the definition of youth as the period of transition from dependence to independence relates to all societies and could serve as one of the fundamental principles of the United Nations global agenda. Independence, in the sense of representing personal autonomy, is part of the Western process of individualization[31] and, as such, is an example of a culturally conditioned relationship between an individual and society. The world's customs and cultures can be classified according to whether they are characterized by a collectivist or an individualistic nature;[32] the more collectively oriented a culture is, the more sensitive the dependence/independence issue tends to be. Although becoming independent is the key objective for youth, it is important to remember that children and young people need solid structures—a societal skeleton—to cling to and build upon for their growth and stability. Without this social dimension, a young person's trust in himself or herself, society, the world and life cannot develop. The two issues addressed here—trust and independence—are important enough to be considered foundational concepts underlying the United Nations global agenda.

Trust, as a crucial generic phenomenon of personality development,[33] allows a child to be raised as the product of social interaction and later in life is a precondition for the maintenance of social relationships. Without trust, a person has no feeling of ontological safety. As Anthony Giddens notes, trust generates the "leap into faith" needed for practical engagement.[34] Releasing the individual from traditional social restraints is often seen as one of the central features of development for modernized and urbanized societies. The notion that it takes a village to raise children and young people is foreign to the contemporary analysis of postmodern sociology, which views the village as being, if not entirely extinct, an endangered species in the new world order being produced by globalization. However, the idea that identity formation is an individual project cultivated in contexts ranging from intimate personal ties to global systems of interaction is well in tune with the spirit of modern times. When this contemporary analysis is considered within the context of the United Nations' youth agenda, emphasis is placed on the importance of the issue of trust. Trust is society's gift to the coming generations.

The concepts addressed above raise questions regarding concrete means and possibilities for building trust in different parts of the world—for example, in a situation in which 120 million people migrate from one country to another each year. Migration patterns such as these break up families and weaken or destroy organized social structures in unprecedented ways and at an unprecedented rate. From this perspective, the functional orientation of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond and the direction of the projects associated therewith[36] are pertinent.[37] The Programme of Action emphasizes the social dimensions of life and the importance of community.

Becoming an independent adult requires a large measure of self-esteem, but this characteristic is not innate. Countless life-management and self-esteem

guides are available in the book market, but people cannot manage life; life manages people. Self-esteem grows when one does socially significant things, learns, and takes care of others.

The transition perspective articulates the issue of when and how young people achieve the status of becoming fully operational members of society—and thereby acquire citizenship in all its dimensions. The concept of participation then becomes relevant;[38] embedded in the theme of transition is a link between participation and gaining independence. What does globalization mean as the context for all this, and why should global questions be considered specifically as they relate to youth?

A GLOBAL YOUTH QUESTION

Young people today are faced with high levels of economic and social uncertainty and volatility.[39] In chapter 2, Andy Furlong cites ILO figures indicating that rates of unemployment tend to be two to three times higher for youth than for adults.[40] In chapter 11, Stephen Miles examines how and why young people, perhaps to a greater extent than any other group, are forced to bear the social costs of globalization.[41] This trend by itself represents a solid reason for the articulation of a global youth-specific policy. Miles focuses on globalization as an economic process and explores its profound social implications. He begins by highlighting the enormous gaps that exist, noting that the assets of the 200 richest people in the world are greater than the combined income of more than 2 billion of the poorest—and the gulf between these two groups continues to grow.[42] The news is not all bad, however. The World Bank reports that low-income developing countries, with a total of approximately 3 billion people, have shifted their export focus from primary commodities to manufactured goods and services.[43] Between the mid-1970s and 1998, the share of manufactured items in these countries' total exports increased from 25 per cent to more than 80 per cent. Per capita incomes in these developing countries rose by about 5 per cent per year in the 1990s, with the number of poor people declining by a not insignificant 125 million between 1990 and 1999.

Juha Suoranta, in the chapter on information and communication technologies,[44] mentions the uneven distribution of social, technological and cultural resources. He writes that young people live in situations of extreme inequality in terms of food, health, education, employment and social security. During the 1990s, the world experienced a substantial increase in income inequality, polarization, poverty and social exclusion. These problems, notes Suoranta, are even more prevalent among youth, and the issue is one of significant proportions, given that four out of five people under the age of 20 live in developing countries. Virtually all young people are encountering the uncertainties and risks generated by economic and cultural globalization, but those with a certain degree of advantage are able to manage the challenges more effectively. As Miles observes,[45] there is a group of young, educated, multilingual Europeans who are able to work

and study in different countries and thus experience a diversity of cultures; however, the vast majority of young people, especially those from developing countries, simply do not have such opportunities because they lack suitable skills, appropriate qualifications or sufficient financial resources.

This finding is in line with S.T. Hettige's observations[46] regarding the emergence of a transnational middle class. Hettige sees this new configuration as one of the most significant social outcomes of the current globalizing tendencies and trends, and argues that this new class, unlike the conventional, nationally rooted middle class, is very much linked to transnational space and therefore depends greatly on transnational forces for its sustenance and identity. Hettige maintains that members of the new class tend to be hostile to extreme nationalist tendencies, which often run counter to the universalistic ideas embedded in the notion of internationalism.[47] According to Hettige, this transnationally oriented middle class does not constitute a homogeneous social stratum; it is comprised of diverse elements including business executives in the outward-oriented commercial sector, the upper layer of the NGO sector, and executives and other higher-level employees in locally based international agencies, organizations and institutions. Paradoxically, young activists involved in anti-globalization movements and campaigns for global democracy often have this type of social background. These young people, travelling around the world for different demonstrations, meetings and social forums, constitute a political force within the international youth culture. This is not meant to trivialize such movements, but to sketch a picture of their social and cultural roots.

Striking paradoxes are also apparent in the situation of girls and young women within the global youth context. Nutritional and weight-related concerns are present everywhere but can be manifested in very different ways. The paradox in this example relates to the fact, pointed out by Helena Helve in chapter 9, "that girls and young women in developed countries suffer from eating disorders, while those in developing countries suffer from diseases caused by insufficient food consumption".[48] This extreme continuum leads to wider thoughts of simultaneous processes;[49] some suffer from the lack of means to meet their basic needs, while others are not able to decide between all the different means available to them to meet those needs. In circumstances such as these, are there enough shared platforms or common experiences among young people to bind them together as a global entity? Modes of living, coping and suffering are quite different in various part of the world. A collision between lifestyle syndromes in developed countries[50] and the lack of provisions for basic needs in developing countries appears inevitable.

Many of the authors contributing to this publication raise concerns about gender inequalities. In chapter 1, for example, Lynne Chisholm calls attention to the gender gaps in primary education enrolment; except in the Arab world, higher levels of overall enrolment seem to correlate with greater gender equity.[51] According to Richard Curtain, poverty has certain gender-specific consequences.[52]

He cites one of the national Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, which notes that "poor women are less able to plan families; they have less access to information on family planning and face higher reproductive risks".[53] In his chapter on health, Robert Thomson refers to female genital mutilation as one of the most striking examples of gender-based violence.[54] Examining the issue of youth and HIV/AIDS, Vivian Mercedes Lopez notes that infection rates are increasing much faster among young women than among young men (the rate is double for young women in much of Africa).[55] This phenomenon is mainly attributable to the fact that girls and young women are biologically more susceptible to infection, tend to experience a greater degree of financial insecurity, are often forced to resort to sex work to survive, are subjected to forced and early marriages, and are victims of rape, sexual violence and human trafficking.

In the chapter on conflict prevention,[56] Laleh Ebrahimian warns that the continuation of current trends will lead to a surge in the level of conflict in various parts of the world, causing problems for the majority of the global population. She provides a case study of Africa, the poorest continent in the world in terms of social welfare but one with the potential to reverse that trend through the equitable distribution of its rich natural resources. More than half of Africa's population is below the age of 18, compared with about one-quarter in Europe. These young people will be unable to survive unless serious deficiencies in the healthcare, employment and education sectors and the grave threat posed by infectious diseases are addressed. Ebrahimian's conclusion is that these factors obviously affect the social, political and economic well-being of young people, but that the situation is unlikely to improve without sustained intervention. She contends that worldwide violence will continue to escalate unless the underlying causes of the deep-seated anger, frustration and restlessness are dealt with.

Disparities in living conditions bring the distinctions between developed and developing countries into clearer focus and raise questions about the concept of global solidarity. This is a world in which some people suffer from hunger while others suffer from injuries caused by IT use and poor ergonomics. Do those living in developed and developing parts of the world have anything in common other than the fact that they are human beings with human rights? Does this represent enough of a shared foundation on which to base and develop global youth policies? What should youth policy in a global context actually include? What does it mean in the United Nations context? Is a global youth policy even possible, considering the vast diversity and wide disparities between localities, countries and regions?[57]

There may seem to be few good reasons to presume the existence of global youth with unifying social markers, since living conditions are so different around the world. Swedish and Norwegian youth, for example, have little in common with Nigerian, Sri Lankan and Ecuadorian youth. There are also the changeable polarizations in each country inherently embedded within the various social gaps. These enormous gulfs can be said to exist even against the backdrop of the

transition model described earlier, in the context of which it was argued that every young person is confronted with the task of attaining independence according to culturally relative definitions. The process of striving for adult-level independence is different in, say, Kazan, Russian Federation, and in Melbourne, Australia. However, there still appears to be a universal perspective. The common element shared among all children and youth exists perhaps at the formal level of development (in terms of psychology).[58] On the societal level this relates to the idea of socialization; full cognitive development requires quality social interaction. The concept of socialization provides a framework in which to examine the social conditions surrounding youth at various stages, and to explore how these conditions facilitate or interfere with the developmental tasks to be achieved. Other dimensions of shared experiences can be sociologically constructed as well, including the issue of generations.

June Edmunds and Brian Turner have recently examined the contemporary relevance of the classical Mannheimian theory of generations.[59] Their argument is that extraordinary events such as those that occurred on 11 September 2001 give rise to the emergence of "global generations".[60] They call the cohort produced by the traumatic events in New York the "September generation". The authors describe a global generational consciousness sustained by mass media sources with an international reach. Events are local but receive worldwide coverage.

The events of 11 September can be compared to the Vietnam War, the Kennedy assassination, and the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, in the sense that global communication systems created communities of emotions—with far-reaching effects. This is particularly the case for the post-war baby-boomer generation and the sixties generation[61] within the context of the cultural changes that occurred in the Western world during the second half of the twentieth century. Is there a corresponding mechanism that permits a generation, with all its fractions, to intervene meaningfully in social change? (It should be noted that these fractions may also lead to a global clash of cultures; the present chapter does not explore this possibility).

The analysis of generations is relevant here; as an element of the general discourse on youth, the generational model is particularly suitable within the context of the United Nations, which emphasizes an action-oriented approach and recognizes the active nature and potential of young people (as does the Mannheimian theory of generations). As noted earlier, a generation may conceivably be fabricated on the basis of the shared traumatic-event experiences of cohorts and shaped by living conditions. A consciousness and specific ethos is born, and this triggers action in societies. The result is social change and—ideally—a better world.

Karl Mannheim makes mention of the fresh contact, or susceptible stage of development. Generally, between the ages of about 17 and 25, the world views and attitudes of maturing young people are forming,[62] and it is during this period that human beings feel and experience the changes (traumatic events) in society

most deeply. How universal a stage this may be is subject to debate,[63] but the fact that it is an acknowledged phenomenon supports the notion that youth is an important stage in one's life and lends justification to the call for a youth-specific agenda for the United Nations.

The theory of global generations articulates the role of global communication networks in the establishment of generational cohorts. The contention is that there are consumer items and icons produced and/or mediated by international media conglomerates that become so widely known that they collectively constitute a dimension of the global youth culture. Shakira, Madonna or World Cup Football tournaments, for example, become part of the shared youth experience. What emerges from this is the sense that one is an engaged member of a young worldwide audience, or a kind of imagined community[64] (based, it must be said, on a very weak thread of shared markers). This perceived bond makes it possible for young people from different parts of the world, and from different social situations and backgrounds, to converse and interact as one cohort bound together by their common interest in the products of popular culture—and by the social ethics embedded therein.[65]

The critical question is how far this common generational consciousness actually extends; the answer lies, fundamentally, in whether the widely disparate origins and situations of those belonging to a particular generation are balanced by shared experiences and perceived membership in the global culture. What does all this signify in terms of the content of a global youth policy? People born within the same historic period do not necessarily share the same opportunities. Global gaps in income alone create different life chances for the world's young people.

The Mannheimian theory asserts that collectively experienced traumatic events produce generations. There are worldwide catastrophes that produce a global consciousness at some level. Just as important, however, are the violent confrontations and internal disputes that never reach the international audience. Between 1989 and 2000 a total of 111 armed conflicts were reported. As Laleh Ebrahimian notes, most warfare takes place in the poorest developing countries, especially in Africa.[66] It is estimated that there are 300,000 child soldiers.[67] Too many young people experience these traumatic events under catastrophic conditions, the improvement of which cannot be taken for granted in youth policy.

Stephen Miles notes in chapter 11 that young people's problems are not always unique but are often part of a more holistic crisis requiring immediate action by Governments and international agencies.[68] About 3 billion people—nearly half of the world population—currently have no access to sanitation, and 1.3 billion have no access to clean drinking water.[69] These circumstances reflect a general dimension of the global youth agenda, namely, the need for measures that address the requirements for basic survival and adequate living conditions.

Nutrition and health may be examined in this context. According to FAO, sub-Saharan Africa continues to have the highest prevalence of undernourishment and has experienced the sharpest increase in the number of undernourished people. Most of this increase derives from Central Africa, where the proportion of undernourished rose by more than 20 per cent in the 1990s. Approximately 40 to 60 per cent of the population in sub-Saharan Africa is currently undernourished.[70] In other areas, such as Asia, the food crisis has largely been resolved, and the situation has improved considerably. Hunger occurs for a combination of reasons, the foremost of which is poverty. Many countries are not self-sufficient and cannot afford to buy food from abroad. There are deeply indebted countries that have only enough to pay the interest on their loans. Poor governance and widespread corruption exacerbate the situation, as do regional wars and conflicts; according to FAO, eight of the 18 countries with the highest incidence of hunger are at war. Meanwhile, the HIV/AIDS epidemic is inflicting massive damage, wiping out the working-age population in some villages, weakening the fabric of society,[71] and driving many young people to engage in criminal activity and substance abuse.

All the chapters in this publication refer to global inequalities and the growing gap between rich and poor countries. It is noted, for example, that the policies of industrialized nations have contributed to the problem of global hunger. Farmers in developing countries cannot compete in production and work their way out of poverty because of developed countries' protectionist policies. Developed countries provide their own agriculture industries with $350 billion in subsidies every year,[72] which translates into an annual loss of $50 billion in agricultural revenues for developing countries—a figure equivalent to all of the development aid being sent to poor countries.[73] The EU, which spends about 70 billion euros per annum on its own agricultural support and regional support systems, has contributed 60 million euros worth of aid this year to fight hunger in Ethiopia.

Perhaps the hunger issue and all of its underlying causes represent an example of what Stephen Miles refers to as the elements of crisis to which Governments must respond with immediate and general (rather than youth-specific) measures. These include debt relief through the Heavily-Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative, United Nations development loans, and an increase in the foreign aid provided by industrialized nations to 0.7 per cent of GNP; this last measure alone would help reduce the incidence of hunger by half by the year 2015. Andy Furlong's emphasis (in chapter 2) on the need to create new jobs rather than just providing training programmes to solve unemployment problems also calls for what is essentially a generalized solution. It should be noted that the gap between rich and poor countries is also a matter of power,[74] and this should be acknowledged and factored into global policy development.

While a broad approach is often called for, it would not be productive to first address all of the world's hunger and poverty problems and only then start to consider global youth policy. The situation of young people could actually constitute one of the key elements in solving these basic problems and keeping them in the public eye. The relative status of young people and the conditions and circumstances under which they live, especially in developing countries, could also serve as indicators on both sides of a youth policy—denoting successes and failures in terms of policy content and implementation but also demonstrating areas of need, where and how such a policy must be sharpened, and what its underlined priorities should be. Youth specificity in relation to the different themes could even be a key factor in developing solutions (see, for example, the chapters on the environment, HIV/AIDS, health and drugs in the present publication).

The factors and themes highlighted here promote a broader concept of globalization, which is all too often perceived exclusively in economic terms. HIV/AIDS, crime, population and migration, environmental problems, ICT and commercial entertainment are all global phenomena. The multiple aspects of globalization raise questions with regard to its democratic control, which has a strong youth dimension (see Gerison Lansdown's chapter on participation).

As indicated above, the 15 (often interrelated) priority areas of the World Programme of Action for Youth are extremely relevant in contemporary society. The Programme explores these issues and urges action to address them.

CURRENT TRENDS IN THE DISCUSSION OF GLOBAL YOUTH POLICY

The overall objectives of global youth policy—peace, development and participation—have retained their priority status in the agendas of the various youth forums, but new dimensions have been incorporated into the discussion of these three themes and action taken to strengthen them. World Youth Forum sessions have been used as workshops to further develop the "action for youth" focus of the World Programme of Action,[75] and the reports and strategies of the Forum have brought out new dimensions in the global youth agenda, including the issues of youth rights and youth empowerment.[76] This has had an impact particularly on the priority area of participation, as will be explained below.

Peace

During the 1990s, intranational warfare killed more than 5 million people. A large number of youth worldwide are still dealing with the human tragedy of armed conflict. An integrated approach towards conflict prevention and peace-building has been identified as one of the key priorities in the global agenda.[77] Peace-related matters affecting youth are not incorporated into the present global youth policy framework with the same intensity and relevance, however. The issue is indirectly addressed in the World Programme of Action through topics such as

discrimination, violence, post-war trauma and integration, and peace education.[78] The Secretary-General has recognized the need for increased attention to this thematic area and has appointed a Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict to provide the necessary guidance in this respect.

Development

Globalization has challenged the development agenda of the international community. The new opportunities and social and ecological costs that come with it constitute a major focus in both the global youth policy agenda and the broader human development agenda. The areas of concern addressed at the Millennium Summit are directly linked to most of the global youth priorities, including education, employment, hunger and poverty, health, girls and young women, globalization, ICT and HIV/AIDS. The Fourth WTO Ministerial Conference (Doha, 2001), the International Conference on Financing for Development (Monterrey, 2002), and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, 2002) have contributed significantly to the creation of a new framework for global governance. The structures of global governance are extremely relevant to global youth policy, as is indicated by Ola Stafseng's assertion that youth policy is becoming a matter of global solidarity.[79] This is also demonstrated in an analytical review of the World Bank's Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (see chapter 3 of the present publication).[80]

Participation

In the area of youth participation, there has been a shift towards a more legislatively based focus on youth rights and movement away from the broad concept of youth participation to a more narrow concentration on structures for political participation.[81] This new emphasis on human rights as a fundamental normative basis for global youth policy derives partly from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), an instrument that specifically defines the human rights of those under 18 years of age. There are a number of other such treaties with relevance to most of the global priorities for youth. During discussions on the human rights of young people at the Expert Group Meeting on Global Priorities for Youth, held in Helsinki in October 2002, it was noted that a youth dimension should be included in human rights monitoring instruments as well as in the mandates of the various Special Rapporteurs on human rights.[82]

The direct relevance of human rights instruments to global youth policy is noteworthy. For example, the general prohibition against discrimination applies to many issues of concern to young people around the world. The principal of non-discrimination is stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948):

> "Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status."[83]

The word "age" is excluded from the list of those areas in which no distinction is to be made in the application of human rights, as it is implicitly recognized in the Declaration that human rights are all-inclusive, pertaining to young people as well as adults. Other human rights instruments target particular priority areas. For example, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights is, at a minimum, relevant to youth participation and youth delinquency.[84] The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights guarantees young people the right to education by obliging States to make education not only available but also accessible, adaptable and acceptable.[85] Finally, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) identifies specific areas of concern shared by all females, including girls and young women.

With regard to the narrower notion of youth participation, there has been a move towards more specific proposals and demands for political participation within the United Nations System.[86] Pressure is being applied for the establishment of a separate and distinctive youth policy structure within the Organization, characterized by institutionalized co-management with youth NGOs.[87] It is worth noting that these ideas of partnership with civil society are in line with the Secretary-General's proposal regarding new methods of civil society participation.[88] In the era of globalization, the challenge of democratization must now be addressed by international organizations, which are expected to play a greater role in the global governance of economic globalization. In the context of the United Nations, the outreach towards global civil society—including young people and their organizations—represents part of this development. This "civil society outreach" policy of the Secretary-General has been defined as a strategy of dialogic democracy, one of the legitimacy strategies of global democracy.[89]

The present challenge in facilitating youth participation is the institutionalization of this dialogic democracy with regard to the issues of global youth policy. The "Report of the Expert Group Meeting on Global Priorities for Youth"[90] urges development in this direction; youth participation is identified as one of the three cross-cutting themes, and a proposal is put forward for the evaluation of youth participation mechanisms in the various United Nations agencies and national delegations. An evaluation of the activities and achievements of the World Youth Forum, prepared independently from the rest of the report, provides an interesting reference for further reflection on the development of trends in youth participation. The direct involvement of young people in decision-making processes is vital; towards that end—in the spirit of dialogic democracy—representatives of youth NGOs were involved in the preparation of the present publication.

As indicated earlier, youth can be characterized as a transition from childhood to adulthood—a developmental journey during which one gains independence and begins to participate fully in society. This period is fraught with enormous challenges for young people themselves and for the rest of society. It is imperative that societies invest in their youth, as they are especially vulnerable to the increasingly complex problems facing the world today.

CONCLUSION

The World Programme of Action for Youth urges the United Nations and its Member States to undertake various tasks during the period 2001-2010; in this "third phase", the focus should be on "further implementation and evaluation of progress and obstacles encountered", and suggestions should be offered with regard to "appropriate adjustments to long-term objectives and specific measures to improve the situation of young people in the societies in which they live".[91]

The present publication should be seen as part of the follow-up mandated by the World Programme of Action, as it represents a response to the call for both "further implementation" and an "evaluation of progress and obstacles encountered". The 15 chapters that follow provide an overview of the global situation of youth, of progress made with regard to the global priorities for youth, and of obstacles to be overcome in the future. The lack of data relating to certain fields in developing countries, as well as the problems of data comparability, are challenging the research community to develop a system of global indicators as well as qualitative research methods in order to build a truly global picture of the situation of youth.[92] The obvious dominance of the Western school/tradition of youth research is one of the key challenges to be addressed in the future, given the fact that the majority of young people are living in developing countries. The establishment of a global youth research network could provide the foundations for achieving a truly global conceptual apparatus as well as a truly global methodological framework for future evaluations.

This publication incorporates the conclusions of the evaluation of the World Youth Forum, prepared independently from the other chapters. Following this example, the next phase of the evaluation should target the means of implementation described in the World Programme of Action for Youth. At the regional and international levels, the youth policies and programmes of various United Nations agencies should be evaluated as mechanisms for the implementation of the Programme. In this context, the proposal of the Expert Group Meeting on Global Priorities for Youth on the evaluation of agencies' youth participation mechanisms could be considered.[93] With respect to implementation at the country level, there is a need for international assessment of national youth policies and coordination mechanisms. According to the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the Programme,[94] there are some individual cases of such efforts having been launched by the Council of Europe.

There is a need for continued discussion on appropriate adjustments to long-term objectives and the adoption of specific measures to improve the situation of young people. It was noted earlier that the normative basis for a global youth policy has continued to develop since 1995, and new concerns have emerged since the adoption of World Programme of Action. These additional priority areas, explored in the last five chapters of this publication, need to be taken

into consideration when recommending adjustments to long-term youth objectives in any updating of the World Programme of Action. In addition, the trend towards developing concrete, proactive measures to address the challenges faced by young people should be sustained. The authors of the following chapters, along with the participants in the Expert Group Meeting on Global Priorities for Youth, have contributed to these efforts by suggesting and assessing various measures and by highlighting some of the key concerns of young people. However, the identification and adoption of specific measures is a task for the Secretary-General and the Member States of the United Nations. ■

[1] Appreciation goes to S. Aapola, P. Lundbom, K. Paakkunainen, S. Perho and L. Suurpää for sharing ideas about global youth policy in connection with the Expert Group Meeting on Global Priorities for Youth (Helsinki, October 2002).

[2] O. Stafseng, "Relevance of the themes of the United Nations International Youth Year (1985)", *Global Situation of Youth* (United Nations, 1998).

[3] See, for example, the World Youth Forum and the Dakar Youth Empowerment Strategy (further information can be accessed at (http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/library/index.html). The concept of participation constitutes the starting point for this sort of youth policy; the objective is to motivate young people to participate in decision-making processes relating to youth and other issues.

[4] The Finnish Youth Research Network (http://www.alli.fi/nuorisotutkimus/nuoriso-www/index2.html), with which the present authors are affiliated, is a national research unit established in 1999 and financed by Ministry of Education in Finland and by various European, Nordic and national research funds. Research is carried out in cooperation with various universities and research institutes. More than 20 researchers of the Network are working in these universities and institutes, providing a strong functional framework for continuous multidisciplinary scientific cooperation at both national and international levels. The Finnish Youth Research Network regularly arranges training seminars for researchers and organizes discussion forums for the general public. The Network's publication series provides factual research information, as well as raising new issues and offering different perspectives for broader discussion on matters relating to young people.

[5] See http://www.alli.fi/nyri/index.htm.

[6] ILO, "Youth and work: global trends" (Geneva, 2001); and United Nations, "World youth report 2003: report of the Secretary-General" (E/CN.5/2003/4) (12 December 2002), para. 2.

[7] United Nations, General Assembly resolution 50/81 of 13 March 1996, "The World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond" (A/RES/50/81).

[8] Charter of the United Nations and Statute of the International Court of Justice (DPI/511-40303-May 1987-50M), article 1.

[9] A former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, issued three reports in which he identified the interrelated key challenges for all States and the international community: an Agenda for Peace (1992), an Agenda for Development (1994) and an Agenda for Democratization (1996).

[10] In resolution 2037 (XX) of 1965, the General Assembly endorsed the Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples.

[11] A/RES/50/81, para. 13.

[12] Ibid., para. 3.

[13] See O. Stafseng, loc. cit., p. 2.

[14] The World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond refers, in paragraph 15, to the following five international instruments as having had an impact on the preparation of its priorities: (a) the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development; (b) the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights; (c) the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development; (d) the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development; and (e) the Platform for Action, adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women.

[15] A. Schlegel and B. Herbert, *Adolescence: An Anthropological Inquiry* (New York, The Free Press, 1991).

[16] Philippe Aries's influential publication *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life* (New York, Vintage Books, 1962) places the birth of "youth", as such, at the beginning of the industrial period, implying that this phenomenon is limited purely to developed and industrialized societies. Many historians of youth have disputed Aries's position; see, for example, J. Gillis, *Youth and History: Tradition and Change in European Age Relations, 1770-present* (New York and London, Academic Press, 1974); or M. Mitterauer, *A History of Youth* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1992).

[17] The subjects of these studies were small hunting-gathering tribes living in one or a few villages, larger nomadic herding tribes, and settled agricultural tribes and peoples in Africa, Asia, North America and South America.

[18] In an earlier version of the "European Commission White Paper: a new impetus for European youth" (Brussels, 21 November 2001) (COM(2001)681 final), it is noted that life is not linear.

[19] A. Van Gennep, in *The Rites of Passage* (translated by Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffe (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960)), suggested that rites of passage mark both biological changes and changes in social position. Rites of passage may be seen as characterized by a common structure involving: (a) separation of the individual from the order or previous social condition; (b) a marginal or transitional phase, which is highly sacred; and (c) a final stage, which incorporates the individual into the new social order or status; see D. and J. Jary, *Collins Dictionary of Sociology*, 3rd edition (Glasgow, HarperCollins, 2000), p. 523.

[20] In an earlier version of the European Commission White Paper, European organizations refer to changes in youth, noting, for example, that traditional collective models have lost their significance, and more individualized patterns of development have become more common.

[21] Private correspondence with Richard Curtain, 6 November 2002.

[22] Stephen Miles explores this issue in some detail in chapter 11.

[23] As Richard Curtain asserts, this age grouping is often too limiting when considered on an individual country basis; in the UNDP *Jordan Human Development Report 2000*, for example, youth are defined as those aged 15-29 years; see chapter 3 of the present publication for more information on this topic.

[24] R. Mkandawire and F. Chigunta, *Youth Unemployment and Livelihood Challenges in Africa* (Centre for Youth Studies, University of Venda, South Africa, 1999).

[25] See Richard Curtain's reference, in the unpublished poverty paper presented at the Helsinki meeting, to OECD, "Growing into work: youth and the labour market over the 1980s and the 1990s", *1996 Youth Employment Outlook* (Paris, 1996), p. 109.

[26] R. Mkandawire, "Alienated, criminalized and stigmatized youth sub-cultures of South Africa", a paper presented at the Kopano-Southern Africa Regional Exchange Conference, held in the North-West Province of Dikhololo from 20 to 25 July 2002, p. 10.

[27] Stephen Miles, in chapter 11, appears to be searching for some universal principle of intergenerational relations that can be applied within the broader context of globalization. He notes that efforts should be made to ensure that young people are made equal partners in the globalization process, able to pursue the opportunities and enjoy the benefits it brings. There is a need to design social policies that explicitly benefit all age groups and prevent the creation of further social divisions.

[28] See Heikki Silvennoinen, ed., *Nuorisopolitiikan suunta* (The Direction of Youth Policy) (Helsinki, 2002).

[29] Private communication with Richard Curtain, 6 November 2002.

[30] UNDP, *Jordan Human Development Report 2000* (New York, 2000), available at http://www.undp-jordan.org/publications_jhdr/publications_jhdr.html, as cited in chapter 3 of the present publication.

[31] N. Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999). The process of modernization involved the breakdown of some of the more important institutions of traditional society such as the larger family, the fixed clan and agrarian village life to make way for urbanization and the beginnings of the wage-based industrial labour movement.

[32] See, for example, G. Hofstede, *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions and Organizations across Nations* (Thousand Oaks, California, Sage Publications, 1980); and M.J. Gannon and Associates, *Understanding Global Cultures: Metaphorical Journeys through 17 Countries* (Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications, 1994). Gannon notes, on pages 340-341, that there are many types of both individualism and collectivism. He shares various cultural metaphors representing unique forms of individualism, as follows: the German symphony represents subordinated individualism; Italian opera, exteriorized individualism; traditional British house, tradition-bound and iconoclastic individualism; Spanish bullfight, proud and self-sufficient individualism; American football, competitive individualism; Swedish stuga, individualism through nature and self-development; French wine, rationalistic individualism; and Irish conversation, religion-focused individualism. For collectivism Gannon identifies the following types of cultural metaphors: Chinese family altar, relation-based and differentiated family system; Japanese garden, kata-based undifferentiated family system; Dance of Shiva, religion-dominated family system; and Israeli kibbutz, democracy-based family system. There are nuances; collectivist societies can be individualistic and vice versa. Gannon mentions that collectivist societies seem to maintain a group-focused individualism that allows for dynamic interplay between the acceptance of rigid hierarchical authority and sanuk, or fun; conversely, some supposedly individualistic societies are also collectivist, as Ireland demonstrates with its strong emphasis on helping others.

[33] A. Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Oxford, Polity Press, 1991).

[34] Ibid., p. 3.

[35] A. Giddens, "Living in a post-traditional society", in U. Beck, A. Giddens and S. Lash, *Reflexive Modernization, Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1994).

[36] See paras. 108-143 (Means of Implementation).

[37] The World Programme of Action can be compared with, for example, the European Commission White Paper referred to in note 18. The latter is an official document that identifies the contents of youth policy; however, it does not specify how the various policy directives should be realized and translated into action. Conversely, the World Programme establishes the priority position of youth and outlines the means of achieving targeted objectives (on the level of the ideal of global citizenship).

[38] The youth-adult transition theme has contemporary relevance in Europe, but even within this regional context there is a surprising range of cultural variations. S.E. Ollus comments on the European debate: " For example, in Spain and Italy the defence of young people's independence must be considered. Questions such as 'how to get young people to move away from home before they turn 30' and 'how can young people learn to take responsibility for themselves' are not part of the basic Finnish debate."; see S.E. Ollus, "Nuorten osallisuus meillä ja muualla" ("Young people's participation at home and abroad"), in *Konventti TÄHDISTÖ*, the publication of the Finnish National Youth Convention (November 2002), p. 13.

[39] As noted by R. Curtain in chapter 3.

[40] See the introduction to chapter 2.

[41] See chapter 11, which details the challenges associated with globalization and how they affect youth in particular.

[42] M. Wolf, "Globalization: the big lie about inequality", *Financial Times* (8 February 2000), available at http://news.ft.com/ft/gx.cgi/ftc?pagename=View&c=Article&cid=BUGSXO3PJ4C&li – FT.com February 11.

[43] World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2002*, available at http://www.worldbank.org/data/wdi2002/globallinks.htm.

[44] See chapter 12.

[45] See chapter 11.

[46] S.T. Hettige, "Introduction: youth, nation-state and globalization", Globalization, Social Change and Youth (Colombo, German Cultural Institute and University of Colombo, Centre for Anthropological and Sociological Studies, 1998), pp. 1-10.

[47] There are important exceptions, however, as exemplified by the growing membership in far-right nationalist political groups, which represents a reactionary response to globalization. According to K. Popple and R. Kirby , the authors of "Winners and losers: young people in Europe" (in *Britain in Europe: An Introduction to Sociology*, T. Spybey, ed. (London, Routledge, 1997], pp. 161-172, cited in chapter 11 of the present publication), the market model has created greater global economic uncertainty, intensifying the pressures and disadvantages youth are experiencing. It is this feeling of exclusion from the mainstream that makes young people vulnerable to recruitment into these far-right groups, where they are able to enjoy a sense of belonging. This ties in with what was mentioned earlier in the present chapter about trust and community membership; a sense of belonging is crucial but is being seriously threatened by diverse dimensions of the globalization process.

[48] The circumstances underlying this phenomenon are explored further in chapter 9.

[49]   Based on information obtained in a discussion with S. Perho.

[50]   Australian political scientist Sheila Jeffreys, Associate Professor at the University of Melbourne, stated the following in a lecture entitled "Cutting up: harmful beauty practices and male domination", given at the University of Helsinki on 2 December 2002: "I will talk about breast implants, labiaplasty, self-mutilation, amputee identity disorder and amputee pornography, autogynephilia and how all these practices are promoted and made into profitable businesses over the Internet."

[51]   As Lynne Chisholm states in chapter 1: "In comparison with sub-Saharan Africa, Western Asia as a whole reports higher levels of primary school participation (84 per cent versus 74 per cent), but the gender gap measures 16 per cent in the Arab world and 14 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa."

[52]   See chapter 3.

[53]   Government of Nicaragua, "Nicaragua: a strengthened growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper" (31 July 2001), p. 10.

[54]   See chapter 4.

[55]   See chapter 13.

[56]   See chapter 14.

[57]   S. Perho and L. Suurpää assisted in the formulation of these questions.

[58]   Compare with the stages in cognitive development described by Jean Piaget; see C.B. McCormick and M. Pressley, *Educational Psychology: Learning, Instruction, Assessment* (New York, Adisson Wesley Longman, 1997); J. Piaget, *The Mechanisms of Perception* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969); and C. Brainerd, *Piaget's Theory of Intelligence* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, 1978). Also refer to the critical examination of the subject by Vygotsky in his social development theory; see L.S. Vygotsky, *Mind in Society* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1978); and J.V. Wertsch, *Culture, Communication and Cognition: Vygotskian Perspectives* (Cambridge University Press, 1985).

[59]   K. Mannheim, "The problem of generations", in *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*, P. Kecskemeti, ed. (London, Routledge Kegan & Paul, 1928/1952), pp. 276-322.

[60]   J. Edmunds and B.S. Turner, *Generation, Culture and Society* (Philadelphia, Open University Press, 2002), pp. vii-viii and 121. Edmunds and Turner stress that traumatic events such as warfare are fundamentally important to the creation of generations (p. ix). The authors define a "cohort" as a collection of people who are born at the same time and thus share the same opportunities available at a given time in an epoch. They call these opportunities "life chances". A cohort can be further defined as a generation that for some special reason, such as a major (often traumatic) event, develops a collective consciousness; in the context of the 11 September example (the traumatic event), there has been a split into fractions, as the attack is interpreted as a clash between two global cultures: Islamic and Western.

[61]   The cohort in this case was also shaped by the rise of consumerism and the sexual revolution.

[62]   Karl Mannheim notes the following (op. cit., p. 300): "The possibility of really questioning and reflecting on things only emerges at the point where personal experimentation with life begins—round about the age of 17, sometimes a little earlier and sometimes a little later." He also ascertains (in a footnote on pp. 299-300) that "it is difficult to decide just at what point this process is complete in an individual—at what point this unconscious vital inventory (which also contains the national and provincial peculiarities out of which national and provincial entelechies can develop) is stabilized. The process seems to stop once the inventory of a-problematic experience has virtually acquired its final form. The child or adolescent is always open to new influences if placed in a new milieu. They readily assimilate new unconscious mental attitudes and habits, and change their language or dialect. The adult, transferred into a new environment, consciously transforms certain aspects of his modes of thought and behaviour, but never acclimatizes himself in so radical and thoroughgoing a fashion. His fundamental attitudes, his vital inventory, and, among external manifestations, his language and dialectic, remain for the most part on an earlier level. It appears that language and accent offer an indirect indication as to how far the foundations of a person's consciousness are laid, his basic view of the world stabilized. If the point can be determined at which a man's language and dialect cease to change, there is at least an external criterion for the determination also of the point at which his unconscious inventory of experience ceases to accumulate. According to A. Meillet, the spoken language and dialect does not change in an individual after the age of 25 years." (See a. Meillet, Methode dans les Sciences (Paris, Alcan, 1911); and his "Introduction a l'étude comparative des langues indo-européennes", as quoted in *Mentre*, No. 19, p. 306ff.)

[63]   See, for example, E. Burman, *Deconstructing Developmental Psychology* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1994).

[64]   This borrows from a concept introduced by Benedict Anderson in his analysis of nationalism in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, Verso, 1983).

[65]   N. Klein, *No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies* (New York, Picador, 2000).

[66] Laleh Ebrahimian notes in chapter 14 that armed conflict, which often attracts youth, exacerbates violent conflict and reduces the chances for peace. She writes that in the past decade, 2 million children have been killed as a result of armed conflict and 6 million have been disabled, mainly through mutilation and landmine explosions. Moreover, 12 million have been left homeless, more than 1 million orphaned or separated from their parents, and more than 10 million psychologically traumatized (see http://www.globalissues.org/Geopolitics/Children.asp).

[67] See chapter 14.

[68] Private correspondence with Richard Curtain, 6 November 2002.

[69] See http://globalissues.org/TradeRelated/Facts.asp.

[70] See FAO, *The State of Food Insecurity in the World*, information on the proportions of undernourished people in developing countries, 1990-1992 and 1998-2000, available at http://globalissues.org/TradeRelated/Facts.as.

[71] Armed conflicts are addressed earlier in this chapter. Laleh Ebrahimian examines the connection between conflict and HIV/AIDS in chapter 14: "The HIV/AIDS pandemic has contributed greatly to the disintegration of societies already under enormous stress. The disease has infected 34.3 million people worldwide, with an average of nearly 6,000-7,000 new cases among youth alone appearing every day, mainly in Africa and Asia. The rates have surged in areas of armed conflict. More than three-quarters of the 17 countries with the highest numbers of children orphaned by AIDS are in engaged in hostilities or are on the brink of an emergency involving conflict." (See UNICEF, HIV/AIDS Unit, "Fact sheet: HIV/AIDS and children affected by armed conflict" [New York, 2002]).

[72] From an interview with UNDP Administrator Mark Malloch Brown in *Suomen Kuvalehti*, No. 44 (2002), p. 16.

[73] Ibid.

[74] Teivo Teivainen and Heikki Patomäki, "Global democracy initiatives: the art of possible", Network Institute for Global Democratization, Helsinki, 2002.

[75] O. Stafseng, loc. cit.

[76] The participants in the second session of the World Youth Forum of the United Nations System, held in Vienna in 1996, proposed the drafting of a youth rights charter and the appointment of a Special Rapporteur on youth rights (see O. Stafseng, ibid.). The fourth session of the World Youth Forum, held in Dakar in 2001, adopted the Dakar Youth Empowerment Strategy; further information is available at http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/library/index.html.

[77] Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, *We the Peoples: The Role of the United Nations in the 21st Century* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.00.I.16). This publication is also referred to as the Millennium Report.

[78] O. Stafseng, loc. cit.

[79] Ibid.

[80] See chapter 3.

[81] O. Stafseng, loc. cit.

[82] The discussion was based on proposals by Cecilia Möller of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and Zina Mounla of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

[83] United Nations, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted and proclaimed by General Assembly resolution 217 A (III) of 10 December 1948, article 2.

[84] International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by United Nations General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) of 16 December 1966, with entry into force on 23 March 1976, in accordance with article 49; see article 22 on freedom of association and article 10 on the separation of youth delinquents from adult prisoners.

[85] Information obtained from a note by Cecilia Möller, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, to the Rapporteur.

[86] See, for example, "An additional mechanism for co-operation between youth NGOs and the United Nations", a policy document of the European Youth Forum (adopted by the Council of Members, Athens, 15-17 November 2001), available at http://www.youthforum.org/en/press/reports/0719-01-e-FINAL.pdf.

[87] This conclusion was drawn by O. Stafseng (loc. cit.) after a review of such proposals.

[88] K. Annan, op. cit.

[89] A study of United Nations legitimacy strategies was done by Juha Mustonen in 2003. The very of concept of dialogic democracy is from theories on the future of radical politics by Anthony Giddens. With this concept, Giddens refers to another dimension of democracy, noting that it represents a way of creating a public arena in which issues can be solved through dialogue on a global scale as well; see A. Giddens, *Beyond Left and Right: The Future of Radical Politics* (Stanford, California, Stanford University Press, 1994).

[90]   Available at http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/helsinki/finland_report.pdf.

[91]   United Nations, World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, para. 17.

[92]   See the "Report of the Expert Group Meeting on Global Priorities for Youth, Helsinki, 6-10 October 2002".

[93]   United Nations, "Report of the Expert Group Meeting on Global Priorities for Youth"…, para. 50 (see http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/library/index.html).

[94]   United Nations, "Implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond: report of the Secretary-General" (A/56/180), para. 43.

Review

of

the

TEN PRIORITY AREAS

OF THE WORLD
PROGRAMME
OF
ACTION
FOR

YOUTH

TO THE YEAR

2000
AND
BEYOND

PART ONE

Chapter 1.
YOUTH & EDUCATION

Educational developments, *patterns, trends, options and objectives as they relate to young people are the focus of this chapter. An evidence-based overview presents the challenges and inequalities faced in different contexts, with attention given to the invisibility of youth as a statistical category, comparisons between developed and developing countries, the gender gap, and deficiencies and requirements with respect to "old" and "new" literacy. Educational achievements and goals are addressed within the Education for All framework. The chapter repeatedly emphasizes the importance of relying on multiple pedagogies and approaches—including formal, non-formal and distance education—in achieving worldwide educational objectives.*

INTRODUCTION

Patterns and trends in educational opportunities and outcomes outcomes are notoriously difficult to describe with any precision and to interpret meaningfully. First, the data are highly context-dependent. Second, in global terms, the diversity in educational access and attainment—between world regions, countries within these regions, and areas and social groups within each country—is overwhelming in its complexity. Third, the information available for comparative analysis is limited in terms of both quantity and quality and is unbalanced in its coverage of individual countries and across world regions. Such issues pose significant problems even for comparisons within Europe, a region in which educational research and statistics are long established and well developed.[1] A worldwide perspective magnifies the difficulties. Reports and statistics at the international level are, in effect, the only practicable comparative sources.[2] There is also a wealth of useful and important material available on the ground—which would be enormously valuable if it were accessible in practice, and if the sources could be brought into reliable, valid and meaningful relationships with one another.

In the light of such limitations, the present chapter restricts itself to an evidence-based overview, drawing on international statistical data to highlight key comparisons, in particular between the developed and developing countries. The thematic focus takes its cue from the Millennium Development Goals, together with the targets set by the Education for All initiative adopted at the World Conference on Education for All, held at Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990. This involves taking a closer look at the progress achieved and the problems encountered in extending the provision of and access to basic education, which in the context of developing countries refers to both primary and secondary schooling. Social inequalities—particularly the gender gap but also urban-rural disparities in access and participation—are addressed largely within this framework.

Outside the OECD countries, international comparative data are scarce for technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and for patterns of transition from school to work. Nevertheless, it is possible to indicate how the differences and inequalities that emerge in basic education continue into the post-compulsory stage of schooling, including higher education. Distance education and non-formal education essentially represent complementary and supporting measures to help achieve basic education access and participation goals, providing a "second chance" to those who do not complete basic education and who lack basic skills, especially basic literacy.

It is important to note that this approach is effectively dictated by the nature of the available data, which are a product of specific policy perspectives on educational priorities in the developing world.

In North America, Western Europe and the developed countries of East Asia and the Pacific, distance education and non-formal education take on broader roles. Both are seen increasingly as independently valuable pathways to knowledge and skills acquisition, and in some instances constitute a more effective avenue than conventional formal education and training. ICT-based instruction and e-learning are rapidly redefining established perceptions of distance education in the developed world.[3] The potential of new information and communication technologies for improving access and participation in the developing world is also on the active educational policy agenda, but appropriate implementation faces enormous obstacles for the foreseeable future.[4]

Renewed policy emphasis on lifelong learning has brought non-formal education into the limelight in terms of raising participation levels at all ages, using more effective pedagogies, and valuing the full range of learning outcomes.[5] These trends go hand in hand with the challenges developed countries are facing in making the transition to knowledge-based economies and societies. The education and training systems now in place in these countries were originally set up to respond to the demands of industrial development; adjustments are required to address the enormous variety of new and different demands that have evolved in recent years.[6]

The developed countries of the world, to widely varying degrees, have well-established social and community services for young people generally backed up by a dedicated youth policy sector and associated measures across a wide range of fields. In many countries non-formal youth education is provided within this context, with an agenda largely oriented towards intercultural learning, human rights and anti-racist education, and building up the social and personal competencies young people need to live in a multicultural and mobile world. The focus is often especially, but certainly not exclusively, on disadvantaged and marginalized youth.[7]

It has to be said that these activities and concerns, along with the recruitment and training of professional youth workers and non-formal youth educators who implement youth policy measures in practice, can hardly be identified as priorities for much of the developing world. Understandably, the resources and energies of these countries are directed towards trying to get all children into basic schooling and to keep them in an effective learning environment long enough to give them a reasonable chance of making their way through life—as parents, workers and active citizens in their communities. It is therefore not only very difficult, but arguably even inappropriate, to attempt to draw any comparisons on a global scale with respect to these aspects of education for young people. It might be more relevant to consider the different means by which developing countries ensure support and accompaniment for young people as they grow towards personal maturity, social adulthood and independent citizenship. The family, neighbourhood and local community—and in many cases religious and spiritual traditions and groupings—generally still play far more prominent roles for young people in these respects.[8]

In today's Western world, public services and professionals at least complement the traditional forms of socialization and learning associated with families, communities and religions. Some would argue that newer forms of socialization and learning have become more important and influential in young people's lives. Non-kin peer groups represent one type of social network that has come to exercise more of an influence on Western youth than on young people in the developing world. This process of self-socialization is generally more significant for young people in developed countries because they spend much more time exclusively with their peers, both at school and in their social and leisure lives. Contemporary youth culture—as a social and an economic phenomenon—is a distinctly modern Western product, one that furthermore provides a focus for parents and State authorities anxious about young people's values and behaviours in rapidly developing societies. These kinds of issues are no less important for the field of youth and education than are rates of participation in basic schooling, but they cannot be addressed through international statistics, and they demand focused attention in their own right.

RELATING "YOUTH" WITH "EDUCATION": A PROBLEMATIC CONNECTION

Education is but one part of young people's lives—an important part in some regions of the world, but a non-existent element for large groups of youth in other regions. Under these circumstances, how can one even begin to compare the situation of a 15-year-old in Mauritania with her schoolgirl peers in Finland? Furthermore, there is often an unspoken assumption that education is automatically linked to young people, as it is generally thought to exist for their sake. Certainly, modern formal education and training systems were developed with young people in mind—people seen to be going through an initial learning phase in their lives, to be doing a whole range of things for the first time, and to be doing these things all together at more or less the same ages. It is understood that this is a purely social construction that has established itself in very specific times and places, but in practice the arbitrary nature of these institutionalized arrangements escapes conscious notice. Educational statistics are by and large a highly condensed and narrowly focused empirical representation of a set of taken-for-granted arrangements for intentional learning and its outcomes. Youth as a social phenomenon and young people as the primary target population of formal education and training fade from view behind an avalanche of indicators that describe participation in institutional processes for learning but reveal little about those who take part. In many ways, educationalists and analysts are condemned to reporting on education and saying nothing about youth.

Few sources that address education within a global and comparative framework adopt a critical perspective on schooling. In other words, few overtly acknowledge the problems that arise in applying Western industrial societies' established educational concepts and practices. For example, all international reports are careful to emphasize that distance and non-formal education are supplementary forms of provision that serve to extend access to mainstream formal schooling—not alternative forms of provision altogether that may better respond to the exigencies of non-Western societies and the developing world. Distance and non-formal education are valued for their structural and organizational benefits, including cost-effective-

ness, scheduling flexibility and enhanced opportunities for community participation. Curriculum and pedagogy are rarely addressed in the context of considering the most appropriate kinds of educational provision — except when reference is made to poor teacher qualification and skill levels or, on occasion, to the need to provide "life-relevant learning" for rural young people and child workers.

Even life-relevant learning is seldom approached from the perspective of whether curricula and teacher-student relations are appropriate for the cultural context in which learners live, though practising educationalists, not to mention parents, are well aware that schooling in many parts of the world remains imbued with ideas and content originating from widely diverse circumstances, systems and traditions. The dominant concern is rather that curricula and certificates or diplomas awarded for distance and non-formal learning should conform as closely as possible to those offered in formal schooling, and that the effectiveness of such supplementary provision should be demonstrated by enrolment and pass rates at least as high as those in formal education and training institutions. None of this is surprising, and it is difficult to imagine how a case might ever be successfully made for relinquishing the ideal of universal formal education for all. It is, after all, impossible and unacceptable to suggest that young people in the developing world do not need and deserve a quantity and quality of education comparable to that enjoyed by their peers in the developed world.

This situation has a consequence for international comparisons, in that a "deficit approach" in comparing performance against standard indicators of access and outcome becomes virtually unavoidable. For a whole set of economic, political and cultural reasons, formal schooling is not yet accessible to everyone, and many have not been able to acquire adequate basic skills even when they have attended school for a given period. Targets are set with an eye to what happens in the developed world, a background against which the developing world will inevitably be assessed as performing more or less poorly. In many ways, the developing world is condemned to participation in a never-ending marathon in which the front-runners are unassailable.

If education is approached largely uncritically, then youth as such are virtually invisible. International reports on education use the word "children" almost universally; the terms "youth" and "young people" are rarely employed, except in reports that specifically focus on initial transitions between education, training and employment in the developed world. Occasionally, the term "young adult" is used, but almost always in reference to school drop-out and illiteracy problems. Furthermore, discussions of literacy rates generally emphasize that illiteracy is a significant problem only for older age groups, and not for the young. Illiteracy is seen as a problem that will die out naturally as education participation rates rise cohort by cohort — even though the results of literacy surveys in the developed world do not necessarily support such optimism. The fact is that levels of functional illiteracy remain disturbingly high in a number of countries at a time when the demand for higher basic skill levels is rising rapidly.[9]

Otherwise, international reports on education make reference to "students" and, less often, "pupils". In other words, young people are seen solely in a functional role or position within institutionalized teaching and learning relations—which is logical, given the prevalence of thinking about and documenting education in terms

of systems and structures of provision, participation and outcome. The other elements of young people's lives and identities are understood largely in terms of the constraints they may place on educational opportunities, access and "survival" rates, with particular attention given to family factors (especially as these affect gender-specific patterns) and economic factors (especially as expressed through the extent of child labour).

Overall, this kind of literature classifies educational subjects as either children or adults, with little indication that there may be a distinct, socially significant life phase called youth between the two. The statistical data included in international reports reflect this perspective in the ways in which the material is ordered and presented, and it is important to add that international comparative statistics are made up of what is already available or possible to extract from national sources. This means the material reflects real, if partial, dimensions of social, cultural and economic realities in the countries that contribute the basic data. As an explicitly recognized social phenomenon, "youth" is absent in much of the developing world or, alternatively, is an invention of modern Western societies.

As far as the developed world is concerned, the fields of education and youth—whether in research, policy or practice—live in rather separate boxes. Youth does exist in social, cultural and economic terms, but the realm of formal education is very much a world apart; it exists for young people, but it is certainly not of young people. On the international reporting front, youth transitions are defined and analyzed solely in terms of pathways between education, training and the labour market. This does not necessarily sit well with the more holistic approaches towards understanding young people's lives on their own terms.

To clarify the point, an analogy can be drawn with understanding gender relations as a social reality in their own right. Appreciating the social significance of gender cannot be limited to visualizing and analyzing people's roles and positions as, for instance, wives, husbands, daughters and sons. It is important to place such analyses in an overall framework of comparing women's lives with men's lives—or girls' educational opportunities with those of boys. As it happens, a good deal of comparative data about basic gender-specific patterns of educational participation and outcomes are now available. This body of information has gradually been generated over the years by the growing policy emphasis at the international level on equal opportunities in education, ultimately reflected in the provision of gender-specific statistics—which were not always collected and presented as a matter of routine. This means that gender has now become a visible dimension of world education indicators and their analysis. Such is not yet the case for youth as a distinct life phase, with its own educational concerns, patterns and trends.

It is nonetheless recognized that youth is no less a significant issue than gender for modernizing societies. Young people are the visible vanguard of cultural change in these parts of the world. They adopt values and behaviours that frequently provoke anxieties and overt disapproval on the part of their parents, social institutions and Governments. They are among the most prominent victims of the risks and pressures of economic and cultural modernization as expressed through marginalized labour, drug abuse, homelessness, sexual exploitation and violence.

They are equally the most enthusiastic creators and interpreters of innovative and hybrid cultures and lifestyles, and the most avid consumers and users of the global market and its communication networks. It can be said with absolute certainty that youth are rapidly becoming a highly visible social group throughout the developing world. This reality, however, has not yet reached the domain of formal education as presented in international reports, where young people remain eclipsed between children in basic education and adult illiteracy rates. Even the narrow meaning of youth transitions as expressed in international educational reporting for the developed world has little real relevance for much of the developing world, given the extremely poor provision of and participation in TVET in most countries—not to mention the lack of jobs to follow on from vocational qualification. Reports do note, however, that the absence of systematic links between education systems and labour markets in most developing countries—manifested in inappropriate course content, mismatched skills/qualifications and labour market demands, and high unemployment rates among the best educated—have highly negative effects on motivation and outcomes in upper secondary and higher education sectors.[10]

It might be concluded that in the developed world, youth and education are explicitly linked together above all in describing and understanding initial transitions from school to work, which for the majority take place between the ages of approximately 15 and 24 (and increasingly between 15 and 29). This is the age range typically used in international statistics for the developed world to define young people in the purely empirical sense. This kind of connection may be restricted in scope, but it is a well-established feature of education and training comparisons between countries.[11]

For much of the developing world there are few, if any, explicit connections between youth (as opposed to childhood or adulthood) and education. As mentioned previously, in many developing countries youth is not traditionally viewed as a distinct and autonomous life phase that exists above and beyond family, kinship and intergenerational relations. Youth policies and measures are not necessarily developed independently, but may be incorporated in other frameworks. Educational policies understandably place priority on ensuring universal basic education, and in many cases this means first of all reaching the target of universal primary education (UPE) and significantly reducing illiteracy rates as soon as possible (in line with the declarations of the World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien, Thailand, 1990) and the World Education Forum (Dakar, Senegal, 2000)).

Concerns about how young people manage to move from school to work and about the quality of the employment they obtain are sometimes assigned lower priority under these circumstances. In any case, in developing countries, it makes little practical sense to speak of employment or youth labour markets as they are understood in the developed economies. Consequently, the empirical information available typically presents the population as falling into two groups: children who (are supposed to) go to school and adults who do not (but may have done in the past). In this context, it is significant, for example, that the operational definition of adult literacy rates for international reporting purposes covers all those aged 15 years and over. Some reports compare these literacy rates with those for 15- to 24-year-olds, but mainly in order to show the success of rising rates of access to basic education as reflected in lower illiteracy rates for younger cohorts.

The invisibility of youth as a distinct category of attention and concern for educational policy and practice in many parts of the world—and as reflected in international policy-making and reporting—is thus explicable. Nevertheless, it is difficult to argue that there is no need for a distinct perspective on youth in relation to education. First, basic education does cover lower secondary schooling, even if developing countries must continue to direct their resources and programmes towards primary schooling in the coming decade. Young people in their early to middle teenage years face different sets of problems in continuing their education at least to lower secondary completion than do primary age children in getting into school to begin with. Second, although gender gaps in primary enrolment and drop-out rates remain disturbingly high in many parts of the developing world, it is at the secondary level that they open up even more dramatically and across a very wide range of countries. Young women in most developing countries still face strong barriers to participation above basic education levels, and the reasons lie at least as much in their lives outside schools as in their experiences within them. Third, education is a crucial space for encouraging and supporting the development of self-identity, the capacity to think for oneself, and the confidence to take one's life into one's own hands. To argue for the value of conceptualizing youth in its own right is to argue for supporting the development of open and democratic societies that confer dignity on all their members, regardless of their age, as citizens in their own right.[12]

EDUCATION FOR ALL: THE OVERALL PICTURE

In follow-up to the 1990 Jomtien Declaration,[13] the 2000 Dakar Framework for Action specifies a series of targets to be met by 2015 including universal primary education, equal enrolment by sex at all levels, and raising adult literacy levels by half, especially for women. Three additional goals that are included in the Framework but are not tied to specific target dates are expanding early childhood care and education, promoting the acquisition of life skills for young people, and enhancing educational quality leading to recognized and measurable learning outcomes for all. The United Nations Millennium Development Goals support the Dakar Framework in resolving to ensure that by 2015 boys and girls everywhere will be able to complete pre-schooling and will have equal access to all levels of education.

The UNESCO monitoring report published in 2001 points out that to meet the goal of UPE alone, most developing countries would need to raise primary enrolment rates by 5 per cent—and some by as much as 10 per cent—each year.[14] In sub-Saharan Africa, primary enrolment would have to increase to fully three times the 1990s rate to achieve this objective. At least 32 countries will certainly not reach the target by 2015.

Primary enrolment rates are relevant within the youth and education context for two reasons. First, access to and completion of primary education is the route to basic literacy and secondary education. Today's primary-age children who do not go to school are tomorrow's young adult illiterates, whose life prospects—in employment and in general—are the bleakest of all. There are currently 113 million children of primary age in the world who are not enrolled in school, 97 per cent of whom live in developing countries, and three-fifths of whom are girls.[15]

Second, in many parts of the developing world, the age range for which primary schooling is formally intended does not correspond to the age range of those actually enrolled.[16] Some begin school later; others are older by the time they complete the primary cycle. Children may start later because the nearest school is far away, or because parents cannot afford to send them.[17] Young people in their early to mid-teens (and sometimes even young adults) may still be in primary school because they began later in the first place, or because they have had to miss or repeat years. In the developed countries, the proportion of primary school students who are older than expected is under 10 per cent; outside this group, only the countries of Western Asia match this figure. In East Asia and the Pacific, the proportion is about 20 per cent.[18] These differences reflect not only the impact social and economic inequalities have on access and completion rates, but also the effects of national educational policies, long-standing professional practices, and the weight of public opinion about what constitutes "good schooling". In Brazil, for example, at any given time, 25 per cent of primary school pupils and 15 per cent of secondary school pupils are repeating a year, mainly because they have not met the attainment targets.[19] Whatever the reasons, young people who do not complete primary schooling until they are older than expected are probably far less likely to be able to continue their education much further, if at all, as pressures to fulfil family obligations and earn a living become more acute.

Meeting the goal of equal enrolment by sex will only be possible at all for the primary education sector. The gender gaps in participation are narrowing almost everywhere in the world, except in most of sub-Saharan Africa, but at different rates and from different starting points. Gender gaps remain particularly wide in South Asia and (with some exceptions) in the Arab world, and they are narrowing only very slowly.[20] Gender inequalities are considered in greater detail below, but all the evidence to date confirms that it will be impossible to achieve equal access to all levels of education for girls and women by 2015—unless the meaning of the word "access" is reduced to the purely formalistic question of whether in principle (in national legal statutes, policy papers and other official documentation) schools, colleges and universities are open to female pupils and students. In practice, it can be expected that in many parts of the world, young women will continue to be severely underrepresented in secondary and higher education for many decades to come. The reality in most countries is that young people's education is young men's education.

As far as adult literacy is concerned, it is currently estimated that some 21 per cent of the world's population aged 15 years and over are illiterate. Only the countries of East Asia and the Pacific and those of Latin America and the Caribbean can realistically hope to halve this figure by 2015.[21] At the other end of the scale, the World Bank's World Development Indicators for the year 2000 reveal that fully 40 per cent of South Asian women between the ages of 15 and 24 are illiterate (compared with 23 per cent for their male counterparts—itself a disturbingly high figure). In Central Asia and Europe, illiteracy rates fall to 2 per cent for young women and 1 per cent for young men in this age group. The scale and intransigency of the illiteracy problem in the developing world are such that the only promising option for achieving progress will be to invest much more heavily in non-formal education in the coming years.

Countries such as Brazil, India and Mexico have already begun to develop a range of programmes, some of which specifically target young people, and many of which are built around the needs of workers and those with family responsibilities regardless of their age.[22]

Promoting the acquisition of life skills by young people is of particular interest. According to the UNESCO monitoring report, the educational levels of most of those aged 15 years and over in developing countries are too low—regardless of their real levels of literacy[23]—to enable them to participate effectively in the global economy. Included in this group are young adults. In this type of context, resources and energies might be better spent on the development of life skills, a mixture of cognitive, social, personal and practical knowledge and competencies that help people plan and manage their lives across the full range of decision-making options—that is, in a "life-wide" sense.

It is pointless to debate whether young people anywhere in the world can best acquire these resources through formal schooling or through non-formal and informal learning channels. In some respects young people's life-skills needs and demands are similar all over the world—for example, as far as health and sex education is concerned. In other respects they are very different; a young Dane confidently making his way through the palette of vocational guidance services and training opportunities available has little in common with a young Bangladeshi trying to find a good quality technical apprenticeship in a small, underfunded and poorly organized TVET system. Whatever the case, the life-skills agenda is a relatively weak and unfocused theme within the follow-up to the Dakar Framework, and it does not explicitly appear among the Millennium Development Goals. Some Education for All initiatives are beginning in the areas of girls' education, health education and HIV/AIDS prevention, but otherwise this is a field in which both information and concerted action are still scarce at the international level.

PARTICIPATION AND COMPLETION: PATTERNS AND TRENDS

The World Education Indicators (WEI) Program[24] provides a range of comparative data for 18 countries, bringing together demographic, economic and education indicators.[25] Most of the participating countries are somewhere near the middle of the economic development scale, and the majority have achieved, or are about to achieve, universal primary education. However, participation rates at the secondary level range between 48 per cent in Indonesia and 87 per cent in Chile. Most of these countries will experience a "demographic bonus" in the coming decades as primary-age cohorts decrease in size while the proportion of those of active working age rises. The hope is that this will free more resources to improve the quality of education and training provision, and not simply the quantity. The fact remains, however, that the secondary school population will continue to grow for several decades. Young people, then, may not be the main beneficiaries of quality improvements in schooling systems, and current circumstances leave much to be desired.

While levels of economic prosperity in the WEI countries vary considerably, even those with the strongest economies (such as Chile) have per capita GDP figures that equal only half of the average for the OECD countries, and only four countries achieved significant growth during the 1990s (Chile, India, Tunisia and, most of all, China). In addition, the WEI group includes some countries with the most unequal internal distributions of wealth in the world. The absolute and relative amounts WEI countries spend on education also vary widely, and do not necessarily correspond to general prosperity levels. Education expenditure nevertheless takes a heavier toll on the public purse in WEI countries than in OECD countries; in Thailand, for example, over a quarter of public spending goes to education, compared with an average of one-eighth for OECD countries. What is striking, however, are the high levels of private expenditure on education in WEI countries, which, for example, accounts for more than two-fifths of total spending on education in Chile, Peru, the Philippines and Thailand—over twice the average proportion for OECD countries.

Taken together, these patterns mean that for this largely middle-income group, opportunities to raise public education spending remain relatively limited, and social inequalities in educational opportunities inevitably remain strong. Despite significant improvements in the past decade, secondary school completion rates are still below those for OECD countries.[26]

In global comparative terms, however, most of the WEI countries are doing well. Many developing countries struggle with low primary school completion rates. Five years of basic schooling is regarded as a minimum benchmark, but in eight countries, more than two-fifths of the pupils do not educationally survive to this level.[27] The situation of the largest developing countries is well illustrated by the E-9 group,[28] which includes Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan.[29] Several of these countries are also WEI countries, and they are not necessarily the poorest in economic development terms. However, they represent 3.2 billion people—over half of the world's population and almost three-fifths of the world's school-age population. Together, China and India account for over half of the world's illiterate people.

In effect, most of these countries must expand their primary and secondary sectors at the same time, but they must also cater to large numbers of adults—including young adults—who have not completed even basic education; they must find ways to raise girls' participation levels right from the primary level; and they must also develop strategies for improving the quality of public education, giving serious attention to addressing the poor levels of teacher qualification and pay and the poor condition of the teaching forces in many areas. Some of the E-9 countries can look forward to an easing of demographic pressures by the close of the coming decade, but others, including Bangladesh, Egypt, Nigeria and Pakistan, are still growing fast. This means that however much such countries invest in expanding provision, they can make no real inroads into further improving participation rates, reducing illiteracy rates and generally raising the quality of education. Under these circumstances, and given the poor employment prospects as well, the opportunity costs of educational participation, even at the primary level, are relatively high. Actually getting to school (which may be quite some distance from home), paying for school materials,

enduring poor-quality teaching and learning conditions, and not knowing whether having a completion certificate will improve job chances are all factors that conspire to reduce motivation and achievement. The increasing attention given to distance and non-formal education in the developing world is to be seen in this context.

Sub-Saharan Africa is the region facing the greatest difficulty in all respects with regard to education for young people.[30] Recent decades have seen declining per capita income and rising foreign debt, combined with the effects of high population growth, natural catastrophes and armed conflict. A quarter of the world's refugees—5.1 million people—live in the region. Adult illiteracy rates are as high as 78 per cent for men and 93 per cent for women; only in Mauritius, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe are these rates below 20 per cent.[31] Even in this latter group, the situation is relatively grim. David Everatt describes the 1990s as having been a lost decade for South African youth; surveys estimate that 3.5 million 14- to 35-year-olds are not involved in education or training and are unemployed, and a quarter of young adults say that they have not been able to continue their education to the level had hoped for.[32]

Differences in participation rates between the primary and secondary education sectors are marked. The median gross secondary enrolment ratio for the region is only 25 per cent, ranging from 9 per cent in Mozambique to 77 per cent in Botswana. In two-thirds of the 21 countries for which gender-specific net enrolment data are available, girls are underrepresented in the secondary sector. In many countries of the region, girls are less than half as likely as boys to be in school. Eleven of the eighteen countries in the region that provide data on these issues report that the majority of those of secondary age who are enrolled in school are actually in primary sector establishments.[33] The post-secondary non-tertiary sector (including TVET provision) is either underdeveloped or non-existent in most parts of the region, and higher education enrolment levels are extremely low everywhere—although many young adults go abroad to study, which is generally only an option for the more affluent and well-connected.[34]

For the OECD countries, the picture is completely different. The past two decades have seen steadily rising education and participation rates. At the close of the 1990s, three-quarters of 18-year-olds and more than one-third of 22-year-olds were still in education and training (though not necessarily full-time).[35] In 25 out of 27 OECD countries, a five-year-old in 1999 could expect to participate in formal education for between 15 and 20 years during his or her lifetime, with most of the variation between countries accounted for by differences in upper secondary level enrolment. Practically everywhere in the OECD grouping, almost all young people will be in initial education and training for at least 11 years, which means that most countries can report virtually universal participation rates right through to the end of their compulsory schooling systems. More than a quarter of 29-year-olds in Australia and the Nordic countries are still full-time or part-time students.[36]

Completion of upper secondary education—which in many countries also includes school-based vocational education and training or dual-system-type apprenticeships—is rapidly becoming the norm in OECD countries, and routes leading to this

qualification level are diversifying. Furthermore, a typical 17-year-old in these parts of the world can now expect to go on to tertiary education of some kind for two and a half years, although the range between countries is wide.[37] One problem in many OECD countries, however, is that upper secondary education curricula and qualifications were originally designed for small proportions of age cohorts destined to continue on to university studies, and not for the large majority of young people who will pursue a variety of qualification routes towards training and employment. Another problem is that most higher education sectors and institutions, in particular universities set up according to the classic model, were designed neither to serve a mass audience nor to provide other than academic-type courses. This is one of the factors leading to high non-completion rates for university-type studies in several countries, including Austria, Germany and Italy.

As an OECD 14-country review concludes, the amount of time it takes for young people to make the transition between education, training and employment lengthened on average by about two years during the 1990s, but by the age of 24, the majority of young adults in most OECD countries are no longer in the education and training system.[38] Transition patterns are also assuming increasingly diverse forms, becoming more highly individualized and thus less normatively predictable. There are many interrelated reasons for these changes, but as far as education and training are concerned, it is clear that young people are adopting more conscious strategies to maximize their future options. For example, they are decreasingly likely to decide to follow an upper secondary vocational qualification pathway if this does not lead to eligibility to enter tertiary education later (should they decide they wish to do so rather than entering the labour market). At the same time, increasing proportions of young people are mixing and matching education, training and employment in parallel, not only because they need to finance their studies but also because this is seen as giving them an advantage in the labour market when they eventually embark on permanent and career-type employment. In the final analysis, however, despite all these largely positive developments in educational terms, no country can claim to have genuinely eliminated social inequalities in access, participation and outcomes. On the contrary, all the evidence points towards the increasing polarization of educational-occupational origins and destinations in ever more differentiated ways. Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States have experienced this in especially acute ways over the past decade.[39]

GENDER INEQUALITIES

In the majority of OECD countries, taking the lifetime view, girls can now expect to stay in education for about half a year longer than can boys. This average figure masks a wide range of variations that do not necessarily follow obvious patterns, so that in countries as different as the Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Turkey and the United States, boys are still noticeably ahead of girls in this respect.[40] In 17 of the 21 OECD countries for which data are available, young women outnumber young men as upper secondary graduates. This trend is especially marked in the case of general upper secondary qualifications that open the door to long-cycle tertiary courses—that is, to conventional academic university studies.[41] In consequence, women graduate from

tertiary education at a higher rate than do men, but in the postgraduate sector, especially at the doctoral level, men still dominate. Interestingly, the postgraduate gender gap is greatest in the humanities and social sciences, in which women are best represented at the undergraduate level.[42]

The fall-off in women's participation at the very top end of the education system can be attributed to several factors. One is institutionalized discrimination, which results both from young women's lesser access to and success in academic "protegé networks" that are still dominated by older men, and from the structuring of academic qualification ladders and research careers.[43] Another factor is directly related to gender-specific life-course patterns; the time and investment required to reach the doctoral level collides with family building, even given the now widespread strategy of postponing childbearing. While these issues concern only a very small minority of young adult women everywhere, they throw light on some of the continuing ways in which gender inequalities are relayed through education.

It is now frequently argued that in most of the developed world women are no longer educationally disadvantaged and that, in fact, quite the reverse is true: by and large, they outpace and outperform their male peers as far as participation and achievement are concerned; it is young men who are more likely to drop out or fail to complete their courses; and it is young, poorly qualified men who are at the greatest risk of unemployment and social marginalization. These observations are accurate in a broad sense, but they must be placed alongside other equally accurate features of educational opportunity and outcome. It remains the case that young women and young men are very differently distributed throughout the education and training system as far as subject or vocational specialization and qualification pathways are concerned. At all levels, women are underrepresented in science and technology and in TVET. They are certainly underrepresented in many of the specialisms and pathways that offer promising labour market and career prospects. A more appropriate generalization would be that as far as educational outcomes and the quality of employment prospects are concerned, young men are overrepresented at the bottom and top ends of the distribution, whereas young women cluster in the middle range. This overall pattern is modified in multiple and complex ways by the equally important factors of social background, ethnicity and formal citizenship status in one's country of residence.

The OECD 14-country review[44] reports considerable variation in gender-specific equality ratios between countries as far as education and labour market initial transition outcomes are concerned, whereby the gender gap is not always in favour of young men. In terms of educational outcomes, for example, young Swiss women are behind their male compatriots, but in Australia and Hungary the situation is reversed. In most countries, labour market outcomes favour young men, but the reverse is true in Hungary, the United Kingdom and the United States. The Nordic countries come nearest to gender equality for both education and labour market outcomes. The precise patterns are extremely complex across the 14 countries reviewed, but evidence suggests that where education and training systems are highly stratified both vertically (by status level) and horizontally (by tracks), transition outcomes are more strongly influenced by both social background and gender—to young women's disadvantage (as, for example, in Austria).

The countries of Latin America feature overall participation rates that on the whole reflect gender equality in most places, and that favour girls and women on occasion. This exists side by side with significant disadvantage at the basic education level for rural and indigenous peoples in the region, especially for women, and with poor participation rates throughout the education system in particular countries, such as Guatemala. Latin American countries do relatively well on the human development index scale as a whole, but this is not reflected as strongly as it might be in education and training. One important reason is the highly unequal distribution of income and wealth in the region, which has a strong impact on access to education, much of which is privately financed.

Primary enrolment rates are high in most Latin American countries, but in all other sectors, from pre-school to tertiary, participation is skewed towards the more affluent groups. Two-fifths of all children in rural areas either do not complete primary school or do so much later than formally expected.[45] The differences between gross and net enrolment rates at the secondary level are wide in this region. Gross secondary enrolment rates are at least 50 per cent in almost all countries, and in all but three countries, young women are either equally or better represented. Where public-sector secondary education is most widespread relative to private-sector provision, enrolment ratios are generally higher, as in Uruguay, but also in Argentina, Bolivia, Cuba and Mexico.[46] Higher education, however, is an expensive business; it is mainly private, so students must pay fees. Still, women seldom fall below half of those enrolled, and never under 40 per cent. Their participation rates are equal to or higher than those for men not only in long-cycle general higher education courses, but also in shorter-cycle vocational higher education; in Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay they outpace men here as well.[47] There can be little doubt, however, that it is urban and socially advantaged girls and young women who populate the secondary and tertiary sectors so numerously and successfully.

Western Asia offers a contrast, because in this region, gender gaps reflect not only social inequalities but also significant exclusion of girls and women solely because of their sex. A recent UNDP regional report notes that despite the progress made in the past two decades, illiteracy rates in this area are still above average in comparison with other parts of the developing world, and population growth ensures that the numbers of illiterates will continue to rise.[48] At least half of the women aged 15 years and over are illiterate, and girls are underrepresented even at the pre-school level; the situation is worst for the poor and those in rural areas. In contrast, levels of secondary and tertiary enrolment are above average in comparison with other parts of the developing world, but (with few exceptions) the gender gap worsens level by level, so that in most Arab countries, female participation rates at the tertiary level are lower than those for males and much lower than those for women in other parts of the developing world.[49] In many countries, very expensive private education for a minority (including highly affluent young women in some of the Gulf States) exists alongside poor quality public schooling for the majority.

Globally speaking, higher levels of overall enrolment correlate with greater gender equality, but Western Asia shows that this is not always the case. In Yemen, for example, the gross primary enrolment rate is 79 per cent—but only 45 per cent for

girls. In comparison with sub-Saharan Africa, Western Asia as a whole reports higher levels of primary school participation (84 per cent versus 74 per cent), but the gender gap measures 16 per cent in the Arab world and 14 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa. At the secondary and tertiary levels, the patterns repeat themselves. Bahrain, Lebanon, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates have the highest rates of secondary enrolment and, in contrast with other countries in Western Asia, the gender balance tips in favour of girls. This suggests that at the secondary level in these countries, social background overrides sex in predicting the likelihood of educational participation. At the tertiary level, only 8 of the region's 22 countries return relevant data, but among these, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates report female participation rates that exceed those for males.[50] These departures from general trends can only be accounted for in terms of very specific features of the countries concerned, among which are high levels of affluence combined with tight restrictions on women's active economic participation and free movement, making education the main arena beyond the family in which they can pursue personal development and social expression.

"OLD" AND "NEW" LITERACY

Literacy rates have been touched on several times in this chapter as a bottom-line barometer of human and educational development. It is abundantly clear that illiteracy remains an enormous problem in many parts of the world, and that it is at its worst among women, older age groups, the poor and those living in rural areas. Research, surveys and statistics do not necessarily use the same definitions of literacy, which is now no longer regarded as simply the ability to read and write in one given language. Literacy is really a multifaceted continuum of knowledge and skills related to reading, understanding, writing and using language and numbers. Whether a person is literate or not has to do with the kind of society and culture in which he or she lives, and what it is necessary to be able to do in order to participate economically, socially and politically at a minimum threshold level. Therefore, definitions of literacy differ across space and time. The "old" language-based literacy and numeracy skills have now been joined by the "new" visual, spatial and analytical skills of the digital age. The need for these new skills does not yet exist everywhere or for everyone in the world. The opportunity to acquire them is also very unequally distributed within and between societies, including by age. Young people undoubtedly have a greater opportunity to obtain such skills, whether in or out of school, and some argue that they also have a greater capacity to acquire them since they are more flexible and open in response to new experiences and circumstances. This is potentially an area, then, in which young people have an advantage over their elders. It is also the kind of innovation that is likely to gradually change the ways in which schools, teachers and students operate in order to effect learning.

The reality for most young people in the world is rather more prosaic: far too many lack basic literacy altogether, and relatively few have the opportunity to acquire digital literacy. Basic (but not higher-level) literacy is virtually universal for all ages in the developed world, but otherwise literacy rates are significantly higher—between 6 and 17 percentage points higher for the different regions of the world—for the age group 15-24 than for all those aged 15 years and over. Literacy rates among

young adults are highest and close to universal in East Asia and the Pacific and in Latin America and the Caribbean; they fall to 66 per cent or below for the least-developed countries.[51]

Education for All sources indicate that gender gaps in literacy have improved little in the past decade or so. They remain wide for all ages in South and Western Asia and in sub-Saharan Africa. In some countries—India is one example—there are marked regional differences in enrolment in primary education by sex, which means that the risks of remaining illiterate also correlate with the region of residence.[52]

According to a report prepared by Mahbub ul-Haq and Khadija Haq, South Asia is the most illiterate region in the world, having fallen behind sub-Saharan Africa in the past three decades. Some countries have made greater progress in raising literacy and basic education enrolment rates than have others.[53] The widest gender gaps in participation in the world are found in this region. Regional and ethnic disparities in literacy and enrolment are also very marked. The report argues that while inadequate resources and demographic pressures are key factors in this situation, the lack of sufficient political commitment to education and the overemphasis on supporting an outdated higher education system irrelevant to current needs are just as significant.

Beyond basic literacy levels,[54] the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) study results for reading, mathematical and scientific literacy levels among 15-year-olds show a wide range of variation between countries and between dimensions of literacy.[55] For each of the three dimensions, between 5 and 30 per cent of young people (depending on the country) function at the lowest proficiency level, which means that they will not be able to deal comfortably with the information and tasks they are likely to be presented with in their daily lives, whether at work or otherwise. The PISA study participants are predominantly the developed OECD countries and the countries of Eastern Europe, so this study clarifies the fact that when literacy is seen as a continuum of skills and as a multidimensional concept, many young people in even the most favoured parts of the world remain poorly equipped for leading productive and satisfying lives. Mainstream and formal education systems, then, are failing to fulfil their promise, despite universal enrolment and high completion rates through to the end of the upper secondary level.[56]

The Human Development Report includes a communications profile in tabular form that indicates the number of Internet hosts per thousand population, which serves as a rough guide to IT access and use. The high-income OECD countries have a combined average of 120 hosts, and the OECD countries as a group have 92. The developing countries have 0.7 and the least developed countries virtually none at all. Only Latin America and the Caribbean, with 4 hosts, and Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, with 3 hosts, rise to visibility on the IT scale.[57] Interestingly, though, the distribution of Internet hosts in the developed countries is not systematically related to their purely economic affluence, nor to their overall rankings in the human development index.[58]

According to the latest Youth Eurobarometer data,[59] fully 94 per cent of 15- to 24-year-olds surveyed in 2001 in the EU reported using at least one available ICT access channel a minimum of once a week, ranging from palm computers (used by

only 2 per cent) through the Internet (37 per cent) to mobile phones (used by 80 per cent—by far the most popular apparatus). Only four years earlier, in 1997, over half of the same age group did not use any of the ICT tools or equipment then available, and only 7 per cent used the Internet at least once a week. Between 1997 and 2001, regular personal computer use rose from 43 to 56 per cent. Comparable information for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States is not available, but one can safely assume that access remains at a lower level overall and that the quality of hardware and connections is poorer. In some countries, however, access and usage rates fall well within the range for EU members.

In spite of the progress achieved in ICT development and adoption, the digital divide remains very real. Half of the regular Internet users in the Russian Federation are young people, but only 5 per cent of eighth-graders have access to the Web.[60] Within the EU, access and use levels are on the rise everywhere, but absolute rates vary a great deal between Northern and Southern Europe and between the sexes. Furthermore, these gaps have not narrowed in the past five years. Over half of young men but still only a third of young women are users. It is likely that the digital divide will exist for some time. A recent study by Keri Facer and Ruth Furlong of 9- to 14-year-old "low PC users" in the United Kingdom shows that even when children have facilities at home, access, use and attitudes at school and at home reproduce gender differences and social inequalities.[61] Girls and pupils from working-class backgrounds are more likely to be low users. Teachers, parents and "more competent" peers contribute in a variety of ways to these outcomes.

The digital divide in the developing world begins at a very basic level, with difficulties linked to hardware purchase and maintenance costs, access to up-to-date software, and the speed of Internet connectivity. These problems are as relevant for schools and public access points as they are for individual citizens in their homes. Luis Osin argues that the effectiveness of computer-assisted learning has been demonstrated beyond all doubt—largely owing to its potential for individualized content and pacing—and that the real cost of equipping schools and colleges is low if the high rate of potential total return is taken properly into account.[62] The key problem is not paying for the equipment, but rather the long-term maintenance and upgrading costs together with ensuring that teachers know how to make good pedagogic use of ICT tools.

Researchers conducting a recent exploratory study of 15 Pacific Islands countries came up against fundamental communication problems in attempting to send out a survey as an e-mail attachment; even fax connections were highly unreliable.[63] Respondents—only one in five of the projected sample—identified cost and bandwidth as the major barriers to more widespread use of the Internet in their areas. Using the lowest acceptable definition of Internet access, all countries reported that fewer than 25 per cent of schools were connected—more or less the same level as private homes.

India is currently at the forefront of the global imagination with respect to overcoming the digital divide between the developed and developing worlds. The country's efforts in this regard are to a certain extent focused on the contribution of the IT industry to economic growth and hence the promise of far greater resources to tackle poverty, illiteracy and poor-quality public education. C.P. Chandrasekhar argues, however, that India remains a lower-end software and services supplier whose ICT export

revenues are far below the value of remittances sent back to India by migrants living elsewhere.[64] He identifies the major brake on development in the IT sector beyond this stage to be India's limited base for training and skills development. Fewer than 1 in 20 Indian citizens has ICT access, but even were access much more widespread, they would be unable to benefit significantly because the quality of education and training is so poor. The digital revolution and its impact on work practices and lifestyles will spread rapidly among the elites, both urban and rural, but will not reach the majority of the population in the foreseeable future. At the end of the 1990s, three Indians per thousand had access to personal computers, and fixed ISP-modem connections were accessible to 22 per thousand, with much of this access confined to urban areas. In comparison, average global access levels stood at 125 per thousand for modems and 60 per thousand for PCs. Finally, the information economy operates mostly in English; active citizenship in the digital age will increasingly lead to the use of the English language as well as the learning of information and communication technologies.[65]

DISTANCE AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

Distance education and non-formal education are by no means the same thing, but in the less developed and developing world they are both viewed as increasingly important ways to facilitate access to, participation in and completion of basic education. The gradual introduction of ICT will reinforce these trends, with the hope of improving access for disadvantaged groups and regions and with the promise of developing tailor-made, perhaps borderless education services for active learners of all ages.

Michael Potashnik and Joanne Capper point out that 11 mega-universities providing solely distance learning are now fully operative and serve approximately 3 million registered students.[66] Only three of these are in the developed countries (France, Spain and the United Kingdom); the remaining eight are located in China, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Korea, South Africa, Thailand and Turkey. China alone can claim 1.4 million registered students and 100,000 higher distance education graduates each year; half of Chinese engineering and technology students are registered in distance education courses.

ICT-supported distance education is mainly relevant for the tertiary sector. At the primary and secondary levels, radio- and television-based distance education has existed for 30 years or more in parts of Latin America—particularly in Brazil and Mexico, where Telesecundaria is a part of the formal education service, above all for rural areas. Still, print-based technologies are easily the least expensive and most widespread medium, though distance education is not necessarily a cheaper option than conventional provision, since initial investment costs are high. High enrolments are needed to bring down unit costs. This brings the risk of limited and over-standardized course provision and inadequate tutorial support. Overall, investment-return calculations and poor infrastructures still favour conventional print-based correspondence courses, supplemented by pre-recorded audio-visual media.[67]

Although there is no research evidence showing that conventional distance learning is educationally less effective than mainstream formal systems, it is still accorded less credibility and recognition. Transfer and progression between the two channels of learning and qualification remain awkward, and systematic evaluations of

success and failure are scarce.[68] In addition, certain risks associated with technology-driven contributions to the delivery of learning are rising as ICT tools overtake conventional channels. In particular, the idea of borderless education is not universally welcomed; it embodies competition for national education and training systems and promotes cultural homogenization to the detriment of cultural and linguistic diversity.[69]

Potential risks and drawbacks notwithstanding, William Saint argues that ICT-supported distance education is the only solution to the tertiary sector crisis in sub-Saharan Africa, which faces the urgent need to expand access with no foreseeable increase in funding resources.[70] Current enrolments in the region are too low to sustain economic and social development. Demographic trends are such that the majority of countries would have to double the number of enrolments for 18- to 23-year-olds in the next 10 years merely to sustain the same participation rates. Public expenditure on tertiary education is falling rather than rising, and in many countries is approaching the minimum level at which conventional higher education can be provided. Many young people who are formally qualified for tertiary education cannot continue their studies because there are insufficient places. In Swaziland, for example, 13 per cent of university students are registered in distance degree courses; the programme was introduced in response to the fact that campus space and facilities are inadequate to accommodate the numbers of qualified applicants.

Facilitating university studies is certainly strategically important for developing countries, but opening access to basic education is arguably their most urgent problem. Indonesia,[71] for example, is a vast archipelago with high levels of regional, cultural and linguistic diversity; 300 ethnic groups, 583 languages and 200 dialects are spread over thousands of islands. A major drive to improve educational access and quality was halted in the late 1990s as the country experienced a monetary crisis. These considerations make conventional educational solutions impracticable, so extensive distance education programmes have been developed to offer alternative learning pathways to those who simply cannot attend school, either because there are insufficient places or because they live in remote areas. For example, the Indonesian Open Junior Secondary School (STLP Terbuka) is designed to reach poor rural families in which children must work, so there is no fixed timetable and the teaching materials do not presuppose high technology infrastructure. The organization of distance education also has to fit in with local conditions and traditions. In Indonesia, Terbuka is integrated into the regular school system, with the same curricula and examinations. In Bangladesh and India, and also in Brazil, NGOs and private initiatives play an important role.

The reasons for and characteristics of distance education and non-formal education overlap to some extent, but the latter is more distinctly defined as an alternative route to learning rather than simply a different channel of delivery for learning. Philip Coombs defines non-formal education as "any organized educational activity outside the established formal system … that is intended to serve identifiable learning clienteles and learning objectives"[72] but that is not necessarily thought of as "educational" in the classic sense of the word.[73] A holistic approach to education will always consider formal, non-formal and informal learning as complementary and mutually reinforcing elements. There is always the risk, however,

that non-formal and informal learning might be used as an argument for investing less in formal education and depriving those who live in the developing world of the right to education as such. This is the reason for the caution with which international educational reports approach the question of non-formal education, which is seen not "as an alternative education system nor a short-cut (but as) providing second-chance or catch-up learning opportunities to those who missed formal schooling or failed to be attracted by the formal system".[74] In other words, non-formal education is complementary and supplementary; it facilitates the learning of life-relevant knowledge and skills—especially for rural and disadvantaged groups—but it cannot and does not replace formal education.

In the developing countries, it is unlikely that UPE can be achieved without expanding non-formal education provision. Formal access does not always lead to enrolment, and enrolment does not guarantee sustained participation or successful completion. UPE may be seen as the guarantee of literacy for young adults, but only non-formal education can reach those for whom mainstream formal education is practically inaccessible. A number of E-9 countries are investing particular efforts in this direction, among them Bangladesh, Brazil, China, India and Indonesia. Nevertheless, the non-formal sector receives too little recognition and funding, and it is still largely regarded as a second-class option by parents and local communities. What is also lacking in the developing world, it seems, is a broader understanding of non-formal education. It is not simply a more flexible, more typically community- or NGO-organized manner of providing education, but can embrace and offer a genuinely distinctive curriculum and more symmetrical pedagogies.

CONCLUSIONS

At the risk of oversimplification, international comparative data on education suggest that the world can be divided into the following three broad groups:

- Regions and countries in which overall participation in primary-level basic education remains low and in which gender gaps in enrolment are wide, compounded by minority group membership, rural location and, as always, poverty. This is the most common situation in countries in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia; it also prevails in some East Asian countries and in some parts of Western Asia, and can be found in some Latin American and Caribbean countries as well.

- Regions and countries in which secondary education completion rates are poor and in which gender gaps in enrolment, whether wide or narrow, are compounded by social inequalities (for example, young women from affluent backgrounds have far better access to education than do other young women). This situation exists in parts of the Middle East and North Africa but is even more evident throughout much of Latin America, where gender gaps are small or non-existent but where social inequalities in educational opportunity are very marked. The Central Asian republics are also best placed in this group, although participation rates are typically better here than in the other regions included in this category.

- Regions and countries in which participation rates are relatively high throughout the entire education and training system but in which (at least) social background and ethnicity are still linked to noticeable differences in educational opportunities and in which gender gaps are still expressed in the distribution of young women and young men across sectors, tracks and subjects and at the highest levels of the system. This is the case in most of the developed world, though precise patterns vary considerably from country to country.

These basic divisions are frequently modified by economic and political changes that introduce turbulence and reform into previously stable education and training systems. Such transformations also overturn and restructure the life chances of specific cohorts who happen to be at a particularly vulnerable stage of their lives when these changes take place. Under such circumstances, participation rates suffer—at least temporarily, and established relations between education, qualification and employment opportunities lose their former predictability and effectiveness. The changes that have taken place in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States since 1990 are a classic contemporary example.[75]

The most obvious cultural source of differences between regions and countries with respect to their educational profiles would appear to be long-established or "traditional" values, as these influence the shape of socialization and learning processes together with the kinds of self-identities and skills or competencies that are seen as necessary and desirable for young people to acquire. Formal school systems and their pedagogies sit less comfortably with cultures in which the family and local community are seen as primary agents and contexts for socialization and learning, and in which particular importance is assigned to people's respect for human relations and group solidarity. This may lead to noticeable dissonance between the worlds of family and school, as is the case in parts of South-East Asia.[76] In some societies, however, including Japan, schooling has been able to establish itself as an extension of the socialization and learning outcomes that parents and families want to achieve on the basis of traditional values; in other words, schools are more consonant with what families themselves want.[77] Looking back at the former Soviet Union, State authorities shaped both schools and families towards pre-specified goals, so that the collapse of State socialism produced turbulence and disorientation in both spheres of social life. Dissonance between formal schooling and the family/community appears to be most marked in parts of sub-Saharan Africa, to the extent that some might argue that introducing modern formal schooling is a misplaced endeavour insofar as it is not adapted to the physical, economic and cultural parameters of much of the region.[78]

Implementing lifelong learning is one important dimension of efforts to provide culturally, socially and economically appropriate education. In the developed countries, this is currently seen most typically as a means to update and to raise the overall level of workforce knowledge and skills in response to rapidly changing labour market and occupational demands. In this context implementing lifelong learning is largely a matter of increasing participation in continuing education and vocational training, in particular for older workers and those with low skill levels. In Europe,

the social benefits of lifelong learning for personal development and active citizenship are also emphasized, together with the importance of nurturing the joy of learning from the very start.[79]

It is both essential and desirable to restructure education and training systems and practices so that they continually open inviting doors to learning rather than closing down alternatives and horizons. It is important to stop and consider why so many young people in the developed countries dislike school and school-like environments, and why combining different activities (in particular, studying/training and working at the same time) is once again becoming more widespread.[80] It might be more effective to design positive ways of drawing greater educational benefit from linking activity spheres rather than regarding them as mutually exclusive alternatives or a result of pure economic necessity (to finance one's studies). The increasing importance of education and qualification in pre-structuring transition chances and risks has indisputably led to increasing internal differentiation within age cohorts (and not simply between them owing to economic cycles of boom and recession).

Unless attitudes and practices are restructured to reduce the relative significance of initial transitions between education, training and employment for subsequent life chances and instead work towards increasing the significance of recurrent or continuous transitions for life management on a long-term basis, the creation of intransigent patterns of social marginalization and exclusion for a significant minority of the population of the most affluent countries in the world remains a real risk. Poor levels of education and qualification are closely correlated with the risk of social exclusion, but good education and qualifications are no guarantee of social inclusion. From young people's perspective, initial education and training no longer deliver the desired result (a reasonable chance of decent, secure employment), while highly individualized and increasingly privatized strategies for achieving and sustaining educational advantage are gaining ground.

For the developing countries and regions, where the vast majority of young people in the world live, implementing lifelong learning could bring differently accented benefits. First, it could enable those who live in countries that cannot afford to provide quality education and training for everyone in conventional ways to participate in more appropriate and life-relevant forms of active learning alongside earning a living and looking after a family. Second, giving greater recognition to non-formal and informal learning and their outcomes is a potentially powerful tool in addressing the problem that conventional formal schooling is too divorced from local cultural and social environments. Third, more systematic and widespread acceptance of a diversity of contexts and channels for learning at all levels and for all ages facilitates access and participation for those living in rural and isolated communities. All these benefits apply to people of all ages, but the particular benefit for young people is that they help to give them more than just one chance, at this one point in their lives, to participate and succeed educationally. Young people in the developing world are especially likely to experience strong pressures to earn money to help support their families and—particularly if they are girls—to take on significant domestic and childcare responsibilities at home. Educational policy and provision must respond to the realities of young people's lives.

TVET provision and participation is typically weak in developing regions and countries.[81] Lacking more promising alternatives, young people usually struggle to get as far as possible in the general education system, but for the vast majority it has to be said that completion of primary education is the only realistic goal. A sizeable number manage this "on time" as foreseen in the national education system, but a significant minority complete their studies a few years later than they "should". By this time, some must find the means to support themselves independently because their families cannot do so, or, more often, they will have long since begun to work on a casual, part-time basis to supplement the family income. Those who manage to gain access to TVET are, in effect, a small and relatively privileged group, but their employment prospects are not necessarily better than those with lower-level and solely general qualifications. It is certainly significant that the modernizing economies and societies of East and South-East Asia have higher rates of participation in TVET and can deliver qualifications that bring returns in their labour markets.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Education is the single most important factor contributing to young people's chances of leading productive and responsible lives. Overall, the commitments made under the Millennium Development Goals are clear with regard to the emphasis placed on both primary and secondary education, aspects of particular relevance for young people between the ages of 15 and 24.

Illiteracy continues to be an enormous problem for many young people in the world. In 2000, approximately 82 million young women and 51 million young men were illiterate. Another 130 million children are presently not in school, and they will become the illiterate youth and adults of tomorrow. Despite improvements, illiteracy rates for young women in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia currently average between 25 and 30 per cent. As further evidence of the gender gap, rates are typically at least 10 percentage points lower for young males in these regions.

Formal school systems and curricula may be considered less important in cultures that emphasize the role of family and local community as primary agents and contexts for socialization and learning. Nevertheless, there is widespread agreement that education, literacy and numeracy are essential for young people, and that educational policy and provision must respond to the realities of young people's lives, which can be achieved only through formal systems. The participation of students as partners in reviewing and renewing educational systems is crucial. Linkages between schools and the private sector and the importance of informal and vocational education to young people should also be considered.

In view of the foregoing, renewed emphasis should be placed on implementing lifelong learning schemes to provide culturally, socially and economically appropriate education. Lifelong learning arrangements, particularly those in informal and non-formal settings, can confer a number of benefits: they can provide people who live in countries that do not have universal education with access to learning opportunities on a continuous basis; they can address the problem of conventional formal

schooling being too far removed from local cultural and social environments; and they can alleviate economic hardship, particularly for young people in developing countries who may experience strong pressures to earn income to help support their families or, particularly if they are girls, to take on significant responsibilities at home. ■

[1] L. Chisholm and S. Kovatcheva, "Youth in search of a sip of happiness: the social situation of young people in Europe", a report prepared for the 6th Conference of European Ministers responsible for Youth, Thessaloniki, Greece, 7-9 November 2002 (Strasbourg, Council of Europe, 2002), chapter 1.2.

[2] As compiled by, in particular, UNESCO and its Institute for Statistics, UNDP, UNICEF, OECD, ILO, the World Bank, and EU agencies such as EUROSTAT, CEDEFOP and EURYDICE.

[3] See, for example, European Commission, "E-learning action plan—designing tomorrow's education" (Brussels, 24 May 2000) (COM(2000)318 final).

[4] R. Mansell and U. When, eds., *Knowledge Societies: Information Technology for Sustainable Development; Report for the United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1998).

[5] P. Sahlberg, "Building bridges for learning: the recognition and value of non-formal education in youth activity", a report prepared for the European Youth Forum and the National Board of Education of Finland (Brussels, European Community/European Youth Forum, December 1999); L. Chisholm, "Towards a revitalization of non-formal learning for a changing Europe", Report of the Council of Europe Youth Directorate Symposium on Non-Formal Education, Strasbourg, 13-15 October 2000 (Sympo/Edu (2000) rap); European Commission, "Making a European area of lifelong learning a reality" (Brussels, 21 November 2001) (COM(2001)678 final); and European Youth Forum, "European Youth Forum response to the European Commission Communication: 'Making a European area of lifelong learning a reality'" (Brussels, 6 April 2002) (Education 0312-02).

[6] L. Chisholm, "The educational and social implications of the transition to knowledge societies", in *Europe 2020: Adapting to a Changing World*, O. von der Gablentz and others, eds. (Baden-Baden, Nomos Verlag, 2000), pp. 75-90; L. Chisholm, "Youth in knowledge societies: challenges for research and policy", *YOUNG*, vol. 9, No. 1 (2001), pp. 61-72; and J.P. Gavigan, M. Ottitsch and S. Mahroum, "Knowledge and learning—towards a learning Europe", *Futures Report Series*, No. 14 (Sevilla, Institute for Prospective and Technological Studies, 1999) (EUR 19034 EN).

[7] P. Lauritzen, "Intercultural learning—big bluff or learning strategy for the future? Concepts, objectives and practices in informal education", in *Intercultural Reconstruction: Trends and Challenges, European Yearbook on Youth Policy and Youth Research, Volume 2*, Circle for Youth Research Cooperation (CYRCE), M. du Bois-Reymond and S. Hubner-Funk, eds. (Berlin and New York, de Gruyter, 1999); and H. Williamson, *Supporting Young People in Europe: Principles, Policy and Practice*, Synthesis Report for the Council of Europe Youth Directorate (Strasbourg, May 2002) (HF-Conf (2002) 4).

[8] B. Bradford Brown, R. Larsen and T.S. Saraswathi, eds., *The World's Youth: Adolescence in Eight Regions of the Globe* (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2002).

[9] OECD and Statistics Canada, "Literacy in the information age: final report of the International Adult Literacy Survey" (Paris, OECD, 2000).

[10] M. ul-Haq and K. Haq, *Human Development in South Asia 1998: The Education Challenge* (Oxford and Karachi, Oxford University Press, 1998).

[11] See OECD, "From initial education to working life: making transitions work" (Paris, 2000); and European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP), "The transition from education to working life: key data on vocational training in the European Union", CEDEFOP Reference Series (Luxembourg, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2001).

[12] In the UNDP *Human Development Report 2002: Deepening Democracy in a Fragmented World*, youth coverage is notably absent, and education is mentioned mainly in the context of its importance for the human development index. Building and consolidating democracy is not solely dependent upon education, and certainly not on formal education, but educating and involving young people as active citizens is an indispensable element. This goes beyond access to basic education and the knowledge and skills children and young people acquire thereby (see European Youth Forum, "Lifewide learning for active citizenship", position paper (Brussels, April 2002) (COMEM 0238-02 final).

[13] The Declaration affirms that all children, young people and adults have a fundamental human right to a basic education that will develop their talents, improve their lives and transform their societies.

[14] UNESCO, *Monitoring Report on Education for All, 2001* (Paris, October 2001) (ED-2001/WS/33).

[15] UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Education for All, Year 2000 Assessment: Statistical Document*, Report for the International Consultative Forum on Education for All, World Education Forum, Dakar, 26-28 April 2000 (Paris, 2000), p. 10.

[16] This is why it is important to distinguish between gross enrolment ratios, which include all registered students regardless of age, and net enrolment ratios, which include only those who fall within the standard age range for primary schooling in the country concerned.

[17] The Dakar goals specify the target of free and compulsory good-quality primary education for all. In many countries, it is certainly not free of charge in practice, as parents must pay for school books, supplies and so on. Systematic data on this question still has to be collected at the international level, as pointed out in UNESCO, *World Education Report 2000—The Right to Education: Towards Education for All throughout Life* (Paris, 2000), p. 48.

[18] UNESCO, *Monitoring Report on Education for All, 2001...*, p. 14, figure 1.

[19] OECD and UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Teachers for Tomorrow's Schools: Analysis of the World Education Indicators, 2001 Edition* (Paris, OECD, 2001), p. 42, figure 1.14.

[20] UNESCO, *Monitoring Report on Education for All, 2001...*, p. 18, table 2.

[21] Ibid., p. 19, table 3.

[22] Ibid., p. 21, table 4.

[23] Basic literacy levels may not correspond with functional literacy levels (which themselves vary according to the society and economy in which a person lives and works). Digital literacy levels may have little or no relationship with language literacy levels in the developed world, and are wholly absent for the overwhelming majority of the population in developing countries.

[24] The World Education Indicators (WEI) Program is a joint initiative of OECD and UNESCO with support from the World Bank. The 18 participating countries include Argentina, Brazil, Chile, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Malaysia, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, the Russian Federation, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tunisia, Uruguay and Zimbabwe. The data included in the WEI covers the whole of a country's education system, both public and private, and includes distance provision. Workplace-based TVET and "non-formal/adult" education are not included unless explicitly recognized as part of and as being in parity with the mainstream formal education system.

[25] OECD and UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Teachers for Tomorrow's Schools: Analysis of the World Education Indicators, 2001 Edition...*

[26] Ibid., p. 41, figure 1.15.

[27] UNESCO, *World Education Report 2000...*, p. 38, figure 3.13.

[28] "The E-9 Initiative was launched in New Delhi, India, in 1993 on the occasion of the EFA Summit of the Nine High-Population Countries (Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan). The heads of State and Government of nine countries signed the Delhi Declaration, committing their countries to reach the Education for All goals in the nearest possible future. The E-9 ministers of education met repeatedly during the past years, reconfirming their commitment to EFA, exchanging experiences and reporting increasingly on significant progress. In this respect and in view of the fact that those countries represent more than half of the world's population, the E-9 countries established themselves as a visible political lobby in favour of EFA", available at www.unesco.org/education/e9/index.shtml.

[29] UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Literacy and Non-Formal Education in the E-9 Countries* (Paris, 2001); and UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Distance Education in the E-9 Countries* (Paris, 2001).

[30] UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Sub-Saharan Africa: Regional Report* (Paris, 2001).

[31] Ibid., p. 10, table A.

[32] D. Everatt, "From urban warrior to market segment? Youth in South Africa 1990-2000: youth in post-apartheid South Africa", *Development Update Quarterly Journal of the South African National NGO Coalition and INTERFUND*, vol. 3, No. 2.

[33] UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Sub-Saharan Africa: Regional Report...*, p. 81, figures 2.13 and 2.14.

[34] Ibid., section 2.5; the median gross tertiary enrolment ratio is 2 per cent for the 30 countries providing data; rates are around 7 per cent for Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Mauritius, Namibia and Sudan.

[35] OECD, "From initial education to working life: making transitions work"..., p. 49, figures 2.9 and 2.10; data based on results returned by 17 countries.

[36] OECD, Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI), *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators 2001* (Paris, 2001), p. 119, chart C1.1; p. 131, table C1.1; and p. 132, table C1.2.

[37] That is, ISCED 5A courses; see OECD, Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI), *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators 2001...*, p. 146, chart C3.1. These figures require careful interpretation, as in some countries much higher proportions go on to vocational higher education (sometimes called "professional courses"), which may or may not enjoy the same status and prospects as general, non-vocational higher-education courses.

38 OECD, "From initial education to working life: making transitions work"...; participating countries include Australia, Austria, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Japan, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States.

39 UNICEF, *Young People in Changing Societies*, Regional Report No. 7 (Florence, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, 2000).

40 OECD, Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI), *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators 2001...*, p. 119, chart C1.1.

41 Ibid., p. 140, chart C2.2.

42 Ibid., section C4.

43 European Technology Assessment Network, Expert Working Group on Women and Science, *Science Policies in the European Union: Promoting Excellence through Mainstreaming Gender Equality,* ETAN report on women and science (Luxembourg, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2000).

44 OECD, "From initial education to working life: making transitions work"..., p. 45, figures 2.6 and 2.7.

45 UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Latin America and the Caribbean: Regional Report* (Paris, 2001), section 2.2.

46 Ibid., section 2.3.

47 Ibid., section 2.4.

48 UNDP, *Arab Human Development Report 2002: Creating Opportunities for Future Generations* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.III.B.9), chapter 4.

49 Ibid., pp. 152-153, table 15; and p. 154, table 16.

50 Ibid., pp. 152-153, table 15; tertiary enrolment rates in the United Arab Emirates are 4.7 per cent for males and 14.1 per cent for females; in Qatar, the corresponding figures are 14.7 per cent for males and 42.1 per cent for females.

51 UNDP, *Human Development Report 2002: Deepening Democracy in a Fragmented World* (Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 185, table 10.

52 UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Education for All, Year 2000 Assessment: Statistical Document...*, p. 54, tables 6.3a and 6.3b; and p. 34, table 3.2; also see UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Literacy and Non-Formal Education in the E-9 Countries...*, p. 12, figures 6 and 7.

53 M. ul-Haq and K. Haq, op. cit.

54 Defined within the Education for All framework as the ability to read and write, with understanding, a simple statement related to one's daily life.

55 OECD, Programme for International Student Assessment, *Knowledge and Skills for Life—First Results from PISA 2000* (Paris, OECD, 2001); the PISA study covers 32 countries (28 OECD countries and Brazil, Latvia, Liechtenstein and the Russian Federation).

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57 UNDP, *Human Development Report 2002: Deepening Democracy in a Fragmented World...*, p. 189, table 11.

58 Information accessed at http://www.undp.org/hdr2002/indicator/indic_380_1_1. html.

59 See L. Chisholm and S. Kovatcheva, "Youth in search of a sip of happiness: the social situation of young people in Europe"...; and http://europa.eu.int/comm/ education/youth/studies/eurobarometer/eurobarometer.html.

60 According to the findings of the 1999 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), as reported in OECD and UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Teachers for Tomorrow's Schools: Analysis of the World Education Indicators, 2001 Edition...*, p. 47.

61 K. Facer and R. Furlong, "Beyond the myth of the 'cyberkid': young people at the margins of the information revolution", *Journal of Youth Studies*, vol. 4, No. 4 (2001), pp. 451-470.

62 L. Osin, "Computers in education in developing countries: why and how?" *Education and Technology Technical Notes Series*, vol. 3, No. 1 (Washington, D.C., World Bank Human Development Department—Education Group, March 1998).

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64 C.P. Chandrasekhar, "ICT in a developing country context: an Indian case study" (New Delhi, Jawaharlal Nehru University/Centre for Economic Studies and Planning, 2001).

[65] For further information on the consequences of the dominance of English in computer software technologies, see UNDP, *Arab Human Development Report 2002: Creating Opportunities for Future Generations…*, chapter 5, which describes the situation in Western Asia.

[66] M. Potashnik and J. Capper, "Distance education: growth and diversity", Finance and Development (March 1998), pp. 42-45.

[67] Ibid., table 2.

[68] UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Distance Education in the E-9 Countries…*, p. 61, table 14.

[69] See, for example, J. Tooley and J. Taylor, "Transnational education: lifelong learning knows no borders", a report to the Academic Cooperation Association for the European Commission, Directorate-General of Education and Culture (Brussels, 2002).

[70] W. Saint, "Tertiary distance education and technology in sub-Saharan Africa", *Education and Technology Technical Notes Series*, vol. 5, No. 1 (World Bank Human Development Department—Education Group and the Association for the Development of Education in Africa Working Group on Higher Education, November 2000).

[71] UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Distance Education in the E-9 Countries…*, pp. 33-39.

[72] P.H. Coombs, "Should one develop non-formal education?", *Prospects*, vol. 3, No. 3 (Autumn 1973), p. 288.

[73] Current definitions are virtually identical. The main issue is the distinction between non-formal and informal education. P.H. Coombs (ibid.) correctly defines the latter as "the truly lifelong process whereby every individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from daily experience and the … environment"; in other words, informal education is effectively socialization. Non-formal education, by contrast, is intentional; it offers a structured process of learning, but one that is not institutionally embedded in mainstream schooling systems.

[74] UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Literacy and Non-Formal Education in the E-9 Countries…*, p. 6.

[75] UNICEF, *Young People in Changing Societies…*

[76] M. Sta. Maria, "Youth in Southeast Asia: living within the continuity of tradition and the turbulence of change", *in The World's Youth: Adolescence in Eight Regions of the Globe*, B. Bradford Brown, R. Larsen and T.S. Saraswathi, eds. (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2002).

[77] H.W. Stevenson and A. Zusho, "Adolescence in China and Japan: adapting to a changing environment", in *The World's Youth: Adolescence in Eight Regions of the Globe*, B. Bradford Brown, R. Larsen and T.S. Saraswathi, eds. (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2002).

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[79] International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, *Learning: The Treasure Within*, Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century (Paris, UNESCO, 1996); and European Youth Forum, "Lifewide learning for active citizenship"…

[80] L. Chisholm, "From systems to networks: the reconstruction of youth transitions in Europe", in *From Education to Work, Cross-National Perspectives*, W.R. Heinz, ed. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999), chapter 13.

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Chapter 2.
YOUTH
Employment

Trends in work and employment *are reviewed at the beginning of this chapter, focusing on the shift in the demand for youth labour towards either low-paying service sector jobs or higher-skill professional jobs, which has resulted in the emergence of a new form of labour stratification. Attention is then given to the intermediary zone, a growing sector occupied by large numbers of young people in both the more developed and less developed countries. Youth working in this zone are between the worlds of employment and unemployment. They may be engaged in the informal economy and be denied employment rights and security; alternatively, they may try to survive through subsistence self-employment or through part-time and casual jobs. Next, the persistent problem of youth unemployment is addressed, with a call for the adoption of macroeconomic policies to help stimulate economic growth and increase the demand for labour. The link between youth employment and vulnerability is explored, with an explanation of how sustained periods of unemployment can lead to marginalization or social exclusion. Finally, the activities of the United Nations Youth Employment Network are highlighted, and a number of proposed recommendations for resolving the youth employment crisis are provided.*

INTRODUCTION

As mentioned in the preface of this book, there are more than 1 billion young people between the ages of 15 and 24, and 85 per cent of them live in developing countries.[1] Many of these young people are in the process of making, or have already made, the transition from school to work.

According to the ILO, 160 million people in the world today are unemployed,[2] and many more subsist on the margins of the economy or have jobs that do not provide them with adequate means to ensure their survival. Nearly 40 per cent of those without work are young people, and levels of unemployment tend to be two to three times higher for this group than for the adult population. For those young people who are employed, many find themselves in low-paying temporary jobs with few protections.

With the world population projected to grow by 110 million during this decade and with technological advances leading to further "rationalizations" of labour demand, some 500 million new jobs have to be created within the next 10 years merely to maintain the status quo.[3] Current trends in job creation offer little hope that growth on this scale can be achieved. The situation is particularly grave for young people, as demographic trends suggest a huge imbalance between the supply of young workers and the demand for their labour.

For growing numbers of young people, employment is precarious and may not provide an income sufficient to cover basic necessities. In industrialized countries, the demand for a flexible workforce and the increased use of part-time and temporary employment contracts have led to a heightened sense of insecurity and risk. In developing countries, a rising number of young people work in the informal economy, where they earn low wages and are often subjected to poor or even exploitative working conditions.

In both developing and developed countries, significant portions of the population live below nationally defined poverty lines; in many African, Asian and Latin American countries, more than half of the population have incomes under the national poverty line, and in the more developed regions, there are countries in which more than a fifth of the population live in poverty.[4] In such diverse circumstances, it is impossible to make too many generalizations about young people and work.

Changes in the labour market are such that, from a global as well as a local perspective, the dichotomy between employment and unemployment has lost much of its meaning. This is particularly true in developing countries, where few have regular employment on a contractual basis and where the absence of benefits makes unemployment a rather meaningless concept. Many youth work in what is known as the intermediary zone; they are engaged in casual employment, "get by" through enforced self-employment, are underemployed, or hold a variety of part-time jobs.[5]

WORK AND EMPLOYMENT

Globalization and technological advances have had a profound impact on labour markets throughout the world, and young people, as new workers, have faced a number of challenges associated with these developments. Trends in the youth labour market tend to reflect changes in the adult labour market, although the effects of any shifts that may occur are often magnified in the employment situation of the young. The decline in skilled jobs in the manufacturing sector, together with the increased demand for professional specialists and unskilled labour in the growing service industries, has led to a "hollowing out" of the youth labour market. New opportunities tend to cluster at the top end, in the professional and advanced technical sector, and at the bottom end, in the low-tier service industries. An increasing number of young people are also finding work in the informal economy, where jobs are usually characterized by insecurity and poor wages and working conditions.

In many industrialized countries, most young people, especially young women, are employed in the service sector. In the EU, for example, 64 per cent of 15- to 29-year-olds were working in service occupations in 1995.[6] While employment in this sector ranges from routine unskilled services in retail sales and call centres to specialized professional services, it has been argued that most young people work in the lower-tier services characterized by poor working conditions and a lack of job security.[7] This is perhaps best exemplified by the fast-food industry, in which young workers often comprise the vast majority of the workforce and are paid at minimum wage rates.

Young workers are less likely to object to sub-standard working conditions in the service industry for several reasons. First, many of them think of their jobs as temporary, and only remain in them while they are continuing their formal education. In such circumstances, dissatisfaction is more likely to lead to a job change than to attempts to improve conditions through industrial action. Second, as a more vulnerable group of workers, young people are less likely to band together to demand better wages and working conditions. Third, many young workers have temporary or other precarious employment arrangements, which gives them little or no leverage in pushing for improvements.

Part-time employment among young people is on the rise in many countries and can be regarded as an aspect of the casualization of the labour market (*see figure 2.1*). While young people frequently hold part-time jobs while they are pursuing a formal education, there are also cases in which part-time or temporary jobs are the only alternatives available, as there is an insufficient number of regular full-time jobs to go around. In Greece, for example, an estimated six in ten young people who work only a portion of the workweek are considered "reluctant" part-timers.[8] This may be explained in part by the progressive removal of benefit safety nets, which may have forced young people to accept part-time jobs rather than holding out for full-time employment. In a survey of young workers in the EU,[9] 22 per cent of male and 14 per cent of female part-timers said they were unable to find full-time jobs.

Figure 2.1
The proportion of the workforce employed part-time in selected countries, 1987 and 2000
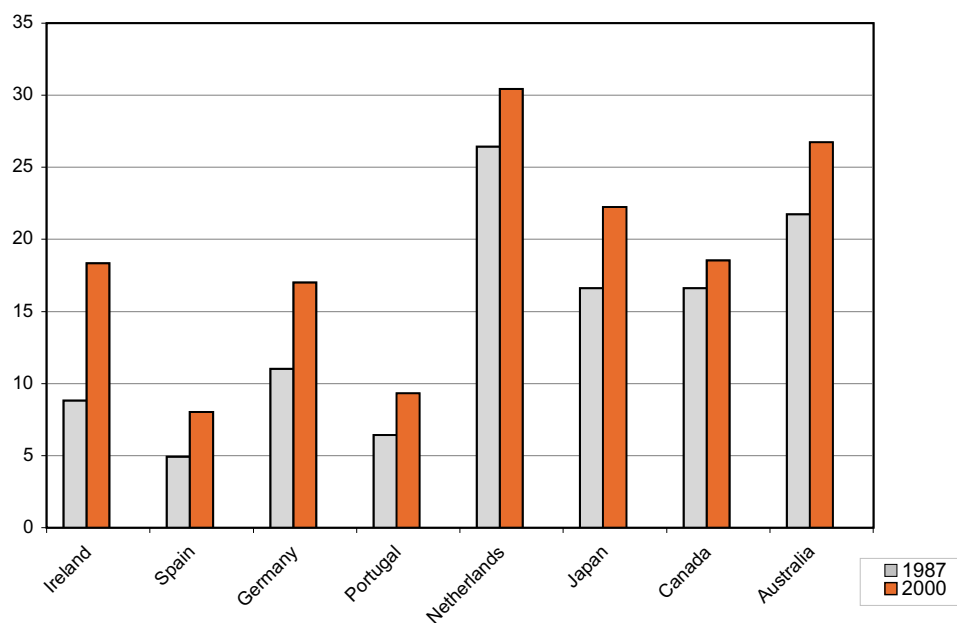
Source: ILO, *Key Indicators of the Labour Market 2000-2001* (Geneva, 2001).
Note: The years nearest to 1987 and 2000 were selected, based on data availability.

The increased use of short-term contracts is another indicator of deteriorating conditions in the youth labour market, as young workers are more likely than older workers to receive and accept this type of offer. In the EU in 1995, 35 per cent of employees under the age of 25 had short-term contracts (the rate was 47 per cent among 15- to 19-year-old workers), compared with 14 per cent of all employees. The use of such contracts is particularly high in Spain, where nearly eight in ten youth under 25 years of age are employed on this basis.[10] Although short-term contracts can be linked to training and probationary status, a recent Eurostat survey of young workers indicates that for many, short-term status is a consequence of not being able to find any other job.[11]

At the top end of the labour market in many countries there has been an increase in the supply of professional and high-level technical jobs, but as a result of the growth in educational participation, especially at the tertiary level, competition for these jobs is intense. In industrialized countries, more than 50 per cent of young people obtain university degrees, and the demand for educated workers lags far behind the supply, leading to qualification inflation. Offering their observations on the situation in the Republic of Ireland, Richard Breen and Christopher Whelan note that "although the average level of educational attainment has increased during successive decades, there has been a simultaneous decline in the returns to higher credentials".[12] In the transitional economies of Eastern Europe, it has been argued that with around half of all graduates either being unemployed or working in the informal sector, education has only a modest impact on success in the labour market.[13] In most countries, many qualified young people are now forced to "trade down" and accept inferior forms of employment. Given the economic and subjective investments in education, this trade-down is not without its costs. Young people may have to service graduate debt while working in non-graduate occupations, and after a lengthy subjective investment resulting in the development of a professional identity, compromises can lead to resentment and dissatisfaction. The length of time young people take to look for desirable employment often depends on the financial circumstances of their families and their willingness to support their children during the period of their job search.

The number of young workers who trade down reflects the degree to which the increase in the supply of qualified workers has outpaced the increase in the number of professional and technical jobs, leading to a high level of underemployment. In developing countries, underemployment among those who have completed their undergraduate studies has led to a rise in graduate school enrolment. In Europe the trend is more recent, but it is estimated that almost six in ten 16- to 26-year-olds regard themselves as underemployed, working in lower-level jobs than those in which they might make more appropriate use of their skills.[14] A similar problem has been identified in the Russian Federation, where 42 per cent of those employed are working in occupations that do not correspond to their qualifications. A majority of young people in the Russian Federation aspire to self-employment, which they regard as the only way to become well-paid, establish control over working conditions and achieve job satisfaction.[15] In the transition economies of Eastern Europe, many new businesses have been started by young people as opportunities in the State sector have declined. In these countries, the incentive to become self-employed has been linked to a shortage of alternative ways of making a living, with a significant proportion being characterized as "forced entrepreneurs".[16] However, the rate of business failure is high, and young entrepreneurs frequently work long hours for few rewards.[17] In one country, for example, more than one-third of self-employed young people reported working more than 60 hours a week.[18]

Given the lengthening of youth participation in education, rates of youth unemployment may be relatively low simply because a diminishing number of young people are entering the labour market before their mid-twenties. Consequently, rates of youth unemployment in a country need to be contextualized in terms of patterns

of educational participation. Levels of employment among young people can be controlled by educational policies that effectively reduce the pool of youth labour by acting as "holding devices". However, the link between education and job creation is dependent on broader patterns of labour demand that are global as well as local.

Evidence from a range of countries shows that education clearly enhances opportunities in the labour market, as those with the best qualifications enjoy superior job prospects. In a number of developing countries, however, many highly educated young people remain unemployed. This phenomenon derives from two key factors. One is that there is an inappropriate matching of university degrees with demand occupations. Degrees are often conferred in disciplines that are less expensive to teach, such as the social sciences. Instruction and training in areas such as engineering and the physical sciences, which require more sophisticated equipment and technology, are often too costly for many universities in developing countries to provide. As a result, there is an overabundance of students graduating with degrees in such disciplines as political science or education, but there are an insufficient number of jobs available in these areas. Conversely, engineering and high-tech jobs remain unfilled. The second factor is the overall lack of jobs in the formal economy. As most new job growth is in the informal sectors of the economy, there remain few opportunities for young graduates to find work that corresponds to their level of educational attainment. Many of these highly educated workers end up migrating to industrialized countries to improve their job prospects. The resulting brain drain holds serious consequences for the future development of their home countries.

For young people who remain in developing countries, self-employment is often the only option for survival. Youth entrepreneurship can be encouraged through a variety of means, including special programmes that facilitate access to credit. Owing to their lack of collateral and business experience, youth are considered a very high risk by lenders, making it difficult for them to gain access to credit. Programmes can therefore be developed to provide small business loans to young entrepreneurs. Many youth currently rely on savings or turn to family and friends for start-up funding. Those without such alternatives have little chance of starting their own businesses unless special credit programmes are set up for them.

Studies have indicated that young people in their twenties are more likely to achieve success in entrepreneurial ventures than are those who are still in their teens. Clearly, entrepreneurship is not for everyone, and so cannot be viewed as a large-scale solution to the youth employment crisis. Entrepreneurship requires some business acumen and an entrepreneurial spirit, which many youth do not have and

cannot acquire, even after training. Furthermore, micro and small enterprises tend to experience very high rates of failure, so they have a limited capacity to create sustainable employment. Self-employment can therefore be considered part of an integrated youth employment strategy, but not a solution in itself.

THE INTERMEDIARY ZONE

Around the globe, the boundaries between the formal and the informal economy are becoming increasingly blurred, and much of the economic activity of young people is taking place in the intermediary zone. The informalization of work is a global phenomenon, with an increasing number of new jobs in both developed and developing countries being created in the informal economy. The proliferation of informal sector employment is problematic in that these jobs tend to be characterized by lower wages and productivity as well as unsafe working conditions. According to the ILO, wages in the informal economy are 44 per cent lower than those in the formal sector.[19] The reality, though, is that the majority of young people worldwide work in the informal sector. In 1999, 78 per cent of Ghana's labour force was engaged in this type of employment; the same was true for 57 per cent in Madagascar and 56 per cent in Bolivia.[20] The ILO has estimated that in Africa 93 per cent of new jobs are in the informal sector, while in Latin America virtually all new jobs for young people are being created in this sector of the economy. Acknowledging the rising concern over the increasing informalization of employment, the ILO held consultations on this topic at the ninetieth session of the International Labour Conference, held in Geneva in June 2002.

In some respects the use of the word "informal" is misleading, as the employment of many workers in this sector is highly controlled, although it may be regulated in ways that contravene local labour laws or utilize legal loopholes. The term intermediary zone captures its marginal location between traditional employment and unemployment. Included in this category are workers who have no formal contract of employment and no guarantees of regular work, those who are denied the rights normally granted under local labour laws, and those working illegally.

Strategies to promote the informal sector have tended to focus on improving access to credit, providing technical and business training and marketing skills, and building infrastructure. Demand-side issues, including linkages between the formal and informal economies, can also be examined. There is some evidence, however, that the informal sector is becoming increasingly informalized rather than being integrated into the formal economy. New initiatives are therefore needed to increase productivity and incomes and improve working conditions for informal sector employees. This is supported by studies indicating that improvements in working conditions can lead to higher productivity, which in turn leads to higher levels of competitiveness. The promotion of more productive and competitive jobs provides an important, sustainable route out of poverty.

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

While young people between the ages of 15 and 24 comprise around 18 per cent of the world's population, they represent around 41 per cent of the unemployed.[21] Between 1995 and 1999 youth unemployment rose by 8 million,[22] and some 70 million young people are currently without work.[23] Moreover, the rate of unemployment among youth is typically two to three times the adult rate (*see figure 2.2*). This is mainly a consequence of difficulties surrounding the initial school-to-work transition, the relative insecurity and inexperience of new workers, and the frequent job changes undertaken in an attempt to find secure and satisfying employment. Youth is a temporary phase in the life cycle, and labour market prospects are ultimately governed by the unemployment rate for all age groups. The key to reducing youth unemployment therefore lies in remedying deficiencies in the labour market as a whole rather than in addressing isolated difficulties within specific subsections.

Figure 2.2
Unemployment rates in selected Countries, 2000 or latest figures
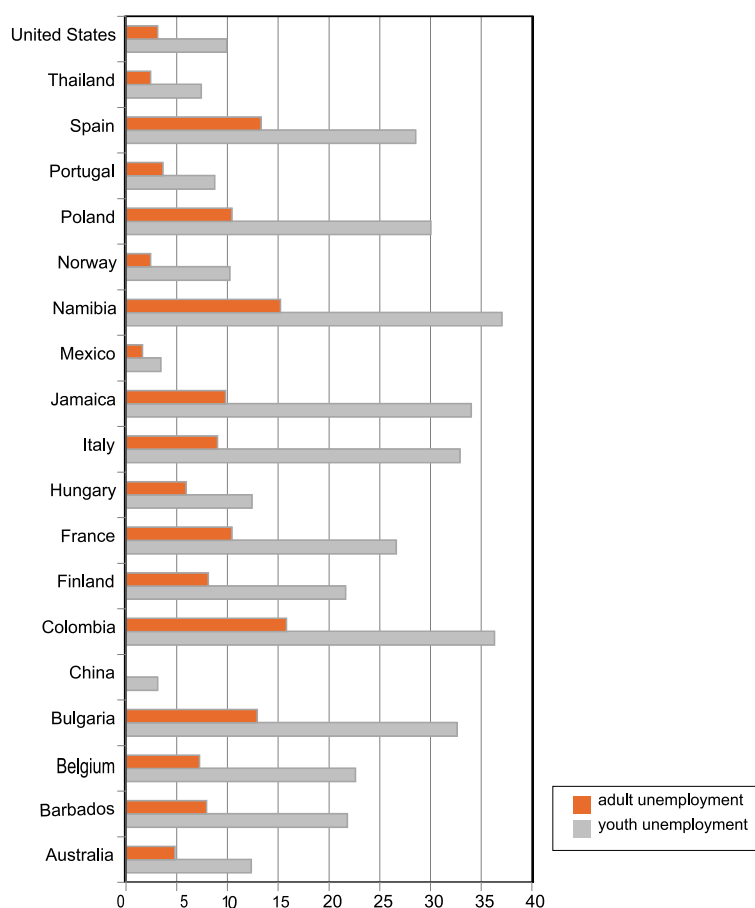
Source: ILO, *Key Indicators of the Labour Market 2000-2001* (Geneva, 2001).

Unemployment rates must always be regarded with caution, especially as rates of unregistered unemployment among young people can be high. In some of the more affluent countries, low levels of youth unemployment can coexist with a weak youth labour market as a result of extended participation in education by a high proportion

of the young population. Education and training policies are thus inextricably linked to patterns of unemployment, and analyses that fail to take into account the role of educational institutions as "holding containers" may provide a false impression of patterns of opportunity. Moreover, the high ratio of informal to formal economy employment in developing countries precludes an accurate accounting of the number of youth who are actually jobless. A better measure of the youth employment situation may therefore be the quantity of youth employed rather than unemployment rates.

One of the key reasons why unemployment tends to be higher among young people than among adults relates to the existence of "job queues".[24] As new entrants to the labour market, young people may find themselves at the back of the line for jobs; they tend to be hired only when there is a relatively high aggregate demand for labour because employers often prefer experienced workers. Other significant factors relate to the higher levels of job-changing among young workers, to redundancy policies based on the "last-in, first-out" principle,[25] and to the lower levels of job protection afforded to new workers.

Youth unemployment rates typically fluctuate in line with overall unemployment rates, indicating a strong link to general economic trends. During times of recession, however, the rise in youth unemployment tends to be more substantial than does the concurrent increase in adult unemployment. It has been estimated that a 1 per cent increase in adult unemployment will be matched by a 2 per cent rise in unemployment among young people.[26] These figures suggest that many employers view youth as more expendable if lay-offs and downsizing become a necessity. Accordingly, the lack of aggregate demand may only partially explain the youth unemployment problem.

Although sustainable, long-term economic growth is the best way to create employment, improved economic growth by itself is often not enough, particularly for special groups such as youth. Added attention must also be given to increasing the employment intensity of economic growth, especially in the rapidly expanding sectors of the economy. Governments can establish incentive structures that promote employment-intensive growth by directing investment to sectors that are more employment-intensive. Labour-intensive manufacturing industries, including garments and textiles, electronics, leather products and food processing, have traditionally provided a key source of employment opportunities in developing countries. As these industries can produce for the world market, incentive structures (including tariff arrangements and exchange rate policies) and the global trading system can contribute to employment growth by facilitating the flow of exports of these goods.

Public works projects have traditionally been an important source of new jobs, particularly for vulnerable groups such as youth. Moreover, labour-intensive public works, which have been used for both regular infrastructure development and as a means of responding to crisis situations, have been shown to have a positive impact on economic development, proving cost-effective and competitive in comparison with equipment-based methods in the rehabilitation, maintenance and development of infrastructure, including rural roads, environmental rehabilitation, irrigation and urban slum upgrading schemes.[27] Industrialized countries have also looked to public works projects as a source of new job creation for youth. In these countries, such projects

have been connected with improving the environment and providing vital social services. Social services in particular are relatively labour-intensive, and creating jobs in this area responds to the growing need for personal services in an ageing society. Such services are instrumental in both creating employment and fostering social integration and intergenerational solidarity.

Other measures to promote jobs for young people include policies that grant private sector employers various incentives for hiring youth. These incentives can take the form of tax rebates, wage subsidies or youth wage rates, or provisions for loosening employment regulations. Youth wage rates, for example, are intended to encourage employers to hire young people rather than adults by providing a substantial wage differential, thus making young workers an attractive economic proposition. This assumes, however, that young people and adults are competing for the same jobs, whereas in reality the youth and adult labour markets are often distinct (particularly with respect to skilled workers).[28] Although there was a decrease in the relative wage rates of young people in the OECD countries in the 1990s, this trend was not reflected in rates of youth employment.[29] These considerations, together with the fact that most developing countries do not have wage-setting structures in place, call into question the efficacy of establishing youth wage rates.

Loosening employment regulations—including easing restrictions on hiring and firing—has also been promoted as a means of encouraging employers to hire youth. In many countries, non-discrimination laws require that there be no preference in hiring on the basis of age, but some have argued for changes in these laws to allow employers to specifically target youth in hiring.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND VULNERABILITY

In all countries, some groups of young people are more susceptible to unemployment than others. Females tend to be far more vulnerable than males. In a review of youth unemployment in 97 countries, more young women than young men were unemployed in two-thirds of the countries; in a quarter of these countries, female unemployment was more than 20 per cent higher than male unemployment, and in around half of the countries in Latin America and the Caribbean unemployment rates for female youth exceeded those for young males by more than 50 per cent.[30] In many countries, education and vocational skills provide some protection, with young people who have advanced qualifications being far less likely to experience unemployment—particularly long-term unemployment. In the more developed countries, the differential chances of unemployment for qualified and unqualified young people have been increasing, leading to a greater differentiation in experiences among young people.[31] Conversely, in the less developed countries, it is educated rather than uneducated young people who are most vulnerable to unemployment, as there is insufficient demand for skilled higher-wage labour. Other factors that make young people more susceptible to unemployment include a lack of basic skills (especially literacy and numeracy), disabilities, criminal convictions, membership in ethnic minorities, and responsibility for the care of children or other relatives.

High levels of youth unemployment are always a source of concern because of the profound impact unemployment has on young people's lives. Research on the psychosocial consequences of unemployment is extensive. Studies of young people show that unemployment leads to a reduction in self-esteem, diminished levels of well-being, and frequently isolation from peers.[32] While in many countries most young people encounter a period of unemployment, the experience is often fleeting, and jobs are secured with little external intervention. Youth unemployment turns problematic when it becomes long-term and when it leaves young people without the means to provide for their basic needs. In the Eastern European transitional economies, long-term unemployment among youth tends to be relatively widespread. In some countries in this region, for example, more than half of the young people who are unemployed have been out of work for over a year, a situation the ILO describes as "alarming".[33] Given the link between long-term unemployment and the processes of marginalization and exclusion among youth, it makes greater sense to focus on this phenomenon than on short-term unemployment.

In addressing issues of social exclusion among young people it is necessary to acknowledge that paid work has traditionally been regarded as central to the process of social integration.[34] At the same time, it is important to recognize that there are many subjective factors (such as attitudes and values) that are not simply outcomes of labour market processes but can themselves mediate patterns of exclusion. As Minna Heikkinen notes, "young people's social exclusion is always loaded with numerous economic, social, political and cultural connotations and dimensions".[35] Long-term unemployment may in some circumstances lead to social exclusion, but high levels of social or financial support may reduce the chances of exclusion. In terms of young people's experiences, the simple chart below (table 2.1) highlights the basic factors associated with exclusion and integration.

Table 2.1
Integration versus exclusion

Social Integration	Social Exclusion
Employment/sporadic unemployment	Long-term unemployment
High employment commitment	Low employment commitment
Financial security	Financial insecurity
Optimism	Pessimism
Life satisfaction	Life dissatisfaction
High social support	Low social support
Active lifestyle	Passive lifestyle

While neither social integration nor social exclusion necessarily involves all of the factors listed, it is generally acknowledged that there is an extent to which objective and subjective factors are mutually reinforcing. The relationship between the subjective and objective dimensions of exclusion is complex, however, and is mediated by nationally specific aspects of the unemployment experience.

It is also important to recognize that a young person's interpretation of his or her situation may be at odds with patterns viewed from a structural perspective. Manuela du Bois-Reymond draws attention to what she refers to as the "trendsetters", who move constantly between unemployment and temporary, part-time or low-skill service jobs as part of a process of self-actualization and exploration.[36] Du Bois-Reymond contends that the process of modernization is linked to the emergence of "choice biographies" in which unemployment may no longer be tied to processes of pessimism and despair. By and large, however, the concept of choice biography has emerged from the more affluent European societies in which levels of unemployment have been relatively low and social security benefits relatively high. There is evidence that some young people find short periods of unemployment compatible with lifestyle choices; this is sometimes the case among those seeking careers in music and the arts. Others may "opt" for unemployment rather than lowering long-held occupational aspirations. However, in most countries, low (and declining) benefit levels have made "lifestyle" unemployment unattractive.

The ability to maintain a high level of life satisfaction despite enduring pro-longed unemployment would seem to be dependent on the achievement of equilibrium between the different dimensions of the unemployment experience. High levels of labour market exclusion may be tolerable subjectively if, for example, adequate recompense is provided or if the range of opportunities available means that unemployment is not perceived as a dead-end street. Conversely, high levels of labour market exclusion combined with inadequate income and low levels of social activity mean that the experience of unemployment is likely to lead to despondency and a sense of not having any future—factors central to the process of social exclusion.

AN ANSWER FROM THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY: THE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT NETWORK

Many of the concerns raised in this chapter echo those of the United Nations, whose commitment to action is reflected in the Organization's current agenda and activities. In September 2000, the largest gathering ever of heads of State and Government took place as the world's leaders converged upon New York to attend the Millennium Summit. During this meeting, within the framework of the Millennium Declaration, they resolved to "develop and implement strategies that give young people everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work."[37]

In preparation for the Summit, the Secretary-General of the United Nations issued a report entitled *We the Peoples: The Role of the United Nations in the 21st Century*, in which he first proposed the establishment of the Youth Employment Network, as follows:

> "Together with the heads of the World Bank and the International Labour Organization, I am convening a high-level policy network on youth employment—drawing on the most creative leaders in private industry, civil society and economic policy to explore imaginative approaches to this difficult challenge. ... I will ask this policy network

to propose a set of recommendations that I can convey to world leaders within a year. The possible sources of solutions will include the Internet and the informal sector, especially the contribution that small enterprises can make to employment generation."[38]

On 16 July 2001 the Secretary-General, along with the President of the World Bank and the Director-General of the ILO, met with the 12-member High-Level Panel of the Youth Employment Network[39] at ILO headquarters in Geneva. At this meeting, the Secretary-General emphasized the need for both immediate action and a long-term commitment to achieve the target for youth employment established within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals. He also invited the Panel to continue working with him in an advisory capacity. Finally, he requested the ILO to take the lead in organizing the future work of the Network and to host a permanent secretariat.

The Panel's recommendations encouraged world leaders to take personal responsibility for translating the commitments made at the Millennium Summit into action through a specific political process. First, the Heads of States and Governments were invited to develop national action plans with targets for the creation of jobs and the reduction of unemployment and to present those plans to the United Nations in a year's time; critical and self-critical reviews of past national policies were to be integrated into the plans. Ten Governments were invited to volunteer to "champion" the process, taking the lead in preparing the action plans and paving the way for others. Governments were encouraged to involve young people in the development of their plans and to integrate the final strategies for youth employment into a comprehensive employment policy. It was noted that employment policy should not be seen as a sectoral policy among others, but rather an extension of the successful mobilization of all public policies.

The recommendations presented youth as an asset rather than a problem; in the next 10 years 1.2 billion young women and men would join the ranks of the working-age population, the best educated and trained generation of young people ever, with tremendous potential for economic and social development.

The recommendations also portrayed youth as a creative force for the present as well as the future. Care was taken to avoid referring to young people as "tomorrow's" leaders; the focus was instead on their role as today's partners. "Young people are now asking that their voices be heard, that issues affecting them be addressed and that their roles be recognized. Rather than being viewed as a target group for which employment must be found, they want to be accepted as partners for development, helping to chart a common course and shaping the future for everyone."[40]

Finally, the Panel devised a simple political message that may be summarily expressed in terms of the following four principles:

- *Employability.* Invest in education and vocational training for young people and improve the impact of those investments.

- *Equal opportunities.* Give young women the same opportunities as young men.

- *Entrepreneurship.* Make it easier to start and run enterprises in order to provide more and better jobs for young women and young men.

- *Employment creation.* Place employment creation at the centre of macroeconomic policy.

Following a discussion in the General Assembly, a core group of countries (Egypt, Hungary, Indonesia, Namibia, Senegal and Sri Lanka) responded to the recommendations by volunteering to act as champions of this process, reviewing and showcasing their own experiences and encouraging others to participate in the development of national reviews and action plans for youth employment. Discussions have begun on how best to support these countries that have agreed to initiate the process.

The Panel members have engaged in advocacy and policy development in the field of youth employment within their own areas of expertise and within the regions in which they are active, including representing the Network at major international meetings on youth employment organized by the ILO and others. The Panel has also formed separate working groups to address each of the four principles on which its recommendations are based in order to better advise the Secretary-General, to provide guidance to countries in the preparation of their national reviews and action plans on youth employment, and to ensure the dynamic development and continuous evolution of the Network, its Panel and its recommendations.

On 18 December 2002, the General Assembly adopted resolution 57/165 on promoting youth employment. The resolution encourages Member States to prepare national reviews and action plans on youth employment; invites the ILO, the United Nations and the World Bank to undertake a global analysis and evaluation of progress made in preparing those national reviews and action plans; and requests the Secretary-General to report on the progress of the Youth Employment Network at the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly. This resolution, together with the work of the High-Level Panel, reflects the growing importance the issue of youth employment has assumed in the global arena.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In developing countries, open unemployment is not an option. Although many young people are unable to find secure jobs in the formal economy, the lack of social safety nets means that they have to engage in some form of work in order to survive. The informal economy provides one source of income, but there has also been disturbing evidence of a rise in the number of unemployed urban youth who are turning to street crime, gangsterism, prostitution and armed conflict. The seriousness of these trends prompted the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (Habitat) to develop its Safer Cities Programme, which currently has activities under way in nine urban areas. The Programme recognizes that engaging youth in productive employment is an important component of efforts to make cities safer from crime. In addition, a number of countries in Africa have identified youth unemployment as a matter of national security and are encouraging job creation as a means of providing youth with an alternative to a life of crime and war.

For young people, jobs provide a source not only of income, but also of dignity and self-respect. Youth who enter the workforce with limited job prospects, underdeveloped skills and inadequate education face the highest risk of long-term

unemployment, underemployment and low-wage employment throughout their working lives, making them more vulnerable to social exclusion. Furthermore, unemployment and inadequate employment among youth contribute to high levels of poverty. Focusing job-creation efforts on young people could help reverse these trends, giving youth the opportunity to become more active and productive participants in the workforce and enjoy a greater degree of social integration.

Young people make up more than 40 per cent of the world's unemployed. Youth unemployment can lead to marginalization, exclusion, frustration and low self-esteem—and sometimes to behaviour that imposes a burden on society. There are an estimated 66 million unemployed young people in the world today; at least 50 of the countries for which data are available have youth unemployment rates of more than 15 per cent.

There is evidence that young people, out of necessity, are increasingly turning to the informal sector for their livelihood. The intermediary zone between unemployment and traditional employment is characterized by informal, part-time or casual jobs that do not have the benefits or security of regular employment; this category also includes subsistence self-employment, or "forced entrepreneurship". Faced with poverty and the lack of possibilities for better jobs, many young people have no alternative but to turn to informal activities to earn an income. With economic growth being insufficient to support the absorption of new labour force entrants, there is a danger that informal work will become the only option for large numbers of young people, thereby making the objective of decent employment for all increasingly unattainable. The distinction between employment and unemployment is gradually losing much of its meaning as young people move into and out of the informal sector, where neither term has any real relevance.

In establishing policies for youth employment, Governments tend to focus on the supply side of the labour market rather than on labour demand. In other words, they typically try to reduce unemployment by addressing the lack of skills or poor attitudes of young people rather than concentrating on promoting economic growth and job creation. Providing young people with opportunities to learn through work may prove more effective than attempting to upgrade their skills before they enter the labour force.

The Youth Employment Network was launched jointly by the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Labour Organization to address the problem of unemployment among young people. The High-Level Panel established to guide the development and activities of the Network has highlighted four areas that require particular attention: employability (investing in education and vocational training for young people and enhancing the impact of those investments); equal opportunities (providing young women and young men with the same opportunities); entrepreneurship (making it easier to start and run enterprises in order to provide more and better jobs for young people); and employment creation (placing job creation at the centre of macroeconomic policy). The active participation of young people in programme design and implementation is key to achieving these goals. ■

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[32] See P. Warr, *Work, Unemployment and Mental Health* (Oxford, Clarendon, 1979).

[33] ILO, *World Employment 1996/97: National Policies in a Global Context* (Geneva, 1996).

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[38] United Nations publication, Sales No. E.00.I.16 (A/54/2000), paras. 110-111.

[39] Saifuddin Abdullah, César Alierta, Ruth C.L. Cardoso, Hernando de Soto, Geeta Rao Gupta, Bill Jordan, Allan Larsson, Rick Little, Maria Livanos Cattaui, Magatte Wade, Ralph Willis and Rosanna Wong.
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Chapter 3.

YOUTH

in Extreme Poverty:

DIMENSIONS and COUNTRY RESPONSES

A definition of relevant concepts and estimates of the number of young people in extreme poverty worldwide are provided in the beginning of this chapter. They are based on indicators used to measure the progress made towards poverty eradication within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals. Evidence is then examined to determine whether poverty is more likely to be concentrated among youth. Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers are used to help identify whether and how youth poverty is being addressed. The chapter concludes with an assessment of reasons for the likely underrepresentation of young people in the country-level poverty statistics and policy initiatives examined.

INTRODUCTION

Poverty and hunger are highly emotive terms. Most young people in the higher-income countries regard poverty—understood in its broader meaning of having no money or suffering the effects of famine, war or conflict—as not only unacceptable but also likely to impinge on their own well-being.[1] Opinion polls show that some 80 per cent of young people in the EU, for example, think poverty in low-income countries should be addressed and are willing to act to bring about change. Unemployment, exclusion, poverty, human rights and upholding democratic values are the issues to which many young people attach priority for action at the regional and global levels.[2]

Young people in low- and middle-income countries also regard poverty and the distribution of income and wealth as major issues of concern. A survey of 13- to 17-year-olds participating in the Arab Children's Conference, held in Amman in July 2001, placed education (25 per cent) and jobs (23 per cent) at the head of their list of concerns, followed by health care (15 per cent), the environment (13 per cent), poverty (11 per cent), political participation (8 per cent) and the distribution of income and wealth (6 per cent).[3]

Many or even most of the young people living in low- and middle-income countries are assumed to be poor in terms of the broader meaning of poverty as a lack of access to resources. However, no published data are available on the total number of young people in poverty or the regions in which the greatest numbers are to be found. An effort is made here to provide quantitative estimates of young people in extreme poverty around the world. The headcounts are based on the income and malnutrition indicators used to measure progress towards the poverty eradication targets of the Millennium Development Goals. The estimates of young people in poverty are based on the assumption that the incidence of poverty in a country is evenly distributed among all age groups in the population.

The chapter includes an examination of available evidence to ascertain whether poverty is more likely to be concentrated among young people. In other words, are there indications of a greater relative risk of poverty for youth, and for young women in particular? This is a key question whose answer has a number of implications for public policy. If poverty is distributed evenly throughout all age groups in the population, general policies aimed at poverty alleviation are justified. However, if young people in poverty face particular obstacles, policies need to be focused on addressing those challenges.

The evidence presented on young people at risk of poverty is based on information supplied in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. The content of the completed Papers for 17 countries will be analyzed to identify whether and how youth poverty is being addressed. The chapter concludes with an assessment of reasons for the likely underrepresentation of young people in the country-level poverty statistics and policy initiatives examined. The implications of these findings are explained as they relate to youth as stakeholders with the potential to influence the formation of public policy in their own countries.

YOUTH AND POVERTY
Defining Youth

The word "youth" has different meanings depending on the context—a fact that applies particularly to the present chapter. The term youth, or young people, is used as a statistical artefact to refer specifically to those aged 15-24 years. This is done for ease of comparison, as it is the age grouping for which data are available. However, this designation is often too narrow when young people and their circumstances are considered on an individual country basis. Another meaning, used in discussion of the policy responses of Governments to the particular problems faced by young people, is based on a sociological definition of youth as a transition stage between childhood and adulthood. More precisely, it comprises a series of transitions "from adolescence to adulthood, from dependence to independence, and from being recipients of society's services to becoming contributors to national economic, political, and cultural life".[4]

Defining Poverty

There is some controversy over the absolute poverty measure of $1 a day used in the Millennium Development Goals targets. A range of statistical problems must still be resolved to provide a more accurate measure based on purchasing power parity.[5] The use of a fixed and static international poverty line rather than national poverty lines has also been criticized for producing underestimates of the extent of global poverty.[6] The following analysis using income poverty measures based on the $1-per-day benchmark should therefore be viewed with some caution, as the figures provided represent a minimum estimate of the numbers of young people in poverty. The term "extreme poverty" is used to indicate the minimal nature of the estimates presented. Estimates of young people in hunger are also used to provide a further cross-check for estimates based on the income poverty indicator.

It is important to note that the full scope of poverty cannot be captured in a single measure.[7] Human poverty is more properly defined as the "lack of basic human capacities, such as illiteracy, malnutrition, low life expectancy, poor maternal health, (and the) prevalence of preventable diseases, together with indirect measures such as access to the…goods, services and infrastructures necessary to achieve basic human capacities (including) sanitation, clean drinking water, education, communications (and) energy".[8]

This broader view of poverty as a lack of capacities should also include the lack of access to means of acquiring knowledge, which may not necessarily be closely correlated with income poverty. One indicator of this is differential access to the

Internet. Although the Arab countries of the Middle East are classified by the World Bank as ranging from lower- to upper-middle-income, they have the least access to the Internet of all the regions in the world. Their level of Internet connectivity is even lower than that of sub-Saharan Africa, whose countries are mostly classified as low-income.[9]

This broader definition of poverty better reflects the views of the poor themselves. A qualitative survey of 1,363 rural villagers in Niger indicated that people saw poverty as involving dependence, marginalization, want, limitations on rights and freedoms, and incapacity (*see box 3.1*).

Box 3.1
PEOPLE'S PERCEPTIONS OF POVERTY

In a poverty analysis undertaken in Niger, 54 per cent of those interviewed attempted to define poverty, and a significant number linked the concept to non-monetary characteristics, as follows:

- *Dependence* was mentioned by 40 per cent, with some noting that a poor person was one who always had to "seek out others" or to "work for somebody else".

- *Marginalization* was used by 37 per cent; a poor person was defined as one who was "alone", had "no support", did "not feel involved in anything" or was "never consulted".

- *Scarcity* was included in the poverty definitions of 36 per cent; specifics included having "nothing to eat", a "lack of means to meet clothing and financial needs", a "lack of food, livestock, and money", and "having nothing to sell".

- *Restrictions on rights and freedoms* were associated with poverty by 26 per cent, who stated that "a poor person is someone who does not have the right to speak out" or "someone who will never win a case or litigation against someone else".

- *Incapacity* was mentioned in connection with poverty by 21 per cent of the interviewees, including the incapacity to take decisions, to feed or clothe oneself, or to act on one's own initiative.

Source: Republic of Niger, "Full Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper" (January 2002), pp. 18-19.

Numbers of young people in low- and middle-income countries

According to world population estimates for 2000, almost a half billion young people aged 15-24 years live in low-income countries, representing nearly half of all young people in this age group in the world. Another third of all 15- to 24-year-olds live in lower-middle-income countries, as defined by the World Bank. Only 11 per cent of young people in this age group live in high-income countries (*see table 3.1*). In terms of their relative share, young people account for around one-fifth of the population in low-income countries but only 13 per cent in high-income countries.

Table 3.1
Youth as a share of the total population, by income level of country

Income level of country	Total population, 2000 (millions)	Youth population aged 15-24 years (millions)	Youth as a share of total world youth population (percentage)	Youth as a share of the total population (percentage)
Low	2,493	487	45.9	19.5
Lower-middle	2,178	362	34.1	16.6
Upper-middle	488	93	8.8	19.1
High	903	119	11.2	13.2
Total	6,062	1,061	100	17.5

Source: United Nations population estimates (2000); and World Bank estimates (2002).
Note: Totals may not add up due to rounding.

An estimated 241 million young people aged 15 to 24 years live in a more specific group of low- and middle-income countries classified by the World Bank as severely indebted, representing 19.5 per cent of the total population. Estimates indicate that an additional 148 million in the same age group live in countries classified as moderately indebted, representing a similar share of the population. The countries classified by the World Bank and IMF as heavily-indebted poor countries (HIPCs) and therefore eligible for comprehensive debt relief have a youth population estimated at 128 million, or 19.8 per cent of their total population.

These data overlap closely with those showing the concentration of the youth population in particular regions. Among low-income countries the largest concentrations of young people aged 15-24 years are to be found in the Asia-Pacific region (17 per cent of all youth)—mainly in India (191 million), Indonesia (42 million), Pakistan (30 million), Viet Nam (16 million) and Myanmar (10 million). The other important regional concentration of young people in low-income countries is in Africa (19.8 per cent of all youth), with the highest numbers found in Nigeria (24 million), Ethiopia (12 million), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (10 million), Kenya (7 million), Tanzania (7 million), Zimbabwe (7 million) and Sudan (6 million).

USING MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOAL INDICATORS TO ASCERTAIN THE PREVALENCE OF YOUTH POVERTY
The value of using the Millennium Development Goal indicators

A more specific set of estimates of the number of young people in extreme poverty can be derived from the Millennium Development Goal targets for poverty eradication set by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 2000. The five indicators of progress in poverty and hunger eradication in relation to each country include the incidence of extreme poverty, the poverty gap ratio, the poor's share of national consumption, the prevalence of underweight children, and the proportion of the population living on less than the minimum level of dietary energy consumption (*see box 3.2*).

Box 3.2

Targets for achieving the first Millenium Development Goal and indicators used to measure progress

Goal 1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	
Targets	Indicators
1. Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of the population whose income is less than $1 per day.	1. Proportion of people whose income or consumption is less than $1 per day
	2. Poverty gap ratio (incidence times depth of poverty)
	3. Share of the poorest quintile in national consumption
2. Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.	4. Prevalence of underweight children below the age of 5
	5. Proportion of the population below the minimum level of dietary energy consumption

Source: United Nations Millennium Development Goals, targets and indicators.

There are two major benefits associated with using the Millennium Development Goals as a source for estimating the number of young people in poverty. The first is that the targets are used by the United Nations, including its specialized agencies, in collaboration with the World Bank, IMF and OECD, to report on progress. This reporting process at the international level is intended to "trigger action and promote new alliances for development".[10]

The importance of the Goals as an impetus for action is demonstrated in the commitment made by the heads of State and Government of eight major industrialized democracies and the representatives of the European Union at the G-8 Summit held in Kananaskis, Canada, in June 2002. This commitment, expressed within the context of the initiative taken by African States in adopting the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), offers the assurance that "no country genuinely committed to poverty reduction, good governance and economic reform will be denied the chance to achieve the Millennium Goals through lack of finance".[11]

The second advantage of using the Millennium Development Goals is that they are accepted internationally as a means of monitoring progress at the regional and national levels to "help reduce the gap between what needs to be done and what is actually being done".[12] At the country level, the Goals are intended, in particular, to help "increase the coherence and consistency of national policies and programmes … to ensure that poverty reduction strategies increase the focus on the poorest and most vulnerable through an appropriate choice of economic and social policies".[13]

Many low-income countries now have information available on key development indicators and a clear outline of their policies to address the Millennium Development Goals in an easily accessible form. The Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), a requirement for debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative of the IMF, are produced through a process of consultation with a range of stakeholder groups within the countries concerned. United Nations

country assessments and national human development reports provide valuable additional information on the status of young people, in terms of both their situation and the policies proposed to address their specific needs.[14]

Young people and the poverty and hunger eradication indicators of the Millennium Development Goals

What do the indicators suggest about how young people in the world are currently faring? The first and most important of the Millennium Development Goals is to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. Two targets have been set for this purpose. The first is to reduce by half, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of the world's population whose income is less than $1 per day; the second is to halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger over the same period. Achievement of the two targets is to be assessed by monitoring changes in five indicators relating to measures of income poverty and malnutrition (*see chart 3.1*).

In concrete terms, the first target is to lower the proportion of the world's population surviving on less than $1 a day to under 15 per cent by 2015, and the second is to reduce the undernourished proportion of the population in developing countries from 21 per cent during the period 1990-1992 to half of that figure by the middle of the next decade.[15]

The World Bank's World Development Indicators database is a repository of the most recent data on all the indicators chosen to measure progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. These data relating to poverty are based on representative household surveys and cover various years after 1990 for most countries of the world.[16]

First indicator: incidence of extreme poverty

The first Millennium Development Goal poverty indicator measures the absolute income poverty level for a country, based on the proportion of the national population in households with per capita consumption of less than $1 per day, measured in terms of 1985 purchasing power parity. The figure of $1 a day is used because it is regarded as typical of the poverty lines in low-income countries.[17] However, as this absolute measure excludes most middle- and high-income countries, the incidence of poverty based on national poverty lines is also reported to provide an idea of the relative poverty levels of countries in different income categories.

It is possible to use data on absolute income poverty at the country level to estimate the number of young people in extreme poverty in 2000. The proportion of people in a country living on less than $1 a day can be applied to the age group 15-24 to calculate the number of youth below the poverty line.[18] Estimates can be obtained for countries for which there are no poverty measures by applying the same percentages to another country with an available poverty measure in the immediate region.[19]

It is estimated, based on this method, that 238 million young people in the world were surviving on less than $1 a day in 2000. This represents nearly a quarter (22.5 per cent) of the world's estimated youth population of 1.061 billion (*see table*

3.1). The South Asia region has the largest concentration of young people in extreme poverty (106 million), followed by sub-Saharan Africa (60 million), East Asia and the Pacific (51 million), and Latin America and the Caribbean (15 million).

The 11 countries with the largest concentrations of youth below the poverty line are India, China, Nigeria, Pakistan, Bangladesh, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Viet Nam, Brazil, Ethiopia, Indonesia and Mexico; together they account for 77 per cent of the 238 million young people living in extreme poverty (*see table 3.2*).

Table 3.2
Youth in 11 countries with the highest concentrations of youth below the poverty line (income/consumption of less than $1 per day), estimated from national data

Country	Proportion of the total population living on less than $1 per day (percentage)	Total estimated youth population aged 15-24 years (millions)	Number of youth living below the $1-per-day poverty line (millions)
India	44.2	191.2	84.5
China	18.8	191.4	36.0
Nigeria	70.2	24.7	17.3
Pakistan	31.0	29.5	9.1
Bangladesh	29.1	30.2	8.8
Democratic Republic of the Congo	66.6	9.8	6.5
Viet Nam	37.0	16.3	6.0
Brazil	11.6	34.0	3.9
Ethiopia	31.3	12.1	3.8
Indonesia	7.7	42.1	3.2
Mexico	15.9	20.0	3.2
Total			182.5

Sources: World Bank, World Development Indicators (Washington, D.C., April 2002); and United Nations population estimates (2000). The poverty rate for the Democratic Republic of the Congo is imputed from the rate for the Central African Republic. The poverty rate for Viet Nam is based on the UNDP "International Development Targets/Millennium Development Goals: progress report from Viet Nam" (2001).
Note: Totals may not add up due to rounding.

A broader measure of absolute income poverty is the number of people who live on less than $2 a day. The *UNDP Human Development Report 2002* provides data, where available, on the proportion of the population in each country surviving on below $2 a day. Applying this proportion to the population of young people indicates that a total of 462 million youth, or just over a third (37.5 per cent) of the estimated number of 15- to 24-year-olds in the world (in 2000), are living in poverty as defined under the broader measure.

Second indicator: poverty gap ratio

The second indicator used by the United Nations to measure poverty is the poverty gap ratio, which is the combined measurement of the incidence and the depth of poverty in each country. As noted above, the incidence of poverty is the proportion of people who live below the poverty line; depth of poverty refers to the difference between the poverty line of $1 a day and the average income of the population living under the poverty line. Multiplying the incidence of poverty by the depth of poverty produces a measure of the magnitude of poverty.[20] In other words, countries can be rated not only in terms of the proportion of their population who are poor, but also in terms of how poor they are. The target for this indicator is to halve the poverty gap ratio between 1993 and 2015, bringing it down to below 5 per cent.[21]

The 19 countries with the largest poverty gaps or largest concentrations of poverty (those with a ratio of 10 per cent or more) are listed in table 3.8, at the end of this chapter. The table also includes each country's estimated population of young people aged 15-24 years and an estimated headcount of youth living in poverty. An estimated 255 million young people reside in countries with the largest concentrations of poverty; nearly half (some 118 million) are living below the poverty line of $1 a day.

It is no surprise that 15 of the 19 poorest countries in the world are in sub-Saharan Africa (*see table 3.8*). The 51 million youth in these countries account for 37 per cent of all young people in sub-Saharan Africa.

Third indicator: the poor's share of national consumption

The third indicator of income poverty linked to the Millennium Development Goals concerns the degree of inequality in a country, measured by the income/expenditure of the poorest 20 per cent of the population as a proportion of the total income/expenditure of the population as a whole. The aim of the indicator is to focus on the situation faced by the most vulnerable population group. This indicator is particularly useful for comparing changes over time; its prime value is in recording whether increased economic growth is benefiting the poorest fifth of the population.[22]

As the inequality indicator serves as a means of cross-checking the other poverty indicators, no specific target has been set for it. However, the World Bank noted a baseline proportion for the world in 1990 of 7 per cent of income going to the poorest fifth of the population in countries for which data were available.[23] The regions in which the poorest receive a greater share of their country's national income are South Asia (9.2 per cent) and the Middle East, North Africa and Western Europe (7.4 per cent). The smallest income shares go to the poorest fifth in the regions of Eastern Europe and Central Asia (6.1 per cent), East Asia and the Pacific (5.9 per cent), sub-Saharan Africa (5.0 per cent) and Latin America and Caribbean (3.3 per cent).[24]

Fourth and fifth indicators: young people in hunger

The Millennium Development Goals acknowledge that poverty needs to be measured in ways that are not based on income.[25] Reducing hunger among the world's population is a necessary condition for eliminating poverty because better nourishment improves the capacity of people to produce a sustainable livelihood.

As noted above, the second target for the Millennium Development Goal of reducing poverty is to halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger. The achievement of this target is to be measured by two indicators: the prevalence of underweight children (under five years of age) and the proportion of a country's population below a minimum level of dietary energy consumption. Data are available for the first indicator only. The specific target for this indicator is to reduce the prevalence of underweight children from 32 per cent of the population aged 0 to 5 years in 1990 to 16 per cent by 2015.

The prevalence of children who are underweight represents a key indicator in its own right as a measure of progress in improving child nutrition. It also provides a valuable means of cross-checking the reliability of income-based measures of poverty. Another advantage is that it offers better coverage of the world's population than do income poverty measures (89 per cent, compared with 71 per cent of the world's population represented for those surviving on below $1 a day).[26]

A total of 57 countries have a higher proportion of their children underweight than the 2015 target of 16 per cent. In these countries there were an estimated 497 million youth aged 15-24 years in 2000, 35 per cent of whom were believed to be living below the absolute poverty line of $1 a day. The most heavily populated countries with the highest proportions of underweight children are Bangladesh (61.3 per cent), Ethiopia (47.2 per cent) and India (47 per cent); their combined population of 15- to 24-year-olds totalled an estimated 233.5 million in 2000.

Background documentation produced for the FAO-sponsored World Food Summit: Five Years Later, held in Rome in June 2002, provides a rating of countries according to their prevalence of undernourishment, based on data for 1997-1999. The background report for the Summit, entitled *Mobilizing the Political Will and Resources to Banish World Hunger*, rates countries in the world with populations of over 1 million (where data are available) according to their incidence of undernourishment and identifies each as belonging to one of five categories.[27] Categories 1 and 2 are reserved for countries with a low incidence of undernourishment, category 3 for those at an intermediate level, and categories 4 and 5 for countries in which the prevalence of undernourishment is high.[28]

Some 49 countries are classified by the FAO as having a high prevalence of undernourishment and are placed in categories 4 and 5 (*see table 3.9*, at the end of this chapter). If the incidence of undernourishment in each of these countries is applied to the resident youth population, it is possible to estimate the number of young people in hunger. Using this method, the number of such youth in countries with a high prevalence of undernourishment is estimated to be 110 million (*see table 3.3* for the regional distribution); this translates into 72 per cent of all young people in all countries with populations of more than 1 million. An estimated 38 million young people are in hunger in category 5 countries (those with the highest incidence of undernourishment).

Table 3.3

Youth in hunger in countries with a high incidence of undernourishment, by region, 1997-1999 and 2000

Region	Estimated population of undernourished youth (millions)
Sub-Saharan Africa	39.3
East Asia and the Pacific	7.4
Latin America and the Caribbean	3.7
Middle East and North Africa	1.2
South Asia	58.5
Total	110.1

Source: FAO, *Mobilizing the Political Will and Resources to Banish World Hunger: Technical Background Documents* (Rome, 2002), based on 1997-1999 data; and United Nations population estimates (2000).

Summary of analysis: How many young people are in extreme poverty?

Two broad sets of indicators—income and undernourishment—are used to measure progress towards the Millennium Development Goal of eradicating poverty. In relation to income poverty, estimates of the number of young people surviving on less than $1 a day have been presented. The numbers of young people in countries with high levels of child undernourishment and low calorie intake for the population as a whole offer another source of information on the extent of poverty, statistically independent of the income measures. The latter help to confirm the accuracy of income-based estimates of youth in poverty.

At the bottom end of the scale, an estimated 38 million young people are living in hunger in the 23 countries designated as having a very high prevalence of undernourishment. The estimate of 110 million youth in hunger is based on the incidence of child undernourishment applied to the population of young people living in countries with a high or very high prevalence of undernourishment. The middle-range estimate of youth in poverty is the 238 million young people surviving on $1 a day, representing 23 per cent of the total youth population. At the high end (based on 2000 figures), an estimated 462 million young people aged 15-24 years are living in extreme poverty, surviving on less than $2 a day, and the figure rises to 497 million when calculated based on the proportion of children in each country who are underweight. The latter total represents nearly half of the world's youth population.

The broader definition of absolute poverty based on the measure of $2 a day (462 million) is said to reflect the national poverty lines more commonly used in lower-middle-income countries.[29] This estimate is confirmed by its similarity to the number of young people identified as being undernourished, based on the incidence of child undernourishment applied to the youth population (497 million). The $1-per-day measure produces a smaller estimate of 238 million, which appears to underestimate the number of young people who could be regarded as being in extreme poverty, especially when compared with the previous two figures based on the $2-per-day estimate

and the incidence of child hunger applied to the youth population. More specific measures of poverty can also be derived. The more narrowly focused estimates of 38 million to 110 million young people in hunger are based on the imputed incidence of undernourishment among young people in particular countries rated as having a high overall prevalence of undernourishment.

YOUNG PEOPLE AT RISK OF POVERTY: IDENTIFYING NEEDS AND DEVELOPING TARGETED SOLUTIONS

Are young people more at risk of experiencing poverty than other age groups? Easily accessible information on youth in poverty is difficult to find. None of the 10 recent UNDP country reports on the Millennium Development Goals, for example, mentions youth as a specific focus of their reporting on progress made towards the eradication of poverty.[30] Only two reports provide any data on young people at all: the Mauritius report notes the unemployment rate among youth aged 15-24 years at two points in time;[31] and the Albanian report provides literacy rate data for the same age group.[32]

Among the 24 country and regional human development reports produced by UNDP between 1998 and mid-2002, however, seven include a major focus on young people.[33] For example, the *Arab Human Development Report 2002: Creating Opportunities for Future Generations* highlights the connection between youth unemployment and poverty.[34]

Identifying young people in poverty

The 17 completed Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers constitute a valuable source of evidence of whether youth are seen by the Governments of low-income countries as a specifically targeted poverty group. The Papers are produced by the Governments of heavily-indebted countries based on input from domestic stakeholders as well as external development partners, including the World Bank and IMF. An important new feature of the PRSP process is seeking the participation of a range of major stakeholder groups, including the poor.[35]

Eleven of the seventeen Papers indicate which stakeholders were involved in the relevant discussions. In those Papers in which such information is included, nearly all mention young people, classified as youth or students, as being participants in the consultation process (*see table 3.4*).

Table 3.4
Youth consultation in the formation of completed Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, to August 2002

Were youth groups consulted?			
Yes	No	Information not available	Total
10	1	6	17
58.8%	5.9%	35.3%	100%

Source: Author's analysis of completed Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers; Papers are available at www.imf.org.

Youth involvement in the consultation process did not necessarily result in the identification of young people as a major group affected by poverty. Among the 17 countries with completed Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, only Malawi and Zambia specifically mention youth as a major population group experiencing poverty. Four countries (Burkina Faso, Honduras, Nicaragua and Rwanda) accord youth a minor focus in their PRSPs (*see table 3.5*). Nearly a quarter of the countries mention youth in passing as one of several groups living in poverty. Some 41 per cent of the completed Papers, however, do not refer to youth as a group in poverty at all. Possible reasons for this are explored in the section below in relation to static and dynamic views of poverty.

Table 3.5

Youth as a specific group in poverty in completed Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, to end-August 2002

Youth identified as a group in poverty				
Major focus	Minor focus	One of several groups	No mention	Total
2.0	4.0	4.0	7.0	17.0
11.8	23.5	23.5	41.2	100.0

Source: Author's analysis of completed Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers; Papers are available at www.imf.org.

The identification of youth as a major or minor focus in the PRSPs takes various forms. The Zambia Paper notes that "the most affected by poverty and environmental degradation are women and youths as they have limited access to land, other productive resources, as well as limited employment in the formal sector".[36] More detailed coverage is given to poverty among children, defined in this case as those between 12 and 19 years of age (*see box 3.3*).

Nicaragua's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper reveals in a section on human capital and poverty that the country's adolescent fertility rates are the highest in Latin America and represent an increasing share of all births. According to the Paper, almost half of all women in Nicaragua have experienced at least one pregnancy by age 19. The Paper goes on to note that "poor women are less able to plan families; they have less access to information on family planning and face higher reproductive risks".[37]

A similar issue concerning adolescent maternity and poverty is raised in the Honduras Paper:

> "Fertility rates in adolescent women (between 14 and 18 years of age) are of particular concern, reaching levels of 2.2 children per woman in rural areas, which contributes to the fact that around 15 per cent of all births nationwide are accounted for by adolescent mothers. Maternity in adolescent women is also linked to an increase in women as heads of the household, which seems to relate significantly to income level. This happens both in urban areas (due to marginalization processes and family disintegration) and in rural areas (due to differences in migration patterns and destinations between men and women).""[38]

Box 3.3

CHILD POVERTY

Child poverty is a conspicuous and growing phenomenon in Zambia. It takes a variety of forms: orphans, street children, working children and children who head households. [Sixteen] per cent of the children in Zambia are orphans. [In addition,] the number of orphans is higher in the rural areas, in small-scale-farming households and in low-cost areas where the incidence of poverty is the highest. Some 20 years ago, street children were unheard of, but today they are a visible lot. Current estimates are not available. In 1996, they were estimated at 75,000, and the numbers have probably grown since then. Child-headed households and child labour are also phenomena indicative of children in distress. Child-headed households are the results of the death of both parents leaving a trail of children and the responsibility on the eldest child, often a teenager, to look after the younger siblings. The conditions in child-headed households are worse than those obtaining in female-headed households. Child labour is an offshoot of the declining economic conditions. In 1998, 28 per cent of the persons in the age group 12-19 years were part of the labour force. These are children one would have expected to be in upper primary and secondary schools in normal circumstances.

Source: Government of Zambia, "Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper", excerpt (31 March 2002), p. 24.

The Government of Rwanda's Paper notes the following:

"Much underemployment is found among young men who have not yet married. Whether or not this group is poor in consumption terms, they suffer from the lack of employment opportunities. Hence, the generation of employment opportunities needs to be an important objective of the poverty reduction strategy."[39]

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper for Gambia, one of the poorest countries in Africa, presents the results of a national household survey conducted in 1998. The findings throw light on the relative poverty status of young people in comparison with that of other age groups (*see table 3.6*).[40]

The survey results show a slight tendency for 10- to 19-year-olds in Gambia to be overrepresented among the poor and extremely poor relative to their share of the total population, while the age group 20-39 is underrepresented. It should be noted, however, that these are trends evident at the margin only. Overall, they show that the extremely poor and the poor have age distributions close to those of the total population. The data suggest that while age is associated with poverty, there are other, more encompassing factors at work that apply to the total population.

Table 3.6
Population distribution in Gambia by poverty status, 1998

Age group	Extremely poor	Poor	Total population
0 to 4	15.0	14.9	14.4
5 to 9	18.0	17.2	16.1
10 to 19	25.9	24.8	23.4
20 to 39	24.2	26.3	28.5
40 to 59	11.0	10.9	11.9
60 +	5.9	5.9	5.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Republic of Gambia, "The Gambia: strategy for poverty alleviation" (2002), p. 25.

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper for Bolivia also offers an age-related comment on the impact of poverty, noting that it tends to be linked to the stage in a person's life cycle:

"Poverty levels are significantly higher (56 per cent) in households headed by young persons—under 25 years of age—than in those headed by older persons. This factor reflects the fact that households accumulate more assets during the life cycle, and that older households generally have a lighter burden of family responsibility." [41]

Young people as a target group in Poverty Reduction Strategy action plans

The next level of recognition of young people in the PRSP context relates to whether they are highlighted as a target group in the Papers' action plans. A content analysis of the relevant sections indicates that youth are a major target group in almost half, and a minor focus in nearly a quarter, of the 17 completed Papers (*see table 3.7*). The action plans of five countries make no reference to young people. The countries with plans in which youth are a major focus include Burkina Faso, Gambia, Honduras, Malawi, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nicaragua and Zambia. Youth are a minor focus in the action plans of Albania, Guinea, Rwanda and Yemen. They fail to rate specific mention in the plans of Bolivia, Niger, Tanzania, Uganda and Viet Nam.

What is significant about these lists is that different countries in the same region can vary greatly in terms of the importance they accord youth as a focus of attention. Countries as close as Gambia and Guinea in West Africa, or Rwanda and Uganda in East Africa, for example, give youth a different degree of priority in their action plans. This suggests that the availability of appropriate data sources and the differing capacities of representative youth groups may be important influences on whether youth are identified as a target group in action plans.

Table 3.7

Youth as a target group in the action plans of completed Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, to August 2002

Youth identified as a target group in action plan			
Major target group	Minor target group	No mention	Total
8.0	4.0	5.0	17.0
47.1	23.5	29.4	100.0

Actions taken to improve the situation of vulnerable young people in hunger

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers of Honduras, Malawi, Mauritania, Mozambique and Nicaragua stand out in terms of their focus on youth. These countries have highlighted the attention young people are to receive in the form of specific initiatives, and have also referred to youth as a group likely to benefit from efforts to achieve outcomes that go beyond the delivery of simple programme outputs.

Malawi's Paper notes that about 300,000 people leave the formal education system every year, but only 30,000 secure formal employment, leaving a balance of "270,000 people who enter the labour market annually and seek some…source of income other than (formal) wage employment". For those school leavers not in wage employment, the problem is a "lack of skills development due to inappropriate education curricula at all levels and low access (to) and intake into technical, entrepreneurial and vocational training institutions".

A more comprehensive and people-centred approach to achieving policy outcomes is evident in the range of issues highlighted by the Malawi Paper for attention in relation to the reform of the technical, entrepreneurial and vocational education and training system. The range of initiatives includes the innovative use of "mobile village polytechnics" to promote self-employment through skills development for the poor in the informal sector in rural areas, and the expansion of multi-purpose youth centres offering appropriate resource and educational information, trained youth leaders and vocational training. New competency-based curricula are to be introduced for vocational education and training in primary, secondary and technical education, backed by rehabilitated infrastructure and equipment and strengthened management and financing systems for the vocational education system.[42] A total of 11 performance indicators are identified to measure the progress achieved in the areas in which changes are sought.

The Nicaraguan Paper highlights the problem of early pregnancy among poor adolescent girls linked to "cultural patterns of early fertility, high school drop-out rates, abuse of women, and limited options in the job market".[43] The proposed set of integrated responses to the plight of vulnerable adolescents involves improved family planning and access to better reproductive health services, together with safe water and basic sanitation to reduce mortality rates. There is also to be an emphasis on strengthening the social fabric by reducing violence in the family through formal

and non-formal education programmes involving NGOs, community leaders and municipalities. The intention is to encourage self-esteem, responsible paternity and maternity, and family unity. Activities to impose penalties for or prevent family violence and assist victims are also being developed.[44]

The Honduras Paper mentions that within the context of the country's goal of supporting the growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises as a source of employment generation and income for poor families, one of the aims is to "stimulate the birth of young entrepreneurs, incorporating different models and education levels for project design and management, and providing favourable finance conditions". The indicator for the policy objective is the "number of youth-incubating enterprises operating".[45] The section on education reform specifies the objective of strengthening middle technical-productive education, both formal and non-formal, with one of the performance indicators being the "percentage of young workers graduating from technical education".

Mauritania's Paper includes two initiatives with direct relevance to young people. One is a special vocational training programme for more than 5,000 people, mainly targeting women and youth. The other is a programme that provides training tailored to the specific needs of unemployed graduates and then strives to place them in the workforce, in partnership with the private sector, local communities and NGOs. The programme is also to provide women who are seeking self-employment with skills to enhance their income-generating capacity.[46]

The remaining Paper with a significant emphasis on young people in poverty is that of Mozambique, which outlines plans to address the health-care needs of "youth and adolescents". The main objectives of the initiative are to improve the health of this group and their knowledge of health issues through school health activities by training personnel to work with adolescents in relation to family planning, complications arising from abortion, and the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS. Other, related key measures include establishing health services that meet the reproductive health needs of adolescents.[47]

YOUTH DISADVANTAGED BY STATIC VIEWS OF POVERTY

The foregoing analysis of the information provided by Governments and other stakeholders through the PRSP process on the extent and nature of poverty suggests that many do not regard young people as a traditionally marginal group in poverty. This may be the result of several factors. First, young males who are poor are not as easi-

ly identified by officials as being part of the visible poor; they are likely to be more geographically mobile. Second, young men (and sometimes young women) are not viewed by authorities as economically or socially dependent in the same way that children or old people may be seen. Third, young males are not as likely as young females to be regarded as socially vulnerable.

The underreporting of young people in poverty statistics may also derive from more complex factors shaping how researchers view poverty and the methodology used to collect data based on this view. Young people are less likely to be identified as a separate poverty target group where a static definition of poverty prevails.[48] The static definition focuses on persistent poverty among the long-term poor, highlighting how people experience difficulties on a continuing basis. These difficulties are likely to be caused by entrenched structural or cultural factors such as regional location and lack of access to basic services related to education and health. The poor are often seen as victims, born into or trapped in poverty because of where they live.[49] This type of poverty is measured relatively easily through household surveys because the population is stable and all age groups are equally affected.

A more dynamic definition of poverty can offer a different starting point for understanding and researching youth and poverty. This alternative approach acknowledges that poverty may be more situational than inherited, and more likely to be a short-term than a lifelong experience. In the latter context, poverty is likely to be associated with difficulties in negotiating a particular stage in the life cycle, such as initially developing a regular livelihood or coping with the birth of a child. A more dynamic view of poverty also emphasizes the active role the poor play in working to get themselves out of poverty. This perspective is illustrated in box 3.4.

Box 3.4
BETTER PROTECTION FOR VULNERABLE GROUPS IN NICARAGUA

Work is being done to differentiate between transfers the government should make unconditionally, such as for poor households facing generalized crises, and more targeted interventions to relieve those vulnerable groups undergoing temporary reversals. Clear income and exit mechanisms for social protection programmes are being designed, so that support and capacity-building go hand-in-hand when a crisis affects the poor, avoiding regression to paternalism and dependency. Future efforts will then be directed towards programmes to better predict some disasters (earthquakes, hurricanes, droughts) and to ameliorate their impact more effectively.

Source: Government of Nicaragua, "A strengthened growth and poverty reduction strategy" (July 2001), p. 35.

One way the poor can help themselves is to develop ways to manage risk in their lives. Lowering one's risk profile may involve measures such as saving money to tide one over during periods of low income generation or investing time and resources in further education and training. Another proactive undertaking entails improving access to supportive social networks in the community that can provide assistance if and when needed. These networks, broadly defined, can include unions, regional associations and community-based support agencies. Supportive social networks may also present opportunities to use "weak ties" to obtain information about decent work or other opportunities to establish a sustainable livelihood in a market economy.[50]

Both perspectives are important for understanding poverty. In terms of understanding the significance of poverty for young people, this chapter contends that the dynamic view offers a better starting point, though it is true that some young people such as single mothers or youth residing in rural areas may be better understood from a static poverty perspective.

The need for a new approach to measuring youth in poverty

Continued reliance on household surveys to determine who is living in poverty will perpetuate the bias against youth. Household surveys usually focus on easily enumerated households identified by a dwelling and a family. Young people are likely to be underrepresented in such settings if they have left the parental home and are in precarious circumstances, which often includes residence in temporary lodgings or even being without any accommodation at all.

Collecting data on young people who are poor using the dynamic perspective on poverty is a more complex task than applying the methodology required for recording poverty from a static perspective.[51] It requires information that does more than record the "incidence" of poverty. It involves obtaining details about income generated over time for particular age groups, the subjective perceptions of those affected, and the significance of the findings.[52]

The dynamic view of poverty requires going beyond aggregate cross-sectional data, focusing on the collection of information about individuals' or specific groups' experiences of poverty over time. Longitudinal data, even if only from small but representative sample surveys, are likely to yield better information about the economic needs and prospects of individuals and groups at risk of poverty than will large-scale and expensive household surveys. Micro-level data will provide better insights into what forms of assistance are likely to be effective.[53] Data collection from a dynamic perspective on poverty needs to start with the identification of separate potential crisis events in a person's life cycle—such as being born, completing a minimum level of education, obtaining a good job, losing a job, bearing children, and dying—and developing a risk profile for those most likely to experience difficulties.[54]

A different policy focus

Policy prescriptions that follow from the static and dynamic views of poverty are notably different. Those based on the former are more likely to focus on geographically targeted poverty alleviation efforts, applied to the whole population within a particular area. Specific measures implemented from a static poverty perspective are typically aimed at addressing the poor's marginal status and social exclusion.

The dynamic view of the poor person as a risk-taker will emphasize policies that help reduce the individual's exposure to risk and enhance the capacity of the most vulnerable to find ways to manage risk better and shape their own lives, individually and collectively. These policies can range from providing more equitable access to education and opportunities for upgrading skills to offering easier access to credit. Other policies may include increasing access to preventive health care or

temporary welfare assistance, or even longer-term measures to build up social capital such as expanding opportunities to participate in the wider society through membership and involvement in civil society organizations.

One specific policy recommendation deriving from this perspective, to help overcome the apparent bias against young people in microcredit provision, is for Governments to collect the data on young people's risk profiles and develop an assessment tool for use by individual microcredit providers. Such an assessment tool would enable those making credit decisions to identify the degree of risk involved in extending a loan to a young person. If it is acknowledged, for example, that only about 20 per cent of young people have the potential to be entrepreneurs, a filtering process to select those most likely to succeed is justified.[55]

This assessment tool should include information on the range of factors known to be associated with success in self-employment and sustainable income generation in the informal sector. Relevant data would likely include age range (for example, 20-24 or 25-29 years), previous experience in wage employment, existing amount of capital, viability of the business plan (even if only verbally presented), access to a mentor, and social network support.[56]

CONCLUSION

This chapter presents various estimates of the number of young people in poverty in the world and their distribution by region and country. It is noted that the lowest estimates of youth in extreme poverty range from 38 million to 110 million; the former figure is based on the number of young people in hunger who are living in the 23 countries designated as having a very high prevalence of undernourishment, while the latter is based on the number of youth in hunger living in countries with a high or very high prevalence of undernourishment.

The middle-range estimate of youth in poverty is 238 million surviving on less than $1 a day. High-end estimates of the number of young people aged 15-24 years in extreme poverty in 2000 are 462 million, based on those surviving on less than $2 a day, and 497 million, based on the number of children who are underweight applied to the youth population.

The use of the broader definition of absolute poverty, based on the $2-per-day measure (462 million), appears to be justified by its similarity to the number of young people identified as being undernourished based on the incidence of child malnutrition applied to the youth population (497 million). The narrower definition, based on the measure of $1 a day, generates an estimate of 238 million young people in extreme poverty, which appears to be an underestimate, given the much larger, complementary figures just mentioned. More specific measures of poverty have also been derived; the more narrowly focused estimates of between 38 million and 110 million young people are based on the imputed incidence of undernourishment among young people in specific countries rated as having a high overall prevalence of undernourishment.

The contrast between the high proportion (about half) of all young people who can be identified as being at least nominally in poverty and the lack of more direct

evidence of youth in poverty is noted in the chapter. The latter is evident from the information provided in the completed Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. The chapter also highlights the fact that youth constitute a major focus in only half of the completed Papers and a minor focus in another quarter. Some 29 per cent of the PRSPs do not mention youth at all in their action plans.

Reasons for the relative neglect of youth have been explored. In particular, the need for a different perspective on poverty has been put forward—one more relevant to the situations many young people are likely to encounter. It should be noted that different forms of data collection will be needed if the view of poverty as a dynamic phenomenon in which young people experiencing poverty strive to reduce their risk is applied.

Table 3.8
Countries with the largest Poverty Gap Ratio, total youth population, and youth population below the poverty line of $1 per day, 2000

Country	Poverty gap ratio	Youth population (thousands)	Youth population living below the poverty line (thousands)
Sierra Leone	39.5	924.5	527.0
Central African Republic	38.1	717.1	477.6
Mali	37.4	2,386.2	1,737.2
Nigeria	34.9	24,726.9	17,358.3
Niger	33.9	2,042.1	1,253.9
Zambia	32.7	2,036.7	1,297.4
Gambia	28.8	220.2	130.6
Burkina Faso	25.5	2.387.3	1,461.0
Lesotho	20.3	461.1	198.7
Madagascar	18.3	3,444.2	1,691.1
Ghana	17.3	3,925.8	1,758.8
Namibia	14.0	343.1	119.8
Botswana	12.5	348.1	115.9
India	12.0	191,286.3	84,548.5
Mozambique	12.0	3,736.5	1,416.1
Honduras	11.9	1,335.9	324.6
Cameroon	11.8	3,010.7	1,005.6
Colombia	10.8	7,314.1	1,440.9
Venezuela	10.8	4,713.2	1,084.0
Total		255,360.1	117,947.0

Table 3.9
Countries with the highest prevalence of undernourishment, and estimated youth population undernourished, 2000

Country	Incidence of under-nourishment, 1997-1999 (percentage)	Under-nourishment category	Youth population	Estimated youth population under-nourished
Somalia	75	5	2,179,170	1,634,378
Burundi Republic	66	5	1,373,878	906,759
Democratic Republic of the Congo	64	5	9,780,561	6,259,559
Afghanistan	58	5	4,427,416	2,567,901
Eritrea	57	5	723,710	412,515
Haiti	56	5	1,524,315	853,616
Mozambique	54	5	3,736,533	2,017,728
Angola	51	5	2,428,390	1,238,479
Ethiopia	49	5	12,110,025	5,933,912
Zambia	47	5	2,036,659	957,230
Kenya	46	5	6,826,500	3,140,190
United Republic of Tanzania	46	5	6,771,087	3,114,700
Central African Republic	43	5	717,080	308,344
Liberia	42	5	647,944	272,136
Mongolia	42	5	566,352	237,868
Niger	41	5	2,042,145	837,279
Sierra Leone	41	5	924,540	379,061
Madagascar	40	5	3,444,210	1,377,684
Rwanda	40	5	1,649,910	659,964
Zimbabwe	39	5	6,559,138	2,558,064
Cambodia	37	5	1,882,776	696,627
Malawi	35	5	2,196,800	768,880
Chad	34	4	1,388,570	472,114
Guinea	34	4	1,501,451	510,493
Yemen	34	4	3,460,538	1,176,583
Bangladesh	33	4	30,152,850	9,950,441
Namibia	33	4	343,134	113,234
Congo	32	4	578,508	185,123
Nicaragua	29	4	1,018,598	295,393

Country	Incidence of under-nourish-ment, 1997-1999 (percentage)	Under-nourishment category	Youth population	Estimated youth population under-nourished
Lao People's Democratic Republic	28	4	1,047,512	293,303
Mali	28	4	2,386,210	668,139
Uganda	28	4	4,491,800	1,257,704
Papua New Guinea	26	4	947,767	246,419
Cameroon	25	4	3,010,671	752,668
Dominican Republic	25	4	1,614,050	403,513
Lesotho	25	4	461,094	115,274
Burkina Faso	24	4	2,387,286	572,949
Philippines	24	4	14,857,326	3,565,758
Senegal	24	4	1,899,000	455,760
Botswana	23	4	348,085	80,060
India	23	4	191,286,300	43,995,849
Nepal	23	4	4,772,012	1,097,563
Sri Lanka	23	4	3,745,379	861,437
Bolivia	22	4	1,624,155	357,314
Guatemala	22	4	2,481,066	545,835
Honduras	21	4	1,335,910	280,541
Sudan	21	4	6,441,768	1,352,771
Thailand	21	4	11,433,555	2,401,047
Venezuela	21	4	4,713,150	989,762
Total	29		374,276,884	110,129,921

[1] I. McDonnell, "Youth attitudes about poverty", submission based upon ongoing work of the OECD Development Centre and the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe on international development cooperation in OECD countries: public opinion (Paris, OECD Development Centre, 2002).

[2] Eurobarometer, "15 to 24 year olds: young people want Europe to be tangible", flash survey carried out between May and June 2002, available at http://europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion/index.htm, cited by I. McDonnell in "Youth attitudes about poverty"…, p. 1.

[3] UNDP, *Arab Human Development Report 2002: Creating Opportunities for Future Generations* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.III.B.9), available at http://www.undp.org/rbas/ ahdr/.

[4] UNDP, *Jordan Human Development Report 2000* (New York, 2000).

[5] P. McCarthy and others, "Improving our knowledge and analysis of changes in poverty and inequality: the international statistical architecture", a paper prepared for the G-20 Workshop on Globalization, Living Standards and Inequality, held by the Reserve Bank of Australia and the Australian Treasury in Sydney from 26 to 28 May 2002, available at http://www.rba.gov.au/PublicationsAndResearch/Conferences/.

[6] J. Vandemoortele, "Are we really reducing global poverty?", in *World Poverty: New Policies to Defeat an Old Enemy*, P. Townsend and D. Gordon, eds. (Bristol, The Policy Press, 2002).

[7] Ibid., p 5.

[8] Government of Mozambique, "Action Plan for the Reduction of Absolute Poverty (2001-2005) (PARPA)", p. 11.

[9] UNDP, T*he Arab Human Development Report 2002…*, p. 29.

[10] United Nations, "Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration: report of the Secretary-General" (6 September 2001) (A/56/326), p. 55.

[11] *Group of Eight, G8 Africa Action Plan,* G8 Summit, Kananaskis, Canada, 26-27 June 2002, available at http://www.g8.gc.ca/kan_docs/afraction-e.asp.

[12] United Nations, "Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration: report of the Secretary-General"…, p. 19.

[13] Ibid.

[14] By April 2002, national Millennium Development Goal reports (comprising information from national development plans, PRSPs, national human development reports and common country assessments) had been published for Bolivia, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chad, Madagascar, Nepal, Tanzania and Viet Nam.

[15] UNDP, *Human Development Report 2003—Millennium Development Goals: A Compact among Nations to End Human Poverty* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2003).

[16] World Bank, World Development Indicators database, goal table on "Poverty and hunger" (April 2002), available at http://www.developmentgoals.org/Data.htm.

[17] Xavier Sala-i-Martin notes that the original definition of $1 a day came from the work of M. Ravallion, G. Datt and D. van de Walle, who used "perceptions of poverty" in the poorest countries to place the poverty line at $31 per month. The $1-per-day line has since been adopted by the World Bank as the "official" definition of absolute poverty. (See X. Sala-i-Martin, "The disturbing 'rise' of global income inequality", NBER Working Paper No. 8904 (Cambridge, Massachusetts, National Bureau of Economic Research, 4 April 2002 (draft)); and M. Ravallion, G. Datt and D. van de Walle, "Quantifying absolute poverty in the developing world", *Review of Income and Wealth*, vol. 37, No. 4 (1991), pp. 345-361.)

[18] The assumption is that young people are likely to experience poverty no less and no more than the population as a whole.

[19] This method is similar to the one used by Bourguignon and Morrisson (2002), as outlined by X. Sala-i-Martin, op. cit., p. 9.

[20] UNDP, *Human Development Report 2003—Millennium Development Goals: A Compact among Nations to End Human Poverty…*, p. 28, box 1.1.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid., p. 7.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid.

[25] United Nations, "Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration: report of the Secretary-General"…, p. 19.

[26] OECD, Indicator Methodology Sheets (1998), p. 7.

[27] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, *Mobilizing the Political Will and Resources to Banish World Hunger: Technical Background Documents* (Rome, 2002).

[28] The FAO uses the following method to calculate the incidence and depth of undernourishment in a country: (a) "calculate the total number of calories available from local food production, trade and stocks;" (b) "calculate an average minimum calorie requirement for the population, based on the number of calories needed by different age and gender groups and the proportion of the population represented by each group;" (c) "divide the total number of calories available by the number of people in the country;" (d) "factor in a coefficient for distribution to take account of inequality in access to food;" (e) "combine this information to construct the distribution of the food supply within the country. This gives the percentage of the population whose food intake falls below the minimum requirement;" (f) "multiply this percentage by the size of the population to obtain the number of undernourished people;" (g) "divide the total calories available to the undernourished by the number of undernourished to obtain the average dietary energy intake per undernourished person;" (h) "subtract the average dietary energy intake of undernourished people from their minimum energy requirement (expressed in kilocalories per person per day) to get the average dietary energy deficit of the undernourished. This is the depth of hunger." (See http://www.fao.org/FOCUS/E/SOFI00/sofi004a-e.htm.)

[29] World Bank, *World Development Report 2000/2001: Attacking Poverty* (New York, Oxford University Press and the World Bank, 2001), p. 17.

[30] These countries include Albania, Bolivia, Chad, Cameroon, Cambodia, Nepal, Tanzania and Viet Nam (see http://www.undp.org/mdg/countryreports.html).

[31] Government of Mauritius, "Mauritius national Millennium Development Goals report" (December 2001), p. 46.

[32] Government of Albania, "The Albanian response to the Millennium Development Goals", prepared for the United Nations System in Albania by the Human Development Promotion Center (Tirana, May 2002), p. 21.

[33] The UNDP human development reports in which youth are a major focus include those for the Arab countries (2002), Lithuania (2001), Maldives (2001), Bosnia and Herzegovina (2000), Jordan (2000), Kazakhstan (2000), and Latvia (1999).

[34] UNDP, *Arab Human Development Report 2002...*, pp. 93-94.

[35] "In September 1999, the objectives of the IMF's concessional lending were broadened to include an explicit focus on poverty reduction in the context of a growth oriented strategy. The IMF will support, along with the World Bank, strategies elaborated by the borrowing country in a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) which will be prepared with the participation of civil society—including the poor—and other development partners." (See www.imf.org.)

[36] Government of Zambia, "Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper" (31 March 2002), available at http://www.imf.org/external/np/prsp/prsp.asp, p. 116.

[37] Government of Nicaragua, "Nicaragua: a strengthened growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper" (31 July 2001), p. 10.

[38] Government of Honduras, "Honduras: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper" (31 August 2001).

[39] Government of Rwanda, "The Government of Rwanda: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)" (30 June 2002), p. 20.

[40] Government of Gambia, Department of State for Finance and Economic Affairs, "The Republic of the Gambia: Strategy for Poverty Alleviation (SPAII) (PRSP)" (30 April 2002), p. 25. Extremely poor households are defined as those with expenditures of less than the cost of a basket of food providing 2,700 calories. Poor households are defined as those with expenditures that are above the poverty line but include the cost of additional items such as clothing and travel (see p. 23).

[41] Republic of Bolivia, "Bolivia: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper" (31 March 2001), p. 37.

[42] Government of Malawi, "Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)" (30 April 2002), pp. 56-57.

[43] Government of Nicaragua, "Nicaragua: a strengthened growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper"..., p. 34.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Government of Honduras, "Honduras: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper", p. 120.

[46] Government of Mauritania, "Islamic Republic of Mauritania: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper" (31 March 2002), p. 15.

[47] Government of Mozambique, "Action Plan for the Reduction of Absolute Poverty (2001-2005) (PARPA)"..., p. 52.

[48] The Tanzanian Paper consultation process focused on the "poor at the village level"; the Paper notes that "in retrospect, the coverage of the poor could have been broadened even further, to include unemployed and under-employed youths, and the informal sectors. It is also possible that with a different sampling of the poor, the emphasis placed on certain views and concerns could have been somewhat different". The Paper goes on to note that efforts will be made in the future to seek "fuller representation of the poor and other stakeholders". (See Government of Tanzania, "The United Republic of Tanzania: Poverty Reduction Strategy Report" (1 October 2000), p. 4).

[49] The following quote from Nicaragua's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (31 July 2001) highlights this perspective: "One of the salient perceptions (of the poor) is a sense of despair and resignation. The poor believe that poverty is a vicious circle from which they cannot escape since it is inherited and perpetuated through generations" (p. 13, para. 51).

[50] The term "weak ties" refers to links with people outside one's immediate social circle. Because they are ties based on more tenuous relationships, they are more extensive in their coverage and hence better sources of information about jobs and other opportunities; see M. Granovetter, "Strength of weak ties", *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 78, No. 6 (1973), pp. 1,360-1,380.

[51] The World Bank's *World Development Report 2000/2001: Attacking Poverty* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2000) notes that: "Measuring vulnerability is especially difficult: since the concept is dynamic, it cannot be measured merely by observing households once. Only with household panel data—that is, household surveys that follow the same households over several years—can the basic information be gathered to capture and quantify the volatility and vulnerability that poor households say is so important. Moreover, people's movements in and out of poverty are informative about vulnerability only after the fact. The challenge is to find indicators of vulnerability that can identify at-risk households and populations beforehand" (p. 19).

[52] L. Leisering and S. Leibfried, "Paths out of poverty: perspectives on active policy", in A. Giddens, *The Global Third Way Debate* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 2001), pp. 199-209.

[53] OECD, "When money is tight: poverty dynamics in OECD countries", chapter 2 in *OECD Employment Outlook: June 2001* (Paris), pp. 37-87.

[54] L. Leisering and S. Leibfried, loc. cit., p. 201.

[55] R. Street, presentation to the Youth Employment Summit, held in Alexandria, Egypt, from 7 to 11 September 2002.

[56] F. Chigunta, "Youth entrepreneurship: meeting the key policy challenges", a paper prepared for the Youth Employment Summit, held in Alexandria, Egypt, from 7 to 11 September 2002, pp. 6-7; and S. McGrath, "Education and training for the informal sector: reflections on an international research project", *Transformation*, vol. 39 (1999), pp. 26-46.

Chapter 4.
YOUTH & HEALTH ISSUES

An overview of the health situation *of youth today is provided in this chapter, which also explores the serious health challenges this vulnerable group is facing within the context of local and global developments. Socio-economic, cultural, educational and other factors affecting young people's health are examined, and reference is made to particular issues and areas of concern. Emphasis is given to the importance of involving young people in identifying problems and developing solutions to ensure that programmes, policies and health services address their needs.*

INTRODUCTION

The young are the future of society, but they are also very much its present. Around half of the world's inhabitants are under the age of 20 (*see figure 4.1*). As evidence from statistics and the experience of youth-serving NGOs show, adolescents who are healthy and happy are better equipped to contribute to their communities as young citizens despite the major shifts occurring in the world they are about to inherit.[1]

Figure 4.1
Male-Female population distribution in developed and developing regions, 2000
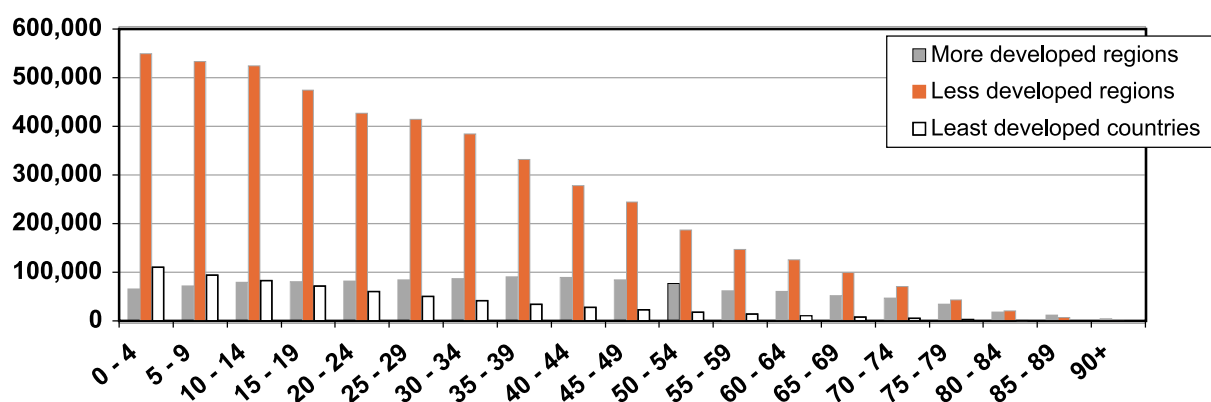
Source: United Nations Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2002.

Bad habits and poor hygiene, persistent behavioural risks, poor basic sanitation, and new and emerging diseases are contributing to a deadly mix that is changing the classic picture of healthy youth. Despite the obvious international epidemiological demographic shifts and certain policy improvements, the state of programme delivery and research in the field of adolescent and youth health is scarcely adequate to make the world "fit for children" as foreseen by the twenty-seventh special session of the General Assembly on Children in 2002. Many young people bear the burden of poor health owing to the effects of accidents and injuries including those caused by insecurity, war and occupation. In all countries, whether developing, transitional or developed, disabilities and acute and chronic illnesses are often induced or compounded by economic hardship, unemployment, sanctions, embargoes, poverty or poorly distributed wealth. The cumulative toll of violence, HIV/AIDS and now tuberculosis on youth is adding to the already heavy price still being paid by child victims of malaria

and vaccine-preventable diseases. All of this exists in stark contrast to the many gains made through the efforts of national authorities, young people themselves and the local communities in which they live, supported by the achievements of international development agencies working to ensure that the special needs of this important population and their right to good health are understood and met.[2]

Global interest in the health of adolescents and youth has manifested itself in the many expressions of commitment to their healthy personal, spiritual, social, mental and physical development. The 1990s saw the affirmation of worldwide commitments to adolescent and youth health that have been shaped within an international legal framework that has as its foundation the United Nations Charter[3] and that reflects the WHO definition of health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.[4] One implication is that the international public health community must adopt an approach to adolescents and youth that goes beyond the health sector to elicit the active participation of all social actors, including young people themselves as agents of change.[5] The services, commodities, information and skills needed to sustain healthy behaviour must be provided in the safest and most supportive of environments, building on the protective factors of family and community.[6]

This call for the integration and coordination of multiple resources exposes an essential polarization—if not of intentions, then of mechanisms. Some scientists and clinicians, researchers and opinion leaders energetically promote respect for culture, tradition, family and religion to enhance apparent health benefits.[7] Others are far more ready to value young people's self-assessed needs and their interpretation of personal experience in order to enhance both psychosocial and biomedical aspects of personal well-being.[8]

The youth population is burgeoning in some countries, and in these areas and elsewhere adolescents are confronting new situations and threats to their present health,[9] moving towards a future in which their health status is likely to be compromised. The health, education and social sectors are called upon to devise, test and make wider use of effective new approaches, including operational, social science and community-based research, clinical studies and longitudinal surveys focused on adolescents and youth.[10] Often slow to recognize the essential value of the intersectoral approach in meeting the needs of the population, public health institutions in particular need to provide services and train personnel to ensure that no young person slips through the cracks in health care. There is room for optimism about the health sector's ability to overcome its conservatism and respond to the needs of youth, adapting to new local realities, if for no other reason than cost-effectiveness.

Even with the best of intentions, some health planners and health-care providers persist in making unwarranted choices unfavourable to youth. For example, an international official with limited resources might feel inclined to support safe motherhood programmes over adolescent-focused initiatives or to promote early marriage rather than adolescent participation in society. At the local level, a district medical officer may be busily treating obstetric complications in adolescent mothers, feeling there is no time to visit schools to provide sexual and reproductive health information. Making carefully considered, informed choices at the policy and programme

levels can have profound long-term effects. Figure 4.2 illustrates the impact of investment in education, showing a healthy decrease in childbearing among those who go to school, whether in Egypt, the United States or Zimbabwe. Adolescent development in general, and girls' education in particular, dramatically reduces young people's contribution to fertility, with evident gains in lowering maternal and infant mortality and morbidity.

Figure 4.2
Childbirth among women younger than 18 years of age

Percent of women ages 20 to 24 who had a child by age 18

Legend:
- Fewer than 7 years of school
- 7 years or more of school
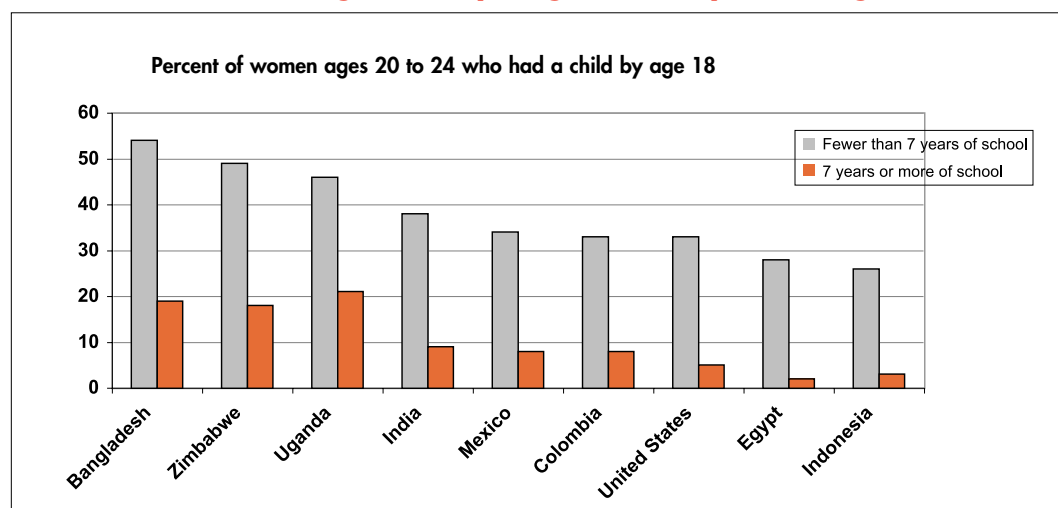
Source: Population Reference Bureau, *World Youth Data Sheet 2002.*

In every culture and economic setting, a sound evidence base enables policy makers, religious and community leaders, NGOs, and medical and legislative bodies to ensure intersectoral intervention and strong sectoral responses to save young lives and meet the needs of young people. This chapter on health is neither an epidemiological review of the causes of mortality, morbidity and disability among 15- to 24-year-olds, nor a public health policy or programme guide. Instead, it addresses a range of issues of interest to those who need a clear picture of young people's health situation in order to make economic and political decisions favourable to social development. The elements of this picture, each to be examined in a separate section, include the following:

- Monitoring the data
- Special concerns of adolescents and youth
- Access to learning and its influence on health
- Social and economic integration
- Other influences on the health of youth
- Benefits of youth participation

- Adolescent- and youth-friendly health services
- Adolescent and youth health conditions
- The policy environment

A selection of national examples will be used, drawing in general on upper- and lower-quartile samples of phenomena and highlighting the situations in countries from all parts of the world. There are slowly emerging indicators for measuring the effectiveness of adolescent programmes that to some extent make up for the non-existence or unhelpfulness of surveillance systems for monitoring the health status of 15- to 24-year-olds in many parts of the world.

MONITORING THE DATA

Demographic and health data are generally available to planners in each country and region. Such data are not always used to monitor trends and patterns of adolescent and youth health or to ensure equitable attention to this client group.

Adolescence itself is a cultural construct that varies across settings and contexts.[11] In terms of the future health status of countries and regions, however, the period of adolescence can generally be considered the "gateway" and the period of youth the "pathway" to adult health. Attention must be paid to the health of adolescent and youth populations irrespective of their size, yet adolescents (10- to 19-year-olds) remain largely invisible, and youth (15- to 24-year-olds) often disappear from the data screens because of inappropriate or convenience clustering. Even in the referential Global Burden of Disease survey, data on key conditions are aggregated in a cohort comprising 15- to 29-year-olds. National demographic and health surveys, however, are now (more often than previously) structured to pinpoint young people.

In many countries, including India and Senegal, up to a third of the population are between the ages of 10 and 24. In other countries, such as France, the demographic pyramid long ago evolved into a cylinder, with fewer young people supporting an ageing population;[12] this phenomenon is becoming more prevalent in emerging economies such as the Republic of Korea. Some transitional economies, in particular the Russian Federation, are experiencing rapid drops in fertility—even to below replacement levels—but still have a sizeable youth population.

National demographic patterns notwithstanding, youth represent a large global client base with evolving needs in the areas of health services, information and counselling, which has implications not only for the present but also in terms of future requirements for a reformed health sector.[13] Within this context, youth constitute an important resource base for improving their own health and that of society, contributing to global development and intergenerational solidarity.[14]

Data on secondary school enrolment patterns are generally available and offer clear indications of variability within and between countries and regions. This is of some interest from a health perspective. Statistics showing either a slightly or much

higher percentage of boys enrolled than girls often coincide with poorer indicators for the health status of young women.[15] Where a higher percentage of girls are enrolled in secondary and tertiary education, there may be a concomitant increase in levels of substance use, violence and depression among young men.[16]

The average age at first marriage for all women is variable within and between regions but is generally increasing. In spite of national and international legislation relating to minimum ages for marriage,[17] the marriage of adolescent girls (often to older men) is still common. The average age is reportedly as low as 14.2 years in Bangladesh[18] and 17 years in Yemen, but seems to have risen to 29 years in Tunisia.[19]

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, only 5 per cent of males aged 15-19 years are married, while 12 times as many girls in the same age group are already wed.[20] The contribution of 15- to 19-year-olds to total fertility can be high (11 per cent in the United Arab Emirates) or low (3 per cent in Cyprus). Another way of looking at the phenomenon is that in Chad, one in five girls aged 15-19 years gives birth each year, compared with 1 in 50 in Malaysia and 1 in 100 in Italy.[21] The countries that show the greatest gender discrepancies are also among the poorest and concomitantly exhibit the highest adolescent fertility rates.

The issue of gender equality remains relevant, especially where sex preference towards boys is common. Apparent social justification for such discrimination is a tenacious cofactor in provoking serious health (including mental health) and nutritional consequences. The availability of quantitative and qualitative indicators of the health effects of sex discrimination, sex preference and other factors of gender inequality in some regions may be limited by strong cultural, traditional or religious concerns. Gender stereotypes also interfere with the professional judgement of health workers concerning the sexual, reproductive and mental health both of adolescent girls and of young people whose sexual orientation remains uncertain.[22]102 Associated sex-role stereotypes prevent women from even knowing they experience discrimination, sexual coercion, exploitation or abuse. In those countries for which preventing the sexual exploitation of the young is a priority, however, a minimum age for consensual sex has been established.

The rationale for research on adolescents will be more explicit and the effectiveness of interventions greatly enhanced if national experts identify and use appropriate sources of regional and country-specific data on adolescents. Basic indicators of health and social status need to be disaggregated by sex and by single year of age in order to enhance their usefulness in programming. Where this has been done, trends in youth mortality are more readily apparent.

THE SPECIAL CONCERNS OF ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH

Adolescence is a dynamic concept that is being defined even now within the context of a life-course approach to health and development. In some traditional societies a rite of passage from childhood to adulthood excludes much of the notion of transition. However, social changes in general and the earlier age at which puberty occurs ensure that, irrespective of when adolescents reach biological maturity, there is no easily recognizable standard age at which a young person is no longer a child though not yet an adult.[23]

The markers of international recognition of the importance of adolescent and youth health exist nonetheless. Commitments made by the World Health Assembly in Geneva in 1989 were reinforced by the specific recommendations of the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994), which in turn contributed to the gender-specific achievements of the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995). As a consequence, the international community has become increasingly inclined to identify adolescents as a distinct group for public health attention and as one in need of ad hoc, gender-sensitive reproductive health programmes, education, counselling and services—provided within a framework of respect for their rights and responsibilities as individuals, partners, spouses and parents, as well as members of families, communities and nations.

Young people are participants in the political evolution of society and occasional clients of the health system. They are people in their own right as well as protégés of families and communities. Religious traditions, values and cultures are essential sociological and psychological phenomena that play a role as risk and protective factors for health.[24] However, the moderating influence of a safe and supportive environment and its contribution to sound mental health, the containment of violence and a sense of belonging can easily be lost for individual young people and the youth population cohorts as a whole.

A complete understanding of the stages of development in human life is drawn as much from religious writings, classical literature and philosophical texts as from endocrinology and psychology. Consequently, well-read parents, teachers and health professionals who are inspired by such materials can study, understand, accept and respond to the specific situations of pubescent children, of early, middle and late adolescents, and of youth. Clinical, community and operational research complements this humanistic view and confirms that the needs of, and manner appropriate for dealing with, 16-year-old patients are not the same as those for 6-year-olds or 36-year-olds.[25]

Specific interventions and approaches to adolescent services are indicated to deal with the emergence of risk behaviour during that stage. However, research design, information dissemination, professional skill development and health-care programme implementation are not universally managed according to the principles of user-friendliness and a holistic participatory approach. Where they are, an interdisciplinary strategy leads to cost-effectiveness.[26]

International agencies have been particularly influenced by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and are beginning to utilize a rights-based programming approach, encouraging the sharing of responsibility between community institutions, parents and adolescents themselves in protecting and promoting the health and development of those under 18.[27] In pursuing this approach, the concept of basic needs as the foundation or motivation for intervention should not be lost. Legal provisions also influence adolescent health and development; policies and laws are in constant need of reform, adoption or enforcement to support medical, psychological and legal definitions and justifications of the fact that adolescents are distinct from children and adults. The socio-legal consideration of adolescence is a work in progress in many countries. Laws and policies affecting adolescent health need to be monitored, both internally and externally, and if necessary updated to remain in the best interests of young people. Health-related areas requiring particular attention are outlined in box 4.1, which lists recommendations made by the Committee on the Rights of the Child to some European countries that are States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.[28]

Box 4.1

EXAMPLES OF RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD FOR SOME EUROPEAN COUNTRIES WITH REGARD TO SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Teenage pregnancy
- Reduce the number of teenage pregnancies;
- Promote adolescent health policies and reproductive health education and counselling services.

Abortion
- Reduce the practice of abortion;
- Strengthen measures to ensure that abortion is not perceived as a method of contraception.

STIs and HIV/AIDS
- Prevent discrimination against children infected by HIV/AIDS;
- Provide counselling to HIV/AIDS-infected mothers about the risk of transmission of HIV/AIDS through breastfeeding;
- Ensure access for adolescents to sex education, including information about contraceptives and STIs;
- Use of the media in relation to awareness raising and education;
- Provide statistical data and other indicators for vulnerable groups (disaggregated data), and multidisciplinary studies on the special situation of children infected by HIV/AIDS.

Teenage marriage
- Increase protection against the harmful effects of early marriage;
- Amend legislation to ensure that boys are treated as equally as girls.

Honour killing
- Review legislation;
- Develop awareness raising and education campaigns to combat discriminatory attitudes and harmful traditions affecting girls;
- Develop special training and resources for law enforcement personnel.

Female genital mutilation
- Undertake strong and effectively targeted information campaigns to combat this phenomenon;
- Adopt legislation with extraterritorial reach to protect children within the State's jurisdiction from female genital mutilation outside its territory.

Age of sexual consent
- No gender discrimination with regard to ages of sexual consent and sexual relations;
- No discrimination based on sexual orientation in regard to the age of sexual consent;
- Enact legislation concerning the minimum legal ages for sexual consent.

Family planning services
- Establish comprehensive family planning programmes;
- Develop youth-sensitive counselling, care and rehabilitation facilities that are accessible without parental consent.
- Allocate adequate human and financial resources to increase the number of social workers and psychologists, to evaluate the effectiveness of training programmes in reproductive health.

Reproductive health education
- Improve the primary health care system regarding the effectiveness of sex education and family planning;
- Strengthen reproductive health education;
- Ensure a programme for the systematic sexual education of adolescents at school;
- Evaluate the effectiveness of training programmes in reproductive health education.

Source: Reproduced from E. Roque, "The Convention on the Rights of the Child and rights to sexual and reproductive health", *EntreNous*, No. 51 (Copenhagen, WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2001), p. 9.

A rights-based approach to the protection and promotion of adolescent and youth health is easily undermined. This occurs, for example, when national or international public health authorities seek to use their positions to influence behaviour by promoting their perceptions of morality or specific religions, cultures or traditions rather than recognizing them as contributory issues in programming. In doing so, they disregard their obligation to assess the conformity of national policy development and legislation with international legal instruments and the application of best practices in public health.[29]

Helping adolescents make decisions that will positively affect their health and their prospects for the future is a challenge for communicators and educators. A variety of means must be used to reach young people, a group characterized by great diversity; they have had a wide range of experiences and have different needs and lifestyles.[30] Access to school and higher education, youth programmes and training are critical if young individuals are to acquire self-efficacy, the health asset of social capital. Rates of school attendance, even where high, do not in themselves indicate the economic and social relevance of training programmes or that curricula have been evaluated appropriately to ensure that they are providing both the knowledge and the skills necessary to sustain health. Criteria that can be used by educationalists and health planners to determine whether or not an educational institution promotes health include well-defined staff roles, access to nutrition, water and sanitation on the premises, health education curriculum content, stress management, gender mainstreaming, nonviolent conflict resolution and accessibility of counselling.[32]

Health information and knowledge about diseases and about bodily conditions and functions are evident determinants of health status and outcomes.[33] However, as information (learning to know) is only useful if reinforced by positive attitudes (learning to be) and useful skills (learning to do), the ability to recognize a potential problem must be accompanied by the will and the identification of the means necessary to avoid it.[34] "Life skills are abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life."[35] They include the ability to negotiate and exercise good judgement, maintain self-esteem and handle pressure.

Figure 4.3, drawing on data from Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys, reveals the considerable variation in the percentages of young people for whom a lack of information could potentially lead to death.

Figure 4.3
Misconceptions about AIDS among adolescent girls
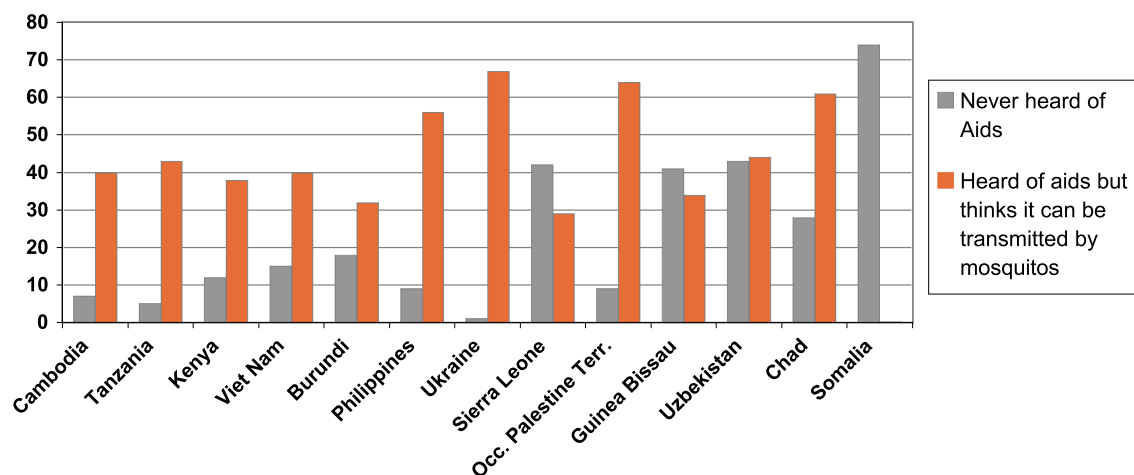
Source: UNICEF, *Adolescence: A Time That Matters* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.01.XX.13), p. 23.

In the protection and promotion of health,[36] parental consideration is the key and the youth perspective the doorway; the same is true for education in general and for health, reproductive health and sex education in particular.[37] The responsibility of parents to educate their offspring about the personal, physical and social aspects of sexuality, pregnancy, sex roles and sex-related matters, including STD prevention and management, is a major concern in most societies and can be considered an obligation in many traditions.[38] In situations in which both parents and traditional media fail to perform this duty, modern media may fill the gap, but not always in a health-promoting manner. Box 4.2 provides an example of how media misinformation can replace traditional sexual initiation. The nature, timing and content of health education need to be discussed by religious, civic and community leaders and by parents, teachers and health professionals—and with young people themselves.

Box 4.2
SEX (MIS)EDUCATION THROUGH MODERN MEDIA

Papua New Guinea's traditions provide fertile ground for (…) reproductive health education. Sex was never a taboo subject. Neither was it shameful. All societies saw it as the mysterious source of life. What was taboo was open sexual discussion between men and women. This distinction is important because, contrary to popular belief, discussions on sex raged within male or female groups. Adolescent males got instructions on manhood and paternal responsibilities in exclusively men's houses, when they were judged ready. Adolescent females were tutored by their mothers or aunts on their roles as wives and parents in women-only houses.

What was and is still missing is that, until they were judged ready, young people were barred from learning about sexual matters in those societies. They were told not to ask questions about how babies were made. In traditional society, that knowledge gap was filled when adolescents reached puberty. In today's modern setting, the ignorance spreads on, with the youth at the mercy of misinformed peers or pornographic and other media.

Source: UNFPA, *Populi*, excerpt (September 2000), p. 15.

Citing 32 projects in more than 20 countries, Johns Hopkins University has demonstrated the cost-effectiveness of utilizing quality media that correctly influence the health behaviour of young people.[39] In some countries, however, the role of the media is still poorly understood and defined with regard to health promotion and communication for sustaining behaviour change.[40] Figure 4.4 illustrates how the failure to match knowledge, skills and attitudes can create or perpetuate misconceptions, often exacting a high cost. Examples are numerous: in Ukraine and the Philippines, around three-quarters of young women, despite having received information about AIDS, still refused to buy from an HIV-positive shopkeeper; and in Azerbaijan and Gambia, a similar proportion believe that a teacher who looks healthy but is HIV-positive should be allowed to continue working.

Figure 4.4
Proportion of young women who have heard of AIDS and have at least one negative attitude towards people living with the disease
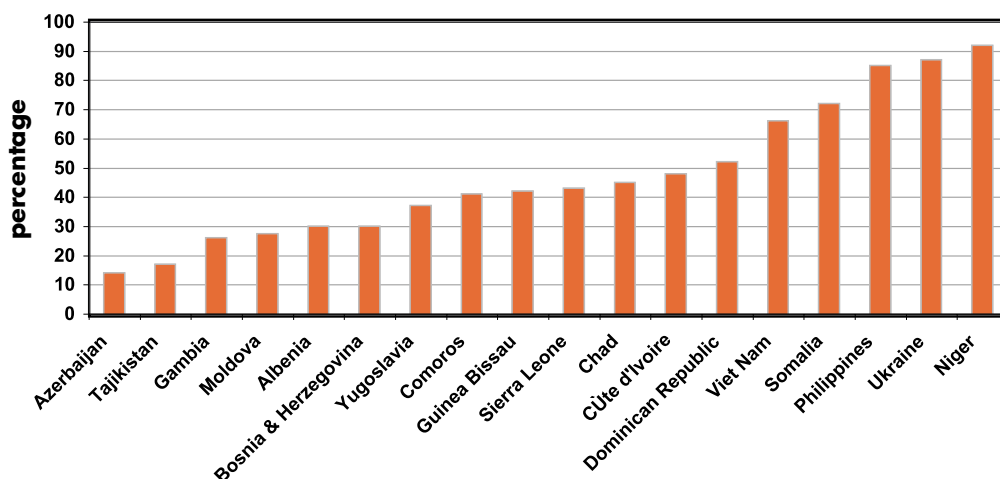
School curricula and extra-curricular activities are seen as ideal means to promote health and adolescent development. However, in cases in which multiple sources of resistance with regard to the status of adolescents and to youth participation combine with misconceptions of the objectives of sexual and reproductive health education, the intersectoral policy basis for youth health is undermined.[41]

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

Social and economic integration of the young and their access to and security within the world of work are consequences and determinants of health and development.

The socio-economic integration of both young women and young men follows improved literacy and basic education, founded on and leading to better health.[42] Social health is based upon recognition of individuals and populations and of their diversity (whether in terms of gender, age, disability, ethnicity, race, language, religion or sexual minority status) as social capital needed for growth, development and prosperity. As the size and proportion of the youth population change, youth policies, workplace laws, occupational health practices and placement mechanisms need to be revised to ensure that youth are provided access to training opportunities and the labour market. All such efforts contribute to reducing the harmful physical, social and mental health consequences associated with child labour, underemployment of the qualified young and youth unemployment in both developed and developing countries, inappropriate academic choices, unrealistic parental attainment expectations, and poor or tardy integration of the disabled.

Urbanization creates a particular set of conditions requiring both psychosocial and logistical competence on the part of youth living in huge metropolitan areas or drifting between rural origins and new peri-urban habitats. When young people about to enter into adult life perceive that their standard of living will never be as high as that of their parents or grandparents, the social and personal health cost is high. The ability of the health sector to absorb those youth who suffer from increased stress or frustration or clinical depression is limited. The exposure through media to images of unobtainable consumer lifestyles that contrast sharply with real living conditions is likely to contribute to higher levels of anxiety, compulsive behaviours, poor nutritional and exercise habits, and a consequent deterioration in mental and physical health.[43]

Where gender-based differences in the distribution of the workload between home and the place of employment exist, or where, because of discrepancies within the place of employment, society expects women to bear the double burden of housekeeping and lower remuneration for identical work, poorer occupational health for young women must be taken into account. Unpaid or extremely poorly paid domestic work for adolescent girls, many of whom will be at higher risk of sexual coercion as a result, and school drop-out related to pregnancy are the most flagrant examples of conditions that undermine young women's health and development.[44]

OTHER FACTORS INFLUENCING THE HEALTH OF YOUTH

Adult family members, community leaders, religious and faith groups, institutions and peers all influence young people and their health and development

The sources of influence on young people's health and development—for good or ill—include but are not limited to internal psychological mechanisms, external educational institutions, the media, peer pressure and individual expectations for the future. Adults of both sexes from within the family and from extended family communities influence adolescents through dialogue or example, providing both positive and negative reinforcement. Role modelling and solicitation of favours in exchange for rewards also play a role in shaping behaviour, including sexual behaviour. The leaders of religious communities and institutions often encourage and sometimes demonstrate how individuals, families and communities can promote and protect health and provide a safe and supportive environment.[45] At the same time, abuse by adults in positions of responsibility and influence over the lives of others, especially the young, is recognized as particularly compromising for personal development, sexual integrity and social stability.

The social and economic integration of adolescents and youth will be enhanced through legislation that provides appropriate protection for members of this group with regard to their preparation and training for entry into the world of work. Much of the common gender discrimination affecting adolescents and youth in their daily lives and work is easily recognizable. However, there are social constructs so

strong that women in general, and mothers in particular—but also young men—are prevented from seeing where and when they are each victims and perpetrators of life-threatening and health-compromising gender prejudices.

UNAIDS offers helpful suggestions for countering harmful gender norms (*see box 4.3*). The cost of gender-sensitivity training for those involved in youth health work is low in comparison with the cost of treatment for those who are return visitors suffering the physical and mental health effects of gender-based violence.

Box 4.3
UNAIDS RECOMMENDATIONS ON CHALLENGING HARMFUL GENDER NORMS

Programmes should seek to counter harmful gender norms that lead to the sexual coercion and exploitation of women and girls. Through the use of media, public information campaigns, the arts, schools and community discussion groups, such programmes should:

- Encourage discussion of the ways in which boys and girls are brought up and expected to behave;
- Challenge concepts of masculinity and femininity based on inequality and aggressive and passive stereotypes;
- Encourage men and boys to talk about sex, violence, drug use and AIDS with each other and their partners;
- Teach female assertiveness and negotiation skills in relationships, sex and reproduction;
- Teach and encourage male sexual and reproductive responsibility;
- Teach and promote respect for, and responsibility towards, women and children;
- Teach and promote equality in relationships and in the domestic and public spheres;
- Support actions to reduce male violence, including domestic and sexual violence;
- Encourage men to be providers of care and support in the family and community;
- Encourage understanding and acceptance of men who have sex with men.

Source: Reproduced from UNAIDS, "Report on the global HIV/AIDS epidemic 2002", p. 84.

The social cost of the poor health of adolescents "on the street" is often assessed by institutions such as the Naga Youth Centre in Cambodia.[46] However, the cost of measures appropriate for the health sector to ensure that a safe and supportive environment is created to prevent delinquency is less often calculated. An ongoing survey of homeless adolescents in the mid-western United States reveals the prevalence of abuse and violence in the lives of vulnerable youth. At least three out of every four runaways report being struck by some hard object, and 23 per cent of boys and 43 per cent of girls show signs of post-traumatic stress disorder. Associated health problems are predetermining factors in living away from the parental home.[47]

Protection from abuse is provided to some young people by legal systems that prohibit sexual advances from those who bear responsibility towards the young. Such laws protect youth from sexual coercion or constraint in a relationship with an older person while giving them the right and responsibility to manage sexual relationships

with people of similar age. In some legislation an age limit is strictly applied, with the perverse effect of turning a stable relationship between two young people into an zillegal, punishable act when the older one passes the age limit.

The influence of friends and others in the same age group plays an increasing role in shaping behaviour in middle and late adolescence before tapering off in young adulthood. Peer influence complements, and at times contrasts or conflicts with, the influence of parents and families, faith principles and community expectations. Structured youth and student groups help to channel and shape influence[48] using a cascade of peer-based methodologies starting with peer information sharing and motivation and continuing through peer education to peer counselling and service delivery or commodity dissemination. Dialogue and partnership between the generations, stimulated by active advocacy to support self-expression by adolescents and understanding on the part of elders, are of essential importance for social harmony and mental health.[49] Dialogue is of special relevance because the changes of adolescence are often lived as though they were unique to the young person experiencing them. When, almost inevitably, self-doubt overwhelms the adolescent, leading to mood changes and the questioning of prevailing socio-cultural values, parental expectations and religious principles, it is imperative that a skilled and caring older person shows the adolescent that he or she is not alone, not abnormal to be thinking in this way and can feel confident that someone is there to listen and share in their reflections.

There are data available on the sexual activity of adolescents and unmarried young people from most parts of the world.[50] A significant absence of data is noted for regions in which strong taboos exist with regard to sexual matters. In these areas researchers are prohibited from administering questionnaires addressing sexuality outside of marriage.[51] As a result, data about sexual activity cannot be collected from unmarried persons, making interregional comparisons and evidence-based health programming difficult. The prevailing principles, values and expectations about adolescents and their personal situation extend to sexuality.

Figure 4.5 shows that the percentage of those who report having had sex before their fifteenth birthday varies widely, ranging from 2 per cent of girls and 6 per cent of boys in Kazakhstan to around 45 per cent of boys in Gabon and Hungary (and half and two-thirds of that proportion of girls in each country respectively).[52]

Figure 4.5

Percentage of young men and women who have had sex before age 15, 1998-2001
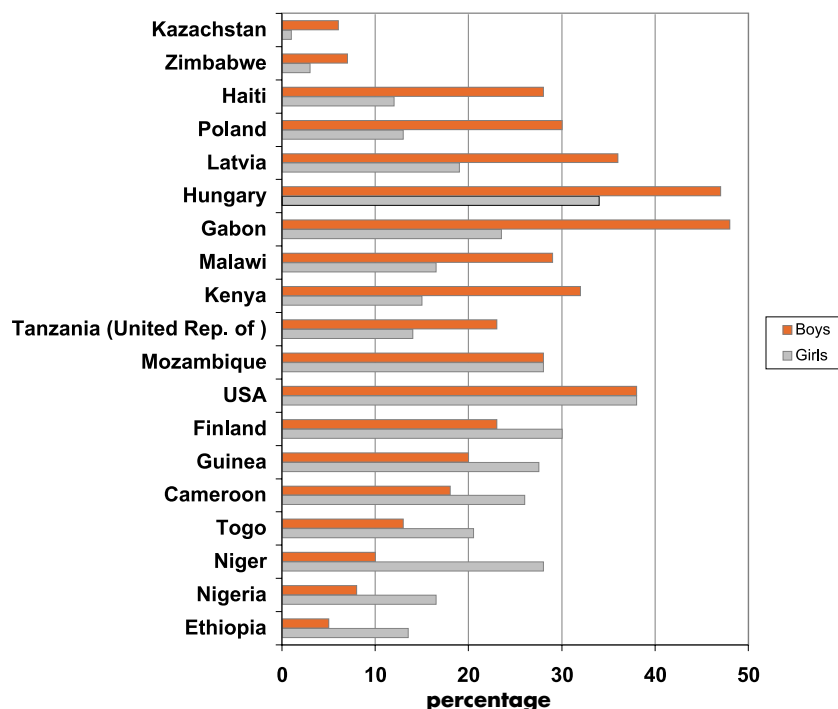
Source: UNAIDS, "Report on the global HIV/AIDS epidemic" (Geneva, 2002), p. 71.

The skills required for sustaining abstinence and other manifestations of sexual responsibility have to be learned. In this respect, health-care providers can support parents, community opinion leaders and others who bear responsibility towards the young. In particular, mental health professionals such as counsellors can help adolescents acquire important life skills, providing guidance in managing emotions and feelings, building and maintaining self-esteem, and applying negotiation skills that will enable them to refuse unwanted, unplanned and unprotected sex.

In order to communicate effectively in addressing sensitive issues raised by their adolescents, parents need to overcome social taboos, personal discomfort and a lack of relevant information and skills. Primary health-care workers can use their place on the front lines of family practice to assist youth in acquiring and sustaining good social, sexual, mental and spiritual health.

Parents are among those who play an important role in the life of an adolescent and continue to have a significant influence. This may not always be beneficial, as indicated by the persistently high proportion of mothers who say they intend to subject their daughters to the traditional practice of genital mutilation.[53] For others, the family is the institution that has sent them to become child brides, soldiers or labourers. Where beneficial influences within the family setting are demonstrated, the health and social sectors can support them. For many youth, however, the influence of external institutions and individuals on health-related behaviour is increasing. Clearly, additional measures and supportive actions must be provided to adolescents who do not have a nurturing family environment or for whom the family is the setting for abuse or

neglect. Youth-serving institutions have been shown capable of providing additional support to health promotion including creative peer-based approaches that underpin social values and norms while at the same time making health information, counselling and services available.[54]

BENEFITS OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Youth participation in community, political and social affairs puts them at the centre of development and allows them to exercise their right to be involved in decision-making on matters that concern them. Young people can and should be part of the solution to global and local health problems affecting themselves and the community at large. Their role as agents of change in promoting health and development enhances their competence.[55]

Participation also diversifies the settings in which adolescent and youth health can be promoted. Results of a 54-country survey indicate that young people wish to be treated with respect and have their voices heard, and to be provided with health services in a professional and respectful manner—not just in traditional settings but in all the places that young people frequent.[56] A major limitation in centrally directed programmes targeting high-risk behaviour can be overcome with youth participation in health promotion. Often risk behaviour is defined according to the perceptions of epidemiologists or other specialists. This means that some vulnerable young people will be overlooked, including those who may be only occasionally or sporadically involved in the risk behaviour. This is increasingly important, as some young people may not identify themselves as injecting drug users, commercial sex workers or homosexuals, but may occasionally consume substances, sell sex or have intercourse with those of the same sex.[57] Using peer-based but anonymous methods for the identification of young subjects makes it possible to extend coverage more widely.

The UNICEF Voices of Youth web site provides a clear example of how to elicit and assemble the views of youth in order to structure their contribution to decision-making.[58] It should be noted, of course, that market research shows how access to the Internet as a health education resource varies widely between the regions of the world.[59] As mentioned earlier, a cascade of methodologies relevant to peer approaches is emerging, ranging from peer motivation, social mobilization and information sharing to peer education and counselling, peer-based services, and youth-to-youth commodity distribution. These approaches enhance the work of health, educational and social services.

In most parts of the world, young people consider health a low to medium priority. A recent review of expectations of young Arabs indicates that while economic issues such as job opportunities are important to 45 per cent of 15- to 20-year-olds, health care is a top priority for only 4 per cent of them.[60] Health ranks below education, the environment, wealth and income distribution, and political participation. There are some young people, however, for whom health is articulated as an issue. Box 4.4 offers a summary of a focus group discussion with some medical students in Lebanon.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION WITH MEDICAL STUDENTS AT THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

The country started changing rapidly as a society in 1990 after 15 years of civil war. A post-war wave of modernization and globalization took place, facilitated by the availability of cable TV and satellite dishes mostly broadcasting programmes made up of or inspired by perceived Western attitudes, values and behaviour. At the same time, many Lebanese who had emigrated to Western countries during the war returned with a lifestyle that had been adapted to their adopted home.

All this had a clear impact on youth, leading to a sharp departure from the norms of the older generation, along with a rise in the age of first marriage owing largely to the deterioration of the economic situation. A combination of both factors resulted in a widely reported increase in premarital sex. Large parts of society from various local, religious, ethnic and migrational backgrounds refuse to believe that young people do in fact have boyfriends or girlfriends, engage in premarital sex with multiple partners, have same-sex relations and do not emphasize the importance of virginity. This dichotomy in perception and behaviour constitutes one of the major problems facing the implementation of adolescent sexual and reproductive health programmes in Lebanon—in fact, probably in the region as a whole.

Policy-making and real life stare at each other and drift further apart. Promoting reproductive health and safe sex is impossible in a society that thinks it is immune to sexual and reproductive problems, feeling itself free of extramarital sex. "Society would rather nurture a perverse fear that a national reproductive health programme for young people is a secret means for promoting premarital sex. This misguided adult view remains the challenge. So far, we are put at greater risk, living a risky lifestyle with little guidance and education, and absolutely no services and supplies."

Source: Focus group discussion with Hossam Mahmoud and others, April 2002, American University of Beirut.

Health can also be given low priority in industrialized countries with a strong tradition of public health care. The 2000 Shell Study on Youth[61] reveals that few German young people consider health a high priority, perceiving it as something that is being taken care of. Increasing unemployment rates, disappointing educational options and a pessimistic view of their own future obscure the value of health. Young Germans fear unemployment most, followed by drug problems, lack of apprenticeships, and irregularities in school and in education in general. Health problems are denied and rank lowest on the issue scale. Paradoxically, fitness and a healthy appearance are considered the most effective signs of establishing one's identity; young people feel that there is pressure on them to measure up to the ideal of youth being beautiful, fit, strong, lean and healthy. To address their needs effectively, the health concerns of adolescents need to be understood from their perspective and not only from mortality and morbidity trends.[62] Box 4.5 summarizes a focus group discussion with some economics students in Germany.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION WITH ECONOMICS STUDENTS IN GERMANY

Health planners should be placing more emphasis on certain global tendencies. Being young no longer means simply being healthy. Young peoples' health is getting worse, not better, because they remain a neglected part of society. The young are poorer than general society, and it is no consolation to say, "One day you'll be as old and wealthy as the mainstream today."

One solution is to stopping seeing children first of all as property of their parents. Value the specificity of young people—not as a lack of lifetime experience but as a resourceful skill that should be used before being lost.

Source: Focus group discussion, reported by Aron Mir Haschemi and others, spring 2001, University of Cologne, Germany.

Adolescents look at the world without prejudice through a window of opportunity to create peace and tolerance. Young people are often the first promoters of social reconciliation despite the stereotype of the clash of generations. Their natural desire for justice and truth and their unique capability to teach the world of adults can help abolish the hatred and mistaken belief that friends and neighbours are enemies. Openness and tolerance shown in childhood and early adolescence can be nurtured to the point that the physically disabled or mentally ill in a young person's entourage are not perceived as handicapped or considered incompetent or incapable of assuming a place in society. With their enthusiasm for surprise and novelty, young people show that marginalized racial, ethnic, linguistic, religious and sexual minorities are part of the rich diversity of life that contributes to social health. The publication *Scenarios from the Sahel* relates how young media professionals produced short films and television spots to successfully communicate health-promotion messages to young and old alike.[63] Not all nations and regions are able to provide adolescent programming on the basis of such active listening to young people. A pervasive paternalism in public health remains a major limitation despite clear provisions in the ICPD Programme of Action calling for young people to be involved in needs assessment, policy development and programme design, intervention delivery and evaluation.[64]

ADOLESCENT- AND YOUTH-FRIENDLY HEALTH SERVICES

Adolescent- and youth-friendly health services help enhance accessibility and acceptability.

It is becoming widely recognized in both developed and developing countries that friendliness towards clients enhances clinic accessibility and acceptability, though such quality-related criteria are difficult to measure. The United Kingdom health service makes it a priority to ensure that all potential users of services, including young people, are able to exercise their right to health care.[65] Throughout Africa, a friendly approach towards young clients involves giving them a say in decisions regarding working hours, staffing, decoration and the attractiveness of the premises, ensuring the presence of younger health professionals at least at the reception and initial screening interview, and/or providing a separate entrance for adolescent clients.[66] Once standards and criteria are clearly specified, it is possible to measure them. An example is the "quality assurance framework for young people's sexual health and contraceptive services" developed by the Brook Advisory Centres in the United Kingdom. The WHO technical report on programming for adolescent health and development describes the different models in place for delivering health services to adolescents and outlines a wide range of characteristics of "adolescent friendliness" that corresponds to the World Health Organization's wider definition of quality health care, highlighting the need for the following:

- Adolescent-friendly policies that advocate for the provision of services to honour the rights and fulfil the needs of adolescents, that are sensitive to gender-related factors hindering equitable provision and experience of care, that do not restrict the provision of health services on any terms, regardless of status, that guarantee privacy and confidentiality and promote autonomy, and that ensure that the special needs of different population segments/groups are taken into account;

- Adolescent-friendly procedures that ensure easy registration and record retrieval, short waiting times, free care or affordable charges, and consultations with or without an appointment;

- Adolescent-friendly health-care providers who are technically competent and act in the best interests of their clients/patients, who are interested and concerned, non-judgmental and considerate, easy to relate to and trustworthy, who treat all their clients/patients with equal care and respect (regardless of status) and are willing and able to devote adequate time to each, and who can be contacted at repeat visits;

- Adolescent-friendly support staff (such as reception clerks) who are understanding and considerate and treat adolescent clients with equal care and respect, regardless of their status;

- Adolescent-friendly health facilities that carry no stigma, are situated in an appealing milieu at a convenient and safe location, offer convenient hours of operation, afford privacy, and provide informational and educational materials;

- Adolescent involvement, whereby they are well informed about the services on offer and their rights to partake of them, and are actively involved in the provision of health services;

- Community involvement, whereby communities are engaged in positive dialogue to promote the value of health services and encourage parental and wider support for the provision of quality services to adolescents.

Interdisciplinarity and complementarity in health service provision for adolescents are primary considerations.[67] Even when an adolescent focus is ensured, there is no guarantee that they will present themselves, especially not to multiple sites of service delivery. One-stop health care is how adolescents themselves might describe what they are looking for, although this means in practice that a variety of types of health facilities might be called for, ranging from stand-alone adolescent reference centres, through private general practices with a solid reputation for attending to adolescent interests, to public primary health-care facilities integrating reproductive health and family planning where adolescents can receive special attention.

While competence and expertise are readily accepted as marks of quality in health care, the attitudes and practices of health service providers and associated staff often stand out in the minds of adolescent clients and can be strong indicators of whether or not a follow-up visit will be made. The orientation and training of health workers to build competence in handling adolescent patients is an area covering a

range of considerations that is constantly evolving. An introduction to, or orientation on, the meaning of adolescence and its implications for public health is urgently needed in medical and nursing curricula. An orientation would need to cover the development and mental, sexual and reproductive health of adolescents, including the prevention, testing and clinical management of pregnancy, STDs and HIV/AIDS, and management of the consequences of abortion. Health professionals also require training to learn how to deal with substance use among young people, adolescent aspects of vaccination and nutrition, chronic conditions, trauma, and health problems that begin in adolescence with manifestation in adulthood.[68] Senior service providers and programme managers need to know how to identify the ongoing training needs of service providers, including those of youth peer workers operating alongside professionals.

An optimum package of services for each level of facility is essential for each national or subnational context. The main considerations in setting up and maintaining a service programme should be sustainability, cost recovery within the limits of adolescents' ability to pay, prevailing health conditions, and the range of essential medications and commodities needed. A decline in self-medication and an increase in adolescent use of services can thereafter be expected; however, the responsibility is shared between adolescents and the health sector.

In certain countries, other sectors play a complementary role in health care and promotion through the services provided by military, school and university health departments, juvenile justice facilities, those engaged in sports medicine, and prenuptial counsellors. Counselling can also enhance the value and appropriate use of services and can prepare young people to lead healthy lives.[69] Non-directive, values-based, client-centred one-to-one and family counselling all have a place in enhancing the ability of young people to solve their own problems.[70]

Whatever the physical setting for service delivery, international best practice shows that when it comes to commodity provision, sexually active adolescents need the double protection of a barrier method to prevent STDs combined with an effective, long-lasting hormonal method to enhance pregnancy prevention.[71]

As they grow older, adolescents increase and diversify their risk behaviours,[72] but they also have an increasing ability to recognize their need for health care and the consequences of negligence, self-medication, recourse to unqualified practitioners and the failure to discuss relevant issues with significant adult mentors including parents. Special attention is required to enhance the use of services by the disadvantaged, displaced, disabled and indigenous populations and by marginalized ethnic, racial, religious and sexual minorities. Adolescents in especially difficult circumstances include those who live on the street, sell sex, use substances, live without families or are incarcerated. Adolescents who are fleeing conflict or have become refugees, or who have been internally displaced within their home countries, are in need of special attention. In some countries, military conscripts and career soldiers can be both young and vulnerable. All young people, including those facing particular challenges, merit and require positive outreach to ensure their access to health services and to stimulate beneficial reflection on what constitutes a suitable alternative approach, structure or type of staffing to bring health care to the young. Many health-

care professionals are ill-prepared to address the social and behavioural causes that underlie adolescent health problems. Some remain unwilling to recognize the need to reconsider their attitudes and prescribing practices with regard to young patients,[73] especially the marginalized.

Guidelines, indicators of quality service provision, additional procedures and protocols exist for adolescent-friendly primary care and appropriate secondary and tertiary referral. Medical and nursing education and training (both pre- and in-service), including the development of interpersonal communication and counselling skills, can enable health professionals to confidently meet the needs of the young in an adolescent-friendly environment.[74] However, these elements are far from universally integrated into capacity-building for service providers.

ADOLESCENT AND YOUTH HEALTH CONDITIONS

Thanks to the good start in life for which immunization and breastfeeding are largely responsible, adolescents and youth who have survived childhood illnesses are generally considered the healthiest members of society. However, accidental death and death by natural causes continue to take a toll, seen when calculating the burden of disability-adjusted life years lost through events occurring in adolescence. Health planners and service providers are thus obliged to rethink their views regarding youth, seeing them first as people and then as people with problems, rather than treating their health conditions in isolation from community-based pre-adolescent development.

Diseases and health conditions that burden adolescents require particular attention even to be documented as such, much less to be benchmarked for assessing progress.

Epidemiological procedures that unnecessarily aggregate data to mask age by year of birth or even sex contribute to the invisibility of adolescents and youth. Reporting on pregnancy by five-year cohorts unhelpfully amalgamates 15-year-old primiparae at evident high risk of complications with the lower biomedically at-risk 19-year-old expectant mothers.

Accidents and injuries are major causes of youth morbidity, mortality and disability. Anxiety and depression, stress and post-traumatic stress disorders combine with suicide, self-inflicted injury or other forms of violence (including homicide and the effects of self-administered abortion) to present one of the most disturbing faces of youth health. This situation is aggravated in countries ravaged by war, occupation, sanctions or embargoes. Figure 4.6 presents two scenarios, one for Croatia and the other for Bosnia and Herzegovina. The first graph shows male mortality rates across the lifespan at a time of peace. The U-shaped pattern is typical of industrialized countries: infant mortality is relatively contained, and children and adolescents have the lowest probability of death; mortality then rises for young people and increases steadily with age. The second graph shows the inversion of the U shape during a time of war,

with mortality cresting among 15- to 24-year-olds, many of whom are bearing arms. Beyond the male mortality impact of war lies the profound effect on children and young people subjected to a culture of violence, with young women in particular being victims of rape and sexual assault.[75]

Figure 4.6
Male mortality by age in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina
Source: UNICEF, "Young people in changing societies: the MONEE project, CEE/CIS/Baltics", Regional Monitoring Report No. 7 (Florence, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, 2000), p. 20.
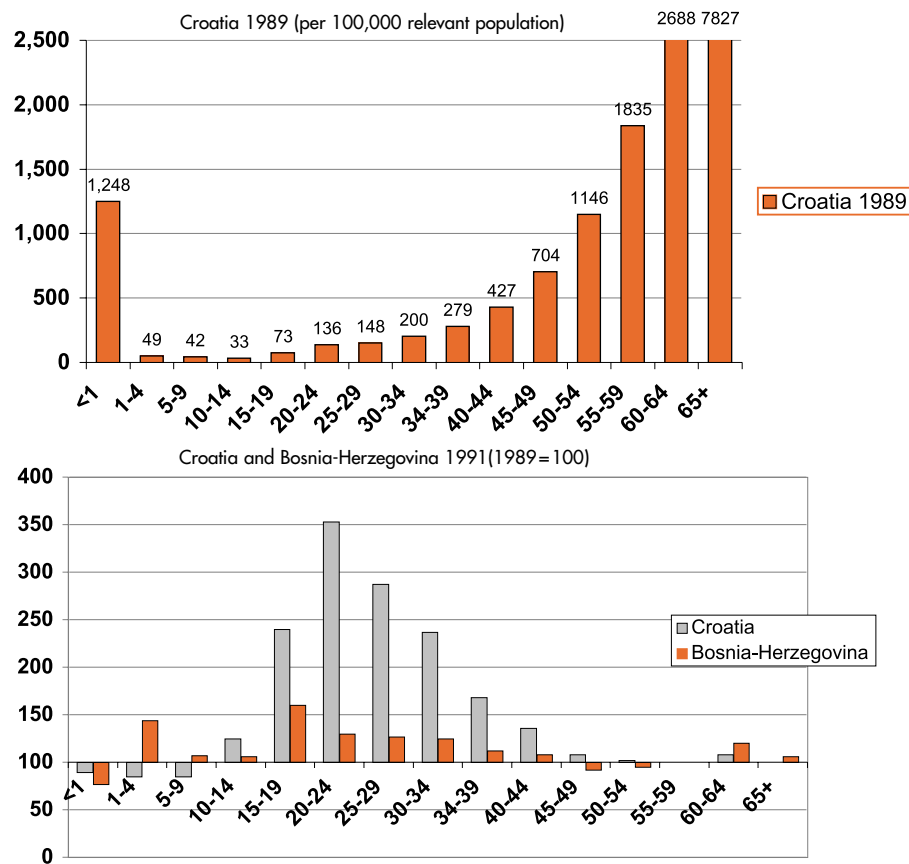
Note: The infant mortality rate is usually calculated per 1,000 live births instead of the rate per 100,000 children aged 0-1 used in the panel on Croatia, 1989.

Source: UNICEF, "Young people in changing societies: the MONEE project, CEE/CIS/Baltics" ,Regional Monitoring Report No. 7 (Florence, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, 2000), p. 20.

War is typically followed by an attempt to return to economic stability, perversely increasing sexual coercion and pressure on young women to assume a reproductive role, leading to earlier pregnancy both within and outside of marriage. This phenomenon has been seen in the course of the Great Lakes War in Central Africa.[76]

The establishment of sexual identity is one of the developmental tasks of adolescence. The State and the family have a duty to care for and support young people during this period of confusion and uncertainty, in particular by preventing sexual abuse.[77] Violence and abuse, including self-inflicted harm and suicidal behaviour, can also be related to sexuality, sexual orientation and gender-based discrimination.[78] Young people are often victims—though they can also be perpetrators—of such abuse and exploitation.

Social, cultural, religious and traditional attitudes towards adolescent sexuality and experimentation vary. There are those who believe that the criminalization or medicalization of young peoples' experimentation with sexuality constitute an obstacle to their personal development and an infringement of their rights. As illustrated earlier in this chapter, legislation in some countries allows for sexual experimentation without State interference.

The improvement of adolescent health worldwide depends on a myriad of interventions, happily some no more complex than washing hands and brushing teeth. Basic hygiene conditions in homes, schools and workplaces around the world have a profound effect on adolescent and youth health, as well as on the health of children born to young mothers. Water, sanitation and hygiene is, in reality, measured at the household rather than the individual level, so in some sense there is no way or need to isolate any age group on the exposure side. The proportion of households with access to clean water and sanitation shows what access adolescent household members have. However, it is not unlikely that adolescent-headed households, like female-headed households, suffer disproportionately from poverty and therefore tend to have more limited access to water and sanitation.

Health education has traditionally focused on basic and oral hygiene, but generally just for those under age five and schoolchildren. There is a well-indicated need to focus on young mothers-to-be and probably on medical students,[79] as this has the potential to dramatically reduce mortality and morbidity by associating manufacturers with health authorities in marketing soap and toothpaste to the young.[80] This is a reminder that behaviours and perceptions are acquired in childhood and, when rehearsed or reinforced in adolescence, have health consequences in adulthood.

Perhaps the most striking example of harmful traditional repetitive behaviour is female genital mutilation—a form of gender-based violence. The age of mutilation varies between countries and cultures, potentially taking place shortly after birth, during early childhood or adolescence, right before marriage or in the seventh month of pregnancy. Whatever the age at which mutilation occurs, psychosocial and biomedical consequences and complications are often manifest during late adolescence in the forms of diminished self-esteem, depression and anxiety, and chronic genito-urinary disorders including abscesses, urinary tract infections, obstructed labour, infertility, and the formation of vesico-vaginal fistulae. While opinion leaders and health professionals are generally aware of these consequences, too few adolescents receive information about the problems associated with this practice.[81] Health professionals brazenly violate young women's rights and their own professional ethics by conducting the procedure.

Other cultural practices harmful to sexual and reproductive health have been adopted by a significant number of adolescents, leading to pregnancy and the transmission of STDs including HIV/AIDS. Data from the Inter-Agency Group's Safe Motherhood Initiative show that pregnancy at age 15 is inevitably characterized by high risk, while at least the corresponding physical biomedical risks for a healthy 19-year-old are reduced. The risk of dying from pregnancy-related causes is twice as high for 15- to 19-year-olds as for 20- to 24-year-olds.[82] Young women aged 15-19 years give birth to approximately 17 million of the 131 million children born every year. In

sub-Saharan Africa around one in five girls in this age group gives birth each year, while in Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Netherlands and Switzerland fewer than one in 100 girls ever gives birth under the age of 20.[83]

In many developed countries immunization in adolescence is recommended, particularly for tetanus and hepatitis A and B prevention.[84] In a number of other countries, high levels of endemic hepatitis affect all population groups, including adolescents, and measles and tetanus continue to complicate adolescent pregnancies. In areas in which poor sanitation is combined with professional neglect of universal precautions for the prevention of infection in hospitals, nosocomial infection is not uncommon. In developing countries in particular, these added health risks and threats, combined with the physical, mental and emotional burdens provoked by female genital mutilation and various initiation rites, weigh greatly on adolescents in their interaction with health facilities.

Poor nutritional practices, cardiovascular diseases, obesity, anaemia, eating disorders, and conditions associated with affluence add to the burdens on today's youth and the adults they will become. The early onset of type 2 diabetes, normally associated with the excess weight that comes with ageing and poor nutrition,[85] and the increasing prevalence of eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia are part of an emerging trend that is placing a strain on health services[86] and causing pain for adolescents and those who care about them. Other lifestyle diseases are associated with inactivity or excessive consumption, particularly in developed countries, parts of the Arab world and the economies in transition, and also among young people from ethnic minorities.[87]

The influence exercised by cigarette manufacturers on the health behaviour of young people is disturbing. The use of tobacco is a major public health concern, yet because of clever advertising and misinformation in the media and tobacco company sponsorship of sports and cultural events, young people fail to perceive themselves as being at high risk of the entirely avoidable burdens of disease, death and disability linked to the use of this substance.

The emergence or continued existence of eye problems related to computer use, refractive errors and poor vision, and even blinding trachoma in some poverty pockets, indicates that there is still much to be done for the prevention and control of conditions ranging from imperfect vision to blindness in adolescents and youth.[88]

Creative use of whatever leisure time is available to young people can increase—even marginally—the amount of physical activity they undertake. Promoting fitness will have a beneficial impact on their current and future health.

THE POLICY ENVIRONMENT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE'S HEALTH

While every country has some policy basis for action to promote adolescent and youth health, too few national health policies give specific attention to young people. Nonetheless, most United Nations specialized agencies are working to ensure that regional strategies and national plans for adolescent and youth health are being developed, published and acted upon. The Millennium Development Goals underpin such plans.

A successful adolescent and youth health policy, strategy, service, programme or project will almost certainly be interdisciplinary and extend beyond the health sector. The role of various social actors is already known and the effectiveness of youth participation acknowledged. The planning and policy frameworks exist at the international level and are to a large extent nationally adopted, though so far this has not guaranteed that community responses are appropriate, effective or efficient.

In a variety of policy development processes, it is becoming more clearly recognized that adolescents and youth have specific needs. The means to ensure replicability, reliability, quality and cost-effectiveness in adolescent health programming are becoming more widely known and available to policy makers, health professionals, legislators and community leaders.[89] Models of health services reflecting the principles of health sector reform need to ensure that counselling, other services and health commodities are accessible to adolescents if such models are to go to scale.

A focus on the young during health sector reform contributes to the establishment of a relationship between individuals and a system that will take care of them throughout their lives. Attention to adolescents at the start of their self-managed interaction with the health system will ensure more effective recourse to health care, limited by spontaneous preference for lower-cost prophylactic measures over high-cost curative services.

Frameworks, statements, guidelines and policies already touch upon adolescent and youth health in general and often cover the health and development concerns of adolescent girls and young women. Adolescent and youth concerns receive brief mention in assessments of mental health, violence and injury prevention, and HIV/AIDS prevention and care. Adolescent sexual and reproductive health is as yet largely underprotected by effective laws and policies.

The systematic documentation, evaluation and dissemination of projects and initiatives in which young women and young men act as agents of change will influence and if necessary reorient how youth health projects are managed. Norms, standards and indicators for evaluation, as well as technical guidelines, are still being developed as part of the overall effort to achieve large-scale adolescent and youth health programming in which young people are fully involved alongside clinicians, technicians and politicians.

The relative absence of a mid- to long-term economic evidence base for investing in youth health as part of health sector reform is being compensated for by the emergence of more accurate and appropriate measurement mechanisms and indicators for the design, delivery and evaluation of interventions.

As indicated in the outcomes of the third and fourth sessions of the World Youth Forum, respectively held in Braga, Portugal, in 1998 and in Dakar, Senegal, in 2001, young people are calling for increased access to national and international resources in order to establish formal and informal educational programmes on HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, sexual and reproductive health, and mental health. Young people clearly want their Governments to facilitate improved access for youth to health information, health services and sexual and reproductive health services.

Young people have advocated the implementation of the recommendations adopted by the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS (New York, 2001), especially those pertaining directly to youth issues. They have priority concerns they hope to see incorporated in national policies addressing youth health and want to contribute to efforts to make counselling and information available (especially on sexual and reproductive health), to promote youth-friendly health services, and to foster progress through research on relevant issues that have been characterized by distinct change since the International Youth Year in 1985.

Global policy concerns reported by youth include adolescent fertility and teenage pregnancy, female genital mutilation, abortion and family planning. Region-specific issues include HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis, malnutrition, and bilharzia (schistosomiasis) in Africa, violence and injury in the Americas, conflict, occupation and displacement in the Middle East, HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis among young injecting drug users in Europe, suicide and gender-based discrimination in Asia, obesity and eating disorders in wealthy countries, traffic accidents in cities and on highways running through villages, and health and safety in the workplace in transitional and emerging economies.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is hoped that this chapter will stimulate action to build on existing experience in adolescent and youth policy and to help accelerate programming in order to ensure the physical, mental, emotional and social health and overall well-being of young people. Efforts to achieve these objectives should focus on the following:

- Creating a positive environment for promoting the right of young people to participation, development and peace as milestones on their road to better health;

- Equipping young people with adequate knowledge, self-esteem and life skills to ensure their healthy development and to advocate for their provision at the family, school and community levels;

- Enhancing the concept of gender equality between young men and young women and redressing the imbalance in the provision of opportunities—particularly for adolescent girls at risk of early marriage and consequent high-risk pregnancy;

- Providing care and protection for all young people—whatever their health, disability, vulnerability or risk status, their age, gender, sexual orientation or class, or their ethnic, racial, religious or linguistic background—through a safe and supportive environment created and supported by appropriate legislation, clinical procedures and health services including counselling.

Although young people generally constitute one of the healthiest population groups, poor health resulting from disease, accidents or injury is not insignificant for them. Factors that influence the health of young people are numerous and interrelated. Consequently, successful health policies for this group must be interdisciplinary and intersectoral, taking into account not only their physical condition, but also their personal, social, emotional and mental development. It is therefore imperative that national youth health policies and strategies extend beyond the health sector.

Health professionals can contribute to the nurturing environment that should be provided by parents, community leaders and others who bear responsibility for the health of young people. Equally or even more important, however, is young people's participation in all stages of health provision—including needs assessment, design, delivery and evaluation—to ensure that health responses are appropriate, effective and efficient. Promoting good health for young people depends a great deal on providing appropriate information and on facilitating the development of life skills through which youth acquire the ability to deal with sexuality in a mature manner, to exercise good judgement, to build and maintain healthy self-esteem, to manage emotions and feelings, and to handle pressure.

There is an urgent and ongoing need to address young people's sexual and reproductive health using a preventive, rights-based, gender-responsive and empowering approach. Relevant efforts should build on the creative energies of youth and respect their rights and capacities for participation and leadership in decisions that affect their lives. Sexual and reproductive health—tied to emotional, mental and physical health as part of the holistic concept of overall well-being—is an essential component of young people's ability to become well-adjusted, responsible and productive members of society. ■

[1] Chief executive officers of the largest worldwide non-formal educational organizations (World Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations, World Young Women's Christian Association, World Organization of the Scout Movement, World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and International Award Association), *The Education of Young People: A Statement at the Dawn of the 21st Century* (Geneva, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 2000).

[2] WHO, Department of Child and Adolescent Health and Development, *Growing in Confidence: Lessons from Eight Countries in Successful Scaling Up of Adolescent Health and Development Programming* (Geneva, 2002) (WHO/FCH/CAH/02.13).

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Chapter 5.
YOUTH & the
ENVIRONMENT

INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins with a brief *overview of the condition of the world's environment and variations in environmental quality around the globe. It then addresses the adequacy of existing policy responses, which provides a context for exploring the roles youth can play in environmental affairs. It examines how these roles might be strengthened through such means as environmental education, whose importance and shortcomings are analyzed. The chapter then turns to the role the media plays in contributing to— and sometimes impeding—social learning in environmental affairs.*

OVERVIEW

Youth have both special concerns and special responsibilities in relation to the environment. A number of environmental risks and hazards disproportionately affect young people, who have to live for an extended period with the deteriorating environment bequeathed to them by earlier generations. Young people will be compelled to engage in new forms of action and activism that will generate effective responses to ecological challenges.

Before investigating the role youth can play in addressing environmental issues, it is important to provide some background and establish a clear context by identifying the current state of the environment. The nature, extent and severity of environmental problems vary tremendously from one part of the world to another. It is perhaps most logical to begin with an overview of the state of the global environment, providing a snapshot of its present condition, as well as a more detailed and revealing assessment of past trends and likely future developments. This level of analysis is justified because certain issues—most notably global warming and ozone layer depletion—are intrinsically global problems and therefore of concern to everyone in the world.

Global indicators are additionally important because national and regional indicators can sometimes be misleading. For example, a country may show a downward trend in industrial pollutant levels, but this may be because the more polluting sectors of its manufacturing industry have moved to countries with more relaxed pollution standards. A region such as Western Europe may do an excellent job of conserving its remaining forests but depend heavily on unsustainable logging in old-growth forests elsewhere in the world.[1] Clearly, global indicators are not all that matter, but they do provide a point of reference and help control for these types of effects.

Global indicators fall into two categories, namely, measures of human well-being and assessments of the condition of the world's ecosystems on which all life depends. These two kinds of indicators give very different impressions about the nature—or even the existence—of a global ecological crisis.

Measures of human well-being indicate that global trends over recent decades have almost all been positive. Life expectancy has risen, infant mortality has fallen, and the proportion of the world's population with access to clean drinking water has increased. The real price of most natural resources including oil, coal, gas and metals (but not timber) is declining with time. Economists maintain that price is a measure of scarcity, the indication being here that most resources are becoming less scarce with time. Such statements about trends in well-being are controversial. Bjørn Lomborg's

book *The Skeptical Environmentalist*[2] offers the best publicized recent positive interpretation of these trends (similar views from past decades can be found elsewhere).[3] The most unremittingly negative interpretations can be found in the annual *State of the World* reports published by the Worldwatch Institute. Both sides are guilty of selective and sometimes misleading presentation of data in support of their positions. Lomborg exposes such selectivity on the part of Worldwatch, but is less forthcoming in exposing his own errors on this score. For example, Lomborg cites FAO data indicating that, contrary to popular perceptions and the claims of doomsayers, total global forest cover rose by 0.85 per cent from 1950 to 1994.[4] However, an increase in temperate forest cover does not compensate for the decline in tropical forests; Lomborg himself admits the latter are shrinking at a rate of 0.46 per cent annually.

Overall, those on the positive side are probably right about trends in global indicators of human well-being over recent decades, but this does nothing to defuse any meaningful rendition of ecological crisis. Part of the reason for improvements in the past few decades is the strenuous effort of environmentalists and others in pushing for pollution control, nature conservation and the like. Another reason to resist complacency is that past trends in well-being cannot necessarily be projected into the future. Positive projections make sense only if one has unlimited faith in human ingenuity to provide solutions to any problems that arise from this point forward. As Thomas Homer-Dixon points out, the supply of ingenuity and the social capacity to mobilize it may be reduced by environmental degradation in poor societies, especially if scarcity induces conflict rather than cooperation between people.[5]

Unlimited faith in the supply of ingenuity is consistent with a Promethean world view on environmental issues, which underpins the optimistic prognoses of Julian Simon and Bjørn Lomborg.[6] The more pessimistic outlook of doomsayers such as the Worldwatch Institute is backed by a Malthusian world view that acknowledges only ecological limits on human population and economic growth. Prometheans are often economists (Lomborg is exceptional in that he is a political scientist) with great faith in the capacity of the market to provide solutions to problems of resource scarcity. Malthusians are more likely to have a background in the biological sciences. Their basic proposition is that continued exponential growth in the economy and/or population[7]—and the consequent stress on natural systems—cannot go on forever in a finite system such as the global ecosystem. The Malthusian *Limits to Growth* global modellers of the 1970s[8] made the mistake of attaching a fairly short time scale to their predictions of doom as limits were approached. The complexity and uncertainty associated with global environmental affairs make it impossible to determine exactly where the relevant ecological limits lie. The Malthusians say they must surely lie somewhere: in the capacity of the Earth's ecosystems to assimilate ever-growing quantities of wastes, in the ability of cropland to feed ever-growing numbers of people, or in the general capacity of the global ecosystem to accommodate stress.

The clarity of the dispute is obscured by the fact that Malthusians often choose to fight on the chosen ground of the Prometheans, arguing that indicators of human well-being have already worsened at the aggregate level, not that they will in the future. The defining moment occurred with a famous bet made between leading Malthusian Paul Ehrlich and prominent Promethean Julian Simon in 1980. Simon wagered that the

real price of any natural resource Ehrlich selected would be lower at any point in the future than in 1980. Ehrlich responded by choosing 1990 as the target year, and copper, chrome, nickel, tin and tungsten as the resources. In 1990, the price of each of these resources was between 8 and 78 per cent lower than in 1980, and Ehrlich paid Simon $1,000. The history of false alarms generated by the Malthusians—going back to the *Limits to Growth* forecasts of the early 1970s and predictions of severe global cooling made at the same time—does them little credit.

The Malthusians are on much more solid ground, however, in their focus on the well-being of natural systems as opposed to that of human systems. Malthusians can point to indicators such as declining biodiversity, declining yields from ocean fisheries, topsoil erosion in relation to the regenerative capacity of land, increasing levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, and falling quantities of proven energy reserves in relation to levels of resource use.

It has been argued that a focus on the global environment is important because it helps to control for displacement across place. However, global aggregates obscure important local variations, which are substantial. Both environmental well-being and environmental stress are distributed unequally across the globe, meaning that issues of distributive justice intersect with environmental concerns. "Environmental justice" is the focus of an emerging global debate.[9] The inequalities are reinforcing in that those with the greatest environmental well-being often impose the greatest stress (in terms of resource use and pollution) on the global ecosystem. It is high-consumption societies that place significant pressure on the environment through, for example, per capita fossil fuel consumption many times that of poorer societies. The picture is a bit different with regard to stress imposed on the local ecosystems, because poorer societies often lack management capacity or the financial resources to invest in abatement technology. Still, when it comes to transitions to sustainability, it is high-consumption societies that ought to lead the way, since they impose a higher degree of stress and have a greater capacity to relieve that stress.

THE ROLE OF YOUTH IN CREATING ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

Young people constitute a large part of the world's population. Many, especially young children, are particularly vulnerable to environmental risks associated with, for example, access to clean and safe drinking water. In addition, young people will have to live longer with the consequences of current environmental decisions than will their elders. Future generations will also be affected by these decisions and the extent to which they have addressed concerns such as the depletion of resources, the loss of biodiversity, and long-lived radioactive wastes. Representing the concerns of future generations is difficult in the context of policy-making in the present. However, the objective is not to expand time horizons many years into the future; moving beyond the current very-short-term focus of much decision-making would be sufficient. In markets, the focus is often on short-term profits; discount rates in capital markets mean that the longer into the future an effect occurs, the more it will be downweighted. Politicians in liberal democratic political systems rarely look much further than the next election. Authoritarian leaders (even if they do have concerns beyond their own

enrichment and aggrandizement) often have even shorter time horizons, because they must worry continuously about being overthrown. In politics, youth can help by making their influence felt as a constituency for the long term, calling political leaders to account for the long-range environmental consequences of their decisions.

It is much harder to exercise influence in markets on behalf of the long term, given the inbuilt logic of interest rates and discount rates that drive investment decisions. Nonetheless, there are actions that can be taken. Young people are often the target of commercials, not just because of any disposable income they may possess, but because corporations promoting goods and services have a vested interest in establishing high-consumption patterns that will last a lifetime. The most nefarious example is tobacco advertising directed at young people to encourage early use and lifelong addiction, but the logic applies to consumer goods more generally. This kind of targeted advertising can be resisted, especially if its consequence is to draw youth into a lifestyle characterized by excessive consumption. Environmental education is one way of equipping young people with the necessary cognitive skills to recognize and withstand the pressures of advertising. However, the kind of education required involves not only providing information about how the world's ecosystems are under stress, but also guidance on how to draw links between an advertiser's product and its ecological consequences. The cognitive demands are very high. Advertisers are extremely skilled—not least at disseminating messages suggesting that their products and activities are environmentally sound or beneficial. This process is known as "greenwashing". It occurs when an automobile company markets "green" sports utility vehicles, and when a lumber firm, logging in old-growth forests, styles itself "the tree-growing corporation".

As well as turning one's back on advertising, there are ways of calling corporations to account.[10] Consumer boycotts can be effective, and protests eventually cause polluting companies to rethink their entire corporate strategy.

Aside from having a greater stake in the more distant future, young people are especially well-placed to promote environmental awareness simply because they often have better access to information about the environment than do their elders. In part this is a matter of having being exposed to more environmental education in schools, at least in the developed world and perhaps more sporadically elsewhere (environmental education is explored in more detail below). Aside from exposure in formal education, youth have lived all their lives in an era in which environmental issues have loomed large. Established anti-ecological ways of thinking and behaving are not ingrained in young people, and they can introduce fresh ideas and outlooks to issues.

Because youth have a stronger awareness of the issues and a greater stake in long-term sustainability, the environment is one area in which they ought to take the lead. In many countries, a generation that came of age politically in the 1970s organized and established environmental movements and green parties. To combat "the greying of the greens", a new generation needs to come to the fore. They will face challenges as pressures are brought to bear in the opposite direction. The commercialization of every area of life affects young people too. In addition, technologies that increasingly distance people from the environmental effects of their consumption decisions are growing with globalization, acting as an impediment to environmental awareness.

STRENGTHENING PARTICIPATION OF YOUTH IN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

The participation of youth in environmental protection can be sought at levels and locations ranging from grass-roots activism and participation in conservation projects to policy-making bodies and NGOs.

The role of youth can be institutionalized in policy-making through advisory bodies such as youth councils. Many national Governments have ministries or departments with "youth affairs" as part of their portfolio, though such offices tend to view youth as a population to be addressed by public policy (often "youth affairs" is part of the education ministry), rather than a resource to be tapped for participation in policy-making in a variety of areas, including the environment.

Currently, the participation of youth appears to be formalized more extensively in international governmental organizations than at the national level. For example, UNEP has a Youth Advisory Council that plays a supportive role. UNDP sponsors training for young environmental leaders in the former communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe.[11] Chapter 25 of Agenda 21, adopted at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro, reads as follows:

> "It is imperative that youth from all parts of the world participate actively in all relevant levels of decision-making processes because it affects their lives today and has implications for their futures. In addition to their intellectual contribution and their ability to mobilize support, they bring unique perspectives that need to be taken into account."[12]

In a similar spirit, paragraph 153 of the Plan of Implementation adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg in 2002, indicates the need to "promote and support youth participation in programmes and activities relating to sustainable development through, for example, supporting local youth councils or their equivalent, and by encouraging their establishment where they do not exist."

An International Youth Summit was held in Mogwase, South Africa, prior to the World Summit. Youth Summit delegates established the Youth Caucus, which was active in the PrepComm meetings leading up to the World Summit. The presence of the Caucus members induced some countries to include youth representatives in their delegations. Relatively few national delegations showed such initiative, however, and among those that did, many were unable to progress beyond token representation. Only 6 of the 100 national delegations at the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit in February 2002 had a youth representative. Four of those representatives drafted a letter urging each delegation to include a youth representative at subsequent meetings; at the fourth session later in the year, however, only eight delegations had done so. In Johannesburg, around 40 youth representatives had government passes allowing them entry to the "official" proceedings of the Summit.

Global gatherings such as the Summit are also attended by NGOs, and youth can play a role in these organizations as well. The Youth Caucus in Johannesburg included NGO activists as well as members of government delegations. At UNCED in 1992, thousands of NGO representatives participated in the Global Forum, a sideline event in which debate was more lively and creative than in the official Conference proceedings. The role of NGOs has become increasingly institutionalized, so the Johannesburg Summit had a Civil Society Secretariat independent from the United Nations Secretariat, and around 45,000 people participated in the Civil Society Global Forum. Any institutionalization may compromise and blunt the radicalism of NGOs that have a "social movement" component (a concept explored further below). Protests constitute a standard feature of international conferences, however, and youth tend to be highly represented in them. For example, at a preparatory meeting for the World Summit in Johannesburg, youth delegates organized a backward march through a conference session to dramatize the fact that no progress was being made on key sustainable development issues, and that matters indeed seemed to be moving backward. At the Summit itself, around 100 youth representatives staged a "round in circles" march up and down the escalators in the conference centre (though demonstrations inside the centre were banned, the protesters were not removed).

NGOs operate at all levels, from local to global. In Australia, the Youth Environment Society declares that its aim is "to inform, inspire and empower Australian youth to make positive change regarding environmental issues".[13] Youth and Environment Europe acts as coordinating organization for 40 national and regional environmental and youth organizations.[14] Aside from facilitating the exchange of information and experiences, this organization brings together young people from different countries to work on conservation projects at camps and promotes environmental awareness, notably through publications such as its *Youth and Environment* magazine.

Outside youth-specific NGOs, young people can play various roles in environmental groups more generally. Some groups are better than others at encouraging youth participation. For example, the San Francisco-based Earth Island Institute annually presents Brower Youth Awards to exemplary young environmental activists, who do not have to be Institute members. Recipients in 2001 included a 16-year-old from New York who organized a project to turn a desolate urban space into a garden, and an 18-year-old from North Carolina, who succeeded in persuading an office products retailer to stock recycled paper.[15]

Youth participation through governmental and non-governmental organizations is important, but there is a place for other kinds of youth action and activism as well. Environmentalism has many roots—in scientific concern for the well-being of resources and ecosystems, in philosophical reflections about nature, in concerns about public health, and in clubs involved initially in providing outdoor recreation opportunities. One particularly important root is the social movement. Along with feminism, environmentalism is the best example of the "new social movements" that gathered momentum in the 1970s and 1980s. New social movements are distinguished from their predecessors by the fact that they do not focus on issues of material distribution across social classes. Nor do they organize (at least initially) with the

intention of gaining a share of government power, but instead feature a self-limiting radicalism. They care a great deal about identity (what it means to be an environmentalist) as well as strategy (how environmental goals are to be achieved). Their organizational form is often fluid, non-hierarchical and participatory.[16] The political venue they emphasize is the public sphere rather than the State, and they are engaged in political association, action and discussion about public affairs that is not formally part of government. Within the public sphere, social movements rely on the media (whose potential role is addressed below) as well as informal networks of activists, information sharing, protests, demonstrations, boycotts, and events geared to attract media publicity (examples include activists digging up a square in London to plant flowers or jumping over a fence to instal solar panels on the roof of the Australian prime minister's residence).

New social movements are no longer new. Many of their activists have taken the "long march through the institutions"—in some cases, as with the German Green Party, eventually becoming government ministers.[17] According to Claus Offe, this is the natural life cycle of any social movement, which typically begins in disorganized protest and activism, eventually coalesces into formal organizations, becomes more moderate with time, and then joins the formal political system.[18] Offe's analysis does not capture everything that has happened in the environmental movement, and many activists have resisted the moderation of the movement and its closer relationship with the Government. Nonetheless, the fact remains that as movements and their activists age there is always need for renewal from the grass roots, or even for the creation of alternative movement forms and foci. As an example, in the early 1990s the established environmental groups in the United Kingdom developed a closer relationship with the Government but had no impact at all in weakening the Government's commitment to massive new road networks. The result was the emergence of new kinds of young activist groups. In the cities, a group called Reclaim the Streets sponsored events (often organized at the last minute to foil the police) to bring car traffic to a standstill and effectively shut down the streets. In the countryside, individuals associated with groups such as Earth First! and the Dongas Tribe blockaded road construction sites, often taking up residence in tunnels to stop the bulldozers. These groups lacked formal organization, in part so their assets could not be seized by the Government through court action. These examples illustrate how a new generation of young people identified the need for a response and invented new forms of activism. A narrow evaluation of that activism would indicate that no road projects were prevented by the protests. However, the movement was successful in both raising public awareness and adding substantially to the costs of building roads (because of the need for enhanced security, police presence and construction delays). A change in government transportation policy that de-emphasized road building followed. The battles may have been lost, but the war was won.

More recently, protests such as those that erupted in Seattle at the 1999 WTO meetings and elsewhere have featured new kinds of youth activism. Unlike many previous movements, the WTO protestors had no semblance of a common programme. Some of their concerns related to the environmental effects of uncontrolled marketization, some to unfair labour practices (involving sweatshops and child

workers), and some to the rejection of capitalist principles. The movement is sometimes called "anti-globalization", but that is just journalistic shorthand. The global establishment and its media mouthpieces ridiculed the protestors for their alleged lack of ideological sophistication. However, this establishment also sat up and took notice, and at least began to talk about moderating global market liberalism. The diversity of the "movement" in terms of the issues, goals and backgrounds of the participants may itself herald a new kind of political form: the transnational network that does not seek unity, but instead operates on the principle of respect for diversity. The general point here is that each generation has the capacity to invent new political forms, and it is always youth who take the lead because they are not subject to the established routines and stereotypes of their elders.

One aspect of innovation is the extent to which contemporary social movements are now transnational in character; they organize networks that span the globe. For example, the network against biopiracy brings activists in the developed world together with communities in developing countries exploited by transnational corporations, and universities taking advantage of indigenous knowledge about local plants and animals then turning this knowledge into products they seek to patent without adequate compensation to the communities.

Aside from political action, there are possibilities for youth participation in practical environmental projects. Examples of restoration projects include Landcare groups working to reverse land degradation in overgrazed watersheds in Australia and community-organized tree planting in rural India. Helping restore one's own local environment is instructive, but participating in projects in other countries is especially educational in that these experiences impart a sense of the variety of problems in the world's social and ecological systems. Camps such as those organized under the auspices of Youth and Environment Europe can play an important role in this respect. Even one's everyday life—and particularly the consumption decisions made in it—can become an "environmental project". In the early 1990s, sustainable consumption became a key part of the Norwegian Government's sustainable development agenda. To support this initiative, the Environmental Home Guard was established in consultation with established environmental organizations. The Home Guard is not a conventional environmentalist group; it has no members, but rather "supporters" who promise to behave in environmentally responsible ways. It also provides information and education, and offers one model for involving youth (and others) in environmental protection.

Strengthening the participation of youth in environmental protection is partly a matter of increasing opportunities in governmental organizations, established NGOs and restoration projects; partly a matter of youth themselves devising new forms of action, as the preceding examples of innovative activism make clear; and partly a question of more effective environmental education and media presentation of environmental issues.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Environmental education has an important role to play in the promotion of environmental awareness (chapter 25 of Agenda 21 addresses the issue in some detail). The knowledge base of a society is one important aspect of its capacity to address and cope with environmental issues. Martin Jänicke and Helmut Weidner write in this context of "the conditions under which environmental knowledge is produced, distributed, interpreted, and applied".[19] Environmental education is the first step in enhancing this knowledge base.

A look at the existing state of environmental awareness and education indicates that the picture is at first glance quite positive, at least in most countries of the developed world. In developing countries, the picture is more mixed, though environmental education has made some inroads; one example is the efforts of the Environmental Education Association of Southern Africa. Surveys in the developed world reveal that most people consider themselves environmentalists; the figure is especially high among youth. In the United States, for example, 85 per cent of people under 30 identify themselves as environmentalists.[20] Departments, institutes, programmes and courses devoted to environmental studies in science, social science, humanities, law and engineering have multiplied and flourished in colleges and universities in many countries. Environmental education can increasingly be found in schools, and by 1999 was a formal graduation requirement in public secondary schools in 30 of the 50 states of the United States.[21] There are also professional associations of environmental educators.

Environmentalist groups put a lot of their resources into education projects, providing course materials for teachers and producing publications targeted at children and youth. Getting information to the public about environmental issues and threats consumes a lot of activist energy. Often environmentalists show great faith in the long-term effects of education being the key to positive social change. It is certainly true that the more educated a person is, the more likely he or she is to show environmental concern and commitment. Presumably, exposure to environmental education in particular reinforces this tendency.

Environmental education has grown steadily in recent years. However, questions remain concerning its impact. During the past three decades there has been massive growth in environmental awareness in many countries, in formal environmental education, and in the educational activities of environmentalists—but has humanity come any closer to achieving a sustainable society? Over this period the consumer culture has become ever stronger, spread by economic globalization to all parts of the world. Individuals in developed countries who profess a commitment to environmental values often lead high-consumption and energy-inefficient lifestyles, drive large cars if they can, travel long distances by airplane, live in ever more spacious houses, and do not recycle household wastes. Mass environmental commitments may be widespread, but they generally prove very shallow.

Why has environmental education so far failed to deliver the anticipated benefits? Part of the reason may lie in the kind of education delivered. Chet Bowers argues that environmental education in its present form is often provided in a way that does

not challenge the dominant ways of thinking that evolved in the modern pre-environmental era of uncontrolled industrialism and has continued in the depersonalized individualism of the information age.[22] In this context, for example, environmental economics retains and so reinforces the anthropocentric (firmly human-centred) value system and model of isolated, disembodied individuals that characterize standard economics. Environmental engineers see nature as something to be controlled rather than conciliated. Postmodern cultural studies treat the environment as a cultural construct that exists mainly in the mind, with no objective external existence.

Bowers is a bit hard on the disciplines, some of which are trying to move beyond the entrenched ways of thinking deriving from industrialism. For example, environmental philosophy challenges the anthropocentric value systems that infuse industrial society. Ecological economics is attuned to ecological limits to human activity in a way that conventional environmental economics is not. Regardless of the extent to which these adjustments in thinking have been incorporated into environmental education, the obvious solution is a different kind of environmental education. Bowers proposes education aimed at restoring the "ecologically centred cultural practices" that have been overruled by industrial societies.[23] The kind of knowledge to be imparted would be indigenous, focusing on local ecosystems and the way they once sustained, and could again sustain, human communities. Similarly, Mitchell Thomashow advocates a "biospheric curriculum" that would begin (but not end) with instruction in the conservation biology and natural history of local ecosystems.[24] The idea behind this approach is to enhance the psychology of perception, to enable individuals to see that their local ecosystem is indeed there, even though it is obscured by the noise of the human world.

For both Bowers and Thomashow, the key to effective environmental education is the recovery of lost knowledge. Though both write mainly for the developed world, practical application might actually be more straightforward in some developing country contexts because the relevant local knowledge has not been lost for as long. Wherever it is implemented, this kind of environmental education is very different from existing models. Any generally applicable curriculum would involve mainly the critique of consumerism and individualism from what Bowers calls a "cultural bioconservatism" perspective that stresses interdependence among peoples and their embeddedness in their environments.

This emphasis on traditional local knowledge implies a particular role for youth in relation to other generations—an intergenerational kind of education. Bowers recommends that students be encouraged "to do a cultural inventory of the forms of elder wisdom in their own community.... This should be followed by a discussion of the role of youth in the process of carrying forward and renewing the ecological and cultural wisdom of previous generations."[25] Thomashow believes that "young people desperately need to step out of their youth culture to speak with folks who have been around for a while".[26] He writes about a 1999 intergenerational forum he helped organize in which older people were paired with secondary school students. The young participants enjoyed talking about the ethical aspects of issues, but it became clear that their potential for environmental activism required a supportive context to be brought out.

There is a tension between this intergenerational transmission of traditional ecological knowledge and the critical, generative activism of the youth social movement described earlier in the chapter. The conflict might be eased by connecting young people's political activism to the critique of the modern consumerist political economy—but detaching it from the more conservative kind of knowledge transmission Bowers advocates. The latter could be applied to questions of how to live in an ecologically sound fashion in a particular place, rather than questions of how to organize political action.

The real problem may lie not in the kinds of environmental education being promoted, but rather in the difficulty involved in translating environmental value commitments into action of any kind, be it in terms of lifestyle adjustments or political activism.[27] If so, the right kind of environmental education may not be enough to make much difference. Leslie Thiele speculates that an individual search for more and better knowledge may actually get in the way of, and even substitute for, action.[28]

The underlying issue here may be one of "free riding". When it comes to the provision of a public good such as environmental quality from which a whole society benefits, there is every incentive for even well-meaning individuals to rely on the contributions of others, as each individual's contribution will make little difference to the overall quantity of the good provided while involving substantial costs to the individual in question. For example, everyone in a large city may complain about the smog, but hardly anyone gives up driving or even buys a smaller vehicle in order to help improve air quality. In large-scale societies, this problem must be solved by government action (including measures to reduce distances travelled by car and regulations to control pollution) rather than individual consumer action.

An important but generally overlooked aspect of environmental education is environmental political education, which stresses how changes can be achieved via political activism directed at Governments, international organizations, and even corporations. In other words, environmental education should be aimed at producing ecological citizens, not just green consumers.[29] Environmental political education should also address the obstacles to effective political action and how they might be overcome. There have been many cases of citizen-activists being asked to serve on government advisory committees that in the end waste time and divert activist

energies while making no difference to policy. In addition, political education needs to identify and illuminate the anti-environmental political forces that operate, sometimes very subtly.

It should be emphasized that environmental education, in its broadest and perhaps most important sense, is not formal schooling. Rather, it is a process of social learning in which young people and others are engaged in generating and transmitting knowledge as well as receiving it. Social learning involves a multitude of activities. NGOs can integrate education with their activism. Networks of activists can work together to explore and develop ideas—for instance, communicating how the whole idea of environmental justice arose, from the bottom up, and providing a variety of local experiences showing the unfair distribution of environmental hazards. Learning by doing is also important, whether through participation in environmental restoration projects or involvement in political campaigns. In these sorts of processes, a young person can play a role as an active participant in education rather than a passive recipient.

THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN SOCIAL LEARNING ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT

Much of the environmentally relevant information young people receive comes not from formal education but from the media. In principle, environmental education and the media could join in a larger process of social learning, though the fact that the media are generally driven by concerns that are not educative can get in the way of such a synthesis.

The media can be a powerful tool for education. Good-quality environmental journalism is sometimes found in newspapers and magazines, especially those that have an environmental correspondent. Over time, this field has become increasingly professionalized. Planeta's Latin American journalism handbook has a substantial section on environmental journalism, pointing to a sophistication in Latin American coverage of environmental issues that often surpasses that in North America.[30] The Society of Environmental Journalists, established in 1990 and based in the United States, has over 1,000 members and declares its mission to be that of "improving the quality, accuracy, and visibility of environmental reporting".[31] The Society sponsors conferences and a news service and conducts a mentoring programme for younger journalists. For the electronic media, there is the Environmental Journalism Center sponsored by the Radio-Television News Directors Association and Foundation. Such professionalism may come at a cost, as it tends to dampen the radical fire that Michael Frome believes should be the essence of green journalism.[32] Frome contends that environmental journalism is about teaching, not just reporting, and that it has to involve much more than relaying corporate or environmental group press releases, none of which can be taken at face value.

Growing professionalism notwithstanding, there are significant problems associated with the way environmental news is reported and interpreted. In general, if a journalist wants to make a splash, he or she is unlikely to report that an environmental risk is minimal or an ecological situation of no real concern. The only exception comes with the debunking of green claims; Bjørn Lomborg (whose book was referred to earlier) is one who has published anti-environmentalist articles in Danish and British

newspapers. There is a tendency, especially when a new story is breaking, to overemphasize the seriousness of risks or disasters. Environmentalists and scientists often support this overstatement, the former because of the publicity it attracts for their cause, and the latter because if a hazard is widely thought to be immediate and serious, research funds are more likely to flow.

Some environmental hazards highlighted by the media in this manner become panics or scares that do not stand up to close analysis but do provide grist for those whose agenda is to minimize the severity of the risks that confront industrial society. Aaron Wildavsky looks at scares associated with Agent Orange, Alar (on apples), PCBs, DDT, acid rain, arsenic in drinking water and asbestos in schools, and argues that a close examination of the evidence shows that the risks in question are in truth minimal.[33] Wildavsky then generalizes from the few risks he has studied to all those he has not, concluding that there is nothing left of environmentalism except an aesthetic respect for nature. The implication is that readers should simply ignore what is presented in the media about alleged environmental risks. Sensationalism in environmental reporting plays into the hands of Wildavsky and other risk apologists and diverts attention from real risks. Pollutants in the environment do kill people, nuclear wastes are highly dangerous, ozone depletion has taken place and has caused damage (as even Wildavsky admits), and droughts do occur as a result of the interaction of human and natural forces.

Sensational coverage of risks by the media highlights the more general problem the media have in probing beneath the surface of events. For immediate impact, visible events such as a bush fire, an oil tanker breaking up at sea or a chemical factory explosion work best. Even serious coverage is characterized by a focus on events rather than on the underlying processes of which the events are just a manifestation. Former UNEP Executive Director Mostafa Tolba points to an analysis of media reports of the 1984 disaster in Bhopal, India, which involved numerous deaths from the explosive release of methyl isocyanate from a pesticide plant owned by Union Carbide.[34] Virtually all reports focused on the event itself; hardly any put the event in the context of political-economic structures and processes that caused or allowed highly dangerous production processes for pesticides to exist in the first place and to be located near the residences of many poor people.

The very essence of ecology is complex connections across time and space. When events are reported in isolation, the public receives disconnected and discontinuous messages about bits of the environment—the opposite of ecological thinking. As former Greenpeace activist Chris Rose puts it, "This is equivalent to covering economics by only reporting bank robberies."[35] The media may be missing the most consequential developments of these times. Even media coverage of gatherings such as the World Summit on Sustainable Development tends to concentrate on the event itself and what happens there, with little nuanced coverage of the issues being debated.

This event focus may lead the public to dwell on and overestimate the significance of spectacular incidents—and consequently ignore long-term trends and chronic risks that pose a greater danger but rarely make the news.[36] Examples of the latter might include soil contamination from heavy metals, agricultural chemicals in drinking

water sources, or increasing salinity in irrigated soils. It has long been recognized that there are systematic differences between expert and lay perceptions and judgements about risks, and this tendency of laypeople to focus on the risks of spectacular events is one of them. However, the implication is not that the challenge to environmental journalism is to close the gap by bringing lay judgement closer to expert judgement; the most important aspect of the gap is the degree to which ordinary people tend to be highly averse to risks they do not choose themselves—one example is environmental pollution—even if, statistically, the real risk is small. Conversely, ordinary people are much more accepting of risks they take on voluntarily, such as those associated with driving a car or participating in dangerous sports. These are reasonable judgements. Nonetheless, there is a need for greater honesty in the reporting of risks; journalists covering environmental issues must show greater restraint and try to communicate the real hazards linked to high-profile events, but at the same time more assiduously report on the real dangers associated with chronic, long-term pollution issues.

Aside from risk sensationalism, the media's penchant for the visible, appealing, and tangible comes into play in reporting on the destruction of nature. News about pandas, elephants, great apes or whales dying as a result of hunting or habitat destruction is easier to propagate and digest than more complex stories of ecosystem degradation. However, photogenic species can serve as "markers" for ecosystems, as pandas do for bamboo forests, and good journalism can highlight this angle.

Environmentalists can cater to the media's need for spectacles and stars. The success of some groups over the decades has largely been a consequence of their skill in producing vivid images for the media—including the Rainbow Warrior sailing into a nuclear test site in the South Pacific, small boats putting themselves in front of the harpoons of whalers, and divers inserting a symbolic plug in the end of a pipeline discharging radioactive waste into the sea. "Guerilla theatre" was developed by, for example, unfolding a huge "crack" down the face of a dam to protest the ecological devastation wrought by large dams on free-flowing rivers, or putting protestors in trees about to be logged.

The media emphasis on spectacles and events cannot be abolished, nor would this be altogether desirable, as it does at least help bring environmental issues to the public's attention. However, the environment-as-entertainment focus must be counterbalanced by deeper and more serious coverage, even if this appeals to only a minority in a world of short attention spans. Journalists need to be creative and investigative, not just reactive, in relation to events. There is no reason young people cannot develop their own publications and programmes along these lines, though their reach might be very limited in comparison with that of the mass media.

There is currently a huge gap between developed and developing countries in terms of media treatment of the environment. As Graham Chapman and others point out in their comparison of India and the United Kingdom, no shared commitment to environmentalism, or even a consensus on what environmentalism means, can emerge or be promoted by media operating in such vastly different and unequal conditions.[37] The first challenge for the Indian media is to get past the idea that "environmentalism" is yet another post-colonial imposition from the developed world.

It may be concluded that the media are not living up to their potential as major contributors to social learning about the environment—environmental education in the broadest sense, which would enhance informed participation in environmental affairs by youth and others. To the extent that this is true, the media are failing youth along with everyone else. Part of the solution may involve the creation of alternative information networks that are not constrained by the need to entertain and can move beyond the event focus of the established media. The Internet has enormous potential that is just beginning to be tapped, though at the moment there is considerable inequality in terms of access to this medium, which reinforces other sorts of material inequalities. It was noted earlier that youth have a proven talent for devising new forms of political action, and that a major recent trend has been the establishment of transnational activist networks. The potential for global environmental action and coordination is tremendous; however, the inaccessibility of the Internet and other ICT resources to youth in the developing world has imposed serious limitations on their involvement in this process and has created an imbalance in terms of the kind of youth voices that get heard.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Young people have important environmental concerns and responsibilities. Because of their longer life expectancy, they will have to live for quite some time with the consequences of a deteriorating environment left to them by their parents. Fortunately, youth have a special talent for invention and the development of new forms of action and activism and can generate more effective responses to environmental issues. Addressing the concerns of future generations is difficult in the context of present policy-making; ultimately, however, it is enough to expand time horizons not necessarily many years into the future, but simply beyond the generally short-term focus of current decision-making.

Environmental issues present some of the most profound and complex challenges requiring attention today and in the coming decades. One foundation-building step in enhancing local, regional, national and global capacities to respond to those challenges is increasing environmental awareness. Here the role of youth is central, for it is in the rising generations that heightened awareness can most easily be achieved. As this chapter indicates, there is much work to be done in terms of reforming and extending both formal and informal environmental education and inducing the media to play a more effective role in facilitating social learning about the environment. Political activism on environmental issues is also crucial; again, youth are well-placed to develop new forms of activism and bring new energies and perspectives to environmental affairs.

Through their participation in the World Summit on Sustainable Development, young people recently demonstrated that they could inject social values and notions of equity into debate. Young people understand perhaps better than most that humankind is not living in a zero-sum, environment-versus-economy world. One way to equip young people to deal with environmental concerns is through more effective environmental education. Much of the information young people receive about envi-

ronmental issues comes from the media. Therefore, environmental educators and the media should make greater and more concerted efforts to promote a larger process of social learning for sustainable development. ■

[1] The transfer of pollution activities and resource depletion across borders constitutes one aspect of a more general process that clouds the meaning of particular indicators and makes resolving environmental problems difficult. This process is referred to as problem displacement (see J.S. Dryzek, *Rational Ecology: Environment and Political Economy* (New York, Basil Blackwell, 1987), pp. 16-20). Displacement can occur across space (from one location to another) and/or across time (from now to the distant future). Displacement across media is also possible. For example, suspended particulates may be removed from smoke emitted by coal-burning power stations using electrostatic precipitators, but this process makes the emissions more acidic, thus increasing the severity of acid rain resulting from the sulphur dioxide in the emissions combining with water vapour in the atmosphere. There is also a problem of how to dispose of the solid waste that accumulates. As Albert Weale points out, there is a need to "control pollution in the round" (see A. Weale, *The New Politics of Pollution* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1992)). Sometimes this is called "integrated pollution control". The ideal is to achieve integrated pollution control at the global level. So far, however, it has only been realized, if at all, at the local level, especially in some Northern European countries. In many countries it is obstructed by single-medium laws for pollution control (such as clean air acts), which means that anti-pollution government agencies are actually organized in ways that prevent integrated pollution control.

[2] B. Lomborg, *The Skeptical Environmentalist: Measuring the Real State of the World* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001).

[3] J. Simon, The State of Humanity (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1995); J. Simon and H. Kahn, eds., *The Resourceful Earth* (New York, Basil Blackwell, 1984); and G. Easterbrook, *A Moment on Earth* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1995).

[4] Lomborg, op. cit., p. 111.

[5] T. Homer-Dixon, *Environment, Scarcity, and Violence* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2000).

[6] For a sketch of this world view see J.S. Dryzek, *The Politics of the Earth: Environmental Discourses* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 45-60.

[7] Exponential growth is growth at a constant percentage rate, such that the absolute quantity added to the total increases by a greater amount every year.

[8] See especially D.H. Meadows and others, *The Limits to Growth* (New York, Universe Books, 1972).

[9] N. Low, ed., *Global Ethics and Environment* (London, Routledge, 1999).

[10] N. Klein, *No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies* (London, Flamingo, 2000).

[11] Available at http://www.undp.bg/en/homepage_files/young_environmental_leaders. html.

[12] For a history of youth involvement in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, see the *Youth Sourcebook on Sustainable Development* (Winnipeg, International Institute for Sustainable Development, 1995), available online at http://iisd.ca/youth/ysbk088.htm.

[13] Available at http://www.yesworld.org.au/execsumm.html.

[14] Available at http://www.ecn.cz/yee/.

[15] Available at http://www.enn.com/news/enn-stories/2001/10/10302001/young_45320. asp.

[16] For a review of the features of new social movements, see J. Cohen, "Strategy or identity? New theoretical paradigms and contemporary social movements", *Social Research*, vol. 52 (1985), pp. 663-716; C. Offe, "New social movements: challenging the boundaries of institutional politics", *Social Research*, vol. 52 (1985), pp. 817-868; and A. Melucci, "The symbolic challenge of contemporary movements", *Social Research*, vol. 52 (1985), pp. 789-816.

[17] Die Grünen joined the governing coalition at the federal level in 1998.

[18] C. Offe, "Reflections on the institutional self-transformation of movement politics: a tentative stage model", in *Challenging the Political Order: New Social Movements in Western Democracies*, R.J. Dalton and M. Kuechler, eds. (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1990), pp. 232-250.

[19] M. Jänicke and H. Weidner, eds., National Environmental Policies: A Comparative Study of Capacity-Building (Berlin, Springer, 1997), p. 7.

[20] L.P. Thiele, *Environmentalism for a New Millennium* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 211.

[21] Ibid., p. 212.

[22] C. Bowers, "The role of education and ideology in the transition from a modern to a more bioregionally-oriented culture", in Bioregionalism, M.V. McGinnis, ed. (London, Routledge, 1999), pp. 191-204.

[23] Ibid.

[24] M. Thomashow, *Bringing the Biosphere Home: Learning to Perceive Global Environmental Change* (Cambridge, MIT Press, 2002).

[25] Bowers, op. cit., p. 202.

[26] Thomashow, op. cit., p. 207.

[27] M. Finger, "From knowledge to action? Exploring the relationships between environmental experiences, learning, and behavior", *Journal of Social Issues*, vol. 50 (1994), pp. 141-160.

[28] Thiele, op. cit., p. 214.

[29] As M. Sagoff points out, it is quite reasonable for an individual to behave badly as a consumer while behaving very well as a citizen (see M. Sagoff, *The Economy of the Earth* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988)).

[30] Available at http://www.planeta.com/ecotravel/period/period_enviro.html.

[31] Available at http://www.sej.com.

[32] M. Frome, *Green Ink: An Introduction to Environmental Journalism* (Salt Lake City, University of Utah Press, 1998).

[33] A. Wildavsky, *But Is It True? A Citizen's Guide to Environmental Health and Safety Issues* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1995).

[34] See M. Tolba, *Saving Our Planet: Hopes and Fears* (London, Chapman and Hall, 1992).

[35] Quoted from http://www.sustainability.com/publications/engaging/good-news-and-bad-more1.asp.

[36] See S. Allen, B. Adam and C. Carter, eds., *Environmental Risks and the Media* (London, Routledge, 2000).

[37] G. Chapman and others, *Environmentalism and the Mass Media: The North-South Divide* (London, Routledge, 1997).

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Chapter 6.
YOUTH and DRUGS

An evidence-based overview of substance use by young people is provided in the beginning of the chapter, drawing on statistical data whenever available and key informants otherwise. The present situation and trends are elaborated and comparative international aspects highlighted, followed by a description of current and best practices in demand reduction programmes and youth participation in those programmes.

REASONS FOR SUBSTANCE USE AND ASSOCIATED PROBLEMS AMONG SOME YOUTH

When the subject of drug use comes up, it is often in relation to young people. This makes some sense, for while there are significant drug issues among other populations, it is during the younger years that most substance use begins. If a person in today's world has not begun to use alcohol, tobacco or an illicit substance during this period, it is unlikely he or she ever will. Young people in almost all countries tend to use these substances to a greater extent and in riskier ways than do older people, and this behaviour can result in significant problems in the short and long terms.

People use substances to satisfy a need or to serve a function. A drug may meet certain needs or desires through its effects (including pain relief and pleasurable feelings) or through the symbolism associated with its use (a sense of rebellion or feeling of belonging, for example). All substance-use decisions involve a weighing of benefits against risks as perceived by the individual. Young people use substances for many of the same reasons adults do (to relieve stress or heighten enjoyment); however, there are some reasons for use that arise from needs specifically related to adolescent development. Sources of motivation include the desire to take risks, demonstrate autonomy and independence, develop values distinct from parental and societal authority, signal entry into a peer group, seek novel and exciting experiences, and satisfy curiosity.[1]

More and more young people worldwide are growing up in an environment increasingly tolerant of various forms of substance use, both medical and non-medical. The pharmaceutical and alternative medicine industries continue to grow and to promote a climate of "solution by ingestion". An unprecedented level of access to media by youth worldwide has meant that more young people than ever are "consuming" a globalized, Western-dominated pop culture that tends to tolerate substance use. The tobacco and alcohol industries have added to this environment by utilizing their powerful marketing capacities to influence young people.

Beyond these broad influences there are always local and personal factors involved in a young person's decisions regarding substance use. Youth may be influenced strongly by their perception of how common or "normative" substance use is. For example, if a young person's friends smoke, drink or use other substances, or if there is a sense that others in the same networks do, that young person is more likely to make the same choices. Decisions on substance use are also linked to perceptions of risk associated with a particular drug.[2] As the perceived risk associated with the use of a drug increases, rates of use decline.[3] The reverse is also true, whereby an emerging drug may experience a "honeymoon period" during which there is little infor-

mation available about risks or harm.[4] Some young people may use substances as consumer items, along with clothes and music, to establish an identity or image for themselves.[5] Some youth do not choose substance use per se, but rather opt for a lifestyle within which substance use goes hand in hand with alienation, rebellion and the search for freedom and friendship.[6]

Adolescent attitudes and beliefs about substance use and risk tend to change rapidly, with tolerance levels rising as adolescence progresses. Youth, to a greater extent than adults, tend to minimize the risks linked to their own substance use, with the tendency more pronounced among young men than among young women.[7] It has long been acknowledged that young people typically give less attention to the long-term risks associated with substance use than they do to the more immediate consequences.[8]

In recent years, observers of substance use patterns have begun to distinguish between youth living in difficult circumstances and "mainstream" youth, who generally have more opportunities, options, and support. The former group includes many youth living in developing countries, but also youth living out of the mainstream in the developed world. For many mainstream youth, substance use is increasingly woven into a leisure culture in which intoxication is viewed as a "time out" from the normal rules.[9] Use of substances by youth living outside the mainstream—a group often termed "especially vulnerable"—tends to be aimed more at relieving the pressures deriving from difficult circumstances, which may include physical or emotional pain or longer work hours, unemployment, neglect, violence, homelessness, sexual abuse or war. While the lines between these two worlds are blurred at times, the associated issues and challenges are quite different.

Given the increasing acceptance of substance use in many regions, the easy availability of intoxicants and the various challenges associated with adolescent development, all young people need to be viewed as being vulnerable to some extent to substance use problems.[10] Any substance use obviously poses risks or the potential for risk. Even a single drug-using experience or a pattern of so-called experimental use can result in serious problems such as an overdose, an accident or, in the case of illicit drugs, criminal prosecution. However, most youth who experiment with substances do not suffer harm as a result and do not move on to other drugs or more problematic use.

Ongoing heavy use of one or more substances increases the likelihood that associated harm will occur. The broad range of problems reported by young people includes deteriorating family relations, poorer performance in school, unwanted and unprotected sexual activity, accidents, violence, trouble with authorities and the increased risk of HIV. Some youth engaging in heavy substance use will continue to do so into adulthood and will experience various longer-term health and social problems.

The problems that young people experience in relation to their use of substances are generally seen to arise from a combination of individual, family, school, community and societal factors or vulnerabilities, which at least at the basic level are well documented.[11] A major challenge in child and adolescent development is identity formation.[12] Adolescents that do not achieve satisfactory development are particularly at risk of experiencing the harmful effects of substance use. This is not

to suggest that substance-use problems cannot arise in the context of "normal" adolescent development. Indeed, the normal incidents of impulsive, reckless behaviour in early adolescence, or a temporary state of identity confusion at any phase of psychosocial development, could represent a time of vulnerability for substance use. However, heavy continued use of substances through adolescence can have the effect of stalling psychosocial development.[13]

Not surprisingly, the quality of family life has been shown to play a very important role in determining the likelihood of substance use.[14] Parents everywhere experience pressure to attend to family needs while generating sufficient income. A key informant in Thailand observed that "parents have to fight for income and the family system is weak, with members leaning less on each other".[15] In the United States, students who perceive their parents to be effective (being good listeners, establishing rules, setting expectations, and keeping on top of their teens' activities) also report significantly lower use of alcohol, tobacco and illicit drugs.[16] Parental alcohol or other substance dependence increases the risk of a young person developing substance use problems, with the extent of susceptibility determined by a complex mix of genetic and environmental factors. Transitions or significant changes in one's environment, such as moving to a new neighbourhood or school, the loss of a close family member, or parental separation, can create a strong sense of vulnerability in a young person.[17] Evidence shows that school dropouts and those with poor marks or little attachment to school are at higher risk or are already regular or heavy substance users.[18]

Youth designated especially vulnerable often have difficult family backgrounds and mental health issues. Street youth who inject drugs tend to present this kind of picture. They are more likely than street youth who do not inject drugs to report backgrounds that include parental substance use, forced institutionalization, and a history of "survival sex".[19] There is some indication that high-risk youth who progress into injecting drug use from other forms of drug use are more likely to experience early and sustained sex trading, to demonstrate a low level of commitment to school, and to be a victim of violence at the time of onset.[20]

A body of international research is showing that the general health status of a society is heavily influenced by the social, educational and economic circumstances of its people, with general educational and income levels and income disparities constituting the primary indicators in this regard.[21] Although the relationship between these determinants of health and substance use problems requires more investigation, there may well be a link between the factors listed and the use of substances by young people.

Especially vulnerable young people in a variety of situations have voiced opinions that seem to support this premise. Given the opportunity to generate and explain their own solutions, youth in a poor neighbourhood in the United States judged the best preventive mechanism to be "more jobs, more education and more scholarships for teenagers" rather than more prevention programmes focusing on risk behaviours.[22] In a similar vein, youth in developing countries often include income-generating programmes in their prevention work.[23] Street youth indicate that basic needs such as food and stable housing are their priorities, while job training, educational upgrading

and personal counselling are also important.[24] These observations by young people underscore the wisdom of building on "protective" factors rather than focusing only on reducing risk factors in prevention work.

When young people use substances to cope with the lack of basic rights and necessities such as food, clothing, shelter and education, the result may be further infringements by authorities.[25] Penalties associated with the use of illicit substances can be harsh, and users often become more marginalized in their communities.[26] In places where public order and stability are an issue, there may be general public support for repressive approaches that do not follow due legal processes, and that violate the rights of children and youth on the street.[27] The general stigma surrounding street youth and illicit drug use represents a significant barrier to reaching and helping these young people and may very well contribute to more problematic use.

TRENDS AND PATTERNS OF SUBSTANCE USE BY YOUNG PEOPLE

Availability of data

An accurate understanding of the nature and extent of substance use by young people is critical to the development of evidence-based responses. The level of understanding of youth substance use worldwide is better than ever, but many gaps still remain. A few countries are conducting broad-based school surveys using methodology that allows comparison; however, a much greater number are using methods and measures that make comparison difficult. Some countries carry out broad population drug-use surveys of persons aged 15 years and above, and this allows analysis of use among at least a portion of youth. These broad surveys require substantial resources, so many countries (including some G-8 members)[28] do not conduct national school or population studies on a regular basis. Substance use by youth not attending school or living at home will not be accounted for in these surveys. Substance use tends to be higher among youth living out of the mainstream; however, because of the difficulties in reaching them, studies of these young people tend to include small, non-random samples, and findings cannot be applied to other populations.

In some regions, the only information on drug use among youth may be from key informants. These officials may be sufficiently in touch with the community to provide an accurate picture, but there have been instances in which young people who were studying the issue questioned the observations of adult informants.[29] In some areas, key informants may have only rough indicators such as drug supply seizures and other drug-related criminal charges as a reference.

Overall situation

National student drug-use data that are recent and reasonably comparable are available only from Australia, Europe and the United States. In other countries and regions, information is sketchy. The collection of data on legally available substances is at times undertaken separately from data collection relating to illicit substances. Underreporting of personal drug use by youth in household and school surveys, or even during interviews, is likely to be an issue in regions with strong taboos or penalties against substance use, or where there exists a general mistrust of authorities. Consequently, caution is required in making comparisons.

In jurisdictions in which drug use among youth has been tracked over the long term (Ontario, Canada, and the United States), the late 1970s and early 1980s represent historic high points for the use of most substances. Rates generally declined from that period into the early 1990s, after which they began to rise again. Similar results have been obtained in jurisdictions that began monitoring trends more recently (including Australia and Europe). Use rates appear to have peaked in the late 1990s at levels approaching the historic highs of previous decades.[30]

Throughout this period, alcohol, tobacco and cannabis have remained the substances most commonly used by youth around the world. The first substances used are generally tobacco, alcohol and, in some communities, inhalants; the age of first use is usually lower in developed countries. The use of substances (with the exception of inhalants in some regions) almost always increases with age, so among students the highest rate of use is generally recorded in the last two years of secondary school, continuing into early adulthood in most countries.[31] In almost all regions boys are more likely than girls to use all substances (exceptions are the non-medical use of medications in a number of countries and alcohol and tobacco use in several European countries) and are more likely to use them in risky ways. Rates of alcohol and tobacco use by students in Europe appear to be the highest in the world, and figures indicate that illicit drug use rates are highest among students in Australia and North America (Canada and the United States). Although data are not readily available, the lowest rates of use for all substances appear to be in countries strongly influenced by Islam, where prohibitions are more likely to be clear and strictly enforced.

Beverage alcohol is the substance most widely consumed by young people worldwide. Alcohol use is interwoven into many cultures and, in some, the first drinking experience occurs in the context of family events. However, alcohol represents the greatest public health burden, in large part owing to acute alcohol-related health issues arising from violence and accidents among adolescents and young adults.[32] In 30 European countries, 61 per cent of grade 10 students reported having used alcohol in the past 30 days, compared with 40 per cent in the United States. In Europe, past-month rates among grade 10 students varied widely, ranging from 36 per cent in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to 85 per cent in Denmark. According to separate studies published in 2001, approximately 65 per cent of adolescents in Australia (14- to 19-year-olds) and Ontario, Canada (grade 7-13 students), reported past-year alcohol use.[33] Reports covering the past decade indicate that current alcohol consumption (either past-year or past-month use) in Central and South America ranges from 37.8 per cent (among 15- to 19-year-olds in the Dominican Republic) to 43.8 per cent (among urban secondary school students in Sao Paulo, Brazil). In Africa, even though alcohol consumption is said to be by far the most troubling substance-related issue affecting the general population, rates of use by youth appear to be significantly lower than in Western countries.[34] Several studies in various African countries during the past decade have found that among students, between 8.8 per cent (10- to 14-year-olds in Lesotho) and 42 per cent (those attending secondary school in Kenya) were current users. Current-use figures from the past decade are largely unavailable for South-East Asia; however, a study of children and youth aged 10-17 years in Nepal found that 17 per cent had used alcohol in the past year and 9.2 per cent in the past

month.[35] In a study of vocational students in Thailand, alcohol use in the past three months was reported by 92.5 per cent of males and 80.5 per cent of females.[36] Survey reports indicate that 70 per cent of senior high school students (roughly equivalent to grade 10) in Japan and 80 per cent in China had used alcohol at least once. In all regions, use increases with age. In developed countries, females are about as likely as males to be current users, while in developing countries males are more likely to be current users. In virtually all countries, males are more likely to use in problematic ways; however, there are indications of a shift in this pattern (further details are provided later in the chapter).

Tobacco use is one of the chief preventable causes of death in the world. Tobacco is often the first substance used by children and youth, with an estimated 20 per cent of young smokers worldwide beginning before the age of 10.[37] A report prepared by a Swedish organization in 2000 indicated that an average of 37 per cent of grade 10 students in 30 European countries had smoked at least one cigarette in the past 30 days.[38] The average incorporated widely disparate national rates ranging from 16 per cent in Cyprus to 67 per cent in Greenland. Two recent studies revealed that among grade 10 students in North America, rates of past-30-day use were 26 per cent in the United States and 29.9 per cent in Ontario, Canada.[39] Past-30-day use rates are reportedly close 20 per cent in Costa Rica, Jordan and South Africa, and 10 per cent or less in Barbados, China, Sri Lanka, Venezuela and Zimbabwe. In most countries boys are more likely than girls to smoke, though the reverse is true in a number of countries in Europe including Denmark, France, Greenland, Ireland, Norway and the United Kingdom.[40] A small proportion (less than 5 per cent) of students in North America have reported the use of "bidis", a flavoured, unfiltered cigarette.[41]

Cannabis is the illicit substance most commonly used by youth in every region. Worldwide, the use of this substance accounts for the vast majority of illicit drug use by young people, representing about 90 per cent of all illicit drug use among students in Australia and the United States and almost 95 per cent in Europe, for example.[42] In several countries, including Australia, Canada, France, Ireland, the United Kingdom and the United States, it might be said that cannabis use is normalized, with more than 25 per cent of all secondary school students reporting past-year use. In Europe, past-year rates for grade 10 students range from 1 per cent in Romania to 31 per cent in France. In sub-Saharan Africa, cannabis is considered the main illicit drug of concern, with increasing use by young people being cited in several countries.[43] Data on cannabis use in Asia are scarce, but two studies of youth populations showed lifetime prevalence rates (the proportions of those surveyed who have ever used the substance) of 4.5 and 6 cent.[44]

Much smaller numbers of young people use illicit substances other than cannabis. However, the use of other substances is much more likely in North America than in Europe (23 per cent versus 6 per cent of grade 10 students in the respective regions have ever used another substance). Amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS), including drugs such as Ecstasy and methamphetamine, are the most commonly used illicit substances after cannabis among high school students everywhere data are available; however, nowhere is lifetime prevalence higher than 10 per cent. A major worldwide concern with these substances is the likelihood of unknown adulterants being

added, with possibly fatal consequences.[45] Methamphetamine is currently the leading substance of concern in South-East Asia, partly owing to its easy and inexpensive production. A study in Thailand found that 29 per cent of vocational students (39 per cent of males and 18 per cent of females) had used methamphetamine.[46] Methamphetamine has a higher abuse potential than Ecstasy; however, there are indications that Ecstasy may cause long-term damage as well. While most do not continue to use Ecstasy beyond early adulthood, a small proportion are heavy continuous users who are also more likely to use other substances.[47]

Inhalants such as glue, nail polish, cigarette lighter fluid, hairspray, paint thinner, gasoline/petrol, correction fluid and amyl nitrite (sometimes called poppers) are inexpensive and easy to purchase in all regions and therefore collectively constitute the drug of choice for especially vulnerable young children worldwide. The "high" occurs very quickly, with effects similar to alcohol-related drunkenness, but there are those who experience something like hallucinations. Street youth often sniff glue or other inhalants to mask hunger and cold. Sniffing can also be a social activity that allows users to pool their money and, in some cases, to present an anti-establishment image.[48] Inhalant use is an issue that spans the globe, though rates vary widely. Among 40 countries supplying lifetime prevalence data during the 1990s, 16 reported rates of lower than 5 per cent, 15 reported rates of between 5 and 10 per cent, and 10 reported rates of 10 to 20 per cent.[49] Rates in poorer communities and among indigenous peoples can be much higher. For example, in Sao Paulo, Brazil, nearly 24 per cent of 9- to 18-year-olds living in poverty had tried inhalants. More than 60 per cent of youth have reported use of inhalants in several Native communities in Canada and the United States. In Africa, inhalants and cannabis appear to be the illicit substances most commonly used by youth (falling short of the number using alcohol and tobacco).[50]

Currently, the highest reported rate of cocaine use is among grade 11 students in Ontario, Canada, where 7 per cent claim past-year use (in the United States, where the year of peak use is grade 12, fewer than 5 per cent of students report past-year use). The use of heroin by injection is generally a behaviour of marginalized persons in urban areas;[51] rates among school-age youth tend to be relatively low (less than 2 per cent, though 4.3 per cent of Australian students aged 15-16 years recently reported using opiates). Rates of heroin smoking are usually higher, however. In Europe, for example, Latvia, Poland, and Romania have reported rates of 5 to 8 per cent—the highest in the region for grade 10 students. Though not used for psychoactive effects, steroids are illegal and can have serious consequences. A relatively small percentage of youth (less than 3 per cent in Australia and the United States, predominantly males) use steroids to enhance body image and/or athletic performance.

Over the years, medicines have been diverted and used for non-prescribed, non-medical purposes. Past-year non-medical amphetamine use by grade 10 students ranges from 6 per cent in Australia and 7.8 per cent in Ontario, Canada, to 12 per cent in the United States. A stimulant medication that has been diverted and used non-medically by youth in several cities in the United States during the past decade is Ritalin.[52] Ritalin is prescribed for people with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), for

whom it has a calming effect; when snorted or injected, it rapidly reaches the brain, producing an effect similar to that of cocaine.[53] Rates of past-year non-medical use of tranquillizers by grade 10 students range from less than 6 per cent in North America to 12 per cent in Australia. Tranquillizer use is reportedly prevalent in Côte d'Ivoire, with some indication of use among street children.[54] Media reports from Bangladesh suggest that young people are among those using phensidyl cough syrup. The syrup reportedly contains alcohol, codeine (an opiate) and ephedrine (a stimulant) and is cheap and readily available in comparison with other alcoholic drugs.[55] In a significant proportion of countries providing data, rates of non-medical prescription drug use are higher among females.

Overall substance-use trends are summarized in table 6.1.

Table 6.1
Lifetime use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs among 15- to 16-year-old (Grade 10) students in various industrialized country jurisdictions, 1999 (percentages)

Substance	Europe:low	Europe:high	United States	Australia	Ontario, Canada
Alcohol	68	98	70.6	92.0	80.9
Tobacco	50	50	50	57.6	46.8
Cannabis	1	35	40.9	42.8	42.7
Inhalants	1	22	17.0	21.3	7.7
Ecstasy	—	6	6.0	5.0	4.5
Heroin/opiates	—	8	2.3	4.3	2.7
Cocaine	—	3	7.7	4.0	4.8
LSD*	—	5	8.5	9.3	13.2
Amphetamines	—	8	15.7	9.3	10.9
Tranquillizers/ sedatives (non-medical)	2	18	7.9	21.5	8.7

Sources: Europe: Swedish Council for Information on Alcohol and Other Drugs, *1999 ESPAD Report* (2000); United States: National Institute on Drug Abuse, *Monitoring the Future*; Australia: Department of Health and Aged Care, "Australian secondary students' use of alcohol in 1999"; and Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (for information on other drugs); and Canada: Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, *Ontario Student Drug Use Survey* (1999).
*Lysergic acid diethylamide.

Notable recent trends

In Europe and North America, alcohol-use patterns among youth appear to be converging with respect to beverages of choice (beer and other low-alcohol drinks) and the growing tendency to drink to intoxication. In the United Kingdom in 2000, for example, just under two-thirds of young men aged 20-24 years drank hazardously, and just under one-third of young women aged 16-19 years did so.[56] These drinking patterns are even being observed in Southern European countries that have traditionally used alcohol quite differently. Aggressive marketing by the alcohol industry interna-

tionally is being cited as a possible factor.[57] For example, the industry recently began to market alcoholic versions of "energy drinks" to youth involved in the dance club scene (more is written on energy drinks below). Other products with clear youth appeal include "alcopops", low-alcohol beverages introduced in various regions including Europe and South-East Asia in the mid-1990s, and "Zippers", gelatin shots containing 12 per cent alcohol in a variety of flavours, introduced more recently in North America.[58] In addition, Internet sites sponsored by alcohol producers appear to be aimed at the youth market.[59]

Tobacco use in North America, already lower than in Europe, has continued to decline significantly since the mid-1990s. In Ontario, Canada, the rate of past-year tobacco use by secondary school students fell from 29.2 to 23.6 per cent between 1999 and 2001, and past-month use among grade 10 students in the United States fell by 30 per cent between 1997 and 2001. This represents a very positive trend, since tobacco is a major contributor to poor health. In contrast, little change has occurred overall in Europe since the mid-1990s.[60]

The use of cannabis and other illicit substances in regions with higher prevalence rates, including Australia, Canada, the United States and certain countries in Western Europe, has stabilized and in some cases declined after rising through the mid- to late-1990s. At the same time, use rates in lower-prevalence European countries, in particular Central and Eastern Europe, have continued to increase, creating a convergence effect. Heroin use in Central and Eastern Europe has risen dramatically and now exceeds Western European levels, and while cannabis use has increased among lower-prevalence countries such as Finland and Norway, it has decreased in higher-prevalence countries such as Ireland and the United Kingdom. The net effect is that lifetime substance use among 15- to 16-year-olds has risen by more than 40 per cent in Europe since the mid-1990s, a higher growth rate than that reported in North America.

Over the past decade, use rates have increased more for Ecstasy and other ATS than for any other drug worldwide. Patterns of Ecstasy use also appear to be converging. Early rates of relatively high prevalence in several Western European countries in the mid-1990s have stabilized, whereas rates in Canada, Eastern Europe and the United States have increased in recent years and in some cases have surpassed Western European rates. Methamphetamine has replaced heroin as the drug of primary concern in South-East Asia. While prevalence rates for Ecstasy and other ATS are low in other regions, the number of references to these substances in country and media reports is increasing.

Though trend data are not available, several products using the stimulants ephedrine and/or caffeine appear to be increasingly popular with young people. In some cases, these products are promoted as "energy drinks" and, as mentioned above, are found in the bar and dance scene in Europe and the United States, sometimes premixed with alcoholic beverages.[61] In other cases, products containing ephedrine are sold as dietary or sports supplements to enhance athletic performance. Products containing ephedrine are generally less regulated, even though adverse effects can include stroke, heart attack, heart rate irregularities, seizures, psychosis and death.[62]

Patterns of hazardous substance use

A significant minority of young people around the world place themselves in serious danger by, for example, using to the point of intoxication, using while engaged in other activities, combining different kinds of drugs, and injecting substances.

Reports from various regions are indicating a growing trend towards alcohol use to the point of intoxication. A pattern of increased binge drinking by both males and females in Europe has raised concerns among authorities.[63] A report prepared in 2001 revealed that close to 40 per cent of regular cannabis users in Australia (12 per cent of the total sample) had engaged in past-week binge drinking.[64] In Ontario, Canada, the prevalence of binge drinking increased from 17.7 to 25.3 per cent among secondary school students between 1991 and 2001.[65]

As the use of substances such as alcohol and cannabis becomes normalized in some populations, the likelihood of it being combined with other activities increases. When young people using these substances engage in activities that call for motor coordination or intellectual functioning, as is the case with driving, school work or athletics, the situation becomes particularly hazardous. A recent study of a broad sample of youth in a North American jurisdiction found a strikingly high percentage reporting the use of intoxicants while attending school or playing games.[66]

The link between alcohol or other drug use and unwanted or unsafe sexual activity is a concern. In a recent United States study, 18 per cent of adolescents reported drinking at the time of first intercourse, while 25 per cent of sexually active grade 9-12 students reported using alcohol or other drugs during their most recent sexual encounter.[67] In a study of vocational school students in Thailand, researchers recently reported worrisome drug use and sexual behaviour. Only 15 per cent of males and 10 per cent of females reported consistent use of condoms with their most recent steady partner (the respective rates were 32 and 47 per cent with casual partners), and high rates of alcohol and methamphetamine use were reported as well.[68]

Heavy users often use two or more substances together, variously referred to as a "trail mix" or "cocktail" of whatever is available. Using two or more drugs at a time makes it difficult to predict the nature and intensity of their effects, particularly when the purity of the substances is uncertain. Depending on the properties of the drugs in question, the effect can be additive (1+1=2), synergistic (1+1=3) or antagonistic (in which case some but probably not all of the effects may cancel one another out). Alcohol is often used in combination with other substances, as is cannabis. Recent mentions of drug combinations include a mixture of heroin and cocaine ("speedballs") in the United States and a mixture of crack cocaine and ketamine ("CK One"), reportedly smoked in Europe.[69]

Populations at risk of hazardous substance use

Evidence from different regions suggests that young women are drinking in ways that are increasingly risky. Alcohol affects women differently than it does men, so researchers often define binge or heavy drinking for women to be four drinks per occasion rather than five. A significant concern is that a sexually active young woman who becomes pregnant runs the risk of exposing her unborn child to alcohol at any

point during the nine-month gestation period, but particularly during the earliest stage, before she is aware of her condition. Drinking during pregnancy can result in lifelong physical, behavioural and mental damage to a child. Binge drinking is known to be particularly risky for a foetus, and a safe level of drinking has not been determined. There are indications that 18- to 20-year-old women are less likely to quit drinking and using tobacco than are older women when they learn of their pregnancy.[70]

There are indications of the need to view gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) youth as vulnerable to substance use problems, though caution is advised in generalizing findings over a broad cross-section of people estimated to represent 10 per cent of the population. Reasons cited for the increased risk among these young people relate to the added stresses of coping with their sexual identity and sharing their sexual orientation with family, friends, and classmates; general stigmatization; and the availability of drugs in the club scene.[71] Substance use is reported to be strongly associated with the gay nightclub, dance party and parade scene, a context in which drugs are often regarded as important in creating a sense of community.[72] In an Australian study, GLBT adults aged 20-29 years were more likely than the same age group in the general population to ever have used 10 of the 11 drugs listed. In a Seattle study, GLBT homeless youth were more likely than others in the same situation to report sexual abuse, more frequent use of substances, and a much higher incidence of mental health symptoms since becoming homeless.[73] One study, however, showed that GLBT students who did not face stigmatization (routine taunting) were at no greater risk of using drugs, attempting suicide or having unsafe sex than their heterosexual counterparts.[74]

Young people belonging to indigenous groups in Australia, New Zealand, North America and other countries and regions often experience high levels of community and cultural disorganization whether they live in urban or rural settings. Not much data are available, but it appears that substance use rates are high for many young people living in these circumstances. Inhalant use is a serious concern in many areas. In some remote indigenous communities, gasoline sniffing, primarily among young people, is said to have contributed to a systematic breakdown of community and family relationships—to the point of almost total disintegration in some cases.[75] Many indigenous young people are introduced to alcohol at an early age, and there are indications that tobacco and injecting drug use are also particular concerns.[76]

Especially vulnerable populations

In most societies and cultures there are young people living in difficult circumstances who have been identified as especially vulnerable. Included in this category are working children, youth no longer attending school, refugees, disabled youth, incarcerated and institutionalized youth, children of dysfunctional families, and young people who have been sexually abused. These young people often live on the street and outside the reach of mainstream services. It is extremely difficult to determine the number of youth affected or their substance use patterns, and there is a shortage of relevant documentation from developing countries.

Substance use is one of many issues faced by these young people, who use drugs as a way of coping with negative experiences including the residual effects of past circumstances and the present challenges associated with life on the street. Once on the street, youth may use substances to alleviate problems ranging from physical discomfort resulting from inclement weather, noise and overcrowding to feelings of fear associated with dangerous jobs.[77] A study of drug abuse among working children commissioned by the ILO in a region of the Philippines found that most young labourers between the ages of 7 and 17 used rugby (glue) and shabu (methamphetamine).[78] Various studies and reports on street youth indicate high rates of substance use, including problematic use, and mental health problems.[79] Because these young people often lack personal as well as external resources, their use of substances is more likely to escalate and become a source of further problems.[80] Injecting drug use is much more common among street and incarcerated youth than among school-based youth (typically in the 1 to 3 per cent range), as indicated by the following study results:

- In seven major Canadian cities 21 per cent of indigenous street youth had injected drugs (2000);[81]

- In the United States 45 per cent of street youth had injected at least once in their past (1998);[82]

- In Canada 36 per cent of street youth had injected at least once in their past (1998);[83]

- In Australia 17 per cent of young incarcerated males and 38 per cent of females had injected in the previous month (1998);[84]

- A four-city study in the United States found that 15 to 30 per cent of street youth had injected at some time (1996).[85]

Young people are characterized by their relative inexperience, their lack of knowledge of risk factors and of consequences such as overdosing, and often their general lack of concern.[86] A 1998 Canadian study found that street youth did not see the first injecting experience as a major event, claiming that everyone was doing it or that it was just another way to take a drug. Similarly, it did not seem to matter which drug they took; whatever was available would have sufficed.[87] The first injecting experience "just happened" for one-third of a sample of youth in a study in Queensland, Australia, while there was some degree of planning or at least contemplation of injecting for the remainder.[88] A very high proportion of these youth were intoxicated at the time of first injection. The age of first injection varies with the community and country but, on average, occurs later in adolescence. In the Queensland sample, the average age of first injection was 18.9 years; in two studies of street youth in the United States the average age was 16.5 and 17 years; and in several Canadian cities the overall mean age was estimated to be 21 or 22 years.[89] There is some indication that young females in this population are more likely than young males to be injectors, and to be more harmfully involved[90]

Needle sharing is a major risk factor for infection with HIV and other blood-borne diseases, and the practice is prevalent among young injectors. Separate studies indicate the following:

- In Australia 22 per cent of incarcerated youth had used a needle before someone else (1998);[91]

- In the United States 44 per cent of street youth had used a shared needle the last time they used (1998);[92]

- In the United States 27 to 39 per cent of street youth had shared a needle during their last injection (1996).[93]

East and South-East Asian countries have recorded very high rates of HIV among injecting drug users (IDUs). The rapid spread within this population has been attributed to the use of self-made equipment, high levels of needle sharing, the lack of effective cleaning procedures, and the use of "professional" injectors who use the same equipment to service many customers.[94] Belarus and other parts of Eastern Europe have also seen an increase in HIV infection rates among young people as a result of needle sharing and unsafe sex practices.[95]

Heavy use of substances (including alcohol) contributes to risky sexual activity including unprotected sex, sex while intoxicated, multiple partners and working in the sex trade.[96] A recent longitudinal study found that, even among IDUs, sexual activity was a major contributor to HIV infection among both males and females.[97]

Substance-use patterns during the transition into adulthood

Late adolescence signals a key transition point for mainstream youth. In countries and regions such as Australia, Canada, Europe and the United States, in which secondary school substance use is reasonably well documented, it is clear that most students in their last years of secondary school will have used alcohol, and a significant minority will have used cannabis and tobacco at least once in the past 12 months. Many of these youth attend post-secondary educational institutions after leaving school. Because a good number find themselves away from parental authority in an environment in which alcohol and other substance use is often the centre of activity, levels of use established in late secondary school tend to continue.[98]

Most university students in Canada and the United States engage in binge drinking during the school year.[99] A survey of post-secondary students in New South Wales, Australia, found that 49.2 per cent had binge drunk in the past two weeks. Reasons given are the desire to simply get drunk, to celebrate a special occasion, to forget their worries or to feel good. This pattern of drinking can result in various problems, however, including missed classes, criticism from others, fights or arguments, and actions later regretted.[100] In the United States, males are more likely to binge drink, though female bingeing is on the rise. The most notable trend in the use of other drugs among university students in the United States involves Ecstasy. Between 1997 and 1999, there was a 69 per cent increase (from 2.8 to 4.7 per cent) in past-year Ecstasy use within a large United States sample.[101]

Little is known about youth that enter the workforce immediately after leaving secondary school, though there are indications that many of these young people work in small enterprises. Because of the rate of substance use among young adults and

the tendency of smaller organizations to give less attention to employee health and safety issues, substance use in the workplace or that affects workplace performance has been raised as a possible issue with this population.[102]

It is generally agreed that young people who complete school and settle into conventional adult life reduce their use of substances. However, they are making the transition into a world that is fast-paced and highly unpredictable (or as one commentator puts it, a "runaway world").[103] A longitudinal study in the United Kingdom found that many youth and young adults responded with a work-hard/play-hard lifestyle in which substances were used not only to have fun, but also to unwind and cope with increasing pressures.[104] These young people were more likely to avoid complete intoxication than they were at age 18, but even when job concerns led them to adjust their patterns of use to reduce negative consequences, many still held to relatively high adolescent levels of use into their early twenties. A long-term study of students and young adults in the United States clearly indicates that getting married and beginning a family generally has a greater impact on substance use patterns than does entering the workforce.[105]

REDUCING THE DEMAND FOR SUBSTANCES BY YOUNG PEOPLE
Establishing a balanced, integrated strategy

As described in the foregoing, most regions of the world are experiencing levels of youth substance use and abuse that are at or near historic highs. Given the acute and long-term problems associated with some forms of substance use by young people, a common challenge for Governments and communities is determining the most effective way to reduce the demand for drugs among youth. If Governments are to establish targets for reducing youth substance use, what approaches are most likely to contribute to success? Every country and community requires its own unique demand reduction recipe or strategy that takes into account its particular circumstances and the resources available; however, it is also possible to implement a general evidence-based strategy.

The evidence presented here is of two types: a growing body of empirical research; and the opinions of young people and those who work with them, drawn from key-informant meetings. Caution is advised in interpreting this information because even the most studied interventions have not been replicated in more than one or two (typically Western) regions of the world. That said, there has never before been a greater quantity and quality of information available on which to base drug demand reduction strategies and programmes.

Such strategies should not overlook the evidence linking social and economic well-being with the health of a population. The influence of this relationship on substance-use patterns requires more investigation; however, any social policy that effectively promotes equitable human development (by making sound education, quality jobs and affordable housing more widely available, for example) is likely to have a positive effect on substance-use patterns. Some drug workers may feel that advancing this kind of policy exceeds their scope of work, while others see it as their most

important job. In the Philippines, for example, a number of programmes are involved in community organizing and advocacy with young people, and also provide a range of income-generating and social support services such as day care and early childhood education.[106]

At the broader governmental level, a demand reduction strategy must be balanced and integrated with efforts to reduce drug supply or availability, with each receiving similar resources and political support. Alcohol and tobacco control experience shows that young people are very sensitive to price changes, and manipulating prices through tax increases remains the most effective way to reduce the use of these substances.[107] While supply reduction efforts have proved ineffective in stemming the tide of illicit substances produced in or brought into most regions, successful interdiction may have the effect of ensuring prices do not decline. However, successes with one substance can result in problems with another, producing what is sometimes called the "balloon effect" or "unintended effects of prevention".[108]

Identifying the local situation

National or community demand reduction strategies are most effective if based on patterns of use in the area of concern, using the foregoing information on trends and patterns as a context. Each data source and method of data collection will have limitations, so bringing together data from several sources allows for cross-checking and ultimately increases confidence in the quality of the information.

UNDCP and WHO have developed a number of materials to guide information collection using what is called a "rapid" or "local-situation" assessment methodology.[109] This methodology has been adapted by the UNDCP/WHO Global Initiative on Primary Prevention of Substance Abuse to allow youth in more than 100 programmes (in eight countries within three regions) to carry out the assessment themselves.

Local-situation assessments need to include existing information that describes the situation in some way, such as drug-related hospital admissions records, a history of drug-related offences and data from government records. It is rare that all of the necessary information is available, so new information can be collected using pencil-and-paper surveys (household or school) or various ethnographical research methods such as key-informant interviews, focus-group discussion, observation, community immersion, and case studies. Strict protocols for surveys will help to minimize underreporting of use by ensuring the anonymity of respondents.

One aim of the Global Initiative is to have young people develop guidelines to help other youth groups conduct their own local drug-use assessments. Early indications from the project are that young people who feel comfortable and respected are often the best source of information on youth substance use. When facilitated by trained and knowledgeable staff, focus-group discussions are a particularly effective format for young people to obtain local drug-use information from other youth. These sessions permit two-way discussion that leads logically from identifying problems to exploring solutions. Generally, having a credible reputation in the community and involving young people whenever possible in the collection and interpretation of data also contribute to increased accuracy.[110]

More and more communities around the world are establishing standing epidemiology committees of local experts including physicians, police officers, street workers and treatment specialists to provide an ongoing profile of drug use in a community. This approach can provide quantitative and qualitative information that is both relevant to local needs and easily updated.[111]

The use of other innovative approaches for collecting information is also increasing. Prevention and health promotion workers are learning from indigenous peoples that structured narratives or story-telling can be used to gather information about what is occurring in a community and why.[112] Audio-computer-assisted self-interviewing has been used with a youth population in Thailand to provide accurate self-reports. With this method, respondents hear questions and possible answers through earphones, while simultaneously reading them from a computer screen, then clicking or typing their answers on the computer.[113]

Schools provide a convenient setting for information collection, and the methodology for conducting school surveys is well documented.[114] In various regions of the world, drug testing by urinalysis is being used both to determine the type and extent of illicit drug use in schools and to deter use.[115] What authorities do with the information can vary; however, this form of data collection raises human rights concerns and tends to reduce the level of trust between students and authorities.[116]

A major limitation of all school-based data is that they exclude those not attending school owing to illness, institutionalization, expulsion, voluntary absence (having dropped out), or the inability of parents to pay, and yet these young people are generally considered to be most vulnerable to substance-use problems for the very reason that they are not involved in school. Studies on out-of-school youth are very important, but they also represent a challenge because this group is not easily reached, particularly in connection with illegal drug-use activities. It is very important to have or to develop a rapport with these especially vulnerable youth and to engage them where they are.

Whatever methods are used, a broad assessment of the local situation should provide a range of information that includes the general age at which various substances were first used, the level of use by youth of different ages, gender differences, general age of heaviest use, forms of risky use, and problems experienced. The assessment must also determine the risk and protective factors at play among youth in the community. During this phase, it is important to account for the resources and support available to the demand reduction initiative that will be planned. Most importantly, an assessment undertaken in a participatory manner will engage targeted young people from the outset and establish a strong foundation for programme planning.

Employing demand reduction models

A local assessment typically reveals that the circumstances among youth in a community vary, and analysis of the data should help to identify differences and subpopulations. The most useful way to divide the youth population is according to the level of risk or severity of the problem, and several models have been developed for this purpose. Historically, the most widely used model has been one from the public-

health sector that distinguishes between primary, secondary and tertiary prevention.[117] According to WHO, the aim of primary prevention is to ensure that a disorder, a process or a problem does not develop. Secondary prevention is aimed at recognizing, identifying or changing a disorder, a process or a problem at the earliest possible point in time. The aim of tertiary prevention is to stop or delay the progress of a disorder, a process or a problem and its consequences, even if the underlying condition continues to exist.

An emerging model used by the United States Institute of Medicine[118] covers the same range of risk or problem severity and distinguishes between universal prevention, selective prevention, indicated prevention, and treatment. Because the two models operate from different premises (*see table 6.2*), the precise relationship between the elements of each is not completely clear. However, communities concerned with reducing the demand for drugs need to consider how they will work with all youth (from those who are not using to those who would benefit from treatment in order to stop), and both of these models provide useful direction. The models can be seen as presenting a series of "safety nets", with the first net (universal or primary prevention) aiming to "catch" most youth before they begin to use and the succeeding nets set up to catch the remainder.

Table 6.2
A comparison of two demand reduction models

No/low risk	Moderate risk	High risk
Alcohol/drug problems have not developed	Alcohol/drug problems have developed	

Public-health mode		
Primary prevention	Secondary prevention	Tertiary prevention

Institute of Medicine mode			
Universal prevention	Selective prevention	Indicated prevention	Treatment

Universal prevention

Prevention activity can target a broad or "universal" population (for example, all students in grades 5 and 6) with the aim of promoting the health of that population or preventing or delaying the onset of substance use. Early onset of the use of substances (including tobacco) has been found to be strongly associated with later problems such as substance dependence, poorer mental health and poorer educational performance,[119] though it has been suggested that the factors leading to early use, rather than the early use itself, are the primary contributors to the later problems.[120] The earlier young people begin smoking daily—an indication of dependency—the more cigarettes they are likely to smoke, the less likely they are to quit, and the more likely they are to be heavy smokers as adults. In many regions alcohol and tobacco are the first substances used, often in pre-teen years, though in some communities

inhalants are used by children as young as 6 years of age. Aside from the long-term concerns, there are a number of safety concerns surrounding the use of alcohol and other drugs at an early age. Consequently, preventing or delaying the first use of substances by children or adolescents is an important prevention goal in any community. The broad dissemination of universal prevention programming before the general age of first use is essential. Activities often associated with universal prevention include awareness campaigns, school drug education programmes, multiple-component community initiatives and, in the case of alcohol and tobacco, various measures to control their price and availability.

Even the best school-focused programmes are inherently limited because they cannot address the full range of factors contributing to substance use problems, such as poor family life and substance availability, but schools are nonetheless an effective setting for universal prevention programming for youth.[121] To produce results in school programmes, a minimum level of intensity of one 45- to 60-minute contact per week over at least 10 weeks has been suggested.[122] Programmes that provide "booster" sessions in subsequent years to reinforce earlier lessons help sustain effects; however, full programming each year is preferable. While some models are proving effective in preventing or delaying substance use within at least some populations, many universal or primary prevention school programmes are not. It makes sense to support school tobacco or drug education programmes with health-promoting school policies, but here too the evidence has not been persuasive to date.[123]

The more promising school-based programmes combine elements of knowledge building and skills development. Programmes that focus only on increasing knowledge or building self-esteem and general values without addressing drug-specific issues do not bring about change in adolescent substance-use behaviours.[124] Some school programmes include components aimed at the development of specific resistance skills. However, heavy reliance on resistance training is less likely to be effective, given that peer pressure has been exaggerated as a causal factor in risk behaviours.[125] Considerable evidence suggests that associating with drug-using peers is often a consequence rather than a cause of substance use, as young people thinking of using generally seek out a drug-using group.[126]

The interactive group process has been shown to be a critical component of universal school prevention programmes, the interaction in this case taking place between peers rather than between instructors and youth.[127] Examples of interactive activities include role playing, Socratic questioning, simulations, service-learning projects, brainstorming, cooperative learning and peer-to-peer discussion to promote active participation by youth. These types of hands-on activities provide valuable opportunities for youth to clarify their beliefs and to practise helpful skills such as problem solving, decision-making, dealing with conflict, assertiveness and communicating effectively.

Best conducted in small groups, interactive approaches call on the leader to oversee the activities, establish a supportive environment, keep groups on track, assume a directive role only when necessary, and ensure that each young person has an opportunity to participate and receive feedback on his or her use of the above-mentioned skills.[128] For older adolescents, a less structured interactive approach may

be most appropriate, with the same aim of encouraging the participation of the full group or class within a supportive atmosphere. Interactive programmes appear to be effective regardless of the substance targeted or the ethnic group being addressed.[129]

A broader life-skills approach may produce better results than a narrower focus on refusal or social resistance skills.[130] Based on social learning theory, a broad life-skills programme includes activities aimed at facilitating the development of decision-making, goal-setting, stress management, assertiveness and communication skills, which are intended for more generalized application to various situations and health-related behaviours. Mastery of these skills can enhance the young person's self-confidence in dealing with challenging situations. Requiring an interactive process, life-skills sessions usually include the demonstration of a skill, practice and feedback on the use of the skill, discussion about its practical application, and ongoing modelling of the skill.[131]

Another approach proving effective with secondary and post-secondary students is the so-called normative model, which challenges young people's views of how common or accepted substance use is in their schools or communities.[132] The logic behind the approach is that if a young person believes most people are using substances, he or she will underestimate the risk and will be less likely to abstain from or be worried about use. Programmes based on this approach seek to undermine the popular belief that everyone else is doing drugs. Student surveys and opinion polls can be used to give students an understanding of actual rates of use, and activities such as games and debates can help them in setting their own norms. The normative approach may make more sense with older students, as life skills appear to be more difficult to affect at this point.[133]

Parents and families play a critical role in supporting the development of their children and are an important priority for universal prevention.[134] Parental monitoring of children's behaviour and strong parent-child relationships are positively correlated with decreased drug use among students.[135] Parenting programmes can support efforts in this area by addressing issues such as parental attitudes towards (and use of) alcohol and drugs, poor and inconsistent family management practices including too much or too little discipline, family conflict, and the young person's attachment to the family.[136]

Parenting programmes typically have trouble attracting parents. One suggestion has been to normalize parent information, education and support by making them widely available through media, information lines, and work-site and school programmes.[137] It has also been suggested that programmes entrenched in a neighbourhood and available over the course of a number of years are more effective than the standard "one-off" sessions. Parents are more likely to be engaged in a parenting

programme if they think it is credible and has a good track record. Facilitating the development of bonds between parent participants has been suggested as a promising way to retain parents in these programmes.[138]

Time and scheduling are issues for parents, so short programmes may increase the attractiveness of parenting education.[139] Recent research has shown that relatively brief family programmes (five to seven sessions) that are designed for general populations and address communication, coping and disciplinary skills delayed the onset of alcohol, tobacco and cannabis use among adolescents during the early to mid-teen years.[140, 141]

The Internet is an emerging tool with the potential to raise awareness and promote health. As more people gain access to the Internet and use it to obtain information, sites that address drug-related issues will reach ever-larger audiences.[142] A challenge for prevention programmers using the Internet is to segment the audience in order to provide targeted and developmentally appropriate substance-abuse messages. For Internet users, a major challenge lies in verifying the accuracy of the information found on the numerous sites. There is little evaluation of this approach, but early indications are that Internet substance-abuse prevention and health-promotion sites for youth are most useful when tied in with opportunities to participate in related local activities.[143] UNDCP is preparing guidelines for "by youth, for youth" Internet drug-abuse prevention based on decisions taken at a recent international meeting of young experts.[144]

These broad, lower-intensity efforts aimed at the general youth and parent populations can serve to "till the soil" by creating greater awareness of the issue and acceptance of the need for more targeted programmes.[145] Similarly, they can lead some individuals to contemplate changing risk behaviours and to present themselves for more intensive programming.[146]

Selective prevention

Some youth and their families face special challenges relating to academic problems, family dysfunction, poverty, and a family history of substance use problems (that may include genetic predisposition). It makes sense to "select" such people for more intensive programming on the basis of these risk factors. Selective prevention is aimed at generally reducing the influence of certain risks and preventing or reducing substance use problems by building coping strategies and other life skills.

Children in difficult environments clearly benefit from selective prevention interventions during the pre-school and early school years. Longitudinal studies covering both the early childhood and primary school periods indicate that programmes combining child and parent components (often including home visits) produce benefits on multiple measures, including substance use.[147]

Students who are not succeeding in school, have few peer contacts or are not involved in extra-curricular activities are at risk for a variety of problems, including tobacco and other substance use.[148] School programmes that select young people on the basis of these indicators are proving effective in re-engaging students and reducing the risk of substance use.[149] One means of identifying young people at risk is

the student assistance approach (based on the workplace employee assistance programme model), which encourages students to seek help and trains students and staff to support others in seeking help.[150]

Evidence supports family-focused interventions over parent-only programming.[151] Family-skills training that offers several components, including behavioural parent training, children's-skills training and behavioural family training, has been shown to have a positive influence on a number of risk and protective factors, and has resulted in reductions in youth substance use. Many of these programmes increase the likelihood of attracting and retaining families by offering transportation, food and childcare during sessions, advocacy and crisis support.

Programmes for higher-risk or more vulnerable youth may be situated in multiple-service centres or other settings such as hospital emergency wards, health clinics (for expectant adolescent women), shopping malls and the street. Selective programming for higher-risk youth calls for the attention and collaboration of some groups and individuals who have not traditionally played a role in preventing substance use problems, such as urban planners, housing authorities, shopping mall managers and employment policy makers.[152]

On-site Ecstasy pill-testing operations are increasingly common in Europe and may be viewed as a selective prevention measure aimed at providing information and support to those attending techno dance parties or raves. These operations vary between prevention and harm reduction in their orientation and messages; however, they all share the goal of providing accurate, timely information on the chemical make-up of pills being presented as Ecstasy. Many also use the contact with dancers to provide "safer dancing" messages, counselling and other support. In the Netherlands these services are supported by the national drug strategy; elsewhere, they generally operate through informal agreements between local governments, police and dance sponsors.[153] Law enforcement officers have an opportunity to intervene in substance use and abuse by exercising their discretion in determining whether pressing charges will benefit a young suspect, and by using apprehension or arrest as a point of information-giving or referral. Diversion schemes that are well resourced and have project workers operating closely with the police are showing promise, though they have not been empirically evaluated.[154] Formal cautioning is used in some jurisdictions with those apprehended for drug offences (usually cannabis possession). Those warned are not very likely to be re-arrested for a drug offence, though the effect on actual substance use is unknown.[155]

Motivational approaches have been tested and found effective with youth in a number of settings, from hospital emergency rooms to universities. They are based on the assumption that everyone has strengths that can be brought out to address problems, and that a person's motivation to tap his or her inner resources is not fixed but can shift with events (such as an accident) or through contact with another person. A motivational intervention can involve as little as a single 20-minute interaction. During this brief contact, the practitioner attempts to quickly create a rapport, helping the person to weigh negative and positive effects of drug use in a new light and discussing options for making changes.[156] In almost all countries, adolescent males are more likely than young females to use substances in risky ways. While empirical evidence is cur-

rently lacking, many community programmers contend that engaging young males in sports or extreme physical activities can be effective in reducing their risk of substance use. The consensus from the Workshop on Using Sport for Substance Abuse Prevention, held by UNDCP in Rome in the fall of 2001, was that an approach to sport that promoted general respect (for the game, opponents and officials) and emphasized performance rather than results was most likely to have a positive effect on human development and prevention.[157]

Establishing opportunities for leisure, recreation, community service or alternative schooling is a proven strategy for helping at-risk youth.[158] Termed the "alternatives approach", these opportunities may be most appropriate for youth who cannot be reached through school and for those who do not have adequate adult supervision for or access to a variety of activities.[159] A workshop held by the United Nations on Using Performance for Substance Abuse Prevention, held in Mexico City in the fall of 2000, explored the value of various forms of performance such as street theatre, graffiti, dance and public speaking, and found that the process of being involved was as valuable as the product. In Mexico City, young people tired of living with gang violence in their community created the "Revolution of Children", which has organized graffiti contests that have helped lessen some of the inter-gang warfare.[160]

Caution is advised in working with high-risk youth, as in some cases bringing them together into new groups has been found to increase substance use. There is some speculation that participants in these groups may tend to validate and legitimize the antisocial behaviour of other group members.[161]

Older youth at university or entering the working world often continue a pattern of heavy substance use begun in secondary school. Their reported use of substances to cope with pressure is a concern, as is using to the point of intoxication and thereby risking accidents or, particularly in the case of alcohol, violence. Motivational and skills-training approaches are proving effective in reducing substance-use problems in university settings.[162] Businesses can help employees with substance-use issues through comprehensive action that includes careful recruiting, employee education, supervisor training, a means of identifying problems, and access to assistance for those requiring it. Both the company and the employee stand to benefit if assistance is generally preferred over disciplinary measures.[163]

Although selective prevention programmes tend to be more efficient than universal programmes in effecting change among at-risk youth, there are important disadvantages that need to be considered, including the possibility of labelling and stigmatization, difficulties with screening, and inadequate attention to the community-wide social context as a focus of change.[164]

Indicated prevention

Some young people who abuse substances do not meet the criteria for dependency but are at high risk of doing so. These youth tend to experience an array of other health and social problems and usually benefit from indicated prevention programming. Typically, this programming is even more intensive than selective prevention efforts; however, brief motivational approaches are showing good results with different heavy-using youth populations, as mentioned earlier. Indicated prevention often

involves an outreach component to identify, engage and work with these youth to minimize the risks associated with their lifestyle. Various models of outreach work using peers, professionals or volunteers have been identified.[165]

With higher-risk families, family therapy has been shown to be an effective component of a comprehensive strategy. Such therapy helps family members develop interpersonal skills and improve communication, family dynamics and interpersonal behaviour. Therapy can help family members improve their perceptions about one another, decrease negative behaviour, learn and apply skills for healthy family interaction, and reduce inappropriate parental control over children.[166]

Especially vulnerable youth that are using substances in risky ways need support in a number of areas of their lives. The focus of activity should be on minimizing harms in the context of the day-to-day challenges they face. Injecting drug use poses several serious risks, including overdose and HIV and hepatitis C infection, and young people may be particularly susceptible because of their relative inexperience, faulty knowledge and pressure from older IDUs, and because they generally do not take advantage of standard IDU and health services.[167] Given the particular dangers, it makes sense to try to intervene with those drug users at risk of making the transition into injecting drug use from other forms of administration. A recent study of this issue concluded that high-risk non-IDUs should be educated on the dangers of sex trading and the importance of staying in school, and should be provided protection from violence, as these conditions are associated with making the transition into injecting drug use.[168] Heroin smokers are seen to be at high risk of becoming IDUs, in many cases to reduce the amount consumed and to save money. Prevention messages directed at this population need to indicate that, based on the experiences of other IDUs, this approach is likely to backfire because there tends to be a rapid increase in the amounts needed when injecting.[169] Because current injectors are usually part of the first injecting experience, it is logical to consider measures aimed at reducing their influence on non-injecting youth. A study in Australia found that IDUs generally accepted an hour-long intervention delivered by trained drug workers and in many cases altered their behaviour afterward. The aims of the intervention included decreasing the likelihood of the IDUs talking about injecting with non-IDUs and being seen injecting by non-IDUs, and helping them manage requests to inject.[170]

Research clearly shows that for those who do begin to inject, increasing access to new, sterile injection equipment can reduce the sharing of needles and the spread of HIV and other blood-borne pathogens by such means, so this needs to be a programme priority.[171] It appears that contact with outreach workers is linked to positive behaviour change; the more often such encounters take place and the longer they last, the greater the chances are that IDUs will follow up HIV referrals and use new needles.[172] Supervised consumption facilities are intended to reduce overdose deaths and the transmission of blood-borne infections and to minimize the element of public nuisance; however, youth under the age of 18 are often not admitted. These options remain controversial, and their effectiveness relative to other options is unclear at this time.[173]

While indicated prevention programmes are clearly required to address early substance-use problems and are effective in reaching the appropriate target group, they tend to be more costly on a per-person-reached basis. Challenges in recruitment and retention are not uncommon because youth with early substance-use problems do not necessarily see their use as enough of a problem to consider changing.[174]

Treatment for substance abuse

A small percentage of youth will develop substance dependency characterized by drug tolerance, withdrawal and continued use despite significant substance-related problems.[175] These young people can benefit greatly from outreach, followed by counselling, case management or more intensive treatment based on sound assessment. Specialized youth treatment programmes are relatively new and unproven; young people are often placed in adult programmes even though developmental, psychological, social, cognitive and family differences suggest the need for specialized treatment.[176] There have been few controlled trials of youth treatment programmes, and findings have been mixed. However, results generally show that treatment is better than no treatment in terms of substance use and crime measures.[177] Behavioural, skills-training and family therapies show some evidence of effectiveness, though lack of family support negates the value of family therapies for some.[178]

Recently, a large multiple-site experimental study was conducted in the United States covering youth treated in different settings (residential, outpatient drug-free, and short-term inpatient) using various modalities (education, individual and group counselling, skills training, and the 12-step programme). In all cases the programmes typically addressed peer relationships, educational concerns and family issues. Youth in these programmes generally fared better at one year after completion, in terms of cannabis and alcohol use, school attendance and criminal activity, than those who had not been treated; however, there was no indication that any single modality was superior to the others.[179]

Therapeutic communities represent a common form of treatment available to young people in a number of countries. These programmes, of variable duration, provide a highly structured environment and endeavour to change negative patterns of behaviour and feelings associated with substance dependence. This form of treatment may help some, but it is relatively expensive and therefore probably best reserved for those who have not been helped by other, less costly alternatives.[180]

Adolescents may respond best to flexible approaches that can be adjusted to meet individual needs. Young people with a drug dependency are often dealing with other issues that either existed prior to substance use or resulted from it (including co-occurring mental health problems, family dysfunction, physical/ sexual abuse, gender/sexuality concerns, criminal activity, academic performance or academic/vocational difficulties). For this reason, treatment programmes must be able to provide support in a multitude of areas, either directly or by referral.[181]

Research has not found any strategies aimed at halting tobacco use to be particularly effective for adolescents.[182] As a result, it is generally recommended that adolescents who wish to stop using tobacco try strategies found to be effective with adults, including approaches ranging from brief advice from a physician to intensive clinical interventions.[183]

Indicated prevention and treatment approaches are likely to have less of an impact than universal and selective approaches on drug demand in a community. From a human rights perspective, however, it is very important to address the needs of those with substance use problems, so a mix of universal, selective and indicated prevention and treatment programmes is needed.[184] It has been suggested that young people without access to a range of appropriate prevention and treatment services suffer from "programmatic vulnerability", which may ultimately be viewed as a human rights issue.[185] Harsh zero-tolerance approaches to dealing with youth drug problems have also been questioned on human rights grounds,[186] and with regard to their effectiveness.[187] Some suggest that tough penalties discourage students from helping their drug-abusing peers. Those expelled for drug abuse often wind up on the streets or in alternative schools in which drugs are plentiful; this contributes to social exclusion and increases the risk of more serious drug problems.

With the wide range of options available, it is not always clear which demand reduction measure or programme constitutes the best choice; however, programme sponsors can base their decisions on the answers to a number of questions: Is the programme supported by scientific evidence? Has an epidemiological need been clearly established for the programme in this community? Have other, less intensive or more cost-effective options been implemented? Will the measure be part of a comprehensive range of services? Are there sufficient resources to sustain the effort? Does the measure or programme have the support of all key parts of the community? Clear answers to these questions will not always be found, but the basis of programme selection will be stronger if they are addressed and discussed.

Involving youth in programme design and implementation

Regardless of their level of risk, it is critical that youth be involved in prevention programme design and implementation according to their capabilities. Efforts must be made to nurture trust and work cooperatively with credible representatives of the youth population, and to support them as they assess the situation, determine appropriate goals, design and (if possible) deliver the programme, and evaluate the results. It is necessary to ensure the supportive involvement of adults to facilitate and supervise programme activities and to put youth in touch with other resources.[188]

Participatory approaches—including the methodology developed by the UNDCP/WHO Global Initiative on Prevention of Substance Abuse—hold great promise.[189] A participatory approach challenges sponsors to truly share power and be receptive to new ideas, to listen to young people (instead of lecturing them), and to open up the process rather than trying to control it.[190] Youth participants who are involved in data collection and programme planning, modification and evaluation are less likely to drop out of the intervention, which has a greater chance of success as a result.[191] These young people are also more likely to be motivated to actively develop new skills and to be open to accepting new information. In some cases, they may have the opportunity to contribute to decisions about the process and pacing of the programme; in other cases, it will make sense for the young people to assume primary responsibility for developing programme messages and implementing the programme.

Peer-based approaches are being used with mainstream youth to address issues as wide-ranging as reducing impaired driving and promoting safer dancing at raves.[192] Especially vulnerable young people (including those living in poverty, gay or lesbian individuals, and those with mental health problems) often have negative experiences with the service delivery system and are poorly informed about available services. It is important to encourage the involvement of these young people in programming decisions in a respectful and non-judgemental way.[193] Peer outreach by street contact, telephone or the Internet is commonly used to engage such youth.[194] A programme in the Philippines uses trained "young advocates" to conduct a range of outreach activities including street education, theatre activities and employment-seeking tours. Incorporating income-generating opportunities into a project is an important aspect of peer-leader recruitment in developing countries.[195]

Youth involved in injecting drug use are not likely to avail themselves of mainstream health services, so peer education approaches are sometimes used to establish contact with these young people. Peer educators are more likely than others to reach such youth and to be viewed as credible advocates of health-promoting behaviour.[196] A programme using incentives to encourage young IDUs to increase their knowledge and to recruit their peers to attend educational sessions substantially reduced hepatitis C risk behaviours.[197] According to recent United Nations experience, when IDUs believe someone is showing a real interest in their problems and cares about them, they are motivated to take an active part in project activities as volunteers.

Involving youth in the development of programme messages is important. Some programme messages are explicit (all drug use is unacceptable), while others are implied (a lecture by an adult may communicate that youth participants do not have worthwhile views). A vitally important principle for every programme, regardless of its goal, is that drug information must be scientifically accurate, objective, unbiased and presented without value judgement. Regardless of the age range of the intended target group, participants must be provided with accurate information and strategies for developing skills. Messages that focus solely on the negative aspects of drug use may initially be accepted by younger participants but can lose credibility once these youth receive more accurate and/or comprehensive information.

Fear-arousing messages accompanied by incorrect or exaggerated information are ineffective and can generate scepticism, disrespect and resistance among youth with regard to any advice that may be offered on substance use or other risky behaviours. These messages can actually erode motivation to deal with a problem, particularly if no accompanying coping strategies are presented or if the consequences are presented as unavoidable.[198] Similarly, simplistic messages that young people believe to be unrealistic ("just say no") or infeasible (sports activities are recommended when no facilities are readily available) will not be seen as credible. Because children and youth are less interested in distant, long-term effects, programmes must give greater attention to concrete "here and now" social consequences that can be avoided, such as being less attractive, smelling of tobacco and regretting actions taken earlier.[199]

The likelihood of substance use rises as students age. In many regions, a majority of older adolescents currently use alcohol, and varying proportions use other substances. With this population, acknowledging the perceived benefits of substance

use while providing information on the possible health and social consequences in a factual, balanced fashion can clarify personal risks and support decision-making.[200] Basic information about drug effects should be integrated with messages about risky behaviours. The focus must be on practical rather than theoretical information that (a) identifies dangerous or unhealthy practices such as driving or playing sports after using, chugging or bingeing; engaging in unplanned sex after using; studying or working after using; and using and sharing needles; (b) addresses the risk of dependence and long-term problems associated with heavy use; and (c) increases awareness of the resources available for those motivated to reduce or stop use and supports access to services.[201]

Street youth are relatively knowledgeable about the health risks associated with the use of various substances and are unlikely to pay attention to information on the negative consequences of drug use. However, they may be receptive to a practical message encouraging them to "try a little first to see how it feels rather than taking a regular dose", or telling them where they can find help or how they can help others. Youth can often develop this information based on their own experiences.[202]

In developing media messages, it is important to pay attention to the norms, values and language of young people and the youth culture.[203] Substance-use messages that are sensitive to these considerations, address issues important to youth, and reflect the aspirations and values of young people are more likely to be well-received. The best way to ensure appropriate message development is to involve youth participants in the design process. Sponsors of a tobacco demand reduction campaign in Florida attribute their very positive short-term results to the fact that young people devised the message.[204] The European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) has recommended ongoing monitoring of youth media as a way to track and understand youth drug trends and to identify innovative prevention messages.[205] The complexity of the issue is illustrated in a 1995 journal article indicating that young Australian IDUs thought sharing needles with friends or sexual partners was acceptable even though the social norm was generally not to share. Because trust is seen as an important part of close relationships and needle sharing, in such cases, represents a way of demonstrating that trust, the simple message that one should never share needles might have a limited impact.[206]

Youth do not constitute a homogeneous population; there are a number of subgroups and subcultures with their own distinct norms and values (reflected in, for example, Ecstasy use at raves and non-violence among "ravers"). Gender must also be considered in developing appropriate prevention messages. Provocative messages that trigger strong affective responses and interpersonal discussions have been found to be effective with young girls. Boys, who are more likely to use substances in risky ways, will likely be influenced more by themes relating to action, competition, bodily sensations and peer-group membership.[207] Youth who seek novel and exciting experiences tend to be more likely to engage in substance use.[208] Therefore, messages that acknowledge curiosity and the appeal of risk-taking while offering reasonable alternatives to achieve the desired objectives may be effective with these adolescents. It is crucial that ethnocultural beliefs of participating youth be understood

when developing programme messages. For example, messages that incorporate traditional teachings and practices appear most promising in prevention programmes for indigenous youth.[209]

Messages are more likely to be heeded if the programme leader or teacher is accepted and respected by the target group, and acceptance is more likely if the leader is comfortable with the programme's content and process. Most effective prevention programmes require teachers or leaders who are comfortable in a facilitative rather than a directive role. Even programmes that have been shown to be effective will be seriously hampered by teachers or leaders who are unable to conduct the programmes and communicate the messages as originally intended.[210] Mental health professionals have been shown to be effective in this capacity, particularly with older youth.[211] Teachers who have been trained for these types of programmes can also have a positive impact and come with the added advantage of being available on a daily basis.[212] As already noted, young people can serve as leaders or as partners with adults.[213] Across the spectrum of intervention levels, what appears to matter most is that the teacher, leader or counsellor demonstrates competence, empathy and an ability to engage young people.

CONCLUSION

Research indicates that programmes involving multiple components can be effective,[214] though the "more intervention is better" principle raises questions of cost-effectiveness. The coordination of various interventions can be accomplished in a number of settings or within a single organization or agency. For example, schools can combine classroom instruction, peer assistance programmes, parent education, school policies and mentoring for at-risk students. Municipalities can coordinate recreation programmes, community policing and neighbourhood support programmes.

Comprehensiveness also requires that attention be given to organizational policies (of the school board or youth agency, for example) to ensure that they reinforce programme aims.[215] At a broader level, legal and regulatory measures such as price increases, server training programmes that focus on under-age drinkers, and the enforcement of minimum-age purchase laws need to be considered, as they have been shown to be effective in reducing alcohol-related harm among youth.[216] Most evaluations show that as time passes, programme effects erode and programme content needs to be replenished.[217] Consequently, programmers need to see their prevention initiatives as part of a thread of interventions that present developmentally appropriate messages to young people throughout their childhood and adolescence. A cumulative benefit may occur when evidence-based programmes are combined in a community, even though the individual programmes may have only modest effects.[218]

A growing number of the youth programmes implemented today are being set up on the basis of sound scientific evidence. Such progress needs to be maintained. Promising programmes whose results have been subjected to rigorous, controlled research need to be replicated with different subpopulations (diverse ethnocultural groups) in various settings around the world. Governments and other funding bodies

need to give evaluation greater priority by providing technical and financial support for this purpose (generally agreed to require an amount equal to at least 10 per cent of other costs).[219]

Although there are early signs that prevention programmes for youth can demonstrate modest cost-effectiveness, prevention programmers need to give more attention to this issue.[220] The intensity and cost of some of the evidence-based programmes described in this section vary widely. There is a general consensus that higher-risk youth need more extensive interventions; however, brief (20-minute) motivational interviews have been shown to be effective with a range of youth experiencing substance-use problems. Similarly, outreach "information talks" of five minutes or more at raves or on the street have the potential to influence substance use among hard-to-reach young people.[221] Programmes need to begin collecting cost data and weighing outcomes against costs. In doing so, it will be necessary to determine which costs to include (expenses for programme materials, teacher/leader training, teacher salaries during programme delivery, facility use, and research and evaluation), and to identify who is bearing the costs (the primary sponsor, partner agencies or participants).[222]

By promoting and undertaking evidence-based work, those involved in the demand reduction field can provide services of value to communities. Efforts must be made to continuously educate the public with accurate data on trends and issues. Communities and politicians around the world tend to react to perceived drug crises with strong but short-lived responses.[223] In order to maintain long-term support for their own programmes, and for demand reduction efforts generally, sponsors need to convey the fact that substance-use problems are neither a one-time crisis nor an issue to be dismissed, but rather an inevitable part of life that can be affected by committed action. Most importantly, they need to continually remind themselves that youth are their own best resource for dealing with drug issues. ■

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Chapter 7.
Juvenile
DELINQUENCY
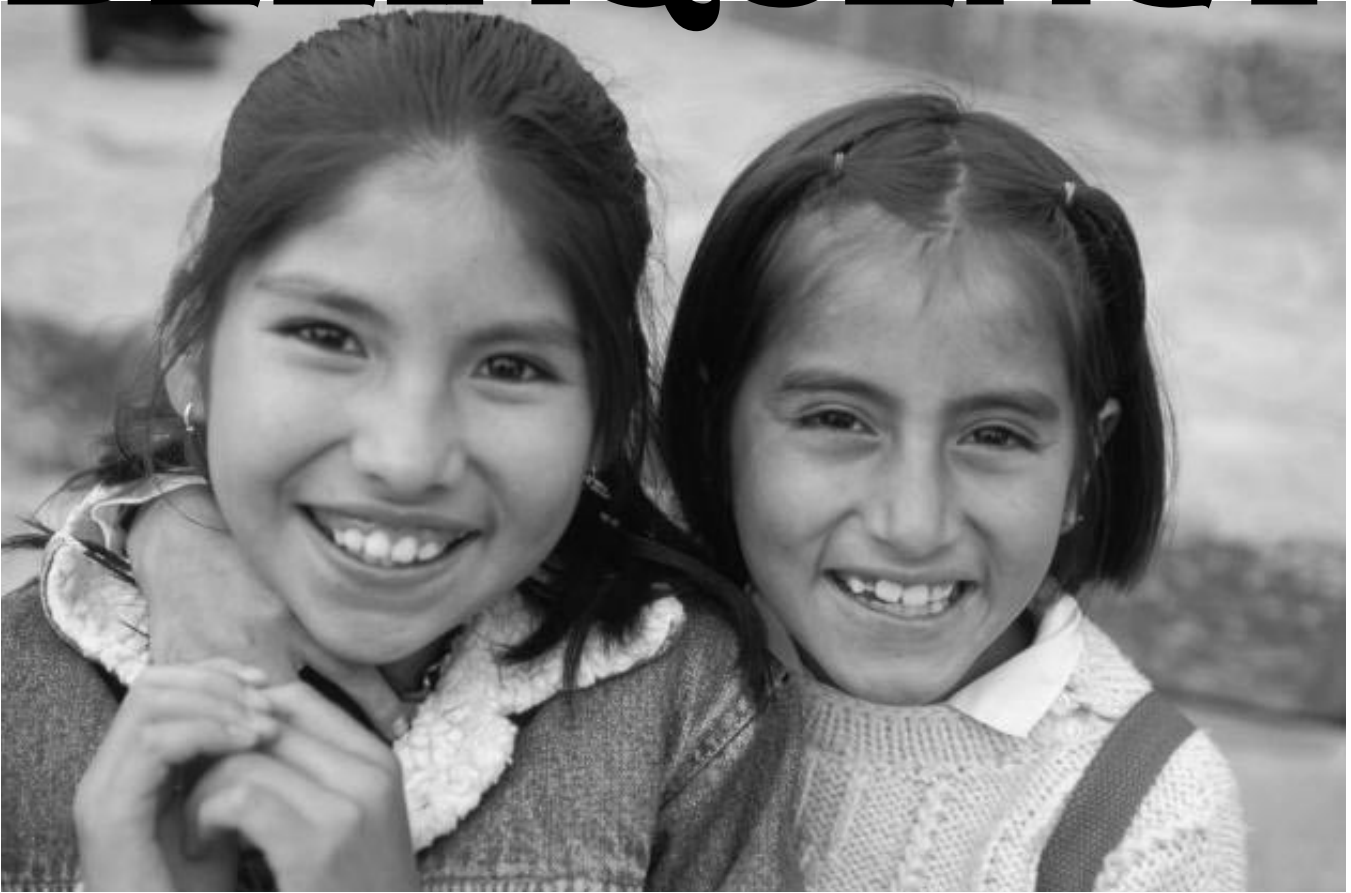
Delinquent and criminal behaviour among *young people, as they negotiate the transition from childhood to adulthood in an increasingly complex and confusing world, is the issue that this chapter first examines. Some basic assumptions relating to delinquent behaviour are presented, followed by a description of the various factors underlying or contributing to this phenomenon. Some regional variations are highlighted. Effective approaches and measures for preventing juvenile delinquency are detailed, with particular attention given to the development of educational, professional development and community programmes, improvements in family relations and parenting skills, and the value of restorative justice for both perpetrators and victims. The chapter concludes with a summary and recommendations for future action.*

INTRODUCTION

For many young people today, traditional patterns guiding the relationships and transitions between family, school and work are being challenged. Social relations that ensure a smooth process of socialization are collapsing; lifestyle trajectories are becoming more varied and less predictable. The restructuring of the labour market, the extension of the maturity gap (the period of dependence of young adults on the family) and, arguably, the more limited opportunities to become an independent adult are all changes influencing relationships with family and friends, educational opportunities and choices, labour market participation, leisure activities and lifestyles. It is not only developed countries that are facing this situation; in developing countries as well there are new pressures on young people undergoing the transition from childhood to independence. Rapid population growth, the unavailability of housing and support services, poverty, unemployment and underemployment among youth, the decline in the authority of local communities, overcrowding in poor urban areas, the disintegration of the family, and ineffective educational systems are some of the pressures young people must deal with.

Youth nowadays, regardless of gender, social origin or country of residence, are subject to individual risks but are also being presented with new individual opportunities—some beneficial and some potentially harmful. Quite often, advantage is being taken of illegal opportunities as young people commit various offences, become addicted to drugs, and use violence against their peers.

Statistical data indicate that in virtually all parts of the world, with the exception of the United States, rates of youth crime rose in the 1990s. In Western Europe, one of the few regions for which data are available, arrests of juvenile delinquents and under-age offenders increased by an average of around 50 per cent between the mid-1980s and the late 1990s. The countries in transition have also witnessed a dramatic rise in delinquency rates; since 1995, juvenile crime levels in many countries in Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States have increased by more than 30 per cent. Many of the criminal offences are related to drug abuse and excessive alcohol use.

The majority of studies and programmes dealing with juvenile delinquency focus on youth as offenders. However, adolescents are also victims of criminal or delinquent acts. The continuous threat of victimization is having a serious impact on the socialization of young men and on their internalization of the norms and values of the larger society. According to data on crimes registered by the police, more than 80 per cent of all violent incidents are not reported by the victims. Information about the victims allows conclusions to be drawn about the offenders as well. Results of self-report studies indicate that an overwhelming majority of those who participate in violence against young people are about the same age and gender as their victims; in most cases the offenders are males acting in groups.[1] Those most likely to be on the receiving end of violence are between the ages of 16 and 19, with 91 in every 1,000 in this group becoming victims of some form of crime. Surveys have shown that men are more likely than women to become victims. In the United States, 105 in every 1,000 men become crime victims, compared with 80 per 1,000 women. Men are 2.5 times more likely to be victims of aggravated assault. Older people are less often affected; as mentioned, crimes are usually committed by representatives of the same age groups to which the victims belong.

Young people who are at risk of becoming delinquent often live in difficult circumstances.[2] Children who for various reasons—including parental alcoholism, poverty, breakdown of the family, overcrowding, abusive conditions in the home, the growing HIV/AIDS scourge, or the death of parents during armed conflicts—are orphans or unaccompanied and are without the means of subsistence, housing and other basic necessities are at greatest risk of falling into juvenile delinquency. The number of children in especially difficult circumstances is estimated to have increased from 80 million to 150 million between 1992 and 2000.[3]

The problem of juvenile delinquency is becoming more complicated and universal, and crime prevention programmes are either unequipped to deal with the present realities or do not exist. Many developing countries have done little or nothing to deal with these problems, and international programmes are obviously insufficient. Developed countries are engaged in activities aimed at juvenile crime prevention, but the overall effect of these programmes is rather weak because the mechanisms in place are often inadequate to address the existing situation.

On the whole, current efforts to fight juvenile delinquency are characterized by the lack of systematic action and the absence of task-oriented and effective social work with both offenders and victims, whether real or potential. Analysis is further complicated by a lack of international comparative data.

BASIC ASSUMPTIONS OF DELINQUENT BEHAVIOUR

It is impossible to develop effective prevention programmes without understanding the reasons behind juvenile involvement in criminal activity. Different approaches are used in scientific and practical literature on juvenile crime and violence to define and explain delinquent behaviour by young people. To criminologists, juvenile delinquency encompasses all public wrongs committed by young people between the ages of 12

and 20. Sociologists view the concept more broadly, believing that it covers a multitude of different violations of legal and social norms, from minor offences to serious crimes, committed by juveniles. Included under the umbrella of juvenile delinquency are status offences, so called because they are closely connected with the age status of an offender; a particular action or behaviour is considered a violation of the law only if it is committed by a juvenile (examples include truancy and running away). In an attempt to explain the theoretical underpinnings of delinquency, sociologists associate the specifics of youth behaviour with the home, family, neighbourhood, peers and many other variables that together or separately influence the formation of young people's social environment.

Antisocial behaviour may be a normal part of growing up or the beginning of a long-term pattern of criminal activity. The United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (the Riyadh Guidelines) assert that "youthful behaviour or conduct that does not conform to overall social norms and values is often part of the maturation and growth process and tends to disappear spontaneously in most individuals with the transition to adulthood"; a great majority of young people commit some kind of petty offence at some point during their adolescence without this turning into a criminal career in the long term.[4] While delinquency is a common characteristic of the period and process of becoming an adult, it is very important to note that juveniles often create stable criminal groups with a corresponding subculture and start to engage in the activities of adult criminal groups, in effect choosing delinquent careers.

Statistical data in many countries show that delinquency is largely a group phenomenon; between two-thirds and three-quarters of all juvenile offences are committed by members of various groups. Even those juveniles who commit offences alone are likely to be associated with groups. According to data from the Russian Federation, the rate of criminal activity among juveniles in groups is about three to four times higher than that of adult offenders. Juvenile group crime is most prevalent among 14-year-olds and least prevalent among 17-year-olds. The rates are higher for theft, robbery and rape, and lower for premeditated murder and grievous bodily harm.

Similarities in the basic characteristics of juvenile group behaviour are found in almost every class and cultural context. Juvenile peer groups are noted for their high levels of social cohesiveness, hierarchical organization, and a certain code of behaviour based on the rejection of adult values and experience. The subcultural aspect of juvenile group activities is rarely given the attention it deserves. Different juvenile groups adopt what amounts to a heterogeneous mix, or synthesis, of predominant (class-based) values, which are spread by the entertainment industry, and intergenerational (group-based) values, which are native to the family or neighbourhood. Subcultures can be defined as particular lifestyle systems that are developed in groups and are in structurally subordinate positions as a result of pressure exerted by the predominant systems.

Subcultures reflect individual and group attempts to solve structural contradictions. One of the most important aspects of subcultures is that they form patterns of behaviour that have substantial symbolic value for the individuals involved. At present there are various subcultures in which deviant behaviour and violence play an

important role. Some groups and subcultures tend to use violence as a means of solving interpersonal conflicts, and the atmosphere thus created is an important mediating factor contributing to delinquent or criminal behaviour. This might even be referred to as a subculture of violence, in which aggression is considered an acceptable and even preferable and courageous approach to problem-solving.

Those most likely to participate in delinquent activities are members of territorial gangs. According to statistical evidence, they commit three times as many crimes as juveniles and youths who are not gang members. Studies reveal that the most frequent offences committed by gang members are fighting, street extortion and school violence.

The fact that juvenile groups always exist in local communities must be taken into consideration. A community is defined by the similar social characteristics of its residents, such as membership in a social class or ethnic group. Urban neighbourhood communities provide their members with a certain everyday social comfort at the local level. Under conditions of social diversity and urban growth these neighbourhood units, like rural communities, are able to balance the social interests of the groups they contain.

Membership in juvenile groups is sometimes an essential element of socialization. Several studies have shown the possibility of establishing connections between delinquent groups and other social institutions—a "symbiosis" in which gangs can, for instance, work to satisfy any of a community's needs.[5] As mentioned earlier, in many cases juvenile delinquent groups are also the entry point to adult organized crime.

Available data show that delinquency and crime have strong gender associations. Police records indicate that the crime rates of male juvenile and male young adult offenders are more than double those of young females, and conviction rates are six or seven times higher. The number of male juvenile suspects for every 100,000 members of the designated age group is more than six times the corresponding figure for females; for those in the youth category the male-female suspect ratio is even higher, at 12.5 to 1.[6] There are a number of reasons why more young men than young women are involved in violent or criminal behaviour. Various restrictive and stimulative factors encourage women to conform to social norms that do not apply to men, one example being the fear of sexual assault. Girls are subject to stronger family control than are boys. Cultural concepts are such that society at large is less tolerant of deviant behaviour among young women than among young men. In addition, aggression and violence play an important role in the construction of masculinity and sexuality in patriarchal societies, the primary objective being to reinforce and maintain the status and authoritative position of men. The male perception of violence can be minimized, forgiven, denied or justified. Men often do not consider such acts as verbal or sexual insults[7] to constitute violent behaviour.

There are cultures in which the dominant type of masculinity is more or less openly directed towards violent confrontation, domination and control.[8] In other cultures the socialization of young males towards hegemonic masculinity is not attached

to norms of physical prowess, hard work and a readiness to fight. For both boys and girls, the street gang is an ideal context for "doing gender" (establishing gender differences). Consequently, girls who are gang members are not simply passive recipients of "patriarchy" but active participants in the construction of gender relations.

The peer group plays an important part in the construction of gender roles and relations, including delinquent behaviour. Youth gangs reflect the gender-based power relations in society and the related discourse and practices by which they are reproduced. Consequently, differences in male and female behaviour in this context are partly a product of the social construction of gendered dominance and subordination in gang arrangements.

CAUSES OF AND CONDITIONS FOR THE FORMATION OF DELINQUENT TRAJECTORIES

The intensity and severity of juvenile offences are generally determined by the social, economic and cultural conditions prevailing in a country. There is evidence of a universal increase in juvenile crime taking place concurrently with economic decline, especially in the poor districts of large cities. In many cases street children later become young offenders, having already encountered violence in their immediate social environment as either witnesses or victims of violent acts. The educational attainments of this group are rather low as a rule, basic social experience acquired in the family is too often insufficient, and the socio-economic environment is determined by poverty and under- or unemployment.[9]

The causes of and conditions for juvenile crime are usually found at each level of the social structure, including society as a whole, social institutions, social groups and organizations, and interpersonal relations. Juveniles' choice of delinquent careers and the consequent perpetuation of delinquency are fostered by a wide range of factors, the most important of which are described below.

Economic and social factors

Juvenile delinquency is driven by the negative consequences of social and economic development, in particular economic crises, political instability, and the weakening of major institutions (including the State, systems of public education and public assistance, and the family). Socio-economic instability is often linked to persistent unemployment and low incomes among the young, which can increase the likelihood of their involvement in criminal activity.

Cultural factors

Delinquent behaviour often occurs in social settings in which the norms for acceptable behaviour have broken down. Under such circumstances many of the common rules that deter people from committing socially unacceptable acts may lose their relevance for some members of society. They respond to the traumatizing and destructive changes in the social reality by engaging in rebellious, deviant or even criminal activities. An example of such a setting would be the modernization of traditional societies and the accompanying changes wrought by the application of

new technologies; shifts of this magnitude affect the types and organization of labour activity, social characteristics, lifestyles and living arrangements, and these changes, in turn, affect authority structures, forms of obedience, and modes of political participation—even going so far as to influence perceptions of reality.

In both developed and developing countries, consumer standards created by the media are considerably beyond the capacity of most families to achieve. Nevertheless, these ideals become a virtual reality for many young people, some of whom will go to great lengths to maintain a lifestyle they cannot afford. Because not all population groups have access to the necessary resources, including education, professional training, satisfactory employment and income, health services, and adequate housing, there are those who are unable to achieve their goals by legal means. The contradiction between idealized and socially approved goals and the sometimes limited real-life opportunities to achieve them legally creates a sense of frustration in many young people. A criminal career becomes one form of addressing this contradiction. One of the reasons for delinquent behaviour is therefore an excessive focus on proposed goals (achieving success) coupled with insufficient means to achieve them.

The likelihood of deviant acts occurring in this context depends in many respects not only on the unavailability of legal opportunities but also on the level of access to illegal opportunities. Some juveniles, cognizant of the limitations imposed by legal behaviour, come under the influence of adult criminals. Many young people retreat into the confines of their own groups and resort to drug use for psychological or emotional escape. The use of alcohol and illegal drugs by juveniles is one cause of delinquency, as they are often compelled to commit crimes (usually theft) to obtain the cash needed to support their substance use.

Urbanization

Geographical analysis suggests that countries with more urbanized populations have higher registered crime rates than do those with strong rural lifestyles and communities. This may be attributable to the differences in social control and social cohesion. Rural groupings rely mainly on family and community control as a means of dealing with antisocial behaviour and exhibit markedly lower crime rates. Urban industrialized societies tend to resort to formal legal and judicial measures, an impersonal approach that appears to be linked to higher crime rates. Cultural and institutional differences are such that responses to the same offence may vary widely from one country to another.

The ongoing process of urbanization in developing countries is contributing to juvenile involvement in criminal behaviour. The basic features of the urban environment foster the development of new forms of social behaviour deriving mainly from the weakening of primary social relations and control, increasing reliance on the media at the expense of informal communication, and the tendency towards anonymity. These patterns are generated by the higher population density, degree of heterogeneity, and numbers of people found in urban contexts.

Family

Studies show that children who receive adequate parental supervision are less likely to engage in criminal activities. Dysfunctional family settings—characterized by conflict, inadequate parental control, weak internal linkages and integration, and premature autonomy—are closely associated with juvenile delinquency. Children in disadvantaged families that have few opportunities for legitimate employment and face a higher risk of social exclusion are overrepresented among offenders. The plight of ethnic minorities and migrants, including displaced persons and refugees in certain parts of the world, is especially distressing. The countries in transition are facing particular challenges in this respect, with the associated insecurity and turmoil contributing to an increase in the numbers of children and juveniles neglected by their parents and suffering abuse and violence at home.

The family as a social institution is currently undergoing substantial changes; its form is diversifying with, for example, the increase in one-parent families and non-marital unions. The absence of fathers in many low-income families can lead boys to seek patterns of masculinity in delinquent groups of peers. These groups in many respects substitute for the family, define male roles, and contribute to the acquisition of such attributes as cruelty, strength, excitability and anxiety.

The importance of family well-being is becoming increasingly recognized. Success in school depends greatly on whether parents have the capacity to provide their children with "starting" opportunities (including the resources to buy books and manuals and pay for studies). Adolescents from low-income families often feel excluded. To raise their self-esteem and improve their status they may choose to join a juvenile delinquent group. These groups provide equal opportunities to everyone, favourably distinguishing themselves from school and family, where positions of authority are occupied by adults.

When young people are exposed to the influence of adult offenders they have the opportunity to study delinquent behaviour, and the possibility of their engaging in adult crime becomes more real. The "criminalization" of the family also has an impact on the choice of delinquent trajectories. A study carried out in prisons in the United States reveals that families involved in criminal activities tend to push their younger members towards violating the law. More than two-thirds of those interviewed had relatives who were incarcerated; for 25 per cent it was a father and for another 25 per cent a brother or sister.

Migration

Because immigrants often exist in the margins of society and the economy and have little chance of success in the framework of the existing legal order, they often seek comfort in their own environment and culture. Differences in norms and values and the varying degrees of acceptability of some acts in different ethnic subcultures result in cultural conflicts, which are one of the main sources of criminal behaviour. Native urban populations tend to perceive immigrants as obvious deviants.

The media

Television and movies have popularized the "cult of heroes", which promotes justice through the physical elimination of enemies. Many researchers have concluded that young people who watch violence tend to behave more aggressively or violently, particularly when provoked. This is mainly characteristic of 8- to 12-year-old boys, who are more vulnerable to such influences. Media bring an individual to violence in three ways. First, movies that demonstrate violent acts excite spectators, and the aggressive energy can then be transferred to everyday life, pushing an individual to engage in physical activity on the streets. This type of influence is temporary, lasting from several hours to several days. Second, television can portray ordinary daily violence committed by parents or peers (the imposition of penalties for failing to study or for violations of certain rules or norms of conduct). It is impossible to find television shows that do not portray such patterns of violence, because viewer approval of this type of programming has ensured its perpetuation. As a result, children are continually exposed to the use of violence in different situations—and the number of violent acts on television appears to be increasing. Third, violence depicted in the media is unreal and has a surrealistic quality; wounds bleed less, and the real pain and agony resulting from violent actions are very rarely shown, so the consequences of violent behaviour often seem negligible. Over time, television causes a shift in the system of human values and indirectly leads children to view violence as a desirable and even courageous way of reestablishing justice. The American Psychological Association has reviewed the evidence and has concluded that television violence accounts for about 10 per cent of aggressive behaviour among children.[10]

Exclusion

The growing gap between rich and poor has led to the emergence of "unwanted others". The exclusion of some people is gradually increasing with the accumulation of obstacles, ruptured social ties, unemployment and identity crises. Welfare systems that have provided relief but have not eliminated the humble socio-economic position of certain groups, together with the increased dependence of low-income families on social security services, have contributed to the development of a "new poor" class in many places.

The symbolic exclusion from society of juveniles who have committed even minor offences has important implications for the development of delinquent careers. Studies show that the act of labelling may lead to the self-adoption of a delinquent image, which later results in delinquent activity.

Peer influence

Youth policies seldom reflect an understanding of the role of the peer group as an institution of socialization. Membership in a delinquent gang, like membership in any other natural grouping, can be part of the process of becoming an adult. Through such primary associations, an individual acquires a sense of safety and security, develops a knowledge of social interaction, and can demonstrate such qualities as loyalty or leadership. In "adult" society, factors such as social status, private welfare, race and ethnicity are of great value; however, all members of adolescent groups are essentially in an equal position and have similar opportunities for advance-

ment in the hierarchical structure. In these groups well-being depends wholly on personal qualities such as strength, will and discipline. Quite often delinquent groups can counterbalance or compensate for the imperfections of family and school. A number of studies have shown that juvenile gang members consider their group a family. For adolescents constantly facing violence, belonging to a gang can provide protection within the neighbourhood. In some areas those who are not involved in gangs continually face the threat of assault, oppression, harassment or extortion on the street or at school. As one juvenile from the Russian Federation said, "I became involved in a gang when I was in the eighth form (about 13 years old), but I joined it only when I was in the tenth (at 15 years of age). I had a girlfriend and I feared for her, and the gang was able to provide for her safety."[11]

Delinquent identities

In identifying the causes of criminal behaviour, it is important to determine which factors contribute to a delinquent identity and why some adolescents who adopt a delinquent image do not discard that image in the process of becoming an adult. Delinquent identity is quite complex and is, in fact, an overlay of several identities linked to delinquency itself and to a person's ethnicity, race, class and gender. Delinquent identity is always constructed as an alternative to the conventional identity of the larger society. Violence and conflict are necessary elements in the construction of group and delinquent identities. The foundations of group identity and activity are established and strengthened through the maintenance of conflict relations with other juvenile groups and society as a whole. Violence serves the function of integrating members into a group, reinforcing their sense of identity, and thereby hastening the process of group adaptation to the local environment.

Other factors that may provide motivation for joining a gang are the possibilities of economic and social advancement. In many sociocultural contexts the delinquent way of life has been romanticized to a certain degree, and joining a gang is one of the few channels of social mobility available for disadvantaged youth. According to one opinion, urban youth gangs have a stabilizing effect on communities characterized by a lack of economic and social opportunities.

Offenders and victims

Criminal activity is strongly associated with a victim's behaviour. A victim's reaction can sometimes provoke an offender; however, "appropriate" behaviour may prevent a criminal act or at least minimize its impact. According to scientific literature, the likelihood of becoming a victim is related to the characteristics or qualities of a person, a social role or a social situation that provoke or facilitate criminal behaviour; personal characteristics such as individual or family status, financial prosperity, and safety, as well as logistical characteristics such as the time and place in which a confrontation occurs, can also determine the extent of victimization.

People may become accidental victims, as assault is often preceded by heated discussion. According to the classification of psychological types there are three typical adolescent victims of violence: accidental victims; people disposed to become victims; and "inborn" victims.[12] Studies have shown that in the majority of cases that

result in bodily harm, the offender and his victim are acquainted with one another and may be spouses, relatives or friends; this is true for 80 per cent of murders and 70 per cent of sexual crimes.[13]

SOME REGIONAL ASPECTS OF DELINQUENCY

While certain aspects of juvenile delinquency are universal, others vary from one region to another. As a rule, cultural contexts are important in understanding the causes of juvenile delinquency and developing culturally appropriate measures to deal with it.

In Africa, delinquency tends to be attributed primarily to hunger, poverty, malnutrition and unemployment, which are linked to the marginalization of juveniles in the already severely disadvantaged segments of society. As a result of rapid population growth, young people in Africa will soon constitute two-thirds of the region's population. Every year about 790,000 people enter the labour market, while the economy generates fewer than 60,000 jobs. One half of all households in Africa are living in poverty. Many of the urban poor live in slum and squatter settlements with overcrowded, unhealthy housing and a lack of basic services. It is here that the majority of urban youth and children live.[14] One of the most serious problems is the great number of street and orphaned children, whose numbers have been growing as a result of continuous and multiple armed conflicts, the advent of HIV/AIDS, and the breakdown of a centuries-old way of living and social structure. Juvenile crime and delinquency are on the rise, a trend also linked to the rapid and dramatic social, political and economic changes that have taken place in Africa in recent decades. The principal offences committed by young people are theft, robbery, smuggling, prostitution, the abuse of narcotic substances, and drug trafficking.[15]

In Asian countries, juvenile crime and delinquency are largely urban phenomena. Statistically, as is true elsewhere, young people constitute the most criminally active segment of the population. The most noticeable trends in the region are the rise in the number of violent acts committed by young people, the increase in drug-related offences, and the marked growth in female juvenile delinquency.[16] The financial crisis that hit some countries in East and South-East Asia in the late 1990s created economic stagnation and contraction, leading to large-scale youth unemployment. For millions of young people, this meant a loss of identity and the opportunity for self-actualization.[17]

Some countries are facing great difficulty because they are located near or within the "Golden Crescent" or the "Golden Triangle", two major narcotics-producing areas of Asia. Traffickers actively involve adolescents and youth in serving this industry, and many of them become addicted to drugs because of their low prices and easy availability.[18] Another major problem is human trafficking.

In Latin America, the young have been the hardest hit by the economic problems linked to the debt crisis in the region, evidenced by the extremely high unemployment rates prevailing within this group. Juvenile delinquency is particularly acute and is often associated with the problem of homelessness among children and adolescents.

In the Arab world, the problems associated with juvenile delinquency vary from one country to another. Some countries have experienced socio-economic difficulties, while others have become prosperous. In the latter group, delinquency may occur in connection with migrants seeking employment, or may be linked to factors such as continued urbanization, sudden affluence, rapidly changes in the economy, and the increasing heterogeneity of the population. The conflict between tradi-tional Arab-Islamic values and newer, often imported values appears to be a common problem throughout the region.

In the industrialized countries, increased prosperity and the availability of a growing range of consumer goods have led to increased opportunities for juvenile crime, including theft, vandalism and the destruction of property. With the social changes that have occurred over the past few decades, the extended family has been replaced by the nuclear family as the primary kinship group. The informal traditional control exercised by adults (including parents, relatives and teachers) over young people has gradually declined, and adequate substitutes have not been provided. Lack or insufficiency of parental supervision is one of the strongest predictors of delinquency. The contemporary Western family structure constitutes one of the most important factors associated with the increase in juvenile delinquency in the past 50 years.[19]

The sharpest increase in the rate of juvenile violence in most Western European countries occurred in the mid-1980s or early 1990s. In some countries, the official figures rose between 50 and 100 per cent. In England and Wales, for example, approximately 360 of every 100,000 youths aged 14-16 years were "convicted or cautioned by the police" for violent crimes in 1986; by 1994, that figure had increased to approximately 580 per 100,000. In Western Germany in 1984, the number of 14- to 18-year-olds suspected of violent crimes was approximately 300 per 100,000; by 1995, that figure had more than doubled to approximately 760 per 100,000. Rates in the former East Germany were 60 to 80 per cent higher. The results of a number of studies indicated that the victims of violent crimes committed by juveniles were most-ly other juveniles. For example, in the Netherlands in 1995, young people 15-17 years of age were four times more likely than adults (25 years or older) to be the victims of assault. It must be noted that in most countries the crime rate among adults has either remained stable over the years or increased moderately. In no country has the increase in the adult crime rate paralleled that of juveniles. Thus, the rise in violent crime among juveniles derives only partially from overall crime trends.[20]

Within developed countries there are groups of impoverished and needy people suffering from relative deprivation. In recent years some countries have reduced their social services, placing the weakest strata of the population in an even more vulnerable position. Poverty has increased, and the problems of homelessness and unemployment have reached alarming dimensions.[21] In most EU countries the rise in juvenile crime has corresponded to observed increases in poverty and unemployment rates among vulnerable groups.

The overall crisis in Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States deriving from the transition to market-based economies has contributed to an increased tendency towards criminal behaviour, owing mainly to the weakening of the primary institutions of socialization (the family, the public education system,

recreation services, work collectives and the informal peer environment) and to personal alienation. Juvenile delinquency in the region is most often related to the unemployment of both young people and parents, poverty in the family, or pressures on overworked parents to successfully maintain the traditional guardianship of children. These challenges and other socio-economic pressures have intensified in the past decade, affecting the behaviour of children and youth. The impact of pathological behaviours in the family, educational negligence, negative patterns of conduct conveyed by parents or guardians, and the lack of leisure alternatives is also considerable. In Slovakia, only about 8 per cent of young people are members of youth associations. There may be a reluctance to join such groups, in which participation was virtually mandatory under past regimes.[22]

In the major countries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, the number of mothers and fathers deprived of their parental rights is increasing every year. These individuals are predominantly alcoholics, drug addicts and people who have demonstrated antisocial behaviour. Unemployment, low family income and parental irresponsibility are the main factors contributing to juvenile delinquency in many parts of this region. Children experience suffering and humiliation; they may be involved in theft or other offences, and some are forced to earn an income through prostitution. In many countries of the former Soviet Union, the collapse of public educational organizations has undermined efforts to prevent juvenile delinquency. For most adolescents there are no opportunities for involvement in associations or clubs. Many social services in the region have been eliminated during the transition period, and those still operating face chronic financial problems. The low wages paid to social service employees give them little incentive to work with adolescents. Alienated from society, young people often become involved in delinquent groups.

PREVENTING JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

Violence against children endangers their fundamental human rights. It is therefore imperative to convince individuals and institutions to commit the time, money, expertise and other resources needed to address this global problem.[23] A number of United Nations instruments reflect a preference for social rather than judicial approaches to controlling juvenile delinquency. The Riyadh Guidelines assert that the prevention of juvenile delinquency is an essential part of overall crime prevention in society,[24] and the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (the Beijing Rules) recommend instituting positive measures to strengthen a juvenile's overall well-being and reduce the need for State intervention.

It is widely believed that early-phase intervention represents the best approach to preventing juvenile delinquency. Prevention requires individual, group and organizational efforts aimed at keeping adolescents from breaking the law. Various countries use different methods to discourage delinquent and criminal behaviour. Some focus on punitive prevention intended to frighten potential offenders by making sure they understand the possibility of severe punishment, or action may be taken to prevent recurrent crime, which includes explaining the negative aspects of an offence to a delinquent and attempting to reconcile offenders and their victims.

Early preventive work is being carried out in several areas. Some of the most promising approaches, programmes and initiatives are described in some detail below.

Within the economic sector, professional development programmes are being set up to provide legal alternatives for income generation. Supplying adolescents and young people with increased economic opportunities, professional training and education, new workplaces and assistance in organizing businesses can help prevent youth involvement in delinquent activities.

Educational programmes are helping young people learn how to engage in positive self-appraisal, deal with conflict, and control aggression. The programmes debunk the myth of gang glamour and help young people find alternatives to illegal behaviour.[25] Some work with troubled youth to help them develop the social and cognitive skills necessary to avoid conflict and control aggression. Children raised in strong families, quality schools and healthy communities typically develop these skills as a matter of course. In the United States law-enforcement agencies, schools, local communities and parents of adolescents are involved in these programmes.

Recreation and youth development activities are directly encouraged in the Riyadh Guidelines: "A wide range of recreational facilities and services of particular interest to young persons should be established and made easily accessible to them".[26] In a number of towns in the United States the establishment of basketball programmes for adolescents led to a 60 per cent decrease in crime rates. Researchers at Columbia University in New York City found that having a Boys' or Girls' Club in a public housing project reduced the level of crime by an average of 13 per cent. In Stevenage, a town in the United Kingdom where a large youth centre and playground were built and several youth clubs organized, young people have largely avoided delinquent activities.

Often it is possible to reduce the level of juvenile delinquency by changing an urban environment, altering the physical features through architectural and landscape planning and providing opportunities to engage young people's interest. A research study conducted in a town in the United States revealed that most of the activities of juvenile delinquent groups were concentrated around the town's only park. The layout of the park was redesigned to create many more leisure and recreational alternatives for juveniles and their parents. The number of positive afternoon activities held in schools and parks was also increased. All of these measures led to a considerable reduction in juvenile delinquency; in the United States juvenile crime, including violent offences, peaks at around 3 p.m., generally right after school lets out.[27]

Recently, greater attention has been given to the role and responsibility of local communities in dealing with juvenile delinquency. There are programmes designed to train groups and individual representatives of local communities in which juvenile delinquency has increased to informally control youth and include young people in constructive activities.[28] The idea that young people can and should work in partnership with adults to improve conditions in their communities has gained currency in the past decade. Young people are being asked to sit on boards, submit ideas and support community efforts through structured (sometimes required) volunteering.[29] A promising development in efforts to prevent juvenile delinquency and

crime is the involvement of NGOs and volunteers (students and pensioners, along with well-known and authority figures such as sportsmen, politicians and public figures) in social work with adolescents. Generally, programmes for preventing gang delinquency should endeavour to integrate children and youth into organized group activities. This can be achieved through social service agencies or organizations such as the YMCA, YWCA, Girl Guides and Boy Scouts, as well as independent boys' and girls' clubs and community centres; local government recreational activities also serve this purpose.

Cooperation between various agents of prevention work is becoming increasingly important. Multisectoral prevention initiatives designed and implemented by entire communities are the most effective, in particular those that build on the strengths and interests of youth rather than focusing only on their problems or deficits. In one city in the United States law enforcement officers, human service agency representatives and local citizens forged a partnership to combat crime in 10 high-crime neighbourhoods. The initiative—which included the establishment of new athletic leagues for young people, a youth forum for teens to speak out on community problems, and various other prevention measures—led to a 29 per cent drop in crime in the targeted neighbourhoods and a citywide reduction in violent crime.

Institutional programmes aimed at providing social and psychological support for individuals and groups include camps, group homes, alternative schools and shelters. Provided within this context are educational, behavioural and psychological evaluation and diagnostics; health attention and assignment to medical facilities; individual educational planning; individual, group and parent counselling; and the organization of leisure activities.

The family, as the primary institution of socialization, appears to play the most important role in the prevention of child and juvenile delinquency. The most impressive prevention efforts focus on the families of troubled youth, including those young people with serious behaviour problems. In the United States, when parent management training was provided to the parents of problem children aged 3-8 years, the children fared far better than those in a control group assigned to a waiting list for the programme. Overall, between two-thirds and three-fourths of the children in the programme achieved clinically significant change and returned to a normal range of behavioural functioning.

In this connection special attention must be given to street children and to children and adolescents who have lost their families (or their ties to them) during armed conflicts and have thus had no appropriate family surveillance. The majority of programmes serving street children are remedial in nature, as they operate on an ad-hoc basis, providing food, clothing and occasionally shelter and health services. These initiatives, which provide symptomatic treatment, have to be complemented by programmes that also address the causes of "streetism".

Special programmes are needed to tackle the problem of unaccompanied and homeless children, including rehabilitation schemes that take children off the streets. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child provides a framework for improving the living conditions of children, focusing on the following four broad areas:

- *Survival rights.* Articles 6.1, 6.2 and 24.1 deal with the basic needs that must be met for children to enjoy good health for adequate growth, including medical care, nutrition, shelter and clothing. For street children most of these needs are not satisfied.

- *Development rights.* Articles 6, 26 and 28 relate to the opportunities and means for providing children with access to education, skills, training, recreation and rest, information, parental care and social security.

- *Protective rights.* Articles 2, 19.1, 19.2, 32.1, 33, 34, 36 and 37 focus on the legal and social provisions that must be made by each country to protect children from exploitation, drug abuse, sexual abuse, cruelty, separation from family, discrimination, and the effects of all types of man-made or natural disasters.

- *Participation rights.* Articles 12, 13, 14 and 17 focus on the opportunities and means provided to children to enable them to express opinions on matters affecting their lives, including freedom of worship, access to information about oneself, and freedom to give evidence (where applicable). Children are knowledgeable about their situations and can devise innovative solutions to their problems if consulted. Street children, in particular, have already learned to make important decisions regarding their daily lives without the assistance of adults.[30]

Community-based improvements in slum and squatter settlements have the potential to prevent children from living on the streets and to help reintegrate them into their neighbourhoods.[31] Another objective of preventive work is to help street children engage in optimistic self-appraisal and form positive attitudes.

Many countries still have "punitive" prevention programmes that try to suppress juvenile and youth offences, as well as gang recruitment, expansion and criminal behaviour, by means of surveillance (continuous police observation) and prosecution. Suppression is a form of active intervention wholly legitimized by the State. Because this approach is believed to be inherently "right", it requires no special justification or evaluation of results.[32] This type of approach generally precludes efforts to promote proper behaviour, focusing instead on preventing unwanted behaviour. However, aggression on the part of authorities can in many cases contribute to the further integration of youth into delinquent groups.

Purely preventive (or suppressive) efforts are not very effective for youth already in trouble. The majority of crimes are committed by a relative handful of repeat offenders who typically display serious behaviour problems in early childhood. For them, more intensive, individualized treatment is likely required.

Prevention of recurrent crime is best achieved through "restorative justice", which is usually carried out by non-governmental remedial organizations and local communities. Restorative justice is regarded as an alternative mode of criminal justice. It involves a process whereby all the parties with a stake in a specific offence come together and collectively determine how best to deal with the aftermath of the offence and its implications for the future.[33] The offender, through interaction with the

victim, must understand the seriousness of the incident and together with the victim and social workers develop a series of steps towards reconciliation, arranging reparations for damages and providing whatever remedial assistance the victim might require. If successful resolution occurs, the juvenile is not placed in a correctional facility or labelled a delinquent, thereby avoiding the influence of an environment (jail) that can reinforce delinquent behaviour.

The reconciliation process must be carried out very carefully so that the offender does not consider it a "deal" with the victim—a risk emphasized by various researchers. According to different studies up to 95 per cent of juveniles who have participated in such programmes and agreed to provide restitution have fulfilled their obligations, and recurrence levels have been reduced by 50 per cent in general. Moreover, restitution is much more cost-effective than confinement; in the United States the cost of keeping each juvenile in a correctional facility can be as high as $30,000 per year.

One of the key elements of restorative justice is reconciliation between the offender and the victim, a process necessary not only for the correction of the offender, but also for the restoration of justice for the victim. The protection and support of victims and witnesses is recognized as an important basic element of overall crime prevention and crime control strategies. Support measures reduce the impact of crime on those most directly affected and are essential for preserving and protecting the role of victims and witnesses in the criminal justice process. It also aids the investigation and prosecution of crime by facilitating cooperation between victims, witnesses and law enforcement and prosecution agencies.

According to experts, crime victims require restitution to restore their dignity and honour, compensation to acknowledge the trauma inflicted and bring a sense of closure, and rehabilitation to enable them to return to their homes and communities with a measure of self-worth. Usually a victim's initial contact after a crime is with police, immigration authorities, welfare volunteers, representatives of NGOs or laypeople, few of whom have the expertise to deal with traumatized victims. Appropriate training is needed for those who are typically the first to come into contact with victims.[35] Additional victim support services and awareness campaigns focusing on victims' rights are needed, and witness protection policies must be developed and implemented, particularly with respect to organized crime and specific offences such as trafficking in persons, where intimidation or retaliation may be used against those who cooperate with the police in preventing, investigating or prosecuting offences.[36]

Generally, a crime prevention system will be effective only if (a) the contents and framework of prevention efforts are clearly defined and the functional opportunities of all agencies included in that system are appropriately utilized; (b) all of the subjects and targets of prevention work (including adolescents themselves and their relations in different spheres of society) are covered and the specific characteristics of each are taken into consideration; and (c) the mechanisms of administration, control and coordination for this type of prevention work have been developed.

In practice, many prevention approaches have proved ineffective. Studies show that shock incarceration (boot camp) does not reduce criminality. Short-term, "quick fix" job training has not lowered arrest rates. Neither traditional psychotherapy nor behaviour modification has shown great promise as a vehicle for redirecting delinquent and criminal youth. A few methods—especially scare-oriented approaches or programmes that place groups of delinquent youth together for extended treatment—have actually worsened the behaviour of participants.

Experience shows that efforts to fight gang membership are the most ineffective. Several techniques for transforming the gang environment have been suggested, but they tend to deal only with the criminal aspect of the problem, while the socio-economic and other conditions and circumstances that compel juveniles to enter a gang remain forgotten; further, traditional social institutions are rarely engaged in the process. Nonetheless, programmes designed to address the problem of gang membership are often implemented, and many of them are reported to be successful by some evaluators and completely inadequate by others. According to some researchers, the implementation and positive appraisal of a number of initiatives can be attractive to politicians who wish to demonstrate that they are taking action against juvenile delinquency. Such political considerations make adequate evaluation of prevention work difficult in many cases, with the result that ineffective programmes may continue to operate while the problems of juvenile delinquency remain unsolved.

Consistency is an essential factor in achieving prevention at all levels. Juvenile delinquency is often wrongly perceived as an individual phenomenon; the communal aspect tends to be downplayed or ignored. In reality, however, delinquent acts are generally committed by juveniles in a group or at least within the framework of a particular group's standards. To be effective, prevention work must take into account not only individual motivation, but also group cultural dynamics. At an even broader level, in some countries (such as the Russian Federation) juvenile delinquent groups may have close ties with adult organized crime and connections with local community members, which must also be considered in the development of prevention programmes.

Prevention initiatives are not always easily transferred from one sociocultural environment to another. Programmes that work effectively in one country may be totally inadequate in others; for example, an approach to restorative justice developed and successfully applied in one country may be implemented in another with poor results. There is a need to factor the subcultural specifics of a particular group of juvenile delinquents into programme development, and to clearly define the target group at which preventive measures will be directed.

Communities must implement a combination of prevention, intervention and suppression strategies to address the gang problem. Policies and programmes must be based on appropriate targeting of both institutions and youth, taking into account

their mutual relationship at a particular time and place (focusing, for example, on the point at which a young person is entering or ready to leave a gang and/or at the stage the gang problem is developing in the particular institution or community).[37]

Gang members are not totally without the desire to live within socially approved boundaries. However, they are often suspicious and afraid of mainstream society and turn to the gang as their only source of security and approval. Efforts to guide juvenile gangs towards socially acceptable avenues of behaviour are needed. At present, most rehabilitation initiatives are not working to redirect the energies or potential of gang members into socially desirable activities.

One promising area of prevention work involves strengthening the position of victims by developing relevant programmes and training for them and supporting victims' associations. The problem of youth victimization is still characterized by a certain theoretical vacuum. Recent studies have shown that differentiation between offenders and victims is based not on sex and age, but on differences within each gender; in other words, offenders and victims of the same gender represent different "types" of masculinity and femininity. These and other gender-related considerations must be borne in mind in the development of prevention programmes. Expanding efforts in this direction would be particularly useful for dealing with street and orphaned children and the victims of armed conflict, sexual abuse and trafficking. Special measures are needed for children and adolescents subjected to the latter three types of challenges: the media, as the main source of public information, should play a key role in informing the public about the destructive results of armed conflicts; and round-table discussions should be organized to develop strategies for counter-trafficking and for integrating the victims of armed conflicts (including adolescent former soldiers) and the victims of harassment and sexual abuse into society.

A proactive but carefully considered approach to the development and implementation of prevention and rehabilitation programmes is needed, with care taken to apply those lessons learned through direct experience. Significant public investment is warranted to both strengthen and expand the youth-oriented prevention agenda and to intensify efforts to refine and improve upon the promise of prevention. However, it must be acknowledged that the thoughtless expenditure of money, time or effort for spontaneous or poorly developed measures will do little to solve the problem; research and evaluation must therefore be integrated into all prevention efforts.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The current situation with regard to juvenile crime and delinquency can be characterized by the following basic facts and trends:

- There has been an observed increase in violent and aggravated crimes among youth.

- The number of drug-related crimes is growing.

- The process of globalization and the greater mobility of large population groups have led to an increase in criminal activity associated with intolerance towards members of other cultures.

- The difficulties encountered by immigrants and their descendents in certain countries are sometimes related to the high levels of group crime deriving from the activities of ethnically based delinquent groups.

- In many cases juvenile crimes are linked to less obvious sources of motivation; various actions may reflect, for example, the standards of particular subcultures, teachings or traditions deriving from religious radicalism, or the compulsion to use of violence as a means of contructing gender identity.ß Quite often, aggressive and criminal behaviour is positively portrayed in the media, creating a confused picture of acceptable societal norms within some youth subcultures.

- Quite often, aggressive and criminal behaviour is positively portrayed in the media, creating a confused picture of acceptable societal norms within some youth subcultues.

- Children and adolescents in difficult circumstances constitute ready reserves for organized crime, participation in armed conflicts, human and drug trafficking, and sexual exploitation.

- The disintegration of families, poverty, and the death of parents in armed conflict or from HIV/AIDS has led to the forced independence of many young people around the world.

As illustrated in this chapter, juvenile delinquency covers a multitude of different violations of legal and social norms, ranging from minor offences to serious crimes committed by young people. Some types of juvenile delinquency constitute part of the process of maturation and growth and disappear spontaneously as young people make the transition to adulthood. Many socially responsible adults committed various types of petty offences during their adolescence.

Quite often, however, the situation is far more serious. Poverty, social exclusion and unemployment often cause marginalization, and young people who are marginalized are more susceptible to developing and maintaining delinquent behaviour. Furthermore, young people are more likely to become victims of crimes committed by juvenile delinquents. Delinquency is largely a group phenomenon; it is frequently engaged in by certain subcultures of young people who have jointly assumed a particular identity. It is also primarily a male phenomenon, with crime rates for male juvenile and young adult offenders more than double those for females. Some criminal activities are associated with intolerance of members of other cultures or religious, racial or ethnic groups.

If delinquency policies are to be truly effective, higher priority must be given to marginalized, vulnerable and disadvantaged young people in society, and issues relating to youth in conflict with the law should be a central focus of national youth policies. The administration of juvenile justice should be decentralized in order to encourage local authorities to become actively involved in preventing youth crime and reintegrating young offenders into society through support projects, with the ultimate aim of fostering responsible citizenship. ■

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Chapter 8.

Rethinking *LEISURE TIME:*

Expanding Opportunities
for YOUNG *PEOPLE*
COMMUNITIES
&

The importance of leisure time *for young people, particularly as it relates to personal and community development, is examined in this chapter. It is imperative that youth be given a wide range of opportunities for meaningful participation within the community, provided or facilitated by a multitude of organizations, institutions and programmes in all sectors. The various sections in the chapter focus on how young people spend their free time, the developmental opportunities presented within diverse contexts, and the virtuous cycle of mutual benefit created through reciprocal youth-community support (illustrated in several detailed case studies). The conclusion emphasizes the importance of saturation (adequacy of opportunities is more important than variety), a solid infrastructure, a strong public and political commitment, and the recognition that leisure time and opportunities constitute a right to be protected rather than a privilege to be earned or lost.*

Certain major themes—basic health, risk behaviour reduction, education, employment and political participation—constitute the pillars of youth policy. Indeed, they are the foundations of human resource development in general, reflecting a continuum of goals from protection to prevention to civic and economic participation. They are the domains of responsibility of the main public systems charged with providing services and opportunities for youth. They represent the core indicators against which Governments and advocates track progress. They do not, however, represent the totality of young people's lives; herein lies the challenge.

In every culture, there are hours in the day when young people are not formally required to be in school or engaged in household or paid work. They choose to be involved in various activities, and there are public and private programmes, organizations and individuals who support their participation. These hours, these activities and often even these programmes are considered discretionary. They are viewed as optional—nice but not necessary, or even particularly important. These are the hours, the activities and the programmes whose absence or disappearance would not be noticed by policy makers but would be very much felt by young people. Public recognition of their importance is low, a fact reflected in the scarcity of relevant data.

Equally important, it is these hours, activities and programmes that policy makers, programme planners and frequently the public have few qualms about reducing. When crime rates go up, the quality and quantity of young people's discretionary hours are often diminished by strict curfews. When test scores drop or family incomes dip, opportunities to participate in voluntary activities are often restricted, as the hours required for work or study are increased. When public funds are low, sports, recreation and cultural programmes and institutions are often among the first casualties.

In a number of sectors, these hours and activities and the infrastructure that supports them are seen as promising means to achieve specific, well-defined ends, including delinquency prevention, formal education or HIV/AIDS prevention. Reducing idle time is adopted as a delinquency prevention strategy, youth counsellors are heralded as effective messengers for reaching peers and family members, and youth organizations are funded to reach and train young people who have failed in the mainstream educational system.

Too often, forays into discretionary space are taken without an appreciation of what that space is and what it does for young people. The ease with which policy makers and large-system planners confiscate time, redefine activities and supplant or take advantage of community programmes and organizations suggests a basic lack of understanding of, and a lack of respect for, what goes on when young people are not in school or at work.

The language used by those who study discretionary time and programmes does not help. Terms such as "leisure", "informal learning" and "play" imply a casualness of purpose and practice that does not do justice to young people, their activities, or the programmes and people that support them. It is possible that major systems including education and public health, formally held accountable for achieving visible, measurable outcomes through codified interventions and practices, may simply believe they are stepping into uncharted or at least unstructured territory.

The purpose of the present chapter is to take a step back from detailing current trends in leisure and out-of-school activities to present a frame for thinking about why discretionary time, activities and programmes are important and how they can be better leveraged to promote individual and community development.

The three basic premises underpinning this chapter are as follows:

- *Discretionary time plays an integral role in young people's individual development and the development of their communities.* The amount of discretionary time available to young people varies considerably according to age, gender and culture. In all countries, though, this time provides space in which young people make important developmental headway. Youth show signs of strain and depression in countries in which discretionary time dips below a certain threshold. The developmental progress made during discretionary time is not solely individual; how young people use these hours has significant implications for the communities in which they live.

- *The availability of a range of constructive, voluntary activities and opportunities to engage is critical to young people's development and their contributions to the community.* Activities should vary to address the broad range of young people's interests and needs, should adhere to what is known about supporting development, and should strive to offer outlets and support that are often more difficult to provide in larger institutions.

- *The choice of institution is as critical as the choice of activity.* Leisure activities and opportunities should be offered and made available by multiple institutions and organizations within the community. The decentralized infrastructure characteristic of most informal education, leisure-time, and community-based programmes is a useful counterpoint to large public institutions that determine not only what is done, but who is involved.

The first section of the chapter offers different perspectives on discretionary/leisure time, focusing on the developmental opportunities these hours offer, and presenting statistics and research on young people's leisure-time use and discretionary activities. The section concludes with the argument that young people will use

their discretionary time more productively if activities and programmes are of higher quality, are focused on life preparation and community participation, and address concerns about prevention and problem reduction.

The second section concentrates on the dual issues of young people's development and their community contributions, exploring through examples the reciprocal relationship between young people and communities, and the community as the context in which most young people spend their discretionary time.

In its entirety, this chapter is meant to locate leisure/discretionary time and activities within a bigger picture of what young people need and can do. Young people's leisure time and activities are inseparable from many of the other pressing issues affecting them (covered in the different chapters of the present publication), as the following pages will make clear. Leisure—used here to refer simultaneously to the hours, activities and infrastructure—is a key context for education and learning, for health care and the decisions that affect young people's health, for full participation, and for the use of ICT. It is inextricably connected with young people's employment opportunities and formal schooling. How young people spend their leisure time is also linked to pressing threats to their well-being, including HIV/AIDS, delinquency, conflict and drug abuse, and to issues of globalization and interdependence. Given these interconnections, it is critical that leisure be discussed as a context for the development of young people and their participation in the development of community and society. It is hoped that this chapter, as one piece of a larger puzzle, represents a useful contribution to the United Nations' efforts to understand and support the well-being of young people around the world.

RETHINKING LEISURE: HOW YOUNG PEOPLE SPEND THEIR DISCRETIONARY TIME

"There is nothing to do in Oakland, absolutely nothing. Young people are killed in car crashes every night because there is nothing to do but drive around."

—Young adult focus group participant, United States

Defining leisure time

Researchers draw the picture differently, but all agree that leisure time, at a minimum, is the waking hours during which a young person is not in school and not at work. School-related activities such as homework, Saturday classes and summer school are often counted as extensions of school. Chores and required family responsibilities such as childcare are often counted as extensions of work.

Pulling together a vast array of studies on how young people spend their time across cultures, R. Larson and S. Verma recently compiled a relatively clear picture of leisure time around the world.[1] The combination of immense diversity (within and across cultures, nations, regions, socio-economic situations and genders) and a shortage of data and credible studies (particularly those relevant to developing country contexts) make efforts to generalize difficult and tentative. While recognizing that doing so obscures important differences and missing information, it is nonetheless useful to use Larson's and Verma's effort to build a composite snapshot of young people's leisure.

Leisure time

The amount of time young people spend away from work and school work varies significantly across populations and regions. Differences exist within the developing world. In a Kenyan sample, 10 per cent of children's waking hours were free, compared with 63 per cent for a sample of young men in urban India. In developing country populations, boys tend to have significantly more leisure time than do girls, as the latter spend more time in household labour than do their male counterparts. In the developed world, about half of American young people's waking hours are free, and European adolescents seem to have about the same or slightly less leisure time, while Asian young people appear to have a quarter to a third of their time for leisure.

Leisure activities

While media use is not even mentioned in the developing country time-use studies Larson and Verma examine, it is a dominant force in developed societies. East Asian, European and North American young people appear to spend an average of about two hours daily in front of the television, with boys watching more than girls. Young people from all regions spend less than an hour reading each day, with those in the United States reading less than Europeans, and Europeans less than Asians. Music plays a less substantial role in young people's leisure time than any other activity. In terms of active, unstructured leisure, the time that younger children spend in play appears to be supplanted during adolescence by labour in developing and transitional populations and by talking (often more than two hours a day) among American and European young people, while children and youth in East Asia spend relatively little time in unstructured active leisure. Young people's engagement in active, structured leisure such as sports, organizations and the arts is also greater in Europe and the United States than in Asia; studies tracking organized activity participation in developing areas have not been carried out. Across regions, participation appears to increase as socio-economic status improves, with sharper rises in sports for boys than for girls, and a greater increase for younger than for older adolescents. Time spent "doing nothing"—waiting, hanging out and thinking, for example—takes more of Western young people's time than that of Asian youth, and perhaps more time of youth in developing than in developed countries.

Leisure locales and partners

In developing societies, young people tend to spend most of their time at home, with boys generally venturing outside the family with peers somewhat more than girls. Asian adolescents in developed countries, according to Larson and Verma, "spend nearly all of their non-school time at home", while young people in Europe and the United States spend significantly more time (perhaps a quarter of their waking hours) with peers. Perhaps most interesting, though, is research relating to the changes that may occur in young people's interaction with particular individuals or groups as they get older. According to the data amassed by Larson and Verma, American and European youth typically spend a decreasing amount of time with their families as they advance through adolescence, while time with family stays constant for African-American young people and youth in India, with an increase in family time for young Indian women as they get older.

Opportunities presented by adolescent leisure time

In many cases, discretionary time is thought of first and foremost as an opportunity for problem behaviour—as the time when young people get in trouble, roam the streets, engage in risky sexual behaviour and watch too much television. Concerns about potential risks during leisure hours are valid. However, advocates and policy makers should set their sights higher than whether or not young people are in trouble. Leisure time is also an opportunity for play and recreation—for self-expression and relaxation, and for young people to exercise their emerging self-control. Beyond this, though, leisure is when learning and development occur—not learning in the formal, academic sense, but no less critical than the learning that goes on inside schools. Finally, leisure time is the context in which young people flex their muscles as contributors and change-makers, as participants in the development of their communities and societies.

This is the opportunity of leisure—robust, varied and essential. Too often, though, risk rather than opportunity is the focus of programmes and policies that affect young people's leisure, and leisure is not imagined as the critical time it genuinely is. How leisure is perceived makes all the difference.

> "Sports, leisure activities ... and even paid entertainment allow individuals to manage their free time without constraints. Even in difficult situations, these activities give young people the opportunity to entertain themselves, to relax, to play, and to find cultural enrichment. ... [These] activities give young people the possibility of self-expression, personal fulfillment, and personal development as an individual and as a member of a group. In addition, sports and leisure activities can raise awareness in young people that can inspire them to contribute to the improvement of their living conditions through volunteerism."
>
> — Dakar Youth Empowerment Strategy (para. 58)

Problem reduction and prevention: hours of risk?

The out-of-school hours constitute a period during which bad things can and do happen, including drinking, smoking, unprotected sexual activity, delinquency and violence. It is nonetheless unfortunate that the reasons most closely associated with a willingness to support out-of-school opportunities are those that arise most often out of concern about the risks and problems associated with these hours. This perspective is reflected in the tone of popular media coverage focused on young people's leisure. Prominent news magazines in the United States lead with headlines such as "Wild in the streets" (Newsweek) and "Teenaged wolf packs" (U.S. News & World Report) when they report on young people's use their leisure time.[2,3] Coverage of children's leisure in South America and other parts of the developing world, especially that which makes its way to global media outlets, takes the street child as its primary figure, painting none too positive a picture.

It is not only the press that represents leisure as a time of risk rather than opportunity. Much of the international research on leisure focuses on young people's problem behaviour as well. Policies and policy debates tend to be framed from a problem-reduction standpoint; in the United States, for example, new policy commitments to after-school programmes were spurred largely by reports that juvenile crime rates spiked during the hours directly after school.

Problem-focused conceptions of leisure are shaped by a larger climate of negative perceptions about young people. Throughout diverse regions of the world, public attitudes, media and policies reflect the perception that young people are problems to be solved, seen in terms of their collective deficits rather than their potential. J. Boyden explains how two problem-focused images of youth—of children as potential victims of "pollution" by a dangerous adult world, and as young delinquents who pose a danger to others—"have been exported from the industrial world to the South", forming the basis for public policy as well as public attitudes.[4] Whether imported or home-grown, this mindset is not easy to change; in Brazil, it was not until a constitutional reform process and a major movement spotlighting street children swept the country that a decades-old child policy that criminalized youth in "irregular circumstances" was overturned and the focus shifted almost entirely to youth problems such as delinquency and abandonment.[5] Problem-focused policies go hand-in-hand with problem-focused media coverage. Research by young people in the United States on television and newspaper reporting revealed an increase in coverage of juvenile crime—just as actual crime rates dropped to their lowest levels in decades.[6] Perhaps in part because of such media coverage, focus groups of American adults refuse to change negative perceptions of youth, even when confronted with statistical evidence or compelling stories of young people's positive potential.[7] Even in post-apartheid South Africa, where youth played the decisive role in reshaping the country for the better and where forward-thinking youth policies have been put into place, public images of young people are largely problem-focused, as illustrated in the following:

> "As the 1980s drew to a close, young people were gradually no longer seen as the engine of resistance…causing some to call those who grew up in the turbulent 1980s a lost generation. Many feared that young people would derail the democratic process or that the resistance movement would dissipate into a criminally inclined subculture."[8]

There are certainly reasons to be concerned about young people's leisure time, and to view the development of positive leisure opportunities as part of a solution to youth problems. It is telling that when young people in the slums of Nairobi began to document life in their communities using photographs, they focused largely on violence, rampant drug use (including glue sniffing), and other negative "leisure activities".[9] In a very different context, the wider mass media coverage and the spread of Internet and other information and communication technologies, particularly in much of Asia, Europe and the United States, have resulted in a significant decrease in physical activity among young people, especially older youth.[10] It is true that young people disconnected from adult support and supervision are more likely to engage in a variety of problem behaviours, taking risks, performing poorly in school, and abusing substances.[11] Young people who have left the school system and have not found paid employment—youth for whom discretionary time is all the time—need and deserve policy attention in all regions of the world.

Real and potential difficulties notwithstanding, viewing young people's leisure time primarily as a problem to be fixed ignores the possibilities of this time. It results in policy responses aimed at filling or diminishing young people's leisure; such responses include programmes that provide little more than basic supervision, longer

school days, curfews that keep young people out of the public eye and, at the extreme, increased investment in facilities for juvenile delinquents. At a more basic level, it sells young people short. It does not do justice to the possibilities and potential of young people, nor does it contribute to the development of those qualities and skills society will require from them as workers, citizens, and community and family members.

Preventing problems is an important but inadequate goal; remaining problem-free does not fully prepare young people for the challenges and responsibilities of adulthood. A prospective employer may be introduced to a young man and told he is not a drug user, a gang member, a dropout or a teen father. The employer might be impressed but would be far more interested in whatever (applicable) knowledge and skills the young man possessed. Efforts must be made to define—and to give young people ample opportunity to identify and understand—the values, attitudes, knowledge, skills and level of commitment expected of them with as much clarity as undesirable qualities have been defined; otherwise, the disconnectedness in youth development will persist.[12]

The logic applied above is not only relevant to the world of work. Young people must be more than problem-free when they go to the ballot box for the first time or take on parenting responsibilities, and they should learn to be good neighbours. It is critical that leisure be seen as more than a time of potential risk to young people, during which problems must be prevented.

Play and recreation: time for fun and exploration?

Young people's discretionary time is worth a significant amount of attention, partly because it is a potential breeding ground for youth problems, but mainly because it presents endless possibilities for constructive development. It is critical that a positive vision of leisure time activities be put forward and defined, and that time and care be given to specifying how such time should be used and why it should be protected.

International plans and commitments such as the Dakar Youth Empowerment Strategy offer such a positive vision, taking a clear stand against severe infringements on young people's right to free time. Most have their source in the promise of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, amplifying, reiterating and expanding on the following basic provisions of article 31:

"1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.

"2. States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity."

Echoing these international commitments, a developing body of research—and a growing choir of advocates and practitioners—emphasize the importance of play and recreation for younger children. Leaders in child development have long identified play as critical space for children's cognitive, identity, and social/emotional development.[13] Research indicates that the specific types of thinking and problem-solving involved in play provide valuable skills for the future.[14] Researchers,[15] therapists,[16] and childcare practitioners have made play a central element of their work with children, with demonstrated impact.

While the nature of "play" may change as (especially Western) young people get older—with increases in peer leisure and time spent talking for some and in structured recreational and sports activities for others[17]—it appears to be no less critical to adolescents than to younger children. Though the precise effects are not certain, time spent informally with peers and adults in activities such as talking and playing is likely to result in both stronger social networks and stronger social skills for adulthood.[18] The physical exercise and habits associated with sports and recreation, again in concert with the social skills and relationships gained through such activities, constitute an important input to young people's health. Adolescents' play and recreation, though defined differently in cultures around the world, has intrinsic value.

The shift from a negative view of leisure to a positive vision that emphasizes the value of leisure in its own right is a critical first step towards protecting young people's right to discretionary time and to quality leisure activities. This message is important for developing and least developed countries, where economic pressures often propel young people into the labour force at an early age; it is equally important for highly industrialized countries concerned about improving academic performance.

Learning and development: more hours for academic learning?

Around the world, the amount of time young people spend in work has decreased, replaced by a larger amount of time in school. In the developing countries, school generally occupies a relatively small amount of young people's time. In much of Asia, however, the combination of a longer school day, an expansive network of non-school academic enrichment programmes (many geared towards test preparation), and more time dedicated to homework means that up to half of young people's time is spent in academic pursuits. In developed countries, frustration with educational reform efforts and continued pressure for academic achievement have resulted in an explosion of academic after-school programmes.

At the heart of this international phenomenon is an important fact: young people's learning need not—and does not—stop at the end of the school day. Their leisure time provides a rich opportunity for learning and a particularly rich climate in which to facilitate the development of lifelong learners.

Pushing for more "time on task", many programmes simply replicate the teaching practices used during the school day and extend them into young people's leisure time, despite growing evidence that "more of the same" is both unproductive and developmentally dangerous. Research supervised by Deborah Vandell shows that

young people in Thailand who were involved in high-yield arts and cultural activities that had reading, writing and mathematics as the "hidden curriculum" rather than the lead curriculum not only performed better on State tests than those enrolled in strict content-drill programmes, but were also emotionally healthier. This study speaks to a tension that is developing, at least in the United States, challenging the belief that academic outcomes are best bolstered by the application of formal school-derived practices during out-of-school hours.

Based on research findings such as these, there is growing recognition that learning during leisure hours cannot appear identical to that inside of schools and, equally important, an increased willingness to describe learning as a primary goal for leisure-time activities. The ideas of "serious leisure" and "leisure education" put forward by World Leisure in its *Charter for Leisure*[19] and other documents imply a set of principles, professional standards, practices and pedagogical orientations that are distinct from but complementary to what goes on in formal education settings. The model of learning put forward by J. Falk and L. Dierking goes further in specifying the contextual, personal and social factors in place when young people participate in learning that is volitional, recreational, and engaged in as a form of self-fulfilment.[20] Falk's and Dierking's framework for free-choice learning, developed through investigation focusing largely on museums, is one of a number of research-and-practice efforts to underscore the unique nature of learning that happens during leisure.

> ## Box 8.1.
> ### FEATURES OF POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTAL SETTINGS
> - Physical and psychological safety
> - Appropriate structure
> - Supportive relationships
> - Opportunities to belong
> - Positive social norms
> - Support for efficacy and mattering
> - Opportunities for skill-building
> - Integration of family, school and community efforts
>
> Source: National Academy of Sciences, National Research Council.

Other efforts push even further in defining the specific features of environments that support young people's leisure-time learning and development. International documents including "Programming for adolescent health and development: report of the WHO/UNFPA/UNICEF Study Group on Programming for Adolescent Health"[21] and *Adolescence: A Time That Matters*, published by UNICEF,[22] and country documents such as the New Zealand Ministry of Youth Affairs' *Youth Development Strategy Aeteatoa*, published in 2002, present a set of common features of environments that support young people's development. Research and synthesis by M. McLaughlin,[23] by J.P. Connell, M.A. Gambone and T.J. Smith,[24] by the Forum for Youth Investment,[25] and, most recently, by the National Research Council[26] confirms that there are core principles relevant to learning that goes on during leisure time—principles applicable to schools as well but not consistently present within them. This set of central principles—in reality, conditions for effective learning and engagement—includes, inter alia, the presence of caring relationships, challenge and relevance, choice and voice, high expectations, physical and emotional safety, and experiences of "mattering" and contribution.

This research and practice goes far in validating and clarifying the significance of leisure-based learning. Research results indicate that community-based leisure-time settings may actually be more effective than schools in engaging students in learning. A study by R. Larson indicates that young people are only cognitively and emotionally engaged a small amount of the time, even though such engagement is a critical pre-condition to learning.[27] Importantly, this combination of cognitive and emotional engagement is far more likely to happen in structured, voluntary leisure-time settings than during school. Apparently, the blend of principles that make leisure-based learning what it is offers a powerful model for engagement and achievement.

Based on these findings, stating that leisure time provides an opportunity for learning represents a richer and more promising claim than the argument that students should spend more time doing what they do in school. As indicated by the research just described, the "how" (pedagogy) of learning during leisure is significantly different. The "what" of learning—the appropriate content for learning that goes on outside school hours—is also different. As both the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Dakar Youth Empowerment Strategy acknowledge, leisure time is critically a space in which young people express themselves creatively, take part in arts and cultural activities, and develop as individuals. Culture, creativity, and identity are central, defining features of the content of learning during leisure time. Research confirms that leisure time is important in helping young people achieve a broad range of positive outcomes, as follows:

- *Social/emotional development and engagement:* the ability to respond to and cope with both positive and adverse situations, reflect on one's emotions and surroundings, engage in leisure and fun, and sustain caring friendships and relationships with others.

- *Vocational development and engagement:* acquiring the functional and organizational skills necessary for employment, including an understanding of careers and options and the pathways to follow to reach these goals.

- *Physical development and engagement:* biological maturation and the evolving ability to act in ways that best ensure current and future physical health for oneself and others.

- *Cognitive development and engagement:* the ability to gain basic knowledge, to learn in school and other settings, to use critical-thinking, problem-solving, and creative and expressive skills, and to conduct independent study.

- *Civic development and engagement:* the growing recognition of one's impact on one's surroundings and responsibility to others, as well as the ability and opportunity to work collaboratively towards a common goal.

Leisure is a developmental opportunity and an imperative. Larson argues that adolescence, including leisure time during this period, should be defined and understood as a time of preparation for family life, employment, good citizenship, lifelong learning and personal fulfilment.[28] It also provides an opportunity for the development of communities and societies.

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Contribution: time to make a difference?

In many contexts, young people are required to use their non-school time to contribute to the livelihood and economic sustenance of family and community. As about half of the world's population are under 25, and between 14 and 21 per cent of the population in each of the world's major regions are within the age group 15-24, it is obvious that young people are crucial to their communities' well-being. A significant number of those in the latter group are economically active, with totals ranging from roughly 28 per cent of Western Asia's young women to more than 75 per cent of Oceania's young men in 1995.[29]

Reliance on young people as a source of labour and economic well-being is a necessity for many. However, youth in such circumstances often sacrifice their individual development for the sake of family security, and may be exposed to exploitative and unhealthy labour conditions.

The important role that young people play in sustaining their families, communities and countries suggests that their discretionary time may represent a potentially powerful force for renewal, contribution and change.

Around the world, young people are proving that leisure represents a prime opportunity not only for individual development, but also for contribution and change (see boxes 8.3-8.7 later in the chapter). Rates of voluntary participation in community building and community development have increased dramatically among youth in many regions. Young people have demonstrated the desire and capacity to use their own time to make an impact on their communities and societies, as illustrated by the following:[30]

- *Reclamation.* In some situations, young people seek to recover lost community capacity and well-being. Young people in Cambodian squatter communities, living with broken infrastructure, poor sanitation and garbage-lined streets, decided to take back their neighbourhoods through a combination of youth-taught classes, massive volunteer clean-up efforts, and community organizing activities.

- *Creation.* Some young people create new infrastructure and community resources where the need exists. In Nairobi, the young people of the Mathare Youth Sports Association have set up a sanitation infrastructure for their neighbourhood, running the garbage trucks that clean their local streets.

- *Preservation and conservation.* Recognizing that they have something worth holding on to, the corps members of the Southeast Alaska Guidance Association help ensure that Alaska's natural beauty is not destroyed by those who travel there to appreciate it. This effort is one of the many examples of young people working to keep their culture, environment and history alive.

- *Development.* The high school students of Lubec, Maine, in the United States demonstrate that young people can play a vital role in the complex, professionalized work of community development, in this case by incubating small businesses, testing aquaculture technologies, and doing real research that yields potential new directions for a challenged local economy.

- *Building.* Young people can help build their communities, constructing greater connectedness, leveraging human resources and community assets, and forging common agendas, as the young leaders of Cefocine in Guayaquil, Ecuador, have done with their blend of education, arts and action.

- *Change.* If the systems in place do not work, young people often take responsibility for reforming or reinventing them. In the American city of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the members of the Philadelphia Student Union are organizing for genuine educational change, sitting down with school and city leaders to negotiate improvements in everything from bathroom and hallway safety to the quality of their textbooks and teacher training.

The preceding examples, as well as many others, were explored as part of several years of research on the connections between youth development and community change undertaken by the Forum for Youth Investment with the support of the Ford Foundation. A key component of this work was international dialogue sustained through the International Learning Group on Youth and Community Development (ILG).[31] Practitioners from over a dozen countries grappled with some basic questions about how opportunities, expectations and roles varied across cultures, countries and contexts. The three lessons that came through with particular clarity in this work are highlighted below.

Opportunities for contribution are greater in countries where there is real need. Opportunities for recognized, real contribution are more widely available in countries and contexts in which unfulfilled needs relate to basic services, basic rights and access, or political stability and voice. From the slums of Nairobi to the steps of Parliament in Paraguay to inner-city and rural communities in the United States, young people—who are often a majority of the population—have brought about real change. In situations in which the infrastructure and institutions are sturdier, young people have fewer openings for meaningful, visible and respected contribution. In such circumstances, the challenge often lies in ensuring that service opportunities and organizing activities are not assigned marginal, "make-work" status but instead produce tangible results.

Involvement and participation should not be limited to older youth. The philosophies and realities of contributing to one's community can start at an early age. Several ILG members were awed when they met elementary school students in the La Vega neighborhood of Caracas who had produced textbooks for use by even more disadvantaged middle-school students in a nearby neighbourhood. Efforts such as these are rooted in a sense of social responsibility, as evidenced in a statement by one of the 10-year-olds in the class:

> *"I teach other students to read and write and add. Someone thanked me and I said, 'Don't thank me because it is an honor to teach the future of Venezuela. We are here now but we will be leaving—and what we will leave behind is an imprint on the future.'"*

For experts and practitioners struggling to build a bridge between young people's development and the development of communities, words like these are both compelling and instructive.

It is important to strike a balance between community and youth outcomes. In the ILG discussions and others, a basic debate arose about how a young person could be expected to contribute to community development when their own basic needs were not being met. One participant asserted that it was useless to talk about youth participation without discussing the exclusion of young people from education and employment. There were also concerns about the over-involvement of young people. In less industrialized countries, in particular, the value of young people as a current resource (to work, fight and mobilize) is often so high that they are not afforded leisure time. In child labour and other such contexts, youth development is sacrificed in the name of community development. In the developed world, in particular, community development leaves little space for young people, and the challenge is often to "fill the empty time". Finding a new balance between youth and community development is critical in either case, as is achieving a balance within youth engagement efforts.

Figure 8.1
Youth and community outcomes: a difficult balancing act

Youth Action

Individual Growth

Institutional & Community Change
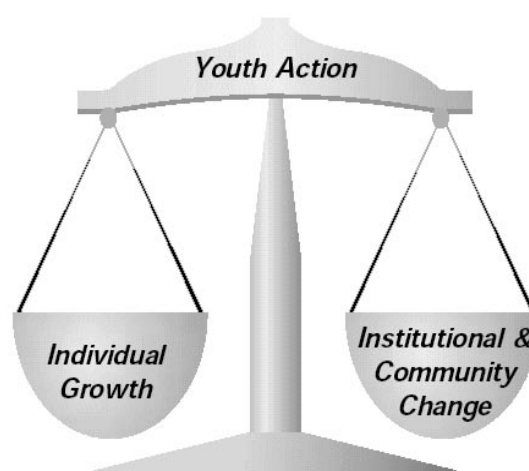
How can goals related to individual growth (developing skills, confidence, values, experiences) be balanced with the goals of community change—finding efficient, systematic ways to effect measurable change in communities?

In discussions addressing the issue of balance, one of the key concepts that emerged was the "alternative view" represented in figure 8.2. ILG members concluded that one of the most effective ways to help and encourage young people who had very little in terms of support and opportunities was to involve them in addressing the challenges faced by them personally, by their peers, and by their families, communities and societies. By drawing on and developing their expertise in dealing with problems directly affecting them, and by engaging them in devising solutions, contribution and development become inseparably joined. This way of thinking about opportunities for young people speaks directly to the challenge of reconciling the multiple goals of leisure time.

Coming full circle:
the inseparable goals of leisure time

In too many communities and for too many young people, solving problems, promoting play, relaxation and self-fulfilment, supporting learning and development, and encouraging engagement and contribution to community are still seen as competing options rather than complementary goals.

An old paradigm that focuses on fixing the problems of high-risk youth, providing opportunities for leadership and contribution to the lucky few, and helping the vast group in the middle meet their basic needs and prepare for adulthood often holds sway in policies, public attitudes, and programmes aimed at supporting young people. The options that are provided (or not provided) are often based on society's sense of whether young people are a problem or are problem-free. High-risk youth are targeted with programmes meant to solve their difficulties, rather than with opportunities to build their capacity and make contributions. Youth identified as low risk are given a wider range of options, including opportunities for contribution. A "fix, then develop, then contribute" formula remains dominant (*see figure 8.2*).

Figure 8.2

The Current Thinking
Fix then Engage

High Risk Youth

Fixing and Preventing Youth Problems

Providing Opportunities for Play and Recreation

Supporting Learning and Development

Promoting Youth as Problem Solvers

Low Risk Youth

An outdated paradigm—fix problems before you develop or engage—still dictates how many young people are treated.

An Alternative View
Grow and change through engagement

Fixing and Preventing Youth Problems

Providing Opportunities for Play and Recreation

Supporting Learning and Development

Promoting Youth as Problem Solvers

There is an alternative paradigm: that (a) the best way to fix problems is to engage youth as problem solvers; and (b) all youth should have access to a full range of support and opportunities.

In reality, all young people need a full array of basic services, consistent means of support, and challenging opportunities. All youth have problems that need fixing, as well as the capacity to contribute and solve problems. The best way to help them tackle their difficulties is to engage them as problem solvers (*see figure 8.2*). Vulnerable youth are perhaps those most in need of opportunities to participate and take action, given that young people in low-income communities have significantly fewer opportunities at present.[32] It is equally clear that the most effective problem-prevention programmes are those that support, and provide the critical means of support for, development.[33] An emerging approach helps young people to fix problems by engaging them and to prevent problems by ensuring their access to basic support systems and opportunities.

LEVERAGING LEISURE TIME:
A COMMUNITY CHALLENGE AND OPPORTUNITY

Ideally, young people's discretionary hours are those over which they have some control, hours during which they can choose to do things that interest them with individuals or organizations that interest them. Because these hours are discretionary they come with the potential for enormous individual growth and community benefit. The present section focuses on two inter-related facts: (a) the potential for young people's contribution is unlimited; and (b) the context in which young people exist can either support or sabotage their development. These contentions are best expressed as follows:

> "Young people contribute to all sectors. Our teachers are young people, our police are young people, and our nurses are young people. It is young people who give dignity and pride to our nations. Young people go out to the Olympics and win medals. Youth create culture

> and music. ... (Yet) the concept that young people are good for nothing and they are not reliable—many people hold this idea."[34]

> "The local environment can help, or hinder, young people's development. The local environment encompasses all those factors that contribute to an area's uniqueness as a place and community, including its physical, social, economic, political and historical characteristics. ... Planners, designers and managers ... must understand the impact that local development decisions have on young people's lives."[35]

Communities provide the overall context for young people's learning and development. As Larson's and Verna's research suggests, when young people are away from the family, it is in the parks, streets, faith institutions, businesses and community organizations that they spend their discretionary time. Leisure-time use is ultimately an issue of how young people engage in community life. A community that recognizes the potential of young people's leisure time will (a) provide the full range of formal and "discretionary" community resources to support youth and their development, supplementing formal education and family experiences (a vision of communities supporting young people); and (b) engage young people as actors and contributors in all aspects of community life, including during their leisure time (a vision of youth contributing to communities) (*see figure 8.3*).

Figure 8.3
**Communities and young people:
a shared vision for contribution**

Youth Contributing to Communities

Young people and adults working together to create the necessary conditions for the successful development of themselves, their peers, families and communities

Communities Supporting Youth

Source: M. Irby and others, *Youth Action: Youth Contributing to Communities, Communities Supporting Youth,* Community and Youth Development Series, vol. 6 (Takoma Park, Maryland, FYI, 2001).
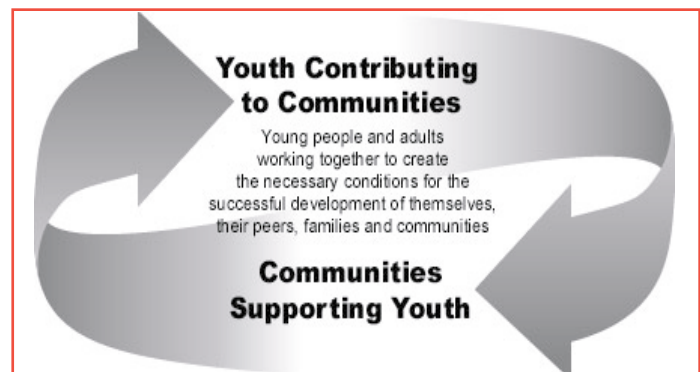
These two ideas are explored further in this section, and several examples illustrating key elements are provided.

Do communities really support young people?

If young people are to move successfully into adulthood—problem-free and fully prepared and engaged[36]—it will be in large part because of the support and opportunities they are able to access in the places where they live. Common sense indicates, and research confirms, that community support mechanisms matter. The overall climate and context of young people's neighbourhoods have been shown to make a difference. For instance, young people who have more adult support in their neighbourhood are less likely to experience depression.[37] In neighbourhoods in which there are more professional jobs available, young people delay sexual activity and childbearing.[38] A high degree of neighbourhood connectedness, shared values, and common commitment reduces crime rates and creates a safer environment for young people,[39] and in stable neighbourhoods people are more likely to provide mutual support. Perhaps just as significant as the overall neighbourhood context is the impact of individual non-parent residents on young people's successful development; a number of studies point to the positive influence of faith leaders, extended family members living in the community, neighbours, and other local adults.[40] These adults are, in many cases, a critical part of the leisure lives of young people.[41] None of this should come as a surprise since, regardless of the culture, young people spend an increasing amount of their time exploring and navigating the larger community of which they are a part.

Of particular importance are the structured services, support, and opportunities available in communities during young people's leisure time. As indicated in the previous section, young people are more consistently engaged—cognitively and emotionally—in structured out-of-school settings than during the school day.[42] This higher level of engagement appears to result in better outcomes for young people, particularly for those who lack opportunities in other parts of their lives. According to a major report prepared by the National Research Council on youth in the United States, young people who take advantage of community-based opportunities and support are less likely to engage in negative behaviour and show higher positive developmental outcome rates. These findings confirm the results of dozens of studies on community-based leisure-time opportunities and young people's development, a selection of which reveals the following:

- Adolescents who participate regularly in community-based programmes experience better academic and social outcomes, including higher education and career aspirations and achievements, than do teens from similar backgrounds.[43]

"I sometimes think that community is the enemy of young people."

— Allá, age 22, Egypt

> **Box 8.2**
>
> **LESSONS FROM ANOTHER FIELD: A COMMUNITY FOCUS ON CHILD HEALTH**
>
> In creating a community focus around leisure, a number of core principles can be adapted from community-focused efforts made by and for other sectors. For the World Health Organization, in the field of child health, a community-based approach achieves the following:
>
> - Involves people—by acknowledging the vital role of the immediate community in a child's healthy growth and development;
> - Adapts to community needs—by recognizing that priorities are best set by the people involved;
> - Builds on existing resources—by enhancing community structures and expertise;
> - Strengthens links—between health services and the people they serve, making them a more valuable community resource;
> - Avoids duplication—by working in harmony with single-focus health programmes, not in competition with them;
> - Builds bridges—between community groups, NGOs and the private sector, both within and outside the field of health, from mothers' support groups to education and development initiatives;
> - Focuses on outcomes—identifying the key care practice needed by families to improve their children's health, while being flexible enough for countries and communities to adapt the practices;
> - Is cost-effective—because it maximizes use of existing resources and focuses on low-cost interventions which have the greatest impact on child health and development;
> - Is sustainable—because it is cost-effective, builds on existing structures and responds to the needs and priorities of local people.
>
> Source: World Health Organization, excerpt from Improving Child Health in the Community (WHO/Department of Child and Adolescent Health and Development, 2002) (WHO/FCH/CAH/02.12), p. 4.

- The National Longitudinal Study of Youth, a large ongoing public survey, has found that students who report spending no time in extracurricular activities are 57 per cent more likely than those spending one to four hours in such activities to drop out before reaching twelfth grade. Studies by J. Eccles and B. Barber[44] and research synthesized by D. Vandell and L. Shumow[45] echo these findings.

- Reginald Clark found that economically disadvantaged children and youth in poorly performing schools who participated in constructive learning activities for 20-35 hours per week during their free time got better grades in school than their more passive peers.[46]

All indicators point to the fact that young people need and deserve early and sustained support throughout their waking hours to achieve a broad range of positive outcomes. Family support and public policy commitments are extremely important (a concept explored further below); however, it is even more directly a community-level responsibility to support youth during their discretionary time, and the quality and quantity of that support is critical.

Box 8.3

It is hard to know where to begin in listing all the challenges that face the impoverished communities in and around Guayaquil, Ecuador. Some 82 per cent of residents live in poverty, and the consequences of this poverty run deep. Those who take public transportation run the risk of assault by the rampant gangs. Parks and wells alike are rendered unsafe by the garbage and sewage that pollute them. The neighbourhoods lack basic infrastructure and must manage with few health services, little sanitation, a massive shortage of jobs and inadequate schools. A woman living in one of the cooperatives says when it rains, streets turn into rivers and garbage floats on the surface. "It's impossible to walk, because the currents could take you," she explains, "and that is just one of the problems of the community."

Facing this laundry list of woes, the young people of Cefocine have responded in perhaps the only way possible: they create, they play, and they turn weaknesses into strengths. In the process, they have changed the face of their communities. The roughly 30 leaders of Cefocine—boys, girls, young men and young women concerned with growing poverty—coordinate a variety of programmes that together reach more than 1,000 children, young people and women. The result is an inseparable mix of youth development and community development, all led by young people themselves and tied closely to the communities in which they work.

Children: from games to social criticism—before age 11. Cefocine's work starts early, with 2- to 11-year-olds, when most organizations are thinking about childcare, not social change. The centre of these programmes, as with everything at Cefocine, is creativity and fun; children plan and create cartoons, videos and other works of art. However, it would be a mistake to dismiss their work as all fun and games. Their cartoons focus on community concerns chosen by children, including their family, violence, ecology, hygiene, rights and relationships at school. As they produce their own media, these children learn to be critical of the media images and advertising they are exposed to every day.

Young people: from gangs to agents of change. "The youth have all the energy and the enthusiasm. They can transform their community's reality through their work. All the energy that a gang uses in a negative way, destroying and scaring a whole neighbourhood could—potentially, using it in a positive way—make the community better," says Nayla Bersoza, a 21-year-old Cefocine facilitator. This is the powerful logic behind Gangs: A Bet for Hope, an effort that has helped about 250 gang members become entrepreneurs and providers of vital community services. The effort combines educational, sport and ecological activities with youth-led business ventures such as a youth bicycle courier business. Many youth involved in the Gangs programme later become programme leaders, bringing the effort full circle.

Women: from isolation to power. "We started our work with children," explains Maribel, another of Cefocine's young leaders. "But as we were working we were finding other necessities and we started to expand the work, to make new projects that were not just with kids." One result: with 50 women, Cefocine developed Creative Hands and Minds, a project through which women come together to create handicrafts and, in the process, a major new source of family income. The furniture and crafts they produce are sought out by residents throughout the city, resulting in a change in perceptions and freedoms. The same city residents who had looked down on these women, stereotyping them as the wives of violent husbands and mothers of gang members, suddenly had to line up to buy the women's work. Just as it has changed the perceptions of outsiders, the women's newfound economic power has also brought greater equality inside marriages. Women with little room for self-expression and time with other females now have space of their own. "Before this we didn't know each other. We could have seen the other, but we never talked . . . now it's incredible because we are the best of friends," said one of the women involved. (*cont'd next page*)

Communities: from poverty to hope. A few years ago, Juan Montalvo and Julio Cartagena—two neighbourhoods in which Cefocine works—exemplified the effects of poverty visible throughout the city. Life in Juan Montalvo was particularly hard. From a simple survival perspective, only 3 per cent of local residents were over 46 years old, and in 1997, an average of 10 assaults occurred every day. The apathy among residents was obvious. Even the community house reflected it; it was abandoned and dirty, nearly destroyed. Thanks in large part to the work of Cefocine, both communities are far more hopeful places than they once were. The combination of new businesses created by women and young people, reduced violence from gangs, greater awareness of health and environment, and more opportunities for children add up to major changes in the character of these two cooperatives. For instance, acting on the suggestion of a young resident, the people of Julio Cartagena recently replaced a garbage-strewn gang battlefield with a park. In Juan Montalvo, a number of youth enterprises have started up. Not all the problems have been solved. However, in these communities—in particular Julio Cartagena, where Cefocine has been active longer—the people have recovered something they lost a long time ago: their faith. The signs of the transformation are small as well as large; "I've never been so kissed in my life," said one visitor, pleased and surprised, when visiting the cooperatives.

Young people in many Latin American communities—and in less economically developed regions around the world—end up playing vital community roles by necessity. In these communities, young people are breadwinners, caretakers and sometimes full community members by the time they reach their teens. Cefocine offers a powerful example of young people taking on these vital roles, while also getting the support they need to learn and grow — a true mix of community development and youth development.

Source: Based on Sabrina Duque's article, "Ecuador: linking youth and change", *CYD Journal*, vol. 1, No. 3 (Summer 2000), pp. 58-59. For a case study on Cefocine's work, see J. Tolman and K. Pittman, with B. Cervone and others, *Youth Acts, Community Impacts: Stories of Youth Engagement with Real Results*, Community and Youth Development Series, vol. 7 (Takoma Park, Maryland, Forum for Youth Investment, 2001).

Do youth contribute to communities?

The relationship between young people and their communities is one of give and take. There is no shortage of compelling stories to illustrate the contribution of youth to community development. Young people in India have organized themselves into a 13,000-member union to fight for their own and their parents' rights in the workplace. Others have led literacy movements throughout Latin America and fought racial oppression and discrimination in South Africa. Everywhere in the world there are examples of young people making a difference.

There is no shortage of young people ready to make contributions to their communities. More than a quarter of the 14-year-olds included in the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement's 28-country civic engagement study have worked with charities, and almost 20 per cent have worked with groups that do voluntary work to help their communities. Far more say they intend to be involved in political life in the future.[47] In terms of sheer motivation, a study in the United Kingdom found that community service is second only to dancing as the activity that gives people most joy;[48] 3.5 million British young people find it satisfying enough that they engage in voluntary work.[49] Research in the United States by Peter D. Hart Research Associates confirms that young people are looking for ways to become involved in their communities: "Contrary to the popular portrayal of young

Americans as self-absorbed and socially inert ... (this generation is not seeking) to distance itself from the community, but instead actively looking for new and distinctive ways to connect to the people and issues surrounding them."[50]

Leisure time is the primary context in which young people make these contributions. While the growth in service learning and civic education in some countries has brought opportunities for contribution into schools, these initiatives tend to make learning—not meaningful contribution to community—their primary target. The relative control young people have over their time, the different societal expectations directed towards them, and the mandates of the institutions with which young people interact during their leisure time align to make it a space conducive to community engagement. As the stories included in this section illustrate, young people take advantage of this opportunity when given the chance to do so. The size and impact of young people's contribution during leisure time is impressive.

A full picture of reciprocal community support

What does it look like when communities are supporting young people and young people are supporting communities? Boxes 8.3-8.7 provide some indication, highlighting a number of successful efforts undertaken to build or strengthen this system of mutual reinforcement. The notion that all aspects of community life provide a space for young people's contribution, participation and development—a claim put forward at the start of this section—warrants further exploration. Communities are more than physical places and are more than the businesses, organizations and individuals within them. Communities are also about associations—about people coming together and working together towards common goals. Over the past few decades, community development researchers and advocates have increasingly underscored the importance of recognizing and strengthening the human, social, cultural and civic aspects of communities as well as the physical and economic components. Emphasis has also been placed on the importance of recognizing that every community has assets. No community, regardless of its level of physical deterioration or economic destitution, is without its strengths.

Embedded in communities are various assets—those aspects of community life critical to their functioning *(see figure 8.4)*. When communities are meeting the needs of their citizens, and when they are rich and viable places, they function and thrive across a range of areas. Such communities have strong physical, economic, and basic services infrastructures. These "bricks and mortar" that are often the target of community development efforts include the basic public works that make communities safe and workable and promote environmental health and sustainability. Beyond these essential tangible assets, well-functioning communities have strong human services support systems, including physical and mental health care and sustained care and supervision for those in need, along with a network of formal and informal educational institutions that facilitate continued learning and information exchange. They are well-governed places, enriched with independent organizations and citizen-led efforts that ensure deep and broad public engagement in political life. Healthy communities also incorporate a number of components that are less concrete but no less important; they are rich in cultural and artistic activity, provide space for religious

expression and commitment, and have strong social networks, relationships, and organizations. Finally, they are places where individual community members' strengths and competencies are respected, supported, and recognized as vital resources for community well-being (*see figure 8.4*).

All aspects of community life can and do play a critical role in supporting young people's healthy development. It is no coincidence that each of these areas corresponds to a fundamental developmental need of young people or to an area in which they are developing. The physical development of youth, for instance, depends in part on the availability of high-quality health care, and in part on a physical environment that provides shelter, food and a healthful natural milieu. The cultural life of a community shapes young people's cultural development, and further provides a uniquely rich environment for other aspects of development, according to research on arts and cultural programmes for youth (see below). Young people's development is not the singular responsibility of a set of educational and "youth development" institutions; it requires community-wide commitment and action.

Figure 8.4
A full picture of community: a range of aspects and assets

A survey of publications produced by foundations, intermediaries, research institutions and others (Forum for Youth Investment, "Pathways for youth and community development: a discussion paper" (Takoma, Maryland, FYI/International Youth Foundation, 1999, updated 2001)) revealed 10 types of community assets, which various types of community development efforts attempt to enhance. This initial scan has been vetted and refined through work with practitioners and experts internationally.

There are powerful stories and research illustrating what happens when each aspect of the community focuses its attention and resources on young people, exemplified in the following:

- *Physical infrastructure.* As D. Driskell and his colleagues on the Growing Up in Cities project team argue, "physical environment issues and action provide a valuable starting point" for efforts to create better communities for and with young people because of the tangibility of these issues, their significance for young people's development, and the real possibility of strengthening public commitment, involvement and goodwill in this context.[51] A number of communities have used this as a powerful source of leverage for their efforts to support young people. For instance, the Australian Youth Foundation has overcome concerns about vandalism, graffiti and intimidation and has created youth-friendly commercial developments, placing youth workers in malls, developing youth-specific activities, and bringing youth-developed planning guidelines into shopping centre development processes.[52] In Chicago, the Southwest Youth Collaborative has linked businesses, churches, organizations and a range of other community institutions together to form a network of spaces in which youth opportunities are available.[53]

- *Cultural and artistic life.* "To do youth development without the arts is like taking your toolbox on a carpentry job but leaving your hammer at home," writes M. Cicarelli-Green in a publication on the impact of arts and culture on young people and their communities.[54] Research on leisure-time programmes confirms that opportunities in culture and the arts seem to be particularly beneficial for young people's development, resulting in more ambitious future plans, higher levels of achievement and personal satisfaction, and a greater "willingness to take risks in learning" among young people.[55] Notable efforts thus far include the Cambodian Master Performers Program, through which young people apprentice with members of an earlier generation of Cambodian musicians and artists; Ecuador's youth-led Cefocine (*see box 8.3*); and the far-reaching Culture Builds Communities initiative in Philadelphia, through which community-based centres of arts and culture are being systematically incorporated into a programme to support and form partnerships with young people. This last initiative, rooted in research on the impact of arts opportunities and the finding that three out of four children in Philadelphia live within a mile of a community arts facility, has helped dozens of cultural institutions in the area create high-quality leisure-time opportunities for the city's young people.[56]

While their promoters claim that the two aspects of community life highlighted above are uniquely important to young people's development, there is little evidence that they are any more essential or powerful than other kinds of resources a community provides its youth. Similarly compelling stories can be told, and equally compelling research cited, that reveal how each of the other aspects of community life plays a vital role in supporting young people.

As mentioned previously, support extends in both directions. There are convincing stories and research showing what happens when young people focus their attention and resources on the various aspects of community life, as the following examples illustrate:

- *Health care.* Youth entering the health-care arena for the first time may find themselves in an unfamiliar world of medical malpractice, physicians' codes of conduct, hospital bureaucracy and genuine field expertise—hardly ripe conditions for meaningful contribution. Yet young people have found ways to make an impact in the community health sector. In Argentina, youth trained as reproductive health educators have joined forces to organize a national network to share practices, successfully lobby for laws that increase adolescents' confidential access to services, and expand HIV/AIDS education across the country. In the United States, college students involved with Project Health design and implement programmes that bring together existing community resources and medical infrastructure to better meet the needs of families. The results are impressive: their achievements include the establishment of a family help desk that links about 1,000 families a year with sources of food, safe shelter, health insurance, job training and child-care; the creation of a swimming programme that addresses the pervasive problem of urban childhood asthma, resulting in improvements in lung capacity representing four times what is possible through the use of medication; and the provision of personal support and advice to young people dealing with various chronic illnesses, helping them to better manage and cope with their diseases.

A survey of publications produced by foundations, intermediaries, research institutions and others (Forum for Youth Investment, "Pathways for youth and community development: a discussion paper" (Takoma, Maryland, FYI/International Youth Foundation, 1999, updated 2001)) revealed 10 types of community assets, which various types of community development efforts attempt to enhance. This initial scan has been vetted and refined through work with practitioners and experts internationally.

- *Basic services.* Organizations such as Cambodian Volunteers for Community Development and the Mathare Youth Sports Association (*see boxes 8.4 and 8.5*) exemplify young people's contributions to community development at the most basic level. Another example comes from Eastern Europe. After the fall of communism, the youth of Poland faced daunting obstacles to involvement in community change. The infrastructure of civil society barely existed. Adults were largely unconvinced that youth could play meaningful roles, as reflected in an old proverb, "Fish and children have no voice." Up to that point, young people's only experience in community participation was their homogenized, compulsory membership in youth organizations controlled by a repressive Government. Youth as Partners, named to emphasize the importance of youth-adult cooperation, was established to encourage, fund and support youth-initiated projects in communities around the country. Working with small grants of about $800, and supported by both local adult mentors and regional training, the young people involved have wrought dramatic changes in many Polish communities. For instance, after floods swept southern Poland, youth organizations participating in the programme took on vital and innovative roles in helping communities rebuild. One group organized a day-care centre for children left homeless by the flood and leveraged their own donations to convince local leaders to invest in the reconstruction of their community's church. Young people in another community developed a comprehensive network of bicycle trails in and around their city, using their Youth as Partners grant to both improve the physical infrastructure and develop relevant environmental awareness opportunities.[57]

- *Economic opportunity.* Young people in a growing number of communities, often in concert with adult allies, are starting entrepreneurial ventures aimed at reviving struggling local economies. In the Mexican state of Oaxaca, for instance, the young founders of the Committee of Volunteers for Reforestation and Environmental Protection (COVORPA) are several years into a venture to raise quails and repopulate the area with a traditional food source that had been disappearing from the region. Such efforts provide a compelling alternative to the "brain drain" many communities are experiencing as talented young people move from rural areas to areas of greater prosperity. In the words of Efrain Ragon Ibanez, the president of COVORPA:

  > *"We found that what we had learned in school did not prepare us to live in our communities. But we also found that there were things in our community that we could reclaim and start working from.... We wanted to show that young people could remain in their communities and have a good life."*[58]

From a youth contribution perspective, each aspect of the community represents both a base of action (a starting point from which young people can become engaged) and a target of action (an area of community life on which young people's work can have an impact). In other words, the structures operating in each area—human services organizations, legal and educational institutions, and political organizing efforts—can act as the loci from which young people can offer their

contributions. Similarly, each is a viable place for young people to direct their efforts—an area of their community to which they can contribute. Some aspects of community life may be more open to young people's efforts. For instance, youth may find they can make more active and meaningful contributions to arts and cultural organizations than to financial institutions involved in community development. Similarly, some bases and targets of action may constitute particularly strong combinations; for example, community-based organizing efforts may be especially effective in bringing about educational change.

> "We start with what we know. Since many of us were interested in the arts, we have been using them as a way to learn about communities and society."
>
> —Aida, age 21, Egypt

Box 8.4
CASE STUDY: CAMBODIAN VOLUNTEERS FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT—PHNOM PENH, CAMBODIA

Having survived the genocide and brutal reign of the Khmer Rouge, members of Phnom Penh's squatter communities have moved out of the international spotlight and into the quieter suffering of poverty. At least one organization, however, founded a decade ago by 40 young people frustrated by the state of their communities, is not allowing apathy and neglect to destroy their area. Cambodian Volunteers for Community Development (CVCD) blends opportunities for training in essential skills, a movement to engage young people in service activities, and deep community engagement efforts in a potent recipe for youth development and community change.

The impact of CVCD has been broad and profound. Between 1998 and 2000, some 3,000 people studied English or computer skills for a minimal charge, and 7,000 residents of squatter communities learned sewing skills, Khmer literacy, English, and environmental sanitation and hygiene for free. During the same period, 1,200 families in Basac squatter areas benefited from community cleanups, environmental education and regular garbage pickup.

The numbers are impressive, but the accomplishments of CVCD have also affected the community in deeper, subtler ways that reflect its fundamental commitment to human resource development as a long-term community-building strategy. One of the intangible effects of the Volunteers' work is a nationwide renewal in young people's civic engagement. Literally thousands of youth have a rekindled sense of cooperation, volunteerism, and civic commitment. These young people are not simply engaged in one-shot service opportunities; CVCD is the natural home for engaged young people on many levels. As a grass-roots organization, it is particularly open to the ideas and energy that young people bring to it. Its focus on education benefits young people as they seek out educational opportunities to change their own futures, and in the process learn that they can change Cambodia's future. Many students continue to work with CVCD long after their coursework has finished, and CVCD Executive Director Arun Sothea believes this experience helps them become leaders and allows them to sharpen their skills and improve their job prospects.

This change in young people has been accompanied by a gradual increase in neighbourhood capacity and power. Through the Volunteers' work, squatter communities are building the capacity for sustained, resident-driven change. CVCD has come to understand the necessary ingredients of sustainable community development. By organizing with community members, CVCD strives to change their attitudes and practices with regard to their environment. CVCD members begin by teaching about public health, then organize a series of neighbourhood cleanups that involve CVCD students and community members in mass area tree plantings and garbage collection. CVCD continues to play a role in the health of the community, leading cleanups as necessary and continuing to provide learning opportunities for young people.

This is a world full of dichotomies—youth and adults, human development and community development—that limit society's definitions and support for youth and their communities. CVCD is a powerful example of what happens when the lines are blurred. The CVCD mission statement, written by the Organization's young founders, is a perfect articulation of the balance between human development ("empowering [poor residents] to shape their own lives by teaching them literacy, job skills and health education") and community building ("encouraging and offering disadvantaged citizens opportunities to volunteer and cooperate in community development and environment activities"). With young people playing roles from student to teacher to organizational leader, it is nearly impossible to tell where youth development stops and community development begins.

Source: Based on a case study by Jeanie Phillips and the Forum staff in J. Tolman and K. Pittman with B. Cervone and others, *Youth Acts, Community Impacts: Stories of Youth Engagement with Real Results,* Community and Youth Development Series, vol. 7 (Takoma Park, Maryland, Forum for Youth Investment, International Youth Foundation, September 2001).

The limitations of a community perspective

While leisure opportunities are critical and are primarily a community responsibility, they are not singularly a community challenge. Many of the forces influencing young people's leisure choices, including the media, transportation, politics and pop culture, are larger than the community and are, at least in part, outside community control. These larger forces require attention from policy makers, advocates and researchers, as J. Mortimer and R. Larson argue:

> "Social scientists who study adolescence typically focus on the immediate contexts of their day-to-day experience, especially the family, school, and peer group, and, more recently, the workplace. … Neglected are the broader institutional forces and currents of societal change that affect the experiences adolescents have within these microsystems of development."[59]

Mortimer and Larson point out half a dozen major macrostructural changes with an impact on adolescents—society-wide changes in demographics, economics, institutional systems and technologies, as well as adolescent-specific changes in the length and diversity of the transition to adulthood—each of which has implications for young people's leisure time. Some global trends, in particular the fraying and loss of strong community networks as rates of mobility and urbanization increase,[60] actively diminish the importance of community in young people's leisure lives.

Families, a variety of local institutions and other forces are smaller but no less important than the community. Whatever social shifts occur, families remain a primary and decisive force in young people's leisure lives and in their development towards adulthood. Other settings and actors, including peers, schools and voluntary programmes, also exert significant influences on young people's leisure and development.[61]

In the final analysis, however, the community is where opportunities and support are or are not available, even if those opportunities and support are simply ways to tap into the larger world. Similarly, while families, peers, programmes and other small-scale forces provide important inputs, it is at the community level that the range of young people's experiences comes together. Moreover, community conditions have a powerful effect on parenting and peer networks, as L.B. Schorr and W.J. Wilson have argued.[62] Community is the context for young people's discretionary time.

The same lessons that apply at the community level hold true within smaller and larger contexts. The reciprocal relationship between young people and their community also exists at the societal level. As J. Youniss and A. Ruth point out, it is critical to recognize "the active role adolescents play in shaping both their individual futures and the future of society":

> "Adolescents are not passive recipients of macrosocietal change; they are actors within it. In some cases they create it. Adolescence is above all a period in which youth are required to be agents, to find their own paths, and, within the set of constraints and opportunities available to them, to mold themselves in ways that enable them to obtain the adulthoods they desire."[63]

This is equally the case at the family and the programme level. Young people shape and are shaped by their families; they support the development of their families just as their families support their development. In effective programmes, at least, young people have access to multiple opportunities for voice, choice and contribution, and are critical actors in the development of those programmes. These interactions constitute a two-way exchange, with positive developmental outcomes on each side.

In sum, the main focus must be on communities because they are the primary and essential context for leisure, bringing together smaller-scale settings and serving as a mediating force for larger ones (*see figure 8.5*), and because the lessons learned at the community level are transferable to both larger and smaller settings in which young people spend their leisure.

Connecting the pieces, balancing the goals and acknowledging the larger contexts

All aspects of community life can and do support young people's development at all times—their leisure time included. Young people can and do contribute to all aspects of community development, and opportunities for contribution are particularly rich when young people are out of school and not at work. The challenge, though, is to connect the pieces in a way that produces optimal benefits for both. Efforts tend to be aimed at either supporting young people or eliciting young people's contribution rather than facilitating interaction between the two, and in each case, the focus tends to be on one aspect of community rather than on the range of aspects. What is being proposed here is community-wide commitment and focus, and connecting the two parts of the equation, so that young people and adults are working together to create the necessary conditions for the development of themselves and of their peers, families and communities.

Figure 8.5
Community as context for young people's leisure
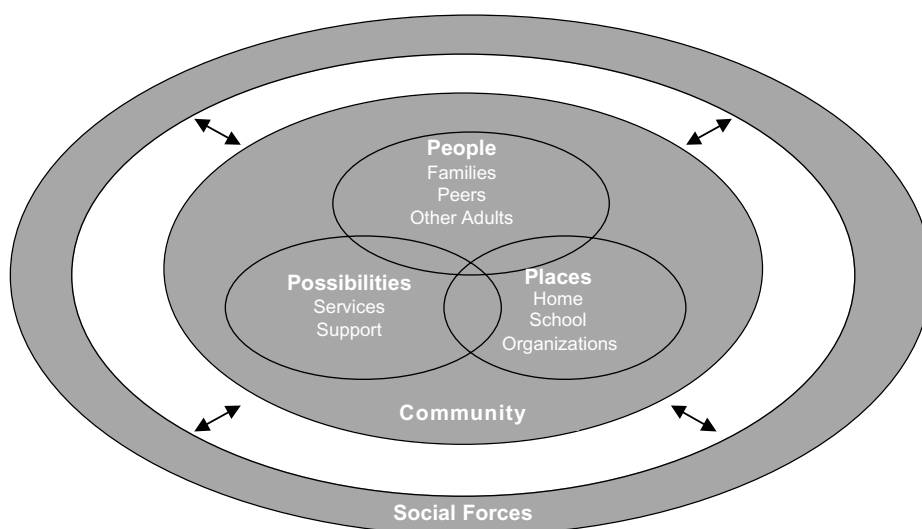
While forces such as families, peer groups, activities and organizations are critical in shaping young people's leisure, community is the context in which this range of people, places, and possibilities comes together. Community is also the context that influences and mediates how young people's leisure is affected by larger social forces and contexts.

Box 8.5

Mathare, one of the largest and poorest slums in Africa, covers roughly 80 square kilometres around Nairobi. Home to several hundred thousand people living mostly in shacks with little or no water or electricity, Mathare's reputation over the years has been that of a very tough place to live, with rampant crime and drug use, high rates of HIV/AIDS infection, few recreational opportunities for young people, and a preponderance of easily preventable diseases stemming from the lack of proper sanitation.

In recent years, however, Mathare has become increasingly well known as the home of some of the region's most accomplished young football players—and some powerful examples of young people revitalizing their communities. For more than a decade, the Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA) has engaged local youth in athletic activities and enlisted their support in carrying out a range of community development initiatives. With upwards of 24,000 members, MYSA is now the biggest youth sports and community service organization in Africa, largely managed by youth under the age of 16. The Association's impact goes well beyond numbers, however.

The give and take between sports and service has been integral to the Organization's approach since the beginning. An early MYSA motto, "healthy athletes need a healthy environment", reflects its commitment to both young people and their communities. Participants spend 60 hours per month engaged in service work, which earns them points that are applied to their league standing.

Youth contributing to communities

In one of its first forays into the "healthy environment" side of its motto, MYSA initiated one of its most impressive contributions to the community, becoming the informal sanitation infrastructure for much of the surrounding area. At the time MYSA was launched in 1987 there were only a handful of garbage trucks serving Nairobi's population of 2.5 million, and they almost never made it to the slums, says MYSA founder and chairman Bob Munro. When its first cleanup efforts took place, MYSA made sure at least one city garbage truck showed up. "When it went to the slums, women started dancing," he recalls. In those days, MYSA youth carried out weekly cleanups using wheelbarrows, rakes and shovels. In 1988, MYSA acquired two garbage trucks and tractors of its own. Over a dozen youth now serve as truck and tractor drivers, responsible for clearing thousands of tons of garbage each month.

Along with garbage collection and cleanup activities, MYSA has initiated a number of other high-impact service programmes. Youth leaders receive professional training in HIV/AIDS prevention and then visit local communities to counsel other young people; since 1995, 200 youth trainers have reached more than 100,000 young people with critical information on AIDS prevention. MYSA has provided lunches and helped improve the jail facilities in which street children, many of them from Mathare, are temporarily held in Nairobi while being processed through the justice system. In 1998, with funding from the Ford Foundation, more than 30 MYSA boys and girls began documenting life in Mathare through photography and essays, resulting in the publication of a book entitled Shootback. Less tangible but no less important, MYSA has helped alter community perceptions of what is possible and instilled in community members a sense of pride in local youth.

Communities supporting young people

MYSA has also changed the opportunity landscape for Mathare youth, starting with access to recreation and physical exercise but moving far beyond as well.

Leadership development. MYSA has successfully fostered the development of leadership and management skills among participating youth. These young leaders are not young adults in their twenties; most of its several hundred volunteer coaches are under 16 years of age. "Youth make the decisions and feel responsible for making sure they're implemented. That's one of the reasons [MYSA] works," says Bob Munro.

Educational opportunities. With poverty forcing many talented youth to drop out of school, MYSA has been challenged to participate educationally as well as recreationally. MYSA youth leaders now earn points for their voluntary activities; the best leaders win annual tuition awards, paid to their schools. In 2000, upwards of 100 MYSA leadership awards were given. (*cont'd on following page*)

Gender equality. Another challenge was to change prevailing perceptions of the role of young women in Mathare. Traditionally in Kenya only boys played football. MYSA sought to change that as a means of empowering young girls and fostering greater gender equality. While it took time to train the girls, they now represent a significant portion of MYSA participants and play an active role in coaching boys' teams. "The girls now have greater confidence. They're more fit, more proud and don't tolerate any silly words or poor conduct from boys," says Munro. Gender relations go beyond the soccer field, too, as young men and women participating in a MYSA programme now meet in small groups to talk about relationships between sexes, what they want in marriage and how to work together.

Adults often wonder why the passion and focus that youth bring to the athletic fields rarely makes its way to their school work, their family chores or their community volunteering. The thousands of young people who have joined the Mathare Youth Sports Association are a testimony to the fact that the transfer can happen, and that recreation and community improvement can be seamlessly linked results of young people's leisure time activities.

Source: Based on a case study by Sheila Kinkade and the Forum staff in J. Tolman and K. Pittman, with B. Cervone and others, *Youth Acts, Community Impacts: Stories of Youth Engagement with Real Results, Community and Youth Development* Series, vol. 7 (Takoma Park, Maryland, The Forum for Youth Investment, International Youth Foundation, September 2001).

CONCLUSIONS: WHAT DOES IT TAKE?

Creating communities that support young people, and in which young people are significant contributors to community life, is anything but easy. No easier is the inextricably linked task proposed in the introduction to the chapter: promoting and protecting young people's discretionary time as critical space for their development and the development of their communities.

There is work to be done, and work being done, by a full range of actors at all levels to promote and protect young people's leisure, and to create communities similar to those described here. There is a need to be vigilant about language. Terms such as youth development and leisure may have narrower or multiple meanings with the public or policy makers. (A funding source once referred to promoting youth development as the equivalent of "shoveling fog".) While the definitions created by those steeped in the discipline may be quite precise, it is important to understand that changing public language use is a difficult task that requires concerted and sustained efforts as well as access to social marketing resources.

Increasing the quality and quantity of support and opportunities for youth cannot be achieved programme-by-programme. There are key leverage points that must be addressed in order to move a broad agenda for young people's development. Logic suggests that addressing these points is critical to moving the sub-agenda of promoting and protecting youth leisure. Three broad ideas frame the action agenda, as follows:

- *Saturation is important.* Because leisure opportunities—like broader opportunities to learn, connect and contribute—are ideally decentralized and diverse, it is easy to confuse variety with adequacy. Almost any community can provide a diverse listing of the types of activities available to youth; few, however, can argue that the mix, location and number of activities are adequate to meet current demand and generate increased usage. It is important to measure the availability of leisure activities at the neighbourhood level.

- *Infrastructure is important.* Because leisure opportunities are likely to be delivered in small packages created by a range of institutions and organizations, ensuring saturation requires creative solutions to the many basic issues and challenges associated with maintaining a system of services, including accreditation, standards and monitoring.

- *Public and political will are important.* As long as leisure opportunities are considered nice but not necessary, there will always be a need to "make the case" for them. Advocates must work to ensure that there is a climate conducive to action by amassing evidence, building constituencies and countering the negative perceptions of youth that cause the public to want to reduce rather than expand youth leisure.

There is a recipe for action embedded in these broad ideas that can be graphically depicted as a set of stacked tasks that require the combined efforts of a broad range of actors (*see figure 8.6*).

Figure 8.6
Increasing opportunities for youth: a recipe for action
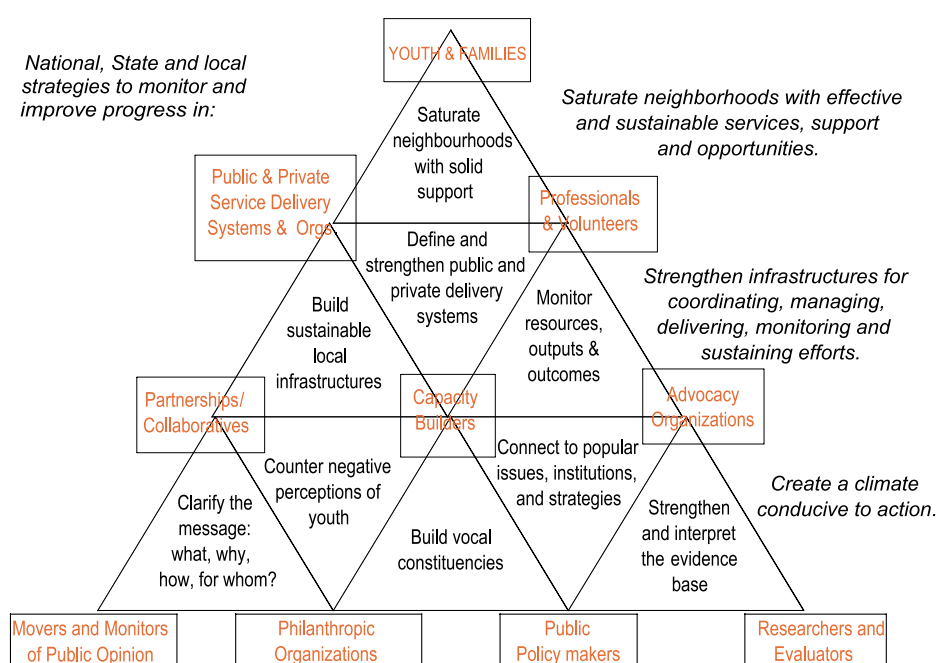
In endeavouring to promote and protect something as elusive and intangible as youth leisure activities, it is important to keep the big picture in mind: leisure is an end in itself, but it is also a means to other ends. The more the arguments for youth leisure can be linked to broader arguments for problem reduction and prevention, preparation and participation, the more youth leisure opportunities will be seen as a right to be protected rather than a privilege to be earned—or lost in lean times.

This chapter has focused on the value of establishing links between youth leisure and youth action—links that need to be made with practitioners and parents as well as with policy makers and the general public. The primary argument, however, is that leisure time, by definition, is time that can be spent in a multitude of ways that support the growth and development of young people, their families and their communities. ■

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13 J. Piaget, *Play, Dreams and Imitation in Childhood* (New York, Norton, 1962); and E.H. Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (New York, Norton, 1968).

14 P.K. Smith and S. Dutton, "Play and training in direct and innovative problem solving", *Child Development*, vol. 50, pp. 830-836, for example, in R. Larson and S. Verma, op. cit.

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Chapter 9.

The Situation of *GIRLS* & *YOUNG WOMEN*

Some of the opportunities and challenges facing girls and young women today are discussed in this chapter, taking into consideration factors such as: negative attitudes, exclusion and discrimination; access to services (health, education, employment); empowerment, attitudes and values; young women as victims of violence; and maternal health issues. Attention is given to issues and concerns of special relevance to females, and to their status or position relative to that of males; within the latter context, areas of both inequality and convergence are explored. The various sections of the chapter focus primarily on health, educational and employment issues, the effects of violence on girls and women, their values and attitudes, and the concept of empowerment. The final section provides a summary and analysis of the issues addressed and of the overall situation of girls and young women, suggesting that while enormous progress has been made in many respects, the gap between existing inequalities and the achievable objective of full equality is still far too wide, particularly in developing countries.

INTRODUCTION

In all areas of society, gender equality has become the norm. Universally accepted principles of human rights have set the standard for equality between women and men. This concept extends to the recognition that girls and young women are unique individuals with rights and responsibilities similar to those of boys and young men.

This chapter explores some of the challenges and opportunities girls and young women face today, taking into consideration factors such as access to health, education and employment, as well as values, attitudes and behaviour (including violence) towards young women and girls. It is important to examine the specific circumstances that have distinguished the lives of girls and young women from those of boys and young men. For example, in societies in which the economy is based largely on subsistence operations, most of the production takes place in the surrounding fields or through hunting and fishing, and consumption is mainly by the family in the home. Under these conditions the goal of both sexes is survival. Despite the convergence taking place in many developed countries, young men are still engaged primarily in paid labour, while many young women are relegated to the home and unpaid work.

The status of men is higher than that of women in developed societies because women's unpaid household labour is still not seen as an essential and valid contribution to the industrial economy. In other societies, girls and young women are viewed mainly as "reproductive labourers". They have fewer rights to political and economic participation than do boys and young men, and they perform essential work for which they are neither paid nor fully recognized. They still live mostly in the private sphere, as the public sphere remains largely a male domain.

In industrialized societies, girls and young women have access to the organized institutions of modern life—the economy, the State, formal education, organized religion, professions and unions, and mass-media forms of communication and entertainment. However, the private sphere also remains important to them, with its less formal and emotionally more open networks of social relationships (marriage, family, kinship, neighbourhood, community and friendship) that coexist with the public sphere.

Life opportunities for girls and young women vary in different parts of the world, at times reflecting a reconvergence of "spheres" (the distinct worlds of work, family and households, and education) separated from each other in industrial societies. In all the Western countries studied, women tend to move more easily between these spheres than do men. In most societies, however, young women's participation in the public sphere is still restricted. In industrial societies the family, traditionally a female concern, is a household unit of consumption that exists largely in the private sphere, whereas the arena of material production, traditionally a male concern, is typically in the public sphere.[1]

Girls and young women in late-industrial societies are portrayed as those most subordinated to the consumer culture. The majority construct their femininity according to popular culture; women's magazines and advertising directed at females tend to promote aspects of narcissistic, pleasurable consumption as part of a woman's image. In former communist countries, prostitution has offered one way to obtain the money necessary to participate in new consumer lifestyles.

Throughout history, young women have been scrutinized with regard to their attitudes, behaviour, sexuality and general conduct. The monitoring and setting of cultural and moral standards, in particular the policing of young women's sexuality, is conducted in public, in private and through the media. Moral "panics" are often constructed in Western cultures. For example, young single mothers are identified as a problem group and are discussed as such in an effort to find ways to alleviate the problem they represent. Some countries have experienced periods of moral panic over teenage pregnancy, to the extent that inner-city disturbances and crime rates have been attributed to the growing proportion of young single mothers.[2]

In various parts of the world a pattern of life-course convergence is occurring for younger women and men. In some developed countries, in particular, this convergence is taking place with respect to educational experiences and attainment, work and career opportunities, and personal lifestyles.[3] The norm of the traditional family with a breadwinning husband and a stay-at-home wife has given way to a new norm deriving from the general trend towards the employment of both spouses outside the home.

> "Youth in general can be regarded as a period of vulnerability: young people attempt to enhance their educational and vocational credentials and gain a foothold in the labour market, develop adult identities and create new lifestyles, form new friendships and sexual and collegial relationships, establish a degree of financial independence and perhaps move away from the family home".[4]

In each of these spheres some girls and young women are far more vulnerable than others owing to a structural lack of resources, primarily in terms of education, vocational training, health and housing. Those girls and young women exposed to a poor quality of life tend to experience higher levels of vulnerability; immigrants and ethnic minorities are the most seriously affected.[5]

ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES AND THE IMPACT ON YOUNG WOMEN

Youth and early adulthood are periods in which females generally reach their full adult strength and capacity. For girls, the risks associated with childhood diseases and other health and safety issues are different in developed and developing countries. The degree of risk is often related to gender; statistics on accidental death, suicide, violent crime, STDs and mental disorders indicate notable gender biases, and it is girls and women alone who face reproductive challenges including the consequences of early pregnancy. Discrimination against girls often has deep historical and cultural roots. In many cultures boys have been valued more than girls from the moment of birth. Female infanticide, inadequate food and medical care, physical abuse, genital mutilation, forced sex and early childbirth take many girls' lives. In some countries the number of adult men is higher than the number of adult women because of such discrimination. Although many countries have banned prenatal tests to identify the sex of a foetus, illegal tests are still available, and females are aborted more often than males. In parts of the world—especially South Asia, South-West Asia and North Africa—girls are more likely than boys to die.

Survival

Globally, girls have a greater chance of surviving childhood than do boys, except where sex discrimination is greatest. However, the gap between children from poor households and those from economically secure settings is more pronounced for girls: boys from poor households are 4.3 times more likely to die and girls from poor households 4.8 times more likely to die than their respective counterparts from financially secure households. This greater vulnerability likely reflects the lower probability of their receiving adequate medical care.

In countries where girls are most seriously disadvantaged, boys tend to receive greater medical attention. For example, a study conducted at a diarrhoea treatment centre in Bangladesh indicated that boys were seen 66 per cent more frequently than were girls. In India and Latin America girls are often immunized later than boys or not at all. In some places, boys tend to be given more and better food than girls. Breastfeeding and weaning practices also seem to favour boys in some countries.

Surveys of girls' and young women's health show that, globally speaking, childhood is a period of relative inequality. In both developed and developing countries, girls are generally healthier than boys, but in adolescence, girls are more likely to suffer chronic illnesses and psychological disturbances.[6] The risk of depression increases among young women during the teenage years.[7]

Mental health

Eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa are more common among young girls than among young boys. Both anorexia and bulimia tend to be concentrated among white, middle-class teenage girls. In Western late-modern societies it is fashionable to be thin, and slimness is associated with success and sexual attractiveness.[8] Anthony Giddens regards eating disorders as a modern phenomenon linked to the desire to establish a distinct self-identity.[9] Giddens sees

such disorders as a determined attempt to control body image and identity during a period when girls and young women are increasingly denied autonomy in many other aspects of their lives.[10] It is striking that girls and young women in developed countries suffer from eating disorders, while those in developing countries suffer from diseases caused by insufficient food consumption.

Young women are more likely to contemplate suicide, though young men are more likely to successfully commit the act. The rapid transition from child to adult woman, involving sudden changes in gender roles and the expectations directed towards young women, could explain some of the mental health problems and self-destructive behaviours they exhibit. Females face greater uncertainties and are more likely to find themselves in situations in which their expectations conflict with their subsequent experiences. The rise in expectations associated with extended educational experiences can have an effect on the psychological well-being of girls and young women.

Lifestyle choices

The lifestyles and behaviours of girls and young women have changed. Smoking and under-age drinking have become more common, and drug use has increased. A British study released in 1995 showed that one in five females between the ages of 14 and 25 used cannabis at least once a week, and 22 per cent of the 15- to 16-year-old girls surveyed had tried it;[11] many girls reportedly associated drinking and drug use with sociability and maturity.[12]

Girls' sexual experimentation, with all of the attendant health risks, is also linked to the process of psychological maturation. Readily available contraceptives are one means of reducing the risk of contracting STDs (such as gonorrhoea, syphilis and HIV) and preventing unwanted pregnancy, which in some societies leads to social stigmatization for young women. Worldwide, the vast majority of sexually experienced males aged 15 to 19 years are unmarried, while two-thirds or more of sexually experienced young women in the same age group are married.

Sexual and reproductive health

The average age of teenage sexual initiation varies widely according to country and gender. For example, the proportions of girls having first intercourse by age 17 in Mali (72 per cent), Jamaica (53 per cent), Ghana (52 per cent), the United States (47 per cent) and Tanzania (45 per cent) are seven to ten times those in Thailand (7 per cent) and the Philippines (6 per cent). In most African countries, three-quarters of women become sexually active during their teenage years. In Latin America and the Caribbean, sexual initiation tends to occur somewhat later. In developed countries, over half of young women are sexually active before the age of 18.[13] The proportions of males who have had intercourse before their seventeenth birthday in Jamaica (76 per cent), the United States (64 per cent) and Brazil (63 per cent) are about ten times the level reported in the Philippines (7 per cent). Differences between young men and young women are very large in Ghana and Mali, where higher proportions of females than males become sexually active early, and in Brazil, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Peru and Thailand, where the reverse is true.[14]

Early marriage and early pregnancy are not uncommon among girls and young women. In some countries, half of all girls under the age of 18 are married, often in response to poverty, family pressure, or fear of out-of-wedlock pregnancy. Countries with relatively high percentages of girls aged 15 to 19 years who are already married include the Democratic Republic of the Congo (74 per cent), Niger (70 per cent), Afghanistan (54 per cent) and Bangladesh (51 per cent).[15]

One in every ten births worldwide is to a teenage mother. In the least developed countries, one out of every six babies is born to a young woman between the ages of 15 and 19. In Central and South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, one in five births is to a female under age 20. The birth rates for young women in this age group are also high in Latin America and the Caribbean, and in Eastern Europe compared with the rest of Europe (*see figure 9.1*).

Figure 9.1
Percentage of all births to women under age 20, by region/subregion
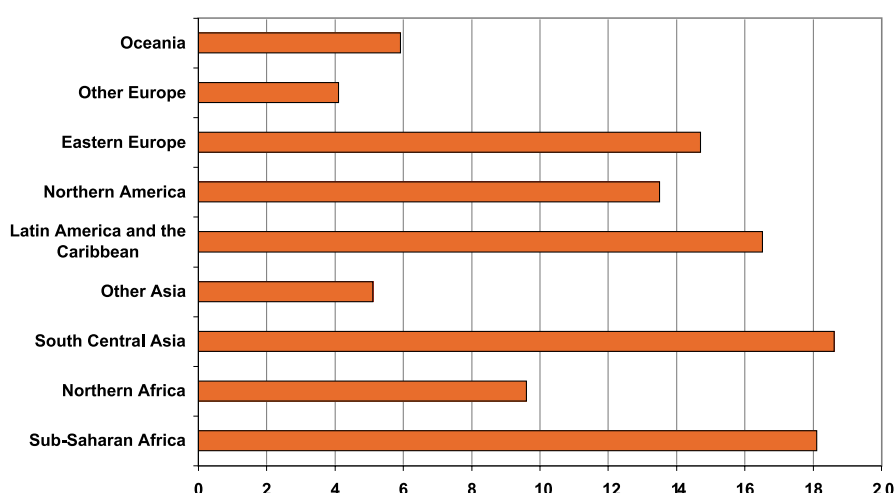
Source: United Nations Population Division, 2000. *World population Monitoring, 2000: Population, Gender and Development.*

Early pregnancy carries a higher risk of illness and death. Girls aged 10 to 14 years are five times more likely to die in pregnancy or childbirth than are women between the ages of 20 and 24. Early pregnancies are also linked to higher abortion rates. At least 1 in 10 abortions worldwide occurs among women aged 15 to 19 years, meaning that more than 4.4 million adolescent women undergo the procedure every year; 40 per cent of these abortions are performed under unsafe conditions.[16] Adolescents tend to delay obtaining an abortion until after the first trimester and often seek help from non-medical providers, leading to higher complication rates. Self-induced abortion is also common among adolescents in many countries. In Argentina and Chile, more than one-third of maternal deaths among adolescents are the direct result of unsafe abortions. In Peru, one-third of the women hospitalized for abortion complications are aged 15 to 24 years. WHO estimates that in sub-Saharan Africa, up to 70 per cent of women hospitalized for abortion complications are under 20 years of age. In a Ugandan study, almost 60 per cent of abortion-related deaths were among adolescents.[17]

The sharp increase in HIV infections and deaths from AIDS are threatening girls and young women, especially in developing countries. In those areas most seriously affected, HIV/AIDS is spreading fastest among young people under the age of 24, who account for one-half of new infections. Many HIV-positive young women will die by age 35, possibly leaving behind children who will be among the millions under the age of 15 who have lost a mother or father or both to HIV/AIDS. Other children become infected even before they are born to HIV-positive mothers.[18]

In many developing countries, a girl's sexuality is a channel of oppression and abuse. For at least 130 million women around the world, this began with their being subjected to genital mutilation, a degrading and dangerous practice sometimes dignified with the name "female circumcision"; an additional 2 million girls undergo the procedure each year.

ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND ITS IMPACT ON YOUNG WOMEN

Enrolment at various levels of education has generally improved more for girls than for boys; the gender gap in schooling is closing in most regions of the world. Nevertheless, the gap remains wide in many areas. In 22 African and 9 Asian countries, enrolment for girls is less than 80 per cent of that for boys. The divide is greatest in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, particularly for secondary education; fewer than 40 per cent of secondary students are women.[19]

Illiteracy rates

According to data presented by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics in 2002, literacy rates for young people aged 15-24 years around the world have been increasing steadily. The proportion of illiterate young people worldwide declined from 25 per cent in 1970 to 13.2 per cent in 2000, and is projected to drop further, to about 9.5 per cent, in 2015. There has been a persistent general tendency at the global level towards higher rates of illiteracy for girls than for boys. The inequality, caused by both cultural and economic factors, is obvious, and the improvements in girls' literacy rates are occurring very slowly. In the 1970s, girls were 1.8 times more likely than boys to be illiterate; by 2000 the ratio had dropped only slightly, to 1.6 times.[20]

In 2000, Africa and Asia had the highest rates of illiteracy among 15- to 24-year-old girls, at 29 and 19 per cent respectively. These figures, while high, represent a major improvement for the two regions over the past 30 years; in 1970 the illiteracy rate for girls was 71.7 per cent in Africa and 50.3 per cent in Asia. In one generation the risk of illiteracy for girls has been reduced by more than half on both continents. Nonetheless, in the year 2000, African and Asian girls still faced a 60 and 70 per cent greater risk of illiteracy, respectively, than did African and Asian boys.

The level of development in a given country has become the major determinant of its level of literacy. Although the situation in developing countries has been steadily improving, the gap between developing and developed countries remains dramatic, as illustrated in the chapter on education.

The gender gap

Girls outnumber boys in school in regions where overall access to basic education is higher, such as Southern Africa, Latin America and most of East Asia. Larger gender gaps are observed in regions of the world with lower overall levels of education. Educational access is lower in rural areas for both boys and girls, but particularly for girls. In Niger, for instance, there are 80 girls in school for every 100 boys in cities, but in rural areas the corresponding ratio is only 41 to 100.

These differences reflect family expectations of future returns from their educational investments. Faced with a choice, some parents elect to educate sons because there are more and better-paying jobs for men than for women. Some parents invest less in girls' education because economic returns will go to their future husbands' families after marriage. Disparities in educational access also reflect the lower value parents place on education compared with household activities for girls; some girls are kept or taken out of school to work at home.

Some families are not willing to educate girls if the school is distant or the teachers are male. Parents may not want their daughters to encounter boys or men in classrooms or on the way to school, or they may fear for their safety, making distance an important factor. In Pakistan, for instance, where schools are segregated by sex, 21 per cent of girls in rural areas—more than twice the proportion of boys—do not have a school within 1 kilometre of their homes.[21]

Although basic education has become more accessible for both young men and young women, gender differences in this context remain dramatic in many areas. In 2002, almost 20 per cent of young women and 12 per cent of young men in most developing countries were illiterate. By contrast, in developed countries and in countries in transition in Central and Western Asia, the proportion of illiterate youth was equal for both sexes, at 0.3 per cent; although a slight gap was evident in 1970 (0.8 per cent for boys and 1.2 per cent for girls), it had effectively disappeared by 2002.[22]

Studies have repeatedly shown that investment in educating girls and women raises every index of progress towards economic growth and development. Despite this, two-thirds of the estimated 300 million children without access to education are girls, and two-thirds of the 880 million illiterate adults are women. In the past few decades, all regions of the world have expanded primary education, though in Africa progress began to slow in the 1980s owing to higher costs for parents and declining school quality. In developing countries as a whole, the gender gap at the primary level has narrowed significantly, though it persists in Africa and South Asia (*see figure 9.2*).

Figure 9.2
Net primary school enrolment/attendance ratios by sex
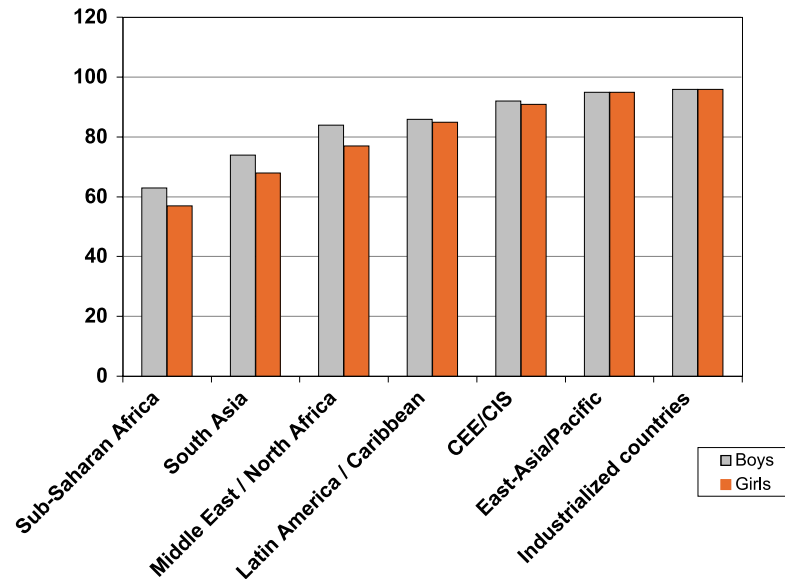
Between 1990 1nd 1999, the gender gap globally was halved,
falling from 6 percentage points to 3 percentage points.

Female representation decreases at the secondary and post-secondary levels, but the gender gap has narrowed somewhat in recent decades.[23]

The link between education and fertility

Fertility affects levels of educational attainment and vice versa. The various determining factors relate directly to the young women themselves as well as to cultural, economic and family considerations (one example being a pregnant mother's decision to withdraw her daughter from school to help at home).

Family size influences educational attainment, with children of either sex from small families enjoying better educational opportunities. One study in Thailand found that, all other factors being equal (income, religion, residence, and parents' educational attainment and ambitions for their children), in families with four or fewer children 31 per cent went to upper secondary school, while in families with more than four children only 14 per cent reached this level. Similarly, a study in Bangladesh found that children in small families stayed in school longer because they were not called upon to care for younger siblings at home. In both the Thailand and Bangladesh studies, however, boys had a higher level of educational attainment than girls.

Once girls reach puberty, pregnancy may prevent them from staying in school. Students who become pregnant often drop out of school or are expelled by school authorities. An American survey indicated that young women who gave birth were much less likely to complete high school. The rates varied somewhat according to the

socio-economic status and racial/ethnic background of the respondents. Girls of low socio-economic status were less likely to complete high school than were those at the middle and higher socio-economic levels. Overall, African-American and Hispanic girls were twice as likely as Caucasian girls to give birth by age 19 (39 and 34 per cent respectively, versus 17 per cent); Asian girls were only half as likely as whites to become mothers (9 per cent).[24]

Higher educational attainment among women is positively correlated with reduced child mortality. In Kenya, for example, 10.9 per cent of children born to women with no education will die by age 5, compared with 7.2 per cent of the children of women with a primary school education and 6.4 per cent of the children of women with a secondary school education.[25] Botswana, Kenya and Zimbabwe, with the highest levels of female schooling in sub-Saharan Africa, record the lowest levels of child mortality. The more educated women are, the less likely they have to have larger families (*see figure 9.3*).

Figure 9.3
Literacy and fertility rates for women in selected countries
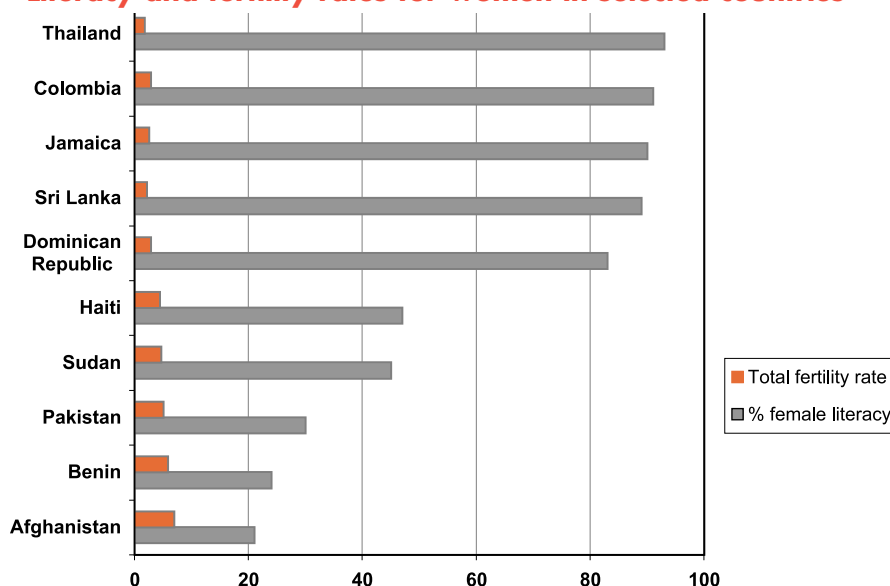
Source: UNFPA, Population Issues Briefing Kit 2001 (New York, 2001).

Education and employment opportunities

In all countries, women are concentrated in particular educational disciplines that tend to lead to lower-paid jobs and "feminized" professions. They often spend a longer time in education than men do but face poorer employment prospects. In Germany, for example, even in terms of apprenticeship pay, average salaries for female-dominated occupations are only one-half to one-third those for male-dominated occupations. Women in the former communist countries have suffered the highest rates of unemployment. Company childcare facilities are no longer as readily available, and because women have the right to a long maternity leave, employers are less willing to hire them. Even among the best-educated young women, the possibilities for independence have diminished.[26]

In a survey of twelfth-graders, girls in general displayed more of a negative attitude towards mathematics and science than did boys.[27] The same survey showed that women had made substantial progress in obtaining graduate-level degrees in the past 25 years. Although an increasing proportion of higher education faculty are women, salary disparities between males and females at this level have not decreased.

While females remain relatively unenthusiastic about science and mathematics, their attitudes towards computers have changed. Since 1996, there has been no difference in levels of home computer use between American boys and girls in the eighth and eleventh grades.[28]

ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT AND ITS IMPACT ON YOUNG WOMEN

Studies have shown that both age and education influence a woman's earnings; younger women with a higher level of education tend to have the highest incomes. However, there are other determinants. In Canada, for example, university-educated young women earn 84 per cent of what their male counterparts earn. This is partly attributable to the types of jobs university graduates eventually find; for some reason, those secured by male graduates are generally better-paying than those found by female graduates. Recently, progress has been made towards wage parity for younger, more educated women, and the situation is even better when hourly wages are taken as the basis for gender comparisons. Surveys in Canada indicate that full-time work averages four hours less per week for women than for men. Male and female earnings appear to be converging in many Western countries. The Canadian data show that annual salaries are slightly better for female university graduates than for their male counterparts after years of experience, job tenure, education and hours of work are taken into account.[29] A similar situation prevails in Sweden, where only a small percentage of the pay difference between women and men cannot be explained by age, occupation, hours worked and education.[30]

In the United States, employment rates for women have increased across all levels of educational attainment since the 1970s. The salaries of male college graduates generally exceed those of female graduates, but the earnings gap between the two has narrowed over time. Women are more likely than men to participate in adult education. In the large industrialized countries, labour force participation for women generally correlates with their level of educational attainment: women who are better educated have higher labour force participation rates than do those who are less educated. Education also correlates with earnings levels for both women and men in large industrialized countries.

In Western Europe increasing numbers of young women are joining the labour force, though their careers are still limited by childcare responsibilities. These women are also the most likely to experience poverty at some point in their lives. Nonetheless, younger Western women take for granted such things as the right to financial independence, an education and a job. Those in the former communist countries, however, can no longer count on professional or social security. They have lost their token representation in the public sphere, and the private sphere is no longer accorded the same value or importance. Young women in this region suffer from a lack of adequate

contraceptive facilities, increasing restrictions on abortion in some countries, and the privatization and individualization of welfare, which hits young women particularly hard as the main users of welfare services.[31]

There is evident gender-based discrimination in access to certain educational opportunities and jobs. In many countries, girls are outperforming boys at school, but this does not necessarily translate into greater labour market success. This is true in part because many girls remain concentrated in traditional fields of study, which often do not relate to rapidly evolving labour market needs. In countries such as France, Jamaica and Japan, where girls have equal access to education, some may still be the intentional or unintentional targets of gender discrimination. In other countries, such as Ghana, India and Kenya, girls' access to education and training is limited, forcing young women disproportionately into the informal sector and subsistence-oriented activities. In still other countries, total economic inactivity is imposed on young women.[32]

Unemployment

In many developing countries (such as Botswana, Jamaica and Chile) and some developed countries (such as Belgium, France and Spain), more young women than young men are unemployed. In other countries (including Hungary, India, Indonesia, some Latin American countries and most developed countries), the gender differences in unemployment are small to negligible. In a small number of countries (among them Algeria, Australia, El Salvador, Sweden and the United Kingdom), female unemployment is lower than male unemployment.

Current unemployment figures from around the world for 15- to 24-year-olds and those aged 25 years and over indicate that youth unemployment rates are approximately twice as high as adult unemployment rates in both developed and developing countries. In a number of developing countries (including Egypt, Chile, Colombia, Honduras, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea and Sri Lanka) the ratio is considerably higher. The ratio is also greater than 2 to 1 in several Southern European countries (such as Greece, Italy and Turkey), as well as in a number of Eastern European countries (including Bulgaria, Estonia, Romania and Slovenia).

An examination of the relevant data show that unemployment rates for young men aged 15 to 24 years are lower than the equivalent rates for young women in virtually all developing countries and transition economies. The pattern is less consistent in the developed world.[33]

EU statistics on children, gender and poverty reveal that in every age group, women are at greater risk of experiencing income poverty than are men.[34] In 1996, 18 per cent of all women lived in low-income households, compared with 16 per cent of all men. However, the gender gap in terms of income poverty is somewhat age-dependent. The gap is largest in the age groups 18-24 and 65 or over.[35] For the EU overall, income poverty rates are the same for men and women under the age of 18, with 21 per cent of each officially qualifying as poor. In most EU countries the income poverty rates are higher for young women under 18 years old than for young men in the same age category. As they get older, young women in the EU face a greater risk of descending into poverty than do young men; the poverty rate among 18- to 24-year-old men in this region is 22 per cent, and among women of the same age group, 26 per cent.

VIOLENCE AGAINST GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN

Girls have traditionally been perceived as less of a threat to social order, being less likely to get into trouble on the streets, less involved in crime, and subject to greater family control and authority at home. The involvement of girls in delinquency and crime, though still less than that of boys, appears to have increased, however. There is little information about the causes of girls' violence. Some studies show that there are significant differences between girls and boys with regard to displays of aggression and the perpetration of violent acts.[36] Nevertheless, in a number of areas girls and young women are increasingly engaging in the more "extreme" antisocial and criminal behaviour typically associated with young males. One example of this is girls joining violent street gangs. Finland's largest daily newspaper reported in August 2002 that youth violence in the city of Helsinki involved more girls than ever before.[37] There are girl gangs whose members beat up other girls and rob them of their mobile telephones and handbags, making them afraid to use the central railway station late in the evening. Some girls and young women, denied access to financial resources and forced into greater dependence on their families, may be involved in crime to gain access to consumer goods.

Violent girls and young women are more likely to come from troubled or violent families. They may have a negative view of femininity based on a low personal sense of self-worth—in some cases resulting from sexual abuse. A study of young African-American and Latino women incarcerated for serious offences identified additional factors that propelled them towards violence, including leaving home or being kicked out and spending a considerable amount of their free time without adult supervision.[38]

For the most part, however, girls and young women are the victims of crime and violence. Violence against women cuts across all social and economic strata and is deeply embedded in cultures around the world. According to some researchers,[39] violence against females can even be classified as an ordinary part of life. *The State of World Population 2000*, a UNFPA report, reveals that at least 60 million girls who in ordinary circumstances would be expected to be alive are "missing" from various populations, mostly in Asia, as a result of sex-selective abortions, infanticide or neglect; and that domestic violence is widespread in most societies and is a frequent cause of suicide among women.[40] "Honour killings" take the lives of thousands of young women every year, mainly in Western Asia, North Africa and parts of South Asia.[41]

Rape and other forms of sexual violence are increasing, and young women tend to fall victim to intimate violence more often than do older women. A survey in the United Kingdom indicates that the possibility of sexual assault by a stranger is one of the chief concerns of 12- to 15-year-old girls.[42] Young women are more likely than men to feel unsafe when out alone. Girls aged 14-15 years are often assaulted or harassed by older males.

One study about sexual violence against girls aged 10-20 years includes some observations regarding the circumstances under which girls and young women experience such violence.[43] For the victims covered by the study, 30 per cent of the sexual abusers were the girls' fathers, stepfathers, mothers' boyfriends, cousins or

brothers; familiar people such as friends, neighbours and co-workers carried out another 20 per cent of the sexual violence. Totally unknown attackers and strangers were the perpetrators in 24 per cent of the cases reviewed; this kind of sexual violence normally occurs in public places. In response to this "geography of fear", girls and young women often avoid walking alone in secluded or low-traffic areas such as forests, parks and beaches.

Every seventh rape of a young girl is a group or gang rape. Girls who are still virgins are often violated in this manner. In many parts of Eastern Europe, gang rape has become a common way of exploiting young women.[44] Gang rape has also constituted one of the terrors of war around the world, and has been shown to have a very traumatic and isolating effect on the emotional lives of victims.

Sexual violence against girls and young women today incorporates some elements that are generally prevalent and others that are quite culturally specific. Of all the different kinds of sexual abuse, sexual violence inside the family appears to have the most damaging effect on the victim, and incest seems to be the most difficult experience to survive mentally. After being raped or abused within their own families, girls suffer from various sorts of fears, shame, guilt, nightmares, insomnia, anxiety and depression, which can result in suicide attempts or aggression and anger. Incest can also be a factor contributing to eating disorders and alcohol and drug abuse. Often the wounds inflicted by sexual violence lead to lifelong suffering.

A young rape victim is also at risk of contracting HIV/AIDS or other venereal diseases. The time spent waiting for the results of HIV tests is a very high-risk period in terms of suicide attempts. Becoming pregnant is yet another risk. Post-traumatic stress disorder can result from such an experience. Despite the seriousness of this type of violence and its consequences, many rapes, sexual assaults and cases of sexual harassment still go unreported because of the stigma and trauma associated with them and the lack of sympathetic treatment from legal systems; many girls and young women say nothing simply because they do not want their parents and others to find out about their degrading experience. Estimates of the proportion of rapes reported to authorities range from less than 3 per cent in South Africa to about 16 per cent in the United States.

EMPOWERMENT, ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Commercial sex, rather than being simply the free market decision of independent women to sell their favours, is a major source of further abuse. One estimate is that 2 million girls between the ages of 5 and 15 are introduced into the commercial sex market each year. Finnish studies show that, because of the growing sex trade, girls and young women are subjected to increased levels of sexual and verbal aggression.[46]

The concept of empowerment emphasizes personal agency and human dignity in striving to take charge of one's own life, with the confidence that one has the knowledge and skills to achieve this objective, and to do so against a background of respect for differences and diversity.[47] For girls and young women, empowerment involves enabling them to address their own concerns and helping them to become more independent. Efforts to facilitate the empowerment of girls and young women at the global level must take into account both the informal cultural values and the official institutional cultures prevailing in each society, and the challenges confronting females in this context. Empowerment programmes can be very effective under the right circumstances and with the right kind of training and support.

Girls and young women in difficult circumstances can also be empowered. Various NGOs have helped girls and young women who have been forced into prostitution in Western Europe to become their own agents of change. Many of these young women are not citizens and are therefore denied a political voice, making them more vulnerable to different kinds of material and sexual exploitation.[48]

The gender empowerment measure (GEM) gauges the relative extent to which women and men can and do take part in economic and political life. It measures gender inequality in key areas of economic and political participation and decision-making. More precisely, it tracks the percentages of women in leading positions in society and the gender disparity in economic independence as reflected in earning levels. The GEM standard is applied around the world and shows, for example, that the Bahamas and Trinidad and Tobago are ahead of Italy and Japan in terms of gender equality. High income is thus not a prerequisite for creating opportunities for women. Much can be done simply to improve women's economic and political opportunities. In only eight countries do women hold 30 per cent or more of the seats in the national assembly, and in very few countries have there been simultaneous improvements in female secondary school enrolment percentages (rising to 95 per cent or more), in the female share of paid employment in industry and services (equal representation), and in their share of seats in parliament (39 per cent or more).[49]

A study carried out in Finland indicates that, even in countries that have gone through long periods of modernization and acceptance of equal rights for both sexes, young women and young men still have different values and attitudes towards life and society.[50] Education has had some effect on the development of various youth perspectives and philosophies. The study found that a belief in the importance of gender equality in working life was reflected most strongly in the values of girls who had been to upper secondary school. They preferred a female employer or supervisor and felt

that going to work was just as important for a woman as it was for a man, as both need-ed to earn money and take care of the home and the family. They also thought there should be more women bosses in higher-level jobs, and felt it was very important to live according to one's conscience. They would not mind if their children went to school where half of the children were of another race. These girls were defined as "humanist-egalitarians" in terms of their attitudes and values.

"Traditionalist-conservative" values—opposed by the majority of urban girls—were found most frequently among secondary school boys. These values were reflect-ed by the respondents' agreement with conservative statements such as "Couples who have children should not divorce", "Marriage is for life", and "Young people today don't respect traditional values enough." They supported the political position reflecting the conviction that "Our country needs strong leaders who can restore order and discipline and the respect for values."

"Environmentalist-greens" stressed ecological values and were mostly female upper secondary school students. In their opinion, economic growth and development should not be taken any further. Nuclear energy should be given up even if it brought about a decline in the standard of living. This group believed that the continued rise in economic well-being increased the incidence of mental illness and that science and technology were beginning to control people instead of serving them. They were will-ing to lower their standard of living to decrease pollution and environmental problems. They also believed that "Even young people can promote world peace by participating in peace work."

The study also identified a group with a new set of values: the "global-interna-tionalists". Those espousing this value system thought that if more foreign people came to Finland such contact would be mutually beneficial. In their opinion it was not a privilege to be Finnish, and the idea that "East or West, home is best" was obsolete.

In terms of gender-based differences, girls valued humanism and equality more, while boys assigned greater value to technology and economic well-being. Secondary schoolgirls (especially those in urban settings) were more concerned about environmental issues, while urban secondary schoolboys in particular expressed more of an interest in science and technology than did their female counterparts. Urban vocational schoolgirls were the most politically passive. They had negative attitudes about traditional politics, citing "green" values as an alternative to technological and economic values. At the other end of the spectrum from the international globalists were the "racists", most of whom were boys who studied in vocational or business schools and colleges. The most humanistic values were found among secondary schoolgirls. In general, family values were more important to rural young people than to urban youth.

The girls participating in the Finnish study were not as engaged in party poli-tics as were boys. For many of them politicians were "old men who lie to people". This critical stance taken by many girls heralds the birth of a new type of political culture. The girls in the study tended to profess attitudes that were more global than those held

by boys. They were more willing to increase aid to developing countries and to accept refugees, and they were also more critical than boys with respect to the capacity of science and technology to solve the problems of the modern era. Most, but not all, of the girls expressed humanistic values. The space within which girls can move has expanded, and it has provided them with the option of being either "soft" or "hard". Girls' perceptions of the world seem to be more varied and open than those of boys.

Several other studies have demonstrated that girls and boys perceive the world differently.[51] The formation of both identity and perceptions occurs within, and is effected by, the gender framework. Many cultures regard "soft" values as being feminine. The different values associated with the gender stereotypes created by a patriarchal society are evident. School, peer groups and commercial mass-media entertainment convey sexual stereotypes that shape the viewpoints held by young people and manifest themselves in matters such as career choices.

The collective consciousness about such things as the kinds of role expectations directed towards women arises within a social context. The situations and experiences of mothers, sisters and girlfriends, for example, indirectly provide girls with information about the essence of being a woman and what that role entails in a particular cultural context. Various theories of cultural influence acknowledge the power of the media and their role in creating beliefs, attitudes and values according to which people interpret the world. Many of the differences in girls' and boys' values and attitudes are not attributable to biology. (The only personality difference that can be shown to have biological roots is perhaps the level of aggressive activity.) Parents and society tend to respond differently to girls than to boys. These and other factors related to the environment in which girls and young women live have to be considered. One explanation for the differences in male and female beliefs and perspectives relates to the divergent socialization of girls and boys, and another to gender roles and culture.

CONCLUSIONS

The issues addressed in this chapter include not only male-female dynamics and relationships involving sexuality and motherhood, but also education, work, empowerment, attitudes and values, inequalities, and the politics and economics of societies on a global level. The literature cited and data presented here display emerging contradictions between existing opportunities and the actual situations of girls and young women today. The various inequalities between girls and boys are not superficial problems that can be solved within the structures and forms of the family and professional spheres. These inequalities form part of the very fabric of societies and are reflected not only in cultural values, but also in the relationship between production and reproduction and between family responsibilities and wage labour. In such a context the contradictions between modernity and democracy within societies become more apparent. The equality of girls and boys cannot be achieved through reliance on institutional structures that are connected by design to inequality.

Modernization has greatly reduced gender inequalities. However, the situation of girls and young women in the family, educational and occupational spheres varies from one country to another, with the greatest differences seen between developed and developing countries. In modern and post-modern Western countries, young

single women are starting to form completely new types of social relationships, the repercussions of which cannot be predicted at present. For example, single mothers are not only divorced women who have unexpectedly ended up raising children without a man's assistance; a number of them have deliberately chosen the role of fatherless motherhood (some, for example, using an anonymous sperm donor). This and other developments are consequences of the modernization of societies.[52]

In some parts of the world, improved educational opportunities for young women and an increased awareness of their position have built up expectations of greater equality and partnership in both professional and family life—which may be frustrated by encounters with the realities of the labour market and male behaviour. The contradictions between young women's expectations of equality and the reality of inequality may set the tone for future developments in gender politics. To solve the problems of gender inequality a general socio-theoretical understanding is needed. According to Ulrich Beck, gender characteristics are the basis of industrial society, and not some traditional relic that can easily be dispensed with.[53] The equalization of educational opportunities and new career motivations among young women reflect the achievement of a new, modern female status. This is leading towards new levels of individualization requiring young women to resolve the conflict between the often incompatible goals of occupational competitiveness and motherhood; however, they are well aware that they have more options and opportunities than their mothers did and do not wish to turn back the clock.

In developed countries, a person's sex has less significance in determining his or her life course and lifestyle than it does in developing societies that are in the early stages of industrialization. The legacy of the separation of private and public spheres persists for many girls and young women from traditional and developing societies, especially for those in the less educated segments of society and members of disadvantaged ethnic/racial groups. Even though the overall education of girls and young women has improved, young women of lower socio-economic status or of particular ethnic-minority origins still tend to have very limited possibilities.[54]

Gender inequality undermines development and prospects for reducing poverty, while economic growth and rising incomes reduce inequality. Studies show that societies in which discrimination is greatest have more poverty, slower economic growth and a lower quality of life than do societies with less discrimination. The effects are strongest in some developing countries. Ensuring that girls and young women enjoy the same rights as boys and young men and have equal access to education, jobs, property and credit and equal opportunities for participation in public life reduces child mortality, improves public health, slows population growth and strengthens overall economic growth. Education, in particular that of young women, has a greater impact on infant and child mortality than the combined effects of higher income, improved sanitation and modern-sector employment. This is true in all countries, but particularly in developing countries. Girls' school attendance in comparison with that of boys is best where both incomes and gender equality are relatively high, and worst in areas in which either equality or incomes are relatively low. Educating girls is one of the most effective ways to promote economic and cultural development.

As incomes rise, previously poor families increase their spending on children's education, health care and nutrition, contributing to greater improvement in the relative position of girls. Similarly, development that creates new job opportunities often benefits women more than men. It is remarkable that in developing countries even improvements in the infrastructure for water, energy and transportation can effect a reduction in gender inequality, as such changes can reduce the time women have to spend fetching water, gathering cooking fuel and producing food for family consumption, giving them more time to earn additional income and participate in community affairs.

The literature and data presented here raise a question: Are girls and young women equally liberated from their gender fate—the traditional traits ascribed to femininity? Population data show an increasing life expectancy for females, which is leading to a demographic liberation of women. Many girls and young women will live beyond the family and childcaring phase of their lives. Post-parental relationships are becoming nearly universal. Even if motherhood is still the strongest tie to the traditional female role, contraceptives, family planning and the legal possibility of terminating pregnancies are freeing girls and young women from the inevitability of taking on this role. In contexts in which these options are available, children and motherhood are no longer the natural fate of a woman. Data show that motherhood without economic dependence is not possible for most young women at the global level (those living in, for example, Scandinavian welfare states would constitute an exception). However, more and more young women can decide when to have children and how many they want to have.

In terms of general health, more reliable international data are needed before anyone can speculate as to the major indicators of health inequalities for girls and young women on a global level. The world is witnessing significant changes, many of which are increasing the level of vulnerability among girls and young women. Depression, eating disorders, suicide attempts and other psychological problems have all become more common in developed countries, threatening girls and young women who are in the process of establishing adult female identities. Girls and young women in developing countries are vulnerable to the health risks that emerge in connection with inadequate food and medical services. Several indicators show that adolescent mothers face greater pregnancy-related health risks and will have more children than those who begin childbearing later.

Many adolescent girls and young women continue to face gender-based stereotyping that often has deep historical and cultural roots. While girls are traditionally believed to pose less of a threat to social order than boys (less likely to get into trouble on the streets or become involved in crime, and more amenable to family authority at home), in many cultures boys have been—and frequently still are—valued more highly than girls from birth.

Gender-based stereotyping and overt and disguised forms of discrimination combine to create risks to the health and well-being of girls and young women that are greater than those faced by boys and young men. In addition to the consequences of

early pregnancy and childbirth, females suffer higher rates of accidental death, suicide, victimization by violent crime, STD infection and mental disorders. Female infanticide, inadequate provision of food and medical care, physical abuse, genital mutilation and forced sex threaten the lives of many girls. Violence against women, including young women, cuts across all social and economic strata and is deeply embedded in cultures around the world.

The right of children to be safe and secure must be guaranteed in all societies. Proper child protection services should be established and maintained everywhere. All over the world, steps need to be taken to improve the training and supervision of those working with children (such as educators and health-care workers) to teach them how to recognize when young people, particularly girls, are at risk or have been abused, and how to protect and/or care for them accordingly.

As a result of concerted efforts, enrolment at all levels of education has generally improved for girls and young women, and the gender gap in schooling has been reduced in most regions of the world. Nevertheless, the gap remains wide in many countries, and gender-based stereotyping and discrimination continue to affect educational attainment. Many individual young women who have completed higher levels of education have increased their earning potential—a positive outcome of the narrowing of the gender gap in education. There is still ample evidence, however, that many women do not receive the same remuneration for work that is equal to that of their male colleagues.

The universal human rights principles adopted by the international community have set the norm for equality, requiring that girls and women be seen as unique individuals with rights and responsibilities similar to those of boys and men. ■

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YOUTH participation in DECISION MAKING

The case for securing a more **firmly established commitment to greater participation for young people is explored in this chapter, which further examines progress made over the past decade, and identifies some of the key challenges that lie ahead. The focus is primarily, though not exclusively, on 15- to 18-year-olds, partly because it is this younger group among youth that is more seriously disenfranchised and denied a voice, and partly because the earlier young people are provided with opportunities to participate, the greater the benefit is to both themselves and the wider society. Respecting the right of this younger group to be heard represents an enormous challenge to traditional attitudes in most societies.**

EMERGING RECOGNITION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF PARTICIPATION

"No one is born a good citizen; no nation is born a democracy. Rather, both are processes that continue to evolve over a lifetime. Young people must be included from birth. A society that cuts itself off from its youth severs its lifeline; it is condemned to bleed to death." — *Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations*

The World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond recognizes that the active engagement of young people themselves is central to its successful implementation and, accordingly, affirms the full and effective participation of youth in society and decision-making as one of its 10 priority areas for action. Implicit in this commitment is an acknowledgement that young people are part of the solution to the difficulties they face, not merely a problem to be resolved by others. An even earlier catalyst for change in attitudes towards young people was the 1989 adoption and subsequent near-universal ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Convention introduced a new philosophy with regard to children and young people, recognizing their importance as individuals whose dignity must be respected. It promotes the principle that youth are entitled to express their views on all matters that affect them and to have those views taken seriously. Article 12 of the Convention makes it clear that participation is a substantive right of all children and young people. As with adults, however, democratic participation is not an end in itself; as a procedural right, it represents the means through which they may take part in and influence processes, decisions and activities in order to achieve justice, influence outcomes, expose abuses of power and realize their rights.

These global developments have begun to affect young people's lives. In every region of the world there are now initiatives, projects and programmes in which young people are participating in decision-making. Many are beginning to shape the world around them, influencing politicians, policy makers, professionals and the media with their own unique perspectives. Organizations and networks of young people have emerged at the local, national, regional and global levels, demonstrating their capacity for advocacy, communication and negotiation, and their commitment to challenging injustice.

The demand for recognition of the right of young people to be heard, to have their views given serious consideration, and to play an active role in promoting their own best interests is far from universally respected, however. This demand represents a profound challenge to traditional attitudes towards young people in most societies throughout the world. It implies a radical change in youth-adult relationships in all spheres of life including the family, schools, local communities, programmes, social services, and local, regional and national government. A commitment to respecting the participatory rights of young people is incompatible with the age-old propensity of adults to take decisions concerning young people in their absence. Those who have been accustomed to authority are being forced to acknowledge young people as protagonists in the exercise of rights—as active agents in their own lives rather than mere recipients of adult protection. Accepting the necessity of their participation does not mean that adults no longer have a responsibility towards youth. On the contrary, young people cannot independently undertake the advocacy necessary to secure their rights. Structural problems such as poverty, discrimination and injustice cannot be dealt with through participation alone. Adults need to learn to work more closely in collaboration with youth to help them articulate their needs and develop strategies to enhance their well-being.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PARTICIPATION

Many politicians, community leaders and others are far from convinced that harnessing the active involvement of youth represents an effective strategy for achieving better outcomes. The present section addresses this ambivalence by spelling out both the benefits of respecting young people's right to participation and the negative consequences of failing to do so.

The consequences of failing to give young people a voice

Analysis of the global experience of children and young people over many years reveals the extent to which the absence of their perspectives in policy-making at all levels has consistently militated against their best interests. Young people lack access to most of the processes through which adults can articulate their concerns. In very few countries are youth under the age of 18 given the right to vote. They lack the power of the large commercial lobbies to wield influence on Governments. They lack access to media and the courts. They are rarely members of trade unions or professional associations that could negotiate on their behalf. The Committee on the Rights of the Child observes that while most States Parties to the Convention attest to the priority and value attached to children and young people within their respective cultures, they generally do not "undertake all appropriate legislative, administrative, and other measures … to the maximum extent of their available resources" to ensure that the rights of the younger members of society are realized.[1] Evidence does not support the presumption that adults within both the public and private spheres will ensure adequate representation of young people's best interests in law, policy and practice.

Adults can abuse their power over children and young people. Adults in positions of authority over children and young people can and do abuse their power. The cultural assumption that young people must not challenge their elders or express their views, even when their rights are being violated, has increased their vulnerability to dangers such as economic exploitation, military recruitment and forced participation in the sex trade. It is now well documented that many millions of children and young people in countries around the globe are both physically and sexually abused within their own families.[2] Girls, in particular, are exposed to frequent sexual assaults by their teachers in some parts of the world. In the 1980s and 1990s the extent to which young people in residential institutions were subjected to systematic abuse by the very adults charged with their care received widespread exposure. The most notorious and well-publicized examples came from Eastern Europe, but young people have been equally vulnerable in wealthier countries. These practices are allowed to continue, at least in part, because the views and concerns of young people are neither heard nor valued. Because young people have no outlet through which they might share their experiences they are effectively silenced, which allows adults to behave, with relative impunity, in ways entirely contrary to their welfare.

Adults do not always act in young people's best interests. Actions detrimental to the well-being of young people occur not only through deliberate abuse or neglect. Adults across the professional spectrum have been responsible for decisions, policies and actions that have been inappropriate and sometimes actively harmful to young people, even when the underlying intention has been to promote their welfare. These actions are characterized by a consistent failure to consult or involve young people themselves. Evidence is not hard to come by; it is not uncommon to find cases in which young people are placed in large institutions that give insufficient attention to their emotional and psychological well-being, children from different communities are segregated into different schools, fathers or mothers are automatically granted custody of their children following a divorce irrespective of the circumstances, and young people are institutionalized in attempts to remove them from the streets. There is growing recognition that young people are more harmed than helped by these practices, which have all been, and in many instances continue to be, justified by adults, while the views of young people themselves have gone unheard. If young people are not involved in the development of the laws, policies and programmes that affect them, even well-intentioned actions on the part of adults will often fail to protect their best interests.

Parents' rights have priority over those of children and young people. Public policy often gives precedence to the rights and interests of parents over those of children and young people, even when the consequences of doing so are detrimental to their welfare. Parents, as adults and voters, have a more powerful influence on and greater access to public officials and the decision-making process than do young people. For example, the physical punishment of children and young people remains a legally sanctioned practice in most countries throughout the world, even though the Committee on the Rights of the Child has clearly stated that it represents a violation of human rights.[3] Parents defend its use by citing the need to impose effective discipline, but it is rare that young people's views on corporal punishment are solicited or factored into policy development.

Young people's interests are often disregarded in public policy. Young people's interests are frequently overlooked in the public policy sphere in favour of those of more powerful interest groups. It is not necessarily the case that the welfare of youth is deliberately disregarded, but because their voices are not heard and the impact of public policy on their lives is not discussed in decision-making forums, their concerns never reach the top of the political agenda. In very few countries in the world is there any real analysis of public expenditure to assess whether the proportion spent on children and young people and their well-being reflects either their levels of need or their representation within the community. Article 27 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child entitles children to a standard of living adequate for their "physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development". However, the resolution by heads of State and Government within the framework of the United Nations Millennium Declaration to reduce the number of people living in poverty by half by 2015 does not extend the definition of poverty beyond the basic provision of material needs. In practice, in the context of the broader understanding of child poverty embodied in the Convention, young people's opportunities for development may decrease as the family income increases, as the incidence of neglect rises with the added stresses and time constraints deriving from expanded work commitments and longer working hours among parents or guardians.[4] Some young people who have been invited to express their views deem the consequent lack of emotional support and guidance even more harmful than inadequate nutrition.[5]

In many cities throughout the world, there is a growing intolerance of young people in the public arena. They are widely viewed as undesirable in the streets and shops, particularly when they are in groups. Public spaces are seen to be "owned" by adults, with young people's presence representing an unwanted intrusion. Little or no thought is given to developing towns and cities that are designed with children and young people in mind.

The benefits of participation

The frequent and widespread failure of the adult world to act effectively to promote the welfare of young people points to the need for a change in approach. A powerful case can be made for listening to young people as part, though by no means all, of a strategy for strengthening participative democracy and furthering the realization of their human rights.

Youth participation leads to better decisions and outcomes. Many of the profound difficulties faced by young people around the globe—illiteracy, poverty, HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, discrimination and forced engagement in armed conflict—are subjects of widespread concern at the national and international levels. In all regions of the world, young people are having to deal with increased unemployment and insecurity at work, greater family instability, and reductions in social welfare programmes. Youth is often characterized by uncertainty and risk.[6] Effective strategies are needed to resolve these concerns. Young people have a body of experience unique to their situation, and they have views and ideas that derive from this experience. They are social actors with skills and capacities to bring about constructive resolutions to their own problems. Too often, though, there is a failure or even a refusal to recognize

the legitimacy of young people's contributions to programmes, policies and decision-making. Much of government policy has a direct or indirect impact on young people, yet it is developed and delivered largely in ignorance of how it will affect their day-to-day lives or their present and future well-being.

One example of the disconnection between policy adoption and application relates to education. Most Governments are concerned about improving young people's educational experience, yet very few take any measures to find out from students themselves which teaching methods work, whether the curriculum is relevant, what factors contribute to school dropout rates and truancy, how to improve attendance rates, what is needed to promote better inclusion of girls, or how to enhance good behaviour and promote effective discipline. The Committee on the Rights of the Child consistently asks Governments to explain how participation is being implemented in their school systems, but progress remains extremely slow.[7] Evidence shows that schools in which democratic environments are introduced are likely to have a more harmonious atmosphere, better staff-student relationships and a more effective learning environment.[8] If the devastating student dropout rates in so many countries in the world are to be reduced, educational administrators and policy makers need to learn from children and young people how learning institutions can become places where they want to be. If they are to have a sense of ownership of and commitment to school, they need opportunities to be involved in the decisions, policies and structures that affect them on a daily basis.

National and international campaigns to end child labour have too often failed to take the views and experiences of working children and young people into account, and sometimes their situations have actually worsened as a result. In Bangladesh, for example, when children were laid off from garment industry jobs following an American campaign to end the employment of children under 15, many of them were compelled to engage in work that was less appropriate and more hazardous than the jobs they had been forced to leave. Similarly, many programmes designed to protect young people from the streets by providing them with institutionalized accommodations and education have failed because they have not sought the input of the young people themselves. The programmes that have been effective are those committed to empowering young people by working with them to allow their own experience to inform the development of appropriate interventions and services.

As youth lifestyles become more divergent and the rate of change increases, and as populations grow more diverse through immigration and mobility, it becomes ever more difficult for those in authority to adequately understand youth. Consulting young people and drawing on their perceptions, knowledge and ideas are essential to both the development of effective public policy and the achievement of positive outcomes.

Participation promotes the well-being and development of young people. It is by questioning, expressing their views and having their opinions taken seriously that young people develop skills, build competencies, acquire confidence and form aspirations. It is a virtuous circle. The more opportunities a young person has for meaningful participation, the more experienced and competent he or she becomes. This allows more effective participation, which in turn enhances development.[10] There is a

considerable body of evidence demonstrating that young people who are afforded opportunities for meaningful participation within their families and communities are more likely to achieve healthy development.[11] Participation is also a means to achieve development in its broader sense. Amartya Sen has argued that development is "a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy".[12] Strictly speaking, development involves realizing particular goals in the areas of health, education and economic growth; however, the final objective is to enable people to choose and live the lives they want. A developed community is therefore one that allows all its members to participate.

Action taken within the public school system in Philadelphia offers evidence of the virtuous-circle effect. The schools in the area were once characterized by poverty, material decay, disaffection, high dropout rates and racial tension. A young person committed to principles of human rights and a belief in the effectiveness of peer counselling founded the Philadelphia Student Union to create opportunities for young people to make a difference. Specific objectives included involving students in decision-making, ending their mistreatment, promoting multicultural education, and developing an interactive and engaging curriculum. After five years, the Union had mobilized more than 500 members. Among its many accomplishments, it lobbied for a new school funding system and was successful in having a proposed funding cut converted into a transfer of $15 million into the school district; it has produced a commitment to improved instruction in schools by persuading teachers to lobby for redesigned professional development; and it has successfully pressed for building inspections in schools, which has resulted in needed repairs. Most importantly, it has enabled the adult world to recognize that students learn better when they are trusted to help shape the environment in which they live.[13]

Participation strengthens a commitment to and understanding of human rights and democracy. In both well-established and newly formed democracies, there is a need for young people to experience the implications of democratic decision-making and respect for human rights. In those countries facing internal conflict and tensions that threaten democracy, such experience takes on even greater significance. Young people need opportunities to learn what their rights and duties are, how their freedom is limited by the rights and freedoms of others, and how their actions can affect the rights of others. They need opportunities to participate in democratic decision-making processes within schools and local communities, and to learn to abide by subsequent decisions that are made.

According to article 29(d) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, education should be geared towards the "preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples". In a recent survey by the European Commission of young people's priorities for the EU, 77 per cent of young women and 70 per cent of young men said they considered democratic rights and values a very important issue for discussion in the development of a European Convention.[14] However, these values cannot be transmitted in a repressive environment in which young people themselves are not respected. Only by experiencing respect for their views and discovering the importance of respecting the views of others will youth acquire the capacity and willingness to listen and so begin to understand the processes and value of democracy. This was recognized at the International Conference on Education in 1994, where delegates affirmed their commitment to "take suitable steps to establish in educational institutions an atmosphere contributing to the success of education for international understanding, so that they become ideal places for the exercise of tolerance, respect for human rights, the practice of democracy and learning about the diversity and wealth of cultural identities".[15] For most young people today, these words reflect little more than pious aspirations. Democracy is often taught in schools through simulation activities such as mock formal elections and model United Nations exercises, with no reference to the day-to-day arbitrary exercise of power at the school level. What is needed is the development of participatory processes in all institutional settings with young people in order to promote their understanding of what practical democracy is all about.

Too many young people feel that their views do not matter, that they cannot influence outcomes, and that democracy does not work for them. At a formal level, most citizens are not given the right to vote in elections until they reach the age of 18. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Croatia, Cuba, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Nicaragua, the Philippines, Serbia, Montenegro and Slovenia are the only countries that have reduced the voting age below 18 years. However, democracy can be understood in much broader terms as participation in civil society. Many groups that have traditionally occupied a disadvantaged position in society, including women and disabled people, have increasingly entered into dialogue with politicians at local and national levels to promote and press for greater recognition of their concerns, as the instruments of parliamentary democracy have not proved sufficient to answer their needs. Without the right to vote, young people have an even stronger claim for comparable political participation.

Participation protects young people. The conventional approach to child protection is predicated on the belief that adults must provide that protection, and that if young people are given the information they need to make informed choices, they will make decisions and act in ways that place them at risk. Accordingly, a considerable number of youth are denied access to information vital to their well-being. In a survey of young people undertaken by UNICEF in East Asia and the Pacific, many of the respondents claimed total ignorance with regard to sexual relationships (55 per cent), HIV/AIDS (43 per cent) and illegal drugs (42 per cent).[16] In a similar UNICEF survey covering the transition economies in Central Asia and Europe, it was found

that 53 per cent had apparently been given little or no information about HIV/AIDS, and 83 per cent in the Caucasus, 64 per cent in Central Asia, and 60 per cent in South-East Europe said they had received little or no information about preventing drug abuse.[17]

These findings reflect the widespread view that perpetuating ignorance among youth keeps them out of harm's way. It is believed, for example, that withholding information from young people about sex will prevent them from becoming sexually active. There is increasing evidence, however, that access to sensitively presented, non-judgemental information on sexual and reproductive health is essential for the protection of young people and does not lead to earlier sexual activity. Particularly in the context of the acute risks associated with HIV/AIDS, denying young people access to such information can lead to "loss of life, illness, cessation of educational and employment opportunities, and other serious infringements of human rights".[18] When young people are engaged in the development of strategies to promote sexual health, their unique understanding of youth perspectives can be incorporated to help achieve more innovative approaches and effective outcomes.

The silence that accompanies sexual abuse within families serves to protect only the abuser. In contexts in which young people are entitled to challenge what is happening to them and have access to established mechanisms through which to do so, such violations of their rights are far more easily exposed. Conversely, young people who are denied the right to express their views and are taught to be submissive and acquiescent are more pliable and vulnerable to adult abuse. Violence against young people in prisons, abuse in foster homes, racism in schools, and misrepresentation of young people in the media can only be tackled effectively if young people have a voice and can enlist the support of adults with the authority to take appropriate action. In other words, young people need to become protagonists in securing the implementation of their rights.

Young people want to participate. There is considerable evidence that young people are becoming increasingly disaffected in many European countries, with apathy towards the formal political process evidenced by low registration and voting figures for this group.[19] However, cynicism and the lack of active engagement in existing political structures do not necessarily indicate a lack of interest in political issues. When given the opportunity, young people consistently assert their desire for wider recognition of their right to participate. This appeal was expressed powerfully by young people participating in the 2001 World Youth Forum: in the Dakar Youth Empowerment Strategy, Governments, the United Nations system and civil society organizations are called upon to "support young people in their endeavours to obtain the resources for extensive and comprehensive youth empowerment programmes". Young people taking part in a meeting on youth policy in Europe in 2000 also indicated a strong interest in seeing participation extend to all levels of society, but noted that existing mechanisms were "inadequate, inaccessible or purely symbolic".[20] They identified participation as the first of five key targets for political action and within this context elaborated a number of expectations including better access to information, improved citizenship education, systematic consultation by Governments and EU institutions, and regular opportunities for European meetings.

According to a survey conducted by Euronet,[21] young people feel their views are consistently disregarded by the adult world; they would like to be given the opportunity to be heard and taken more seriously, and believe they have an important contribution to make.[22] A similar vision is communicated in *A World Fit for Us*, a statement produced by the Children's Forum and delivered to the General Assembly at the United Nations Special Session on Children in 2002. The message stresses the importance of "raised awareness and respect among people of all ages about every child's right to full and meaningful participation ... (and for children to be) ... actively involved in decision-making at all levels and in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating all matters affecting the rights of the child".

Participation is a fundamental human right. All people, including the young, have a right to express their views on decisions directly affecting their lives. Whether it is an issue relating to rules imposed at school, legislation on the minimum age for full-time work, representation of young people in the media, or priorities in public expenditure, youth are entitled to articulate their concerns, participate in the development of policy and have their opinions given serious consideration. Participation represents a means for young people to advocate for themselves and transform their situations. Since the International Youth Year in 1985, the General Assembly has defined youth participation as comprising four components: economic participation, relating to work and development; political participation, relating to decision-making processes; social participation, relating to community involvement; and cultural participation, relating to the arts, cultural values and expression. All four elements are reaffirmed in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and are central to the creation of a culture of respect for children and young people.

MODELS OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Over the past 10 to 15 years, the concept of child and youth participation has gradually taken hold in every region of the world. Some of the highest-profile initiatives have emerged through young people's involvement in international conferences. However, the vast majority of participative projects and programmes are being implemented at the local or national level, where young people have demonstrated the capacity to contribute significantly to decisions and actions normally undertaken exclusively by adults on behalf of—though too often without any consideration for—young people. Their involvement can take place in any environment of relevance to young people including schools, residential homes, the juvenile justice system, media, youth services, workplaces, health services, local and national government, and international systems and networks. Alternatively, youth may be engaged in developing their own organizations in the form of clubs, unions, networks, committees and parliaments. They can participate at all levels, from the family and local community to the international arena. However, if their participation is to be meaningful, it is imperative that their engagement be directly linked to first-hand experience and that the key areas of concern be identified by young people themselves.

Young people have become active in processes as varied as the following:

- Research. Many examples exist of young people being provided with training as researchers and then undertaking independent investigations focusing on issues of direct concern to them.

- Programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Young people share their views and experiences to help design and implement programmes that target their specific needs; by playing a key role in monitoring and evaluation, youth are able to help the programme meet its objectives and adjust to changing circumstances as necessary.

- Peer support, representation and advocacy. Young people are increasingly being provided with opportunities to elect or be elected by their own peers to serve as advocates, working with adult institutions to lobby for greater respect for their rights.

- Policy analysis and development. Many initiatives involve young people in reviewing existing legislation and policies from the perspective of their own experience.

- Campaigning and lobbying. Once young people are afforded the chance to come together and articulate their experiences and concerns, many are able to develop campaigns for the realization of their rights, lobbying for the necessary changes from grass-roots to international levels.

- Development and management of their own organizations. Within a growing number of youth-led organizations throughout the world, young people are defining their own structures, policies and priorities for action.

- Participation in and use of the media. Young people have traditionally been excluded from active participation in the media, but in many countries they are receiving training as youth journalists, running their own radio programmes, developing video tools for the promotion of rights, and publishing journals and newsletters.

- Conference participation. Young people have participated in local, national and international conferences as organizers, speakers, delegates and rapporteurs, often with significant impact on the outcomes of such events.

- Youth councils and parliaments. In a number of countries, young people have participated in the development of democratic political structures that parallel those of the adult world and provide opportunities to inform and influence key economic, social and political agendas.

All of these activities offer opportunities for empowering young people to take action to influence or change aspects of their lives for the better. However, several different models and structures are employed to achieve specific objectives. These may be conceptualized in terms of the degree to which control and power are actually transferred to young people in practice.

Adult-led processes

Many initiatives are developed by adults in positions of authority to elicit young people's views and perspectives or to offer them opportunities for social or cultural engagement. They reflect the recognition that young people have something useful to say and that there is a need to institutionalize structures that will allow their voices to be heard. Their value derives from the fact that, at best, laws, policies, programmes and practices can be influenced by the input of young people. Adults may invite young people to speak at conferences and share their experiences and views, or to participate in research, interactive web sites, informal consultations, youth councils or parliaments. The initiatives might involve the creation of projects or organizations run for young people but not by them. Such processes do not, in and of themselves, achieve youth empowerment; the decision to involve young people, the commitment to consult them, the issues on which they are consulted, the methodology employed and the weight given to the findings all continue to rest with those in authority. Adult-led initiatives are not without merit. They can play an important part in building a youth perspective, but they are essentially about consultation rather than participation.

Adult-initiated processes

Projects, programmes or organizational structures can be initiated by adults but subsequently developed to allow youth participation.[23] For example, a Government or NGO may identify the need to provide better information to young people about drug misuse or HIV/AIDS and decide to develop an awareness-raising programme. Those in charge of implementing the initiative could make it participative, rather than purely educational, if they sought to train youth to become peer educators, developed the content in collaboration with young people themselves, established a joint youth-adult team with responsibility for the programme, or engaged young people in the process of creating indicators for effective outcomes, monitoring and evaluation. Equally empowering are adult-initiated youth councils/parliaments or youth organizations in which young people are able to elect their own representatives, determine priorities and manage their own agendas. Young people invited to speak at or attend an adult conference can participate more effectively if they are fully informed about its aims, adequately prepared, consulted in its planning and organization, respected as equal partners, and encouraged to provide an evaluation of the event. In other words, meaningful participation necessarily involves young people having some control over an initiative's inputs and outcomes. In this way, they contribute unique perspectives that help to shape an adult agenda.

Youth-initiated and youth-led processes

Real empowerment is achieved when young people are able to identify those issues of primary concern to them and to develop strategies, activities, networks, organizations or campaigns through which to pursue their objectives. Many such initiatives throughout the world are supported and resourced by sympathetic adults, through NGOs or Governments. Youth-initiated processes often evolve out of earlier projects started by adult organizations. As young people acquire greater skills, confidence and knowledge, they also develop the capacity to work more independently and to assert their own agendas.

LESSONS LEARNED AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

The practice of creating meaningful opportunities for young people to participate as active agents in decisions affecting them is relatively new in most countries, and in most arenas of young people's lives. This is a rapidly growing and evolving field in which there is little history or prior experience to draw on and much experimental and innovative work being developed. There has been a steep learning curve both for adults struggling to create such opportunities for youth and for young people themselves as they grapple with the construction of new forms of negotiation and dialogue with adults.

The past decade has been witness to a multitude of developments and efforts aimed at securing greater respect for young people's participatory rights; however, much more needs to be done before the commitments to participation embodied in the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond are translated into practice for the majority for young people. Presumptions of young people's incompetence and lack of legitimacy in arenas traditionally occupied exclusively by adults continue to prevail. Respect for young people as social actors, as citizens or as active participants in decisions and processes affecting their own lives is far from universal. The rights of many young people continue to be violated with relative impunity throughout the world, while the opportunities they have to challenge those violations remain limited. There is a need to undertake a critical analysis not only of the progress made to date, but also of the continuing barriers that must be addressed if commitments to youth participation are to be universally fulfilled.[24]

Moving from consultation to participation and empowerment

It is not enough to have youth policies and national bodies representing youth. While consultations can be of some value, young people are increasingly demanding that they also be involved in decision-making processes at all levels.[25] One-time consultations or opinion polls are not adequate means of engaging them as active citizens. They want recognition as partners and as significant contributors to public policy. They want their own organizations and networks through which to articulate their concerns. The active involvement of young people must be embedded in political processes at the local, national, regional and global levels so that they may become the subjects, not objects, of policies that affect their lives. Governments need to lend their support to and be willing to engage in dialogue with youth-led organizations.

Facilitating access to information

Information of relevance to youth must be widely disseminated and made more accessible and user-friendly to enable young people to play a greater and more effective role in political processes. Youth themselves should be involved in the development of such information in order to ensure its appropriateness for a young audience. Information is needed at all levels. It is not possible for young people to make informed, meaningful contributions or to engage in effective dialogue if they are isolated from the debates taking place, the policies being developed, the processes through which decisions are made, or politicians in key positions of power.

Promoting a broader
inclusion of young people

The past decade has witnessed the gradual inclusion of a broader range of children and young people in participatory initiatives. Efforts to create more democratic schools, programmes involving young people living with HIV/AIDS, armed conflict and sexual exploitation, work with young people from rural communities, and initiatives at the local authority level have all brought in a wider constituency. However, there are still significant limitations. For example, disabled young people too often remain marginalized and excluded from participatory activities. Greater investment and effort are needed both to incorporate them in mainstream programmes and to establish forums that allow them to share their particular experiences and priorities. Too often youth movements can be dominated by the most articulate and socially engaged young people, while the more marginalized groups are excluded. In addition, there is a danger that youth movements may replicate the approach of many adult organizations in working for disadvantaged young people rather than empowering those groups to articulate their own concerns.

Developing principles, not blueprints

It has become increasingly clear that there are no blueprints for developing participatory practice, nor should there be. The imposition of predefined methodologies denies young people the opportunity to develop approaches best suited to their unique situations and concerns. What is vital is a commitment to working on the basis of shared principles, rooted in respect for young people's capacities as agents of change, and a willingness to recognize them as partners. It is important that young people are not pushed into replicating traditional adult models for democratic participation but are equipped to create new collaborative approaches. It is also important that youth-led organizations observe the principles of transparency, accountability, non-discrimination and mutual respect.

Challenging adult control
of projects and agendas

Many projects continue to be initiated and controlled by adults. Some youth parliaments that have been established by Governments, for example, are merely showcases and offer no real opportunity for the articulation of concerns. The participants are often chosen by adults and do not represent any constituency of young people; adults assume that youth lack the capacity to choose appropriate delegates. However, as Governments and NGOS place more emphasis on building the self-organizing capacities of child and youth groups, it is possible that these practices will be more effectively challenged. Adults, when confronted with the levels of competence young people display, will often acknowledge the legitimacy of their involvement in decision-making and completely relinquish control. As young people themselves gain confidence and experience in participation, they will increasingly demand more of a say in their own representation.

Working with adults as well as
young people to promote participatory rights

Adults remain a major barrier to the effective participation of children and young people. It is easier for youth to learn the skills necessary to engage in active participation than for adults to "unlearn" attitudes and assumptions built deep within their cultures. While there are significant benefits for adults in opening up opportunities for young people to participate, it is often the immediately perceived threats of doing so that inform their attitudes; for young people the benefits are more evident and immediate.

Many factors contribute to the failure or refusal of adults to recognize the value of a more democratic relationship with young people; presumptions of their incompetence and the insignificance of their experience, traditions of adult power over youth, the fear of losing status or control, and the belief that young people will lose respect for adults and refuse their protection can all play a part. It is also hard for adults who have never felt empowered themselves to accept the importance of empowering young people. However, there is a growing body of evidence indicating that when adults are exposed to effective participatory practice, they invariably recognize that many of their concerns are based on misconceptions.[26] It is therefore vital to invest time in working with adults as well as young people to overcome these barriers.

Institutionalizing participation

Youth participation has become "fashionable" in many national and international arenas, but it will not necessarily remain so, and even where action is being taken, it remains far from comprehensive. An analysis undertaken by the Office of the Children's Ombudsman in Sweden during the 1990s showed that while over half of local municipalities had some form of participation for young people, only one-fifth were working with them on a systematic and strategic basis.[27] In a survey of youth participation in Scotland, a large number of organizations reported involving young people in decision-making, but few had undertaken any evaluation of their participation or had developed guidelines for good practice.[28] In some regions of the world, the rise of fundamentalist regimes is serving to restrict the participation of young people. There is a need to institutionalize democratic systems for youth if the gains made over the past few years are not to be lost. In some cases this might be achieved by adopting legal reforms that, for example, give young people the right to develop democratic structures in their schools, or by introducing formal mechanisms for political dialogue between youth and officials at all levels of government. There is also a powerful case for lowering the voting age to 16 to extend formal political rights to young people. A strong lead from the United Nations emphasizing the importance of youth movements and enhanced participation by young people is essential.

Promoting cultural change and respect for human rights

There is a need for attitudes to change on the ground if young people are to feel empowered to make a real contribution as citizens within their communities. It is important for Governments to take the lead in promoting cultural change by actively engaging in dialogue with children and young people and using their platform to promote respect for them as social actors with a role to play in society and in the exercise of rights.

As more young people begin to take an active part in sustained engagement in their own organizations, programmes and communities, they will experience a deeper understanding of human rights and the concept of citizenship. Child and youth organizations have proved to be excellent settings for learning participation skills and practising non-discrimination, and as such offer an opportunity for young people to learn about rights in the most effective way possible—by putting them into practice in everyday situations. Increasingly, human rights constitute core organizational principles and are applied practically in the establishment and maintenance of these participatory bodies. The idea that rights and citizenship apply to all children and young people is learned through their own discussions of membership, organization and external representation. The best way to learn about gender discrimination is to confront it in the daily running of an organization. The same is true for issues of race, class, caste and disability. It is important that these lessons are retained as young people grow older, so that they can pass them on to younger people following behind them.

Developing systematic evaluations of participation

To date, there has been too little independent evaluation of youth participation and its direct impact on the young people themselves and on other elements of society including legal and policy reforms, public awareness of children's and young people's rights, community improvements, and services for young people. Nor has there been any real assessment of its effect on gender discrimination, or any comparative studies undertaken to measure the levels and nature of the participation of young men and young women. Little work has been carried out in collaboration with youth to develop indicators against which participatory methods and programmes can be evaluated. One obvious improvement would be to build monitoring into all youth participation programmes, and evaluation schemes that build upon these internal monitoring practices could be designed. There is a need to encourage the academic community to collaborate with Governments and youth-led NGOs in developing indicators and tools for evaluation, given the limited capacities of the latter groups in this area. Scepticism about the efficacy and viability of youth participation remains widespread. Concerns have also been raised about the costs associated with youth participation. Evaluation is important, not only to provide demonstrable evidence of its positive outcomes for those advocating greater participation, but also to learn more about both effective and ineffective practices so that programmes may be strengthened and streamlined.

Sharing experiences

Although many regional and global youth networks have been established, little sharing of practical experience between organizations working in the field of youth participation has taken place. Many of the large international NGOs such as Save the Children have developed a sophisticated range of tools and methodologies that could be applied in this context and collectively possess an invaluable body of practical experience from which those working in the youth field could benefit. A number of national NGOs have begun to elaborate participatory processes that reflect their particular cultural environment and sensitivities, as they have recognized that while the right to participate is a universal principle, its application must reflect the context in which young people are living if real change is to occur. There are now many different models of adults and young people working collaboratively, models of youth-led organizations, and examples of effective political dialogue between young people and adults. All of these experiences need to be documented and shared in order to build on the lessons learned. Many new initiatives have to reinvent the wheel because they lack access to others' experiences. Even where there is no hostility, in principle, to promoting young people's active participation, the lack of skills and confidence in developing effective models can lead to a failure to take action. There is considerable scope for national youth organizations to develop networks for exchanging and sharing good practice and effective strategies.

Involving young people directly in the running of NGOs

Although an increasing number of NGOs are developing initiatives to promote children's and young people's participation, it is relatively rare for those organizations to modify their structures to the extent that the priorities identified by young people themselves are reflected in their planning and programming. As argued earlier, even well-intentioned and well-informed adults do not necessarily have sufficient insight and awareness of children's and young people's experiences to make appropriate decisions or develop suitable strategies. Involving young people as apprentices or interns, allowing them to serve on management boards, inviting them to participate in consultative workshops, and creating advisory forums are just some of the mechanisms that might be used to democratize organizations.

Promoting participation skills as well as leadership skills

Initiatives throughout the world demonstrate clearly that young people can emerge as leaders at a young age, and it is important that they have the opportunity to do so. Children and young people need their own leaders with the skills to advocate on behalf of those they represent. Too often, however, "leadership" is the primary focus of training programmes. Leadership training is representative of an older model of democracy than, for example, the one the Convention on the Rights of the Child inspires in so many young people. There is often a strong emphasis on young people learning to speak out rather than learning to "speak in" and communicate more effectively with their peers. Youth organizations should focus on the promotion

of participatory skills for all, not just leadership skills for the few. Leaders will always emerge, but all children and young people need the chance to learn the multiple skills of listening and collaborating in groups if they are to discover that they can play very different roles in building communities and achieving change.

CONCLUSIONS

As demonstrated in this chapter, the value of youth participation is now recognized at levels ranging from the local community to the international arena. However, recognition is not the same as action, and progress in the area of practical implementation has been slow. Even in those countries that have achieved the most, participation remains piecemeal and insufficiently integrated into all areas of young people's lives. Many organizations are still unconvinced that youth can play a leading or supportive role in helping them achieve their programme goals. Initiatives may be limited to seeking the views of young people on particular issues; their involvement in decision-making is rarely sought. Young people therefore remain marginal to most democratic processes. Token participation is meaningless, as it does not empower young people to influence outcomes and achieve real change.

The frequent and widespread failure of the adult world to act in ways that promote the welfare of young people is well documented. Efforts must be made to listen to youth and engage them in the process of strengthening participatory democracy. Their involvement can lead to better decisions and outcomes. Participation promotes the well-being and development of young people, strengthens their commitment to and understanding of human rights and democracy, and provides them a form of protection; it also allows them to take part in decision-making processes.

Youth participation is an essential strategy for ensuring young people's optimal development—and for achieving wider development goals for society. The progress made to date in promoting participation should be sustained and enhanced. Youth participation must become an integral component of, local, national and international policies for youth, and should provide the framework for decisions and actions that affect the daily lives of children and young people. Only then will the traditional approaches towards youth begin to evolve and the oft-stated commitment to their participation begin to have meaning. The approach must promote respect for them as social actors, as agents in their own lives, and as citizens of their own societies. ■

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[1] See R. Hodgkin and P. Newell, *Implementation Handbook for the Convention on the Rights of the Child* (New York, UNICEF, 1998), article 4.

[2] See, for example, commissions of inquiry into violence in Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States.

[3] Committee on the Rights of the Child, "Report on the seventh session (Geneva, 26 September – 14 October 1994)", (CRC/C/34), annex IV, p. 63.

[4] C. Harper and R. Marcus, "Child poverty in sub-Saharan Africa" (London, Save the Children UK, 1999).

[5] Ghana National Commission on Children, "Ghana's children: country report" (Accra, 1997).

[6] See chapter 2 of the present publication.

[7] T. Hammarberg, "A school for children with rights" (Florence, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre/International Child Development Centre, 1998).

[8] See, for example, M. Fielding and M. Prieto, "Student voice and democratic renewal in Chile", in *Learning Democracy and Citizenship*, M. Schweisfurth, L. Davies and C. Harber, eds. (Oxford, Symposium Books, 2002); and L. Davies and G. Kirkpatrick, "The EURIDEM project: a review of pupil democracy in Europe" (London, Children's Rights Alliance for England, 2000).

[9] UNICEF, *In Children's Words* (Dhaka, 1997).

[10] R. Rajani, "Discussion paper for partners on promoting strategic adolescent participation" (New York, UNICEF, 2000).

[11] Ibid.

[12] A. Sen, *Development as Freedom* (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1999).

[13] J. Tolman and K. Pittman, with B. Cervone and others, *Youth Acts, Community Impacts: Stories of Youth Engagement with Real Impacts*, Community and Youth Development Series, vol. 7 (Takoma Park, Maryland, Forum for Youth Investment, 2001).

[14] European Commission, *Young People on the Threshold of the Year 2000: A Eurobarometer Survey* (Luxembourg, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1997).

[15] Declaration and Integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy: Declaration of the 44th Session of the International Conference on Education, Geneva, 3-8 October 1994, article 2.

[16] UNICEF, *Speaking Out! Voices of Children and Adolescents in East Asia and the Pacific: A Regional Opinion Survey* (Bangkok, 2001).

[17] UNICEF, *Young Voices: Opinion Survey of Children and Young People in Europe and Central Asia* (Geneva, 2001).

[18] Centre for Reproductive Law and Policy and Child and Law Foundation, *State of Denial: Adolescent Reproductive Rights in Zimbabwe* (New York, 2002).

[19] See, for example, MORI, "General election: first-time voters" (London, 1997); and H. Wilkinson and G. Mulgan, "Freedom's children: work, relationships and politics for 18-34 year olds in Britain today", Demos Paper No. 17 (London, Demos, 1995).

[20] From the principal recommendations of the European Youth Gathering, held in Paris in October 2000, in preparation for the development of a European youth policy.

[21] The European Children's Network (Euronet) is a coalition of networks and organizations campaigning for the interests and rights of children (all those under 18 years of age).

[22] G. Lansdown, *Challenging Discrimination against Children in the EU: A Policy Proposal by Euronet* (Brussels, 2000).

[23] See, for example, B. Butler and D. Wharton-Fields, with T. Ferber and K. Pittman, *Finding Common Agendas: How Young People Are Being Engaged in Community Change Efforts* (Takoma Park, Maryland, Forum for Youth Investment, 1999).

[24] This section draws heavily on an article by G. Lansdown and R. Hart in the *CRIN Newsletter* (September 2002).

[25] European Commission, *European Commission White Paper: A New Impetus for European Youth* (Brussels, 21 November 2001) (COM(2001)681 final).

[26] See examples cited in G. Lansdown, *Promoting Children's Democratic Participation in Decision Making* (Florence, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, 2001); and N. Reddy and K. Ratna, *A Journey in Children's Participation* (Bangalore, India, The Concerned for Working Children, 2002).

[27] Office of the Children's Ombudsman in Sweden, "Children as participants: Swedish experience of participation by children and young people in urban planning as a tool for giving effect to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child" (Stockholm, 2000).

[28] Carnegie Young People Initiative and Children in Scotland, *Taking the Initiative: Promoting Young People's Participation in Public Decision-Making in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 2000).

[29] Some studies have been undertaken to assess outcomes of youth participation; see, for example, J. Tolman and K. Pittman, with B. Cervone and others, *Youth Acts, Community Impacts: Stories of Youth Engagement with Real Impacts... .*

FIVE NEW CONCERNS SINCE THE ADOP-TION OF THE WORLD PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR YOUTH TO THE YEAR 2000 AND BEYOND

PART TWO

Chapter 11.

YOUNG PEOPLE
in a GLOBALIZING WORLD

__The ambiguous relationship__ between globalization and youth is examined in this chapter. Globalization offers clear economic opportunities and benefits, but comes with substantial social costs that often appear to affect young people disproportionately, given their tenuous transitional status within an uncertain and rapidly evolving global context. The chapter explores the economic impact of globalization on young people, with specific examples provided in country-level and more localized case studies. The phenomenon of cultural globalization and its connection with the youth culture is then examined, with particular attention given to the role of ICT and media resources and the local-global synthesis that has occurred in identity formation. The final section returns to the ambiguities and contradictions that characterize this phenomenon, providing an assessment of its different implications for various groups, its contribution to local-global tensions, and its tendency to simultaneously promote linkages and divisions, inclusion and exclusion, and connectedness and isolation. The final conclusion is that young people's experience with globalization has been negative thus far; efforts are therefore needed to ensure that they become active and productive global citizens.

INTRODUCTION

Young people are growing up in a world of globalization and inequality, taking part in a development process that is simultaneously bringing people closer together and widening the divisions between them. The assets of the 200 richest people on earth are greater than the combined incomes of more than 2 billion of the poorest, and the gap between the two groups continues to grow.[1] The World Bank reports that low-income developing countries, with a total population of approximately 3 billion, have shifted their export focus from primary commodities to manufactured goods and services;[2] between the mid-1970s and 1998, manufactured items increased from 25 to 80 per cent of the combined export total for this group. Per capita incomes in these countries rose by about 5 per cent annually in the 1990s, and the number of poor people declined by a not insignificant 125 million between 1990 and 1999.

Many commentators argue that globalization is primarily an economic process, but it is one that clearly has profound social implications. There is evidence suggesting that, at least in some cases, the higher wages and employment characteristics of globalizing countries such as China, India, Uganda and Viet Nam are closely linked to poverty reduction. Health and education provision has improved in many developing countries that have been more actively involved in the globalization process; in Brazil, Egypt and Malaysia, for example, infant mortality was reduced by an average of more than 30 per cent during the 1990s, compared with an average decline of 12 per cent for all developing countries. However, in the least-developed countries (with a combined population of 2 billion), overall economic growth has declined and poverty has been rising, which are critical considerations in the larger context of global development. Along with the loss of jobs and low incomes, such countries suffer from poor

health and education provision, both of which are crucial factors in the climb out of poverty.[5] World statistics reflect the fact that globalization is a double-edged sword; it offers substantial economic benefits, but those benefits, perhaps inevitably, are accompanied by social costs. This chapter is concerned with the extent to which young people are affected by both the positive and negative aspects of globalization.

What do the statistics really indicate about the globalization experience, and how is the process directly touching young people's lives? The relationship between youth and globalization is inherently ambiguous; in fact, the single word "globalization" and all it represents perhaps best sums up the uncertainty of what it means to be a young person at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Many sociologists specializing in youth affairs have portrayed young people as being at the forefront of social and even economic change.[4] Being at the forefront does not mean that they are in any position to control that change; nor should it be assumed that youth are necessarily controlled by it. Christine Griffin points out that youth are "treated as a key indicator of the state of the nation itself." [5] Young people might well be described as a barometer of social change, but this reveals little about the nature of their involvement in the process of society's evolution.

Globalization is a hotly debated issue within the social sciences. There is a broad consensus in the literature that some of the old certainties of the modern world have been undermined or invalidated, and that young people's life experiences are increasingly tenuous as a result.[6] This chapter will reinforce Kevin McDonald's assertion that young people's experience with globalization constitutes a delicately balanced struggle for independence and success that is as much about constraints and limitations as it is about freedom and opportunity.[7] It is important to understand that globalization has a direct and powerful influence on their lives insofar as it actively extends the kinds of social division to which young people are all too often subjected.[8]

It is generally agreed, notwithstanding the various differences in perspective, that globalization is having a tremendous impact on youth; the present chapter will seek to assess the nature of that impact.

ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF GLOBALIZATION ON YOUNG PEOPLE

In its broadest sense, globalization refers to the extension of a whole range of economic, cultural and political activities across the world landscape. As Anthony Giddens suggests, "Globalization can be defined as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa."[9] In this context, the increasing economic and cultural interdependence of societies on a world scale is of particular interest. Because it involves interaction in so many areas and at numerous levels, it is virtually impossible to conceive of globalization as a singular concept. John Allen and Doreen Massey argue that there are many "globalizations" occurring in various sectors and fields of activity, including telecommunications, finance and culture.[10] A key contributing factor in this regard has been the declining influence of the nation-state, which is in turn intimately linked to what David Harvey refers to as "time-space compression"—the way the world has in effect been de-territorialized by

the acceleration and wider dissemination of capitalist practices, simultaneously creating ever-higher levels of stress.[11]

Young people are in the process of establishing a sense of identity in what is essentially an insecure world, and this underlying instability may serve to magnify the tensions and lack of control they experience on a daily basis. As Zygmunt Bauman notes, what is interesting about globalization is that the uses of time and space are "sharply differentiated as well as differentiating".[12] The danger is that globalization may produce all sorts of (unintended) local consequences. Most worrying is the following:

> "Being local in a globalized world is a sign of social deprivation and degradation. The discomforts of localized existence are compounded by the fact that with public spaces removed beyond the reaches of localized life, localities are losing their meaning-generating and meaning-negotiating capacity and are increasingly dependent on sense-giving and interpreting actions which they do not control."[13]

In this analysis globalization inevitably leads to exclusion. Globalization is characterized by spatial segregation, in that it actively increases the disparities that already exist between global elites and the localized majority. In the past, colonial powers exported raw materials from their colonies in order to strengthen their own power base while ignoring the broader implications for the industrial base of the areas whose resources they were exploiting.[14] What developed in this context was a multitude of core-periphery relationships at the international level; of equal concern, however, was the effect of economic disparities on class divisions domestically. As Christine McMurray and Roy Smith point out, geography is less important nowadays in the formation of core-periphery relationships. Differentials in access to resources, wealth and opportunities have the potential to produce far greater consequences in the global context than was ever the case in the past.

In effect, globalization can intensify social divisions, and as young people are struggling to establish themselves in a new social context—the sometimes intimidating adult world—they may be perceived as being particularly vulnerable to the threat of segregation or exclusion. However, in any analysis of young people's relationship with globalization, two key points must be borne in mind. First, there is a tendency to assume that the effects of globalization are unstoppable, and that globalization is a process young people react to rather than actively negotiate. Stephen McBride and John Wiseman warn of the dangers associated with this position, criticizing the failure to move beyond theory to address the more practical aspects of globalization.[15] There is some concern that debates over globalization will remain at a conceptual rather than a grounded level, thereby leaving the political disparities associated with this phenomenon underexplored, as elaborated in the following:

> "Globalization involves a range of contradictory and contested processes which provide new possibilities as well as threats to communities concerned with promoting relationships of diversity, solidarity and sustainability. The central challenge is to recognize the connections between action at different levels of geographical space and political governance and to think and act at a range of levels without losing our grounding in the particularity of our own home place." [16]

Second, an analogous and equally significant point is that the experiences, meanings and concepts associated with youth are as complex and challenging as those associated with globalization. The inherent differences in young people, together with the wide range of interpretations regarding the significance of various aspects of the youth experience, make it difficult to produce an objective overall assessment of their current situation. One particular danger is that the problem-solving perspective of social science academics may actually serve to exaggerate and reinforce the marginalization and pathology of young people.[17] It is a gross oversimplification—and not entirely accurate—to suggest that youth are the passive recipients or vulnerable victims of the sorts of trends that will be examined below. Young people cannot control the speed or direction of social change, but they do have a say in the effect such change has on their lives. Facilitating their integration and involvement in the globalization process requires an understanding of their needs and priorities relative to those of adults in order to address the potential social divisions referred to above. In this context, the following may be instructive:

> *"Research on youth tells us at least as much about the social, psychological and political concerns of adult society, in all their diversity, as it does about the lives of young people themselves, in all their diversity. Indeed, the two are fundamentally intertwined, and can never be completely disentangled."*[18]

The rest of this chapter will concentrate not on disentangling this relationship but on constructing foundations upon which efforts might be undertaken to demystify the complexity of such a relationship and thereby gain a better understanding of what needs to be done to ensure that globalization represents a positive force in young people's lives.

Steven Jackson and David Andrews caution against either overstating or understating the effects of globalization.[19] Every effort will therefore be made to present an accurate and objective assessment of developments within this context. That said, it might be useful at this stage to outline the broad economic impact of globalization and, more specifically, the economic implications of globalization for young people.

As Phillip Brown and Hugh Lauder point out, the emergence of a global economy reflects the decline of mid-century economic nationalism and increased international competition, the greatest beneficiaries of which have been the multinational corporations (MNCs).[20] In the World Investment Report 1993 UNCTAD estimated that 65 million people worldwide were directly employed and 130 million indirectly employed by multinationals.[21] More recently, David Held and others estimated that 53,000 MNCs with 450,000 foreign subsidiaries were operating worldwide in 1997, selling $9.5 trillion worth of goods and services around the globe. According to some authors, transnational production now exceeds the level of global exports and has become the primary means of selling goods and services abroad;[22] they cite estimates indicating that multinational companies now account for about 20 per cent of world production and 70 per cent of world trade.

As a result of these developments, the economic boundaries between countries are weakening, a trend reflected both geographically and in terms of the legislation that underpins international trade. In this economic environment nation-states are losing their power to shape national economic competition, and international competition can create more problems than it solves—even for developed countries. As Brown points out in an assessment relating to the United Kingdom,

> "In an era of worldwide competition and low-cost global communications, no country like ours will be able to maintain its standard of living, let alone improve it, on the basis of cheap labour and low-tech products and services. There will be too many millions of workers and too many willing to do that kind of work fully as well as we or people in any other developed country could do it—and at a fraction of the cost."[23]

Case study: Republic of Korea

Relating the experiences of specific countries provides a clearer picture of the effects of globalization. Kang Seoghoon addresses the relationship between globalization and income inequality in the Republic of Korea.[24] The economy of this country experienced massive growth in the second half of the twentieth century, with GDP (in terms of local currency) increasing 9,984-fold and per capita GDP 4,253-fold. During roughly the same period, the volume of exports rose 4,354-fold (from $33 million in 1960 to $143.7 billion in 1999). The composition of the country's economic base changed dramatically over a period of several decades. For example, the share of agriculture, forestry and fisheries in GDP declined from 27.1 per cent in 1970 to 5 per cent in 1999, while the service industry share rose from 50.2 to 62.8 per cent. As the Government became increasingly committed to pursuing a global economic strategy, it moved away from a traditionally protective regime that was in danger of reducing competition and impeding technological progress.[25]

The move towards a global economy has had significant implications for employment in the Republic of Korea. Seoghoon relates that between 1980 and 1990 unemployment declined by 71 per cent among those without a high school education, 63.4 per cent among high school graduates, and 29 per cent among college graduates.[26] Broadly speaking, the inequalities associated with income distribution also decreased during this period, apparently as a result of the combined effects of rapid economic growth, low unemployment and an increased supply of highly educated labour. It is worth noting, however, that the country's globalization experience is far from typical. The Government's investment in education can be described as exceptional; the proportion of the State budget allocated to education rose from 16.2 per cent in 1965 to 23.3 per cent in 1998. Between 1980 and 2000 the number of four-year-college entrants increased by almost threefold.[27] With the tremendous improvement in its national income, the Republic of Korea has been able to offset a good portion of the added development expenditures; between 1970 and 2000 the country's deficit-to-GDP ratio rose only slightly, from 5.2 to 5.8 per cent.

As tends to occur during the process of globalization, extraordinary economic successes have been accompanied by unexpected difficulties and hidden pitfalls. In particular, the Republic of Korea has had to deal with problems deriving from the

oversupply of college graduates in the labour market. Ironically, and arguably as a direct result of government policies aimed at easing the transition to a global economy, the wages of college graduates are actually increasing at a slower rate than are those of high-school graduates.[28] Many college-educated workers have been forced to settle for employment that, in relative terms, is poorly paid, requires a low level of skill, offers little in the way of security and benefits, and provides no real opportunity for professional development.

As mentioned, the Republic of Korea's globalization experience is in many ways atypical. It could be argued that the example is actually exceptional, insofar as income inequalities in the country appear to have improved overall with the move towards globalization, which is not the case in most developing countries. What it also illustrates, however, are the pitfalls inherent in the wholehearted adoption of global economics. In addition, it highlights the fact that young people are potentially the group most vulnerable to the uncertainties associated with the global economy and with policies developed by Governments seeking to adapt to rapid economic change. An important lesson learned from this particular experience is that a well-developed educational policy may improve income distribution, but it may ultimately exacerbate the inequalities between young people.

Case study: China

China's experience, while different in many respects from that of the Republic of Korea, further illustrates the complex nature of globalization, its economic impact on young people's lives, its effect on economies more generally, and the potential pitfalls associated with the process. Although evidence suggests that the overall level of inequality has decreased, in practical terms inequality within China has actually increased inasmuch as the divisions between the provinces with urban agglomerations and those without are widening.[29] An estimated 70 million people have left their townships in search of non-agricultural jobs, reflecting the massive scale of social and geographical change occurring in China as well as the quintessentially urban character of globalization.

Large-scale movement from farms and villages to large cities has a serious economic and social impact on a country, as it involves the reconstruction of the urban situation while at the same time profoundly affecting rural development. Huang Ping has assessed the impact of rural-urban migration by young people within the context of globalization.[30] Having conducted research covering a total of 280 rural households in eight Chinese villages, Ping argues that young people are attracted to cities not only by job opportunities, but also by the distant appeal of urban lifestyles. In this sense, globalization operates on at least two levels; the process of urbanization associated with both Chinese economic reform and general world trends clearly has both economic and cultural underpinnings. Young people migrating from remote areas of China to southern coastal areas, in particular Guangdong, are drawn to city life even though most have had no exposure to the urban setting other than that provided through television.[31] The culture of consumerism is an especially powerful pull factor. It is important to remember, though—and this may apply to other countries as well— that however well-entrenched globalization may be, it must operate within the

constraints set by local institutional arrangements, as must young people themselves. Globalization by itself cannot liberate people. However involved in various aspects of globalization some countries might be, those young people willing to take advantage of the opportunities if offers are not always at liberty to do so.

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Other examples:
Sudan and the United States

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Summarizing country experiences can take the analysis of globalization's impact on the lives of young people only so far. Localized examples of globalization in action may provide a more detailed perspective. Cindi Katz assesses the impact of globalization on young people in New York and in Howa, Sudan.[32] One might assume that there would be a world of difference in the effects of globalization on these two areas, but definite similarities can be identified.

In her assessment, Katz indicates that one of the most important ways in which the economic logic of modern development and of globalization has been demonstrated is through agricultural projects. She explains how the Suki Agricultural Project transformed the subsistence economy of Howa, a Sudanese village, into one organized around exchange—a process that involved the complete restructuring of the area's economic and social systems of production. These developments had enormous implications for young people's lives, largely as a result of the practice of keeping women as secluded as possible. The move towards tenant farming imposed serious demands on the workforce and hence on young people. This sparked a series of changes leading to a situation in which many goods that had once been freely available became commodified, increasing the demand for cash and further intensifying the need for young people to work in order to earn that money. Ultimately, what on the surface appeared to be a positive "development" project actually created a situation in which young people's free time and their opportunity to attend school were diminished. Moreover, the fact that the new system incorporated a fixed number of tenancies meant that the same young people were unlikely to have ready access to productive land when they came of age. In short, although this project had clear economic benefits, children and young people were quite simply not acquiring the skills they would need in the long-term.[33] In other words, medium-term economic benefits came with long-term economic and cultural costs.

In analyzing the impact of globalization on young people in New York, Katz points out that the decline in manufacturing industries and in stable employment more generally has drastically reduced the availability of secure, meaningful work. Meanwhile, the emergence of a high-tech service economy has created a labour market of extremes in terms of pay, skills and stability. As a result of these developments, unemployment among 16- to 19-year-olds rose from 18 to 36 per cent between 1988 and 1993.[34]

As the examples presented thus far show, the economic benefits of globalization do not necessarily trickle down to all members of society. However, Katz warns against "dismalizing" young people. Globalization is not all-powerful, and to a certain extent it is possible to undertake measures to limit its more damaging effects at the local level. For instance, on a return trip to Howa two years after the initial

assessment, Katz found the village installing standpipes. This would clearly offer enormously positive labour-saving benefits and would also free up time for young people, many of whom could then take advantage of the village's next plan—the construction of a girls' school. According to Katz, this experience demonstrates how the politics of survival can emerge when necessitated by broad socio-economic change. Similarly, in New York, the local community worked together over a period of five years to ensure that two neighbourhood schoolyards were transformed into useable public spaces, thereby providing young people with a secure place to "hang out". Katz argues that events in Sudan and the United States are connected in a sense, in that they represent local efforts to cope with the profound changes brought about by globalization, in particular those relating to the availability and organization of work.

GLOBALIZATION AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S CULTURE

The attitudes of young people towards global economic change are worth considering. Vladimir Dubsky, citing the results of surveys conducted in the early to mid-1990s, notes that while 90 per cent of young Czechs supported the transition to a market economy, only 22 per cent advocated rapid change, compared with 71.8 per cent who stressed the need for prudence in order to avoid social unrest.[35] Young people, stereotypically considered impatient or impulsive, are not necessarily in favour of fast-paced global change; they recognize as readily as their elders that globalization, at its most fundamental level, should be more about cementing long-standing geographical and social divisions than about providing them with new opportunities.

The experience of global economic change in the former communist countries is further evidence of the unpredictability of globalization and its apparent tendency to provoke disorder not only within national economies, but also within young people's lives. As Ken Roberts states, "Young people's transitions into the labour market have been extended in the West and East, but in the East, for most young people, no destinations towards which they might head are yet visible because the outcomes of their societies' transformations are still unclear."[36]

As mentioned, young people's experience with globalization appears to be fraught with uncertainty. However, the degree of that uncertainty varies according to cultural and social contexts. Much depends upon the extent to which individuals have the cultural and financial resources to offset the risks associated with strengthening patterns of inequality.[37]

Bearing in mind geographical and cultural variations, one might ask what active measures, if any, should be taken to offset the uncertainty and risk engendered in globalization. In relating the Australian experience, Peter Kelly asserts that the emergence of a vocational education and training (VET) agenda in post-compulsory secondary schools represents an attempt to regulate youth transitions.[38] This author underlines the declining influence of class, gender and family coordinates in young people's lives and the fact that youth are becoming more personally responsible for who they are and where they are going. The VET approach reflects an acknowledgment of this trend and seeks to manage youth transitions through the construction of networks or "pathways", providing young people with information about labour markets,

arranging work placements and facilitating training in ways that are flexible enough to account for the uncertainties in young people's lives. VET programmes are particularly aimed at addressing the more problematic experiences of disadvantaged or socially excluded young people who inhabit what Kelly calls "wild zones", while also ensuring that they are "job ready".

An important point Kelly makes is that it is not enough to understand the precarious situation of "global youth". Experts construct conceptions of youth on the basis of multiple criteria, and it may be the case that such conceptions are far too rigid. A more realistic balance might be achieved with a better understanding of the cultural contexts that underpin young people's experience of globalization.

In presenting the contrast between the human connectedness of those engaged in traditional cooking practices in the Yucatán countryside and the personal isolation (but virtual connectedness) of young people lined up around the walls of a nearby shack to play computer games, Doreen Massey highlights the paradoxes inherent in the global youth culture.[39] She defines the local youth culture of the Yucatec Maya as a product of interaction—a culture that is not entirely closed, localized or global. Global culture, from this perspective, derives from a combination of self-focused efforts to carve up and claim some of it for one's own benefit and more interactive efforts that contribute to the immense interconnectedness of global space.[40]

Developments in education and employment are occurring in an environment characterized by broader cultural changes. Many developing countries steeped in tradition are having to reassess their relationships with the outside world, as "outside" is not as clearly defined as it once was. A clear trend towards the global circulation of cultural goods has been developing for decades, facilitated in great measure by the increased access to audio-visual communications media. Hugh Mackay notes that the number of television receivers per thousand inhabitants has increased everywhere over the past several decades; between 1975 and 1996, the number of sets jumped from 9,000 to 90,000 in Burkina Faso, from 1.2 million to 394 million in China, and from 121 million to 217 million in the United States.[41]

Globalization is as much about culture—and how economic and cultural change is culturally negotiated—as it is about economics. The two are inextricably linked, especially insofar as patterns of ownership of domestic communication devices exemplify the nature of global inequality and the intensification of what Mackay describes as the growing gulf between the "information rich" and the "information poor".

In this context, Jan Aart Scholte argues that much of global culture is youth culture,[42] as global consumerism has linked young people around the world to the extent that it has guided the construction of a dominant value system. Some argue that global audio-visual media have made many young people more familiar with Hollywood constructions of the United States than with certain aspects of their own countries. This point is developed in the European context by Dannie Kjeldgaard, who looks at how young people in Denmark and Greenland use global and local "consumptionscapes" in the continuous, day-to-day process of identity formation.[43] Kjeldgaard discounts the idea that young people are engaged with global culture in a uniform manner. In the developed world at least, youth are obliged to partake of the

consumer culture, but they also interact with and contribute to that culture, producing their own experiences and meanings based on their unique local circumstances. In presenting her analysis Kjeldgaard mentions the contribution of Karen Klitgaard, who found that for young people in Denmark the American television series *Beverly Hills 90210* represented a means of providing a social focus but also supplied a canvas upon which they could establish their own individual "style landscape".[44] In other words, young people use global culture and consumption as a means of narrating their own life stories. Levels of engagement may vary, of course; for those young people living on the periphery, opportunities to become actively involved in the global culture are limited, and their participation remains essentially "virtual" and distant. Kjeldgaard argues—notwithstanding mitigating factors such as the personalizing influence of local cultural inputs and variations in levels of engagement—that the power and pervasiveness of global culture is such that young people in Greenland are, in a sense, a minority in their own homeland.

In many respects, as Kjeldgaard's analysis illustrates, global influences outweigh traditional local influences and can even be said to constitute a burden. Western agencies produce and transmit 90 per cent of the world's news,[45] and it is estimated that products of the American mass media account for 75 per cent of broadcast and cable television revenues worldwide and that American books make up 35 per cent of the world market.[46] Serge Latouche argues that the global media propagate a very American-centric vision of the world that fails to acknowledge the existence and importance of linguistic and cultural diversity and of the multitude of perspectives that exist worldwide.[47]

To further illustrate the cultural dominance of the West, which appears to be the source of most of the images seen by the world's young people, Latouche describes a situation in which France provided Africa with 5,200 hours of free television programming per year as part of a support package in the early 1990s. Citing this as an example of the economic impact of cultural globalization, Latouche argues that this effectively undermined the African broadcasting industry. The power dimensions of cultural globalization are undeniable. John Street suggests that the rhetoric of global culture has been detached from the material and institutional conditions underlying the emergence of globalization.[48] In the final analysis, globalization does not represent the intermingling of a plurality of cultures or a harmonious synthesis of a single global culture, but rather a struggle for power. In this respect, globalization is clearly a political as well as a cultural phenomenon, and part of the political impact of globalization relates to the issue of homogenization.

Analysis of cultural globalization: a synthesis of local and global influences

The paradoxical nature of cultural globalization is fascinating in that it both universalizes and individualizes culture.[49] The degree to which globalization actively promotes the consumption of diverse cultures continues to intrigue sociologists. Some theorists argue that globalization actually enhances differences between cultures. James Lull examines the manner in which global commodities and resources are "reused" by local consumers.[50] Media products, for example, are reappropriated

as young people interpret and internalize the messages in a way that gives them meaning in the local context of their own lives.[51]

One example of the personal application of global concepts is provided by Jonathan Friedman, who has examined the specific ways in which young men in the Congo who belong to a low-status group known as the sape create high-status identities through the consumption of global goods.[52] They ostentatiously wear goods with designer names and proudly display cans of internationally known soft drinks in their cars. This process is about asserting a sense of power and undermining dominant power structures.[53]

The lesson here is that it is inappropriate to make assumptions about the impact of globalization when local identity is actually "constituted through face-to-face relationships that occur in social contexts where there is little territorial movement."[54] An important point made by Rosamund Billington and others is that global consumers, particularly those in the developing world, are not simply "global villagers". Local meanings are constructed according to environmental and personal circumstances—and within the framework of wider political, economic and social disparities—that inevitably play a role in determining the context within which those meanings can operate. It may therefore be argued that the impact of globalization cannot be accurately assessed unless it is first understood how globalization is experienced at a local level.

Global and local "forces are constantly felt in the lives of those trying to get from one day to the next".[55] More to the point (in the context of the present chapter), global and local forces are playing a combined and increasingly fundamental role in determining how young people relate to their everyday lives. It is very important to maintain a balanced impression of how youth interact with global culture. Marwan Kraidy explores ways in which cultural identities are being reconstructed by a group of Lebanese youth seeking to adapt to new realities evolving from the global-local interchange.[56] The author contends that young Maronites in Lebanon are establishing their identities at the intersection of two competing forces constructed by the mass media, namely, modernity and tradition. While these spheres are generally considered contradictory, the young people concerned operate in both; however, they do not feel they belong exclusively to either. They occupy a "third space" within which they simultaneously accept and reject Arab and Western culture; this in itself provides a simulated culture that young people use creatively insofar as it allows them to create meaning in a de-territorialized world. Perhaps the best way of conceptualizing the complex ways in which young people engage with globalization is through the notion of hybridity: "Hybridity is … construed not as an in-between zone where global/local power relations are neutralized in the fuzziness of the mélange but as a zone of symbolic ferment where power relations are surreptitiously re-inscribed."[57]

In short, global culture provides a resource young people can use in navigating their identities through the ups and downs of everyday life. Andy Bennett uses hip hop as an example of a "global" practice that reflects how the youth culture can

be simultaneously homogenized and heterogenized.[58] More specifically, localized expressions of hip-hop music may not involve any major stylistic transformations, but tend to be characterized instead by subtle variations based on local affiliations with particular kinds of musical consumption.

Moving away from the more "individualizing" aspects, it could equally be argued that globalization universalizes culture because it is in the interests of commodification to do so. Globalization is underpinned by a desire to create uniform global markets that consumers can be persuaded to respond to individually. "Consumerism as a way of life" promises so much.[59] Whether a young person is living in the Hollywood Hills or in rural Lebanon, the global consumer culture appears to offer something special—and above all, the chance to feel a sense of belonging. Non-consumption, meanwhile, is experienced as a lack of control, a form of exclusion that perpetuates poverty and withdrawal. Globalization raises consumer expectations that often cannot be fulfilled, and the end result is alienation, frustration, relative deprivation and, potentially, crime and social strife.[60]

The problem, especially in developing countries, is that the images of consumerism are everywhere, but many have to be satisfied with the promise of what could be, as the advertised items and lifestyles are not always accessible, particularly to the poorer members of society.[61] The global culture has become a fundamental building block in many young people's lives. However, their relationship with it is very fragile because youth, more than any other group, are exposed to and have come to rely on the global consumer culture but probably have the fewest resources and the most to lose should global culture not provide the satisfaction they demand of it.

On a cultural level the globalization process appears to reinforce existing divides (in contexts such as education, for example). Globalization constructs a more clearly wealth-differentiated world and, within that world, increasingly wealth-differentiated societies. In the developing countries such societies are founded on principles unfamiliar to the societies of old. In some of the booming economies of South-East Asia, for instance, young people have become preoccupied with personal advancement, since the onus is now on them to construct their own life courses and their own sense of identity, rather than assuming this is automatically going to be supplied for them by the family, the community or the State.[62]

The availability of resources is not as uniform as the commodity culture might have one believe. Advertising makes it seem that anything is possible in a global consumer culture. It is worth noting that Proctor and Gamble's corporate advertising expenditure is $5,754.6 million, or 10 times the entire education budget of Viet Nam ($579 million), whose spending in this sector is actually relatively high in comparison with many other developing countries.[63] This is a world in which multinational corporations and advertising agencies are competing with family and school to become the most influential institutions in young people's lives. The trouble, referred to repeatedly in this chapter, is that efforts to ensure the ideological dominance of consumerism also serve to reinforce social divisions.

There is considerable truth in the suggestion that mass media and new technologies have played a key role in constructing what Richard Tinning and Lindsay Fitzclarence describe as a postmodern youth culture.[64] The impact of the global media

on young people is perhaps a metaphor for the broader impact of globalization, insofar as apparently liberating technologies such as mobile phones and Internet computer games actually alienate young people by creating a world of individualistic hyperstimulation in which more mundane activities such as school simply cannot compete.[65] In this regard the effect of globalization on young people's lives is all about maintaining a balance.

The global media make it easier, in one sense, for young people to be the authors of their own biographies, as they can construct their identities, define their roles and model their attitudes and behaviour according to the menus provided for them by global capitalism. Global capitalism, in turn, targets young people as fledgling consumers with the production of the ephemeral. Young people want to be seduced, and global capitalism makes it easy for them. As consumers of the global culture young people are, by default, consumers of cultures. Their lifestyles provide an arena within which those cultures can be actively negotiated in a process of mutual and global affirmation.[66] What policy makers must concern themselves with, though, is that however comfortable young people may be with this situation, the dominant values to which young people ultimately acquiesce are the very values that promote global division and ensure that the majority of youth will remain on the poor side of the divide.

Young people's experience with regard to globalization is very much class-based. In the case of Kathmandu, for example, the opportunities provided by the global culture have allowed the new middle classes to build a position of localized class dominance, and this has actively worked against the interests of the working classes, who are being rendered increasingly powerless in both an economic and a cultural sense.[67] This point can be equally well made in the context of global music, as shown in the following example:

> "Dance or club cultures are taking root from Sao Paolo to Tel Aviv across a wide political and cultural spectrum. Yet the spread has done little to shift uneven power distribution; Western global cities continue to dominate along with the five major record companies which control distribution and abide by the stubborn distinctions of gender and class. We cannot help but ask, 'Is everybody equally welcome at this global party?'"[68]

CONCLUSIONS

It is perhaps impossible to make any valid generalizations about young people's experiences with globalization. The cultural impact of global economics will be very different in Western Europe, Eastern Europe and Africa, and indeed within individual countries. As Goran Therborn states, "Globalization takes place in different spatial-historical contexts, providing it with very different meaning and implications in different parts of the world."[69] The impact of globalization is still evolving and uncertain, as the transformations that many countries are undergoing remain incomplete. The only certainty is that globalization is characterized by increasing market power, and there is always the danger that such power will be abused. Overly hasty privatization, unaccountable

corporations and companies, a weakened public sector, and an imbalance between individual private interests and collective public interests are all symptoms of globalization that may have a direct or indirect impact on young people's lives.[70]

In this context, it is very important to recognize what Doreen Massey has described as the "power geometry" associated with globalization. What benefits one country may adversely affect another, and what addresses the needs of one social group may create problems for a different sector of the population.[71] The argument presented in this chapter is that although young people are not powerless, their economic position is such that they are more vulnerable than any other social group to the uncertainties and risks associated with economic and cultural globalization. In describing youth in Europe, K. Popple and R. Kirby point out that young people's globalization experience is paradoxical.[72] On the one hand, there is a group of young, educated, multilingual Europeans who are able to work and study in different countries and thus experience a diversity of cultures. On the other hand, the vast majority of young people simply do not have such opportunities, perhaps because they are not suitably skilled or lack the necessary qualifications or financial resources. Meanwhile, as the market model perpetuates a situation of global economic uncertainty, the pressures and disadvantages that many young people feel are intensified.

Young people are not fully integrated members of the global culture; in a multitude of ways, both economically and socially, they are excluded from it. At the same time, however, a good number of young people, especially those in the developed world, are absolutely dependent upon it. It is this that makes young people's relationship with globalization so fragile. Precisely because of the nature of the fragilities and delicate balances associated with globalization, it is absolutely imperative that it be perceived as both a structural and an experiential process. Judged on those terms, the process of understanding and addressing the impact of globalization is far from straightforward. In one sense, young people's experience with globalization is rhetorical; it is tempting to assume that youth are at the forefront of the sort of technological and cultural changes that might be associated with globalization, but if this chapter indicates one thing, it would be that this is not necessarily the case.

Many young people have adopted a world view in which the whole globe represents the key arena for social action.[73] Trans-world contacts have helped to create lasting bonds of global youth solidarity, a prime example being global protests (especially by anti-capitalist groups).[74] Young people are actively using the global media to express themselves,[75] and probably constitute the group that has contributed most to making globalization the political issue it is today. However, as Ien Ang argues, being active is not necessarily the same as being powerful, and this is particularly true in the context of globalization.[76] The rhetoric that might be associated with young people's citizenship in a global community generally does not match the reality. As noted in the context of examining the cultural manifestations of globalization in young people's lives, and as suggested in the work of David Harvey, global forces permeate young people's lives—or at least those living in the developed world.[77] Young people are in one sense citizens of a global culture but at the same time struggle for a sense of acceptance in the societies in which they live. For youth, this is the ultimate paradox of globalization.

According to J. Harvey, young people in both developed and developing countries are marginalized in terms of their lack of economic power, their judicial status, and their day-to-day experience of economic and social inequality.[78] Harvey indicates that discourses surrounding young people need to move away from the concentration on socialization and development and focus instead on young people as "social actors", a blueprint for which is already provided in the form of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. In short, policy makers and youth practitioners simply cannot perceive of young people as being moulded for the future. They are full-fledged members of society, here and now, and should be treated as such.[79] As Nikolai Lesko argues, the notion of citizenship is constantly being revised in the current era of globalization.[80] As the global economy expands and discards unproductive processes and people, young people are also being redefined. For Lesko, the outlook is bleak. The increasing emphasis on lifelong learning, in which everyone is in the process of "becoming", is actually reducing the amount of attention given to young people's needs. In many respects the power of globalization is such that young people's global citizenship is unavoidably passive in nature.

To paraphrase Claire Wallace, the global promise of citizenship is always undermined by inequality.[81] Development activities are often imposed upon young people, who are virtually powerless to influence the process in any meaningful way. Intervention is needed to strengthen their participation and input in the processes determining their future. As stated in a report by the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the global situation of youth, "Empowerment … involves young people as active agents for change and development, instead of … passive targets of externally initiated programmes."[82]

Globalization is ultimately as complex as young people's lives are multidimensional. The combination of the two inevitably creates an explosive and heady mix. Young people's transitions are to varying degrees becoming increasingly open-ended, but that open-endedness is introducing an enormous assortment of complications that are making young people's lives more difficult than ever. As World Bank President James D. Wolfensohn states, "We are convinced that globalization can and does contribute to development, but we cannot ignore those who are left out. Nor can we fail to recognize how much better development progress could be."[83] Young people's current experience of globalization is largely and inevitably negative. Globalization does offer opportunities, but one young person's opportunity will inevitably be another's loss. The key question is whether this represents a price worth paying. In the years to come the relative achievements of globalization will be judged, in part, by how far young people have been successfully assimilated into the global processes of social, economic and cultural change. ■

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Chapter 12.

YOUTH & INFORMATION and COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (ICT)

The definitions and ideas applied to information
and communication technologies and the modern media culture are
examined in the beginning of this chapter. The characterizations
of media culture are then explored from the perspective of young
people, and the links between youth and ICT are investigated. The
dominant cultural logic with regard to ICT is outlined, and different
forms of the digital divide are presented. Some global aspects of ICT
use among youth are reviewed, using both primary and secondary
sources. New forms of youth socialization brought about by the
emergence of ICT are examined, and the chapter concludes with a
set of recommendations.

INTRODUCTION

Young people today live in a world characterized by dramatic cultural, economic, social and educational differences; individual circumstances depend largely on where a person is born and raised. More than 800 million adults (two-thirds of them women) still lack basic literacy skills; at the other end of the spectrum, the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) is skyrocketing. Notwithstanding the immense diversity in living environments, an unprecedented and unifying global media culture has developed that challenges and often surpasses such traditional forms of socialization as family and school.

This complex cultural situation—in which young people are struggling to find direction in their lives or simply to survive, to improve their living conditions, and to develop their identities—has been given various names. Some call it the information or informational age, while others prefer the term technoculture[1] or technocapitalism, global media culture, or simply globalization, referring to the dialectic process in which the global and the local exist as "combined and mutually implicating principles".[2] Labels such as post-industrial, virtual and cyber society are also in use.[3] The idea behind all these terms is that across the globe, ICT are playing a central role in young people's lives and in society at large.

Two major assumptions underlie the role of ICT: the first is that the proliferation of these technologies is causing rapid transformations in all areas of life; the second is that ICT function to unify and standardize culture. It is on the basis of these assumptions that the term "media culture", incorporating the phenomena of informationalism[4] and globalization, is used in the present chapter.

Much has been written on the subject of media culture. Manuel Castells lists some of the demands that have characterized the transformation from the industrial to the informational era:

> "...the needs of the economy for management flexibility and for the globalization of capital, production, and trade; the demands of society in which the values of individual freedom and open communication became paramount; and the extraordinary advances in computing and telecommunications made possible by the microelectronics revolution."[5]

The processes behind the above-mentioned terms deserve a more thorough analysis as they relate to young people's living environment. One important consideration is that the concepts embodied in these terms, and the media culture as a whole, are greatly affected by Western values. In discussions about bridging the digital divide, it is therefore important to recall that ICT carry a "cultural package" of Western values that are not directly transferable to other cultures. The media culture of young people comprises traditional modes such as print media, television and telephone, as well as newer ICT such as computers, Internet and cellular phones. All of these devices are predominantly associated with Western popular cultural content; the advertising that goes with them strongly influences young people in the formation of their identities.

The debate about what ICT represent for young people typically moves between two polarities: utopia and dystopia. Technology enthusiasts who believe that ICT will revolutionize every aspect of the world are challenged by those who perceive ICT as a source of cultural invasion. Somewhere in between are those who collect statistics about the global diffusion of ICT, with little emphasis on their interpretation.

THE MEDIA CULTURE OF YOUNG PEOPLE

The content of the current media culture is often blind to a young person's cultural, economic and educational background. The concept of a media culture has evolved owing to the increased volume, variety and importance of mediated signs and messages and the interplay of interlaced meanings. In the world of young people, the media are saturated by popular culture and penetrate politics, the economy, leisure time and education. At present, the global media culture is a pedagogic force that has the potential to exceed the achievements of institutionalized forms of education. As Henry Giroux puts it:

> *"With the rise of new media technologies and the global reach of the highly concentrated culture industries, the scope and impact of the educational force of culture in shaping and refiguring all aspects of daily life appear unprecedented. Yet the current debates have generally ignored the powerful pedagogical influence of popular culture, along with the implications it has for shaping curricula, questioning notions of high-status knowledge, and redefining the relationship between the culture of schooling and the cultures of everyday life."*[6]

The concept of media culture encompasses not simply symbolic combinations of immaterial signs or capricious currents of old and new meanings, but an entire way of life[7] in which images, signs, texts and other audio-visual representations are connected with the real fabric of material realities, symbols and artificialities.[8]

Media culture is pervasive; its messages are an important part of the everyday lives of young people, and their daily activities are structured around media use. The stories and images in the media become important tools for identity construction. A pop star provides a model for clothing and other style choices, and language used by a cartoon character becomes a key factor in the street credibility of young people. Under the present circumstances, there are few places left in the world where one might escape the messages and meanings embedded in the televised media culture.

In a mediated culture, it can be difficult for young people to discern whose representations are closest to the truth, which representations to believe, and which images matter. This is partly because the emergence of digitalized communication and the commoditization of culture have significantly altered the conditions under which life and culture are experienced. Many are still attached to the romantic image of organic communities in which people converse with one another face-to-face and live in a close-knit local environment. Digital communication is gradually undermining this traditional approach:

> "Most of the ways in which we make meanings, most of our communications to other people, are not directly human and expressive, but interactions in one way or another worked through commodities and commodity relations: TV, radio, film, magazines, music, commercial dance, style, fashion, commercial leisure venues. These are major realignments."[9]

In the world of young people, the media culture may be characterized primarily in terms of three distinct considerations. First, it is produced and reproduced by diverse ICT sources. It is therefore imperative to replace the teaching of knowledge and skills central to agrarian and industrial societies with education in digital literacy. A similar point is made by Douglas Kellner, who contends that in a media culture it is important to learn multiple ways of interacting with social reality.[10] Children and young people must be provided with opportunities to acquire skills in multiple literacies to enable them to develop their identities, social relationships and communities, whether material, virtual, or a combination of the two.

Second, the media culture of youth extends beyond signs and symbols, manifesting itself in young people's physical appearance and movements. The media culture influence is visible in how youth present themselves to the world through means made available by prevailing fashions; the body is a sign that can be used effectively to produce a cultural identity. Furthermore, various kinds of media-transmitted skills and knowledge are stored and translated into movements of the body. This is evident in a number of youth subcultures involving certain popular sports, games and music/dances such as street basketball, skateboarding and hip hop.

The body is highly susceptible to different contextual forms of control. While they are in school, pupils' movements are regulated by certain control mechanisms and cognitive knowledge. In the streets, youth clubs and private spaces, however, their bodies function according to a different logic. Informal knowledge absorbed through the media culture requires some conscious memorizing but also involves physical learning, quite often commercialized.[11]

Third, in the experience of young people, media culture represents a source of pleasure and relative autonomy compared with home or school. As P. Willis states:

> "Informal cultural practices are undertaken because of the pleasures and satisfactions they bring, including a fuller and more rounded sense of the self, of 'really being yourself' within your own knowable cultural world. This entails finding better fits than the institutionally or ideologically offered ones, between the collective and cultural senses

of the body—the way it walks, talks, moves, dances, expresses, displays—and its actual conditions of existence; finding a way of 'being in the world' with style at school, at work, in the street."[12]

Experts on young people have long appreciated the complexity of the concept of youth, especially when examined from a global perspective. The best summation is perhaps that the concept of youth today is historically and contextually conditioned; in other words, it is relative as well as socially and culturally constructed.[13] In the present media culture, the age at which childhood is perceived to end is declining, and the period of youth seems to be extending upward.

It is useful, however, to recall that the majority of young people in the world do not live according to the Western conceptions of youth. For them, childhood and adolescence in the Western sense exist only indirectly through media presentations. The same media culture influences seem to be in effect outside the Western world, but their consequences are likely to be somewhat different owing mainly to variations in definitions of childhood and youth and to the different authority relationships prevailing in individual cultures.

THE ICT DEBATE AND THE YOUTH QUESTION
The pessimistic view

Children and young people are often seen as innocent victims of the pervasive and powerful media. In the extreme view, the breakdown of the nuclear family, teenage pregnancy, venereal disease, paedophilia, child trafficking and child prostitution spreading through the Internet, drug use, juvenile crime, the degeneration of manners, suicide and religious cults are all seen as problems exacerbated or even inflicted upon society by the media. Parents seem to have become disconnected from their children's education. Schools have been transformed into teaching factories incapable of providing young people with the coping skills they need to survive and thrive in the media culture.[14] The media, especially television, present material that disturbs children and makes them passive, because they have not yet reached a stage of development that allows them to appropriately process the information they are receiving. From this perspective, children and young people are seen as tractable recipients of messages, as spellbound viewers susceptible to a range of addictions.

An even clearer manifestation of such pessimism is "media panic", which describes the concern, worry or fear that arises from the use of new devices or the adoption of new cultural forms by children and teenagers during a period in which they are challenging earlier cultural practices and conceptions. It is useful to remember that, years ago, the spread of the cinema to a wider audience unleashed a panic and inspired a wave of research intended to provide empirical proof of the destructive effects of motion picture viewing. Another panic emerged in the early 1950s in the United States (and in the following decade elsewhere) when the television became a standard feature in many homes. The third media panic—focused on the detrimental nature of ICT—is occurring now. A sad fact about media panics is that they rarely evoke questions about what might be called problems of the factual world. It may be,

however, that these panics are becoming less fierce in nature as social reality becomes increasingly pluralistic with regard to ethnic foundations, gender codes and cultural meanings.[15] The dystopic view inspires remedial action, including the creation of rules for dealing with the problems of networked societies and the globalizing world, but it also functions to construct a demonized image of youth.

The optimistic view

At the other end of the spectrum, children and young people are seen as those who stand to benefit most from the ICT revolution, as characterized by David Buckingham:

> "It is argued that computers bring about new forms of learning which transcend the limitations of older methods, particularly 'linear' methods such as print and television. And it is children who are seen to be most responsive to these new approaches: the computer somehow releases their natural creativity and desire to learn, which are apparently blocked and frustrated by old-fashioned methods."[16]

In the global village, children and youth—with their own practices and consumer choices—are in the vanguard of developments in ICT use, which has positive implications for the future of society. A number of thinkers from diverse ideological camps suggest that children and young people can act as "oppositional intellectuals" and "semiotic guerrillas" of the Internet age.[17] Some seek the provision of network connections to developing countries and advocate a cultural leap directly from agrarian to digital and post-industrial societies. On the other side are a number of critical pedagogues who have always had faith in the wisdom of youth and are now channelling their hopes towards the development of ICT use for the purpose of resistance. For this latter group, ICT represent powerful tools for self-expression, avant-garde digital situationism, media criticism and influence through media, interaction and research. Some of the authors favouring resistance adopt a systematically critical attitude towards the capitalist and commercial foundations of the media culture.[18]

A word of caution

Critics maintain that not all media teachings are worth learning. The messages received through both the traditional and newer media should be critically negotiated at the national and local levels and between family members, and the meanings carried by them—whether visible or invisible, explicit or implicit—should be examined. It is often argued that children and youth are more familiar than their parents and teachers with the practices of the media culture and are contributing to the creation of a new media culture independent of formal pedagogy or curricula. Without underestimating their capabilities, however, it is reasonable to assert that children and young people are unable to manage their everyday lives totally on their own. They need to be loved, supported and understood by adults who will also provide them with limits and advice. It does not seem likely that a global predatory media culture can cater to those needs.

THE DIGITAL DIVIDE
Three levels of disparity

The concept of the digital divide can be applied in at least in three different ways.[19] First is the notion of the global digital divide, which relates to the disparities in ICT use between people living in different parts of the world. One dividing line in this context can be drawn between the developed and developing countries. In terms of economic activity, ICT are expected to significantly increase accessibility to potential customers in terms of both marketing and direct sales. The Internet appears to be benefiting the development of public services, particularly in areas and sectors such as administration, health care and education. The problems contributing to the digital divide are currently being addressed through hundreds of projects implemented by a multitude of governmental and non-governmental organizations around the world.

The second interpretation relates to unequal opportunities for ICT use within countries. Important factors in this respect include an individual's socio-economic position, level of education and place of residence. The lower the income and educational levels are and the further away from the capital and centre of activity a person is, the more likely he or she is to be excluded from information flows and networks.

The third type of divide is one pertaining to participation in a democracy and the possibilities that may develop after the digital revolution. The digital divide is particularly significant in relation to the civic engagement of young people. Opportunities for children and youth to express their ideas and opinions about different issues in society have traditionally been very limited. Typically, the only means they have had available to influence the world around them have been peer relationships, rebellion against the boredom of school, or resistance expressed at home.[20] The digital revolution is opening doors to increased communication and involvement, but other doors may be closing. Some researchers claim that cell-phone-based interaction between adolescents and their parents tends to diminish productive conflicts between them, robbing adolescents of the opportunity to develop the better defined sense of self that generally evolves through such interaction.

Engagement, participation and learning within the ICT framework

The increasingly mediated and digitalized essence of culture has opened up the world both geographically and socially. Media culture and ICT do not automatically translate into the globalization of the economy alone; they also provide new opportunities for engagement and resistance. At the moment, it is impossible to know for certain what ICT-based democracy and activism will mean in practice, though there have been some initial forays into this area; the global network and e-mail have already been successfully utilized for globalized civic activism. In this sense, the Internet is a competitive playing field used by both the right and the left, and by dominant media corporations from above and radical media and other activist groups from below. In the likely event that new technologies constitute the dominant forces of tomorrow, "it is up to critical theorists and activists to illuminate their nature and effects, to demonstrate the threats to democracy and freedom, and to seize opportunities for progressive education and democratization".[21]

Discourse on the digital divide has produced what is known as the participation hypothesis, according to which ICT influence the involvement of young people.[22] First, the new opportunities for participation created by ICT may strengthen the civic engagement of those youth who are already active in this respect. Second, ICT may serve to mobilize young people not previously interested in any form of political or social engagement. Similarly, young people who do not read newspapers or follow the news on television may be attracted by the opportunity to participate in societal debate through the Internet. It may be too early to tell whether the participation hypothesis is accurate on either of these counts.

Regrettably, in the dialogue on digital culture and bridging the digital divide, the perspectives and opinions of children and young people are often disregarded, and efforts are rarely made to observe these phenomena from within the context of their living environment.

In his recent book on the Internet, Manuel Castells unleashes a powerful attack on contemporary educational systems that sustain the digital divide through their failure to address the knowledge gap.[23] Castells' critique derives from the now common belief that education and lifelong learning constitute central resources that contribute to an individual's professional qualifications and enhance his or her personal development. In his opinion, most schools in developing countries and many in the developed countries function primarily as storehouses for children and youth. In the global assessment, schools display tremendous variation with regard to teachers' qualifications and other resources. Schools have failed to adopt the type of pedagogical thinking required in the Internet era, based on the old idea of learning to learn: "What is really required is the skill to decide what to look for, how to retrieve it, how to process it, and how to use it for the specific task that prompted the search for information." Owing to the miserable state of schools, the task of preparing young people for the new era is left to the home, a fact that is likely to add further to the disparities in the knowledge, skills and attitudes of children and young people.

Bridging the digital divide

The introduction of ICT is linked to a number of practical problems that are especially relevant in the poorest areas of the world. One primary concern is the lack of money and ICT resources. Most agree that a significant increase in development aid is needed. A second concern is that the newest ICT applications are far too expensive from the perspective of developing countries. One solution that has been suggested is to use freeware and to develop devices that are sufficient for the needs of users but do not represent the newest or fastest technologies.

A third problem relates to the language used in ICT. English is currently the global lingua franca. According to estimates, there are some 3,000 to 4,000 languages in the world, but 80 per cent of all web sites provide content in English alone. The language barrier can be overcome with the help of skilled individuals who, like the scribes of old, assist others in the community by translating texts from the local language into English and vice versa.[24] Young people learn languages more easily than adults do and can in many situations function as translators or interpreters.

Statistics on the digital divide show an increasingly polarized world. As the Internet is the most central technology in the global media culture, examining its use provides some understanding of the proportions of the overall ICT differences and an opportunity to assess the significance of ICT for young people on a global scale.

Over the past five years, the world has witnessed a veritable Internet explosion. In early 1997, the number of Internet users was estimated at less than 60 million globally; by 2002 the world total had increased almost tenfold, to some 580 million. A review of the figures for different regions offers a simplified yet revealing picture of the situation: the distribution of Internet users is extremely uneven. Statistics indicate that slightly less than 200 million of them live in the Unites States or Canada, a similar number live in Europe (185 million), and the total for East Asia and the Pacific region is only slightly smaller (170 million). In Latin America, the number of Internet users is estimated at 33 million. In Africa, there are some 6 million users, half of whom reside in South Africa, and the figure for Western Asia is close to 5 million.

Pekka Tarjanne has examined the digital divide and the position of young people in the changing world.[25] According to Tarjanne, ICT have created a new realm of opportunity, but only for the lucky few. This new world has opened up "to the individuals fortunate enough to be able to access these technologies."[26] The Internet currently reaches less than 10 per cent of the world's population; reducing the digital divide is dependent on the participation and support of all players in different sectors of society. Tarjanne states that "the impact of the information revolution touches all of society, and ... (the revolution) is being led by the young adults of the world, on both sides of the digital divide. Young adults from developing countries are increasingly realizing the wonders of foreign cultures and customs."[27] Tarjanne sees young people as explorers who, free from economic and cultural constraints, look for information in other countries and contexts and have grasped the importance of networking in the global labour market of the future:

> "The tools of information technology have provided the next generation with faces and customs of alien places. ... Universities and small cafés are flooded with young adults attempting to find news not available to them in their city or village. They realize how important this knowledge economy will prove for their future."[28]

This view is in line with the cosmopolitanism of Ulrich Beck, who maintains that young people in particular feel as one with global processes and phenomena through popular culture.[29] Beck notes that "the sphere of experience, in which we inhabit globally networked living environments, is glocal, has become a synthesis of home and non-place, a nowhere place."[30]

Attention must be given to the fact that not all young people have unlimited access to "glocal" experiences or the opportunity to build up any speed on the information superhighway. According to Pippa Norris, disparities in media-culture possibilities reflect the previously recognized differences in national income, health care and education.[31] The disparities in the diffusion of the Internet and traditional mass media are the consequence of the profound economic, political, social and educational discrepancies between societies:

"The problem, it appears, is less whether Namibians lack keyboard skills, whether Brazilians find that few web sites are available in Portuguese, or whether Bangladesh lacks network connections. Instead, the problems of Internet access are common to the problems of access to other communication and information technologies that have been widely available for decades in the West."[32]

This being the situation, Norris recommends the following approach: "Rather than any short-term fix, such as delivering beige desktop PCs to wired schools in Mozambique, Egypt and Bangladesh, the long-term solution would be general aid, debt relief, and economic investment in developing countries."[33] She also offers the following remarks about the stages of the Internet revolution:

"In the first decade, the availability of the Internet has ... reinforced existing economic inequalities, rather than overcoming or transforming them. The reasons are that levels of economic development combined with investments in research and development go a long way towards explaining those countries at the forefront of the Internet revolution and those lagging far, far behind. ... If countries have the income and affluence then usually (but not always) access to the Internet will follow, along with connectivity to telephones, radios, and television."[34]

According to Norris, the digital divide has little or nothing to do with the characteristics of media such as the Internet or the opportunities they provide. Instead of linking more schools to the Internet, instructing teachers on issues connected with digital literacy or establishing network connections in poor areas, the primary focus initially should be on fundamentals such as the realization of basic rights and the reduction of economic, social and educational inequalities. Alongside these efforts, action can also be taken to narrow the digital divide.

USES OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES AMONG YOUTH
The current status of traditional media

Examining the global media culture as it relates to young people worldwide, it would be incorrect to claim that they are living in the age of, or are even very enthusiastic about, the Internet. From a global perspective, children are much more oriented towards television. According to one survey, television is the most widely used medium among 12-year-olds in the world.[35]

For young people, the current media culture could perhaps be termed a television culture. During the 1990s television and satellite broadcasting spread throughout the world. Globally, the proliferation of television has been far greater than that of the Internet, though it too remains far from even. In developed countries, 674 of every 1,000 inhabitants have televisions; in developing countries the corresponding rate is 145 per 1,000.

A survey conducted in 23 countries around the world explored the media access and media use of 12-year-olds.[36] The study showed that in 97 per cent of the countries surveyed, the inhabitants received at least one TV channel; the average range of channels per country was four to nine. In 18 per cent of the countries there were more than 20 channels offered. According to the same survey, 93 per cent of children had access to a television set primarily at home. The percentage was similar for radio and books. Less easily accessible media included newspapers (85 per cent), cassette recorders (75 per cent), video recorders (47 per cent), video consoles (40 per cent), personal computers (23 per cent) and the Internet (9 per cent).

One should bear in mind that the domestic television culture in low-income countries differs from that in high-income countries. Children and youth in developed countries are increasingly watching television in the privacy of their own rooms. In developing countries, the same TV set is often used by the children of a group of families. The same is true with regard to the use of other media; for instance, access points to the Internet are often shared collectively,[37] and the same mobile phones are used within and between families.

Though the pervasiveness of radio is even more extensive than that of television, its importance in the media culture as a producer of images and identities remains less significant. However, its value in areas such as health education and political engagement is still very high on a global scale. It is worth remembering that the radio "is the only form of mass communication for two-thirds of the population of rural Africa".[38] Certain proponents of the radio argue that discussion on the digital divide has sidetracked the discussion on global development. Radio can reach communities beyond the information superhighway and is also compatible with the rich oral traditions of the world.[39]

The evolving role of new information and communication technologies

New ICT can be used in many different ways; some options are more relevant for and popular among youth than are others. ICT-based interaction between young people is common. Communication between friends and strangers may occur using real names or pseudonyms (virtual personalities or net identities), or anonymously. ICT are also used to obtain information and assistance in subject areas ranging from music and sports to medical and psychological issues. Young people often use ICT for identity development; some, for example, establish, maintain or join fan clubs on the Internet. The constantly expanding field of online gaming is an important aspect of young people's use of ICT.

Wider comparisons of young people's use of ICT are hindered by the fact that no relevant global statistics, let alone in-depth inquiries, are available. Compared with research on television and video viewing, statistics and studies on ICT use among children and teenagers are relatively scarce, even in countries with high levels of information technology development and use. In information-rich societies, the use of ICT by children and young people is largely uniform and appears to develop in very similar stages, with little cross-national variation.[40] In the following paragraphs, comparisons involving Finland, Japan and the United States are presented. Scandinavian

countries have been among the earliest owners and users of information and communication technologies and may therefore function as trendsetters for ICT development in the rest of the world.

Children in information societies are surrounded by more information and communication technology than any previous generation. In the developed countries, practically every child lives in a home equipped with the basic tools of the information age, including the radio, television, telephone and, to an only slightly lesser degree, the stereo and video cassette recorder.

The cell phone and the computer are central appliances of the media culture and will in time converge with digital television. In affluent countries such as Finland and Japan, the devices are used daily by increasingly younger children. In 1997, for instance, fewer than 5 per cent of Finnish 7- to 10-year-olds owned a personal mobile telephone; by 2001, the rate of ownership for the same age group had risen to 30 per cent. In 1999, 15 per cent of Finnish 15-year-olds owned a mobile phone, but by 2001 the figure had climbed to 66 per cent. In both age groups, girls are somewhat more likely than boys to own a handset. The mobile phone has gradually become part of the everyday lives of people in developed countries. It is seen as a useful object that makes life a little easier, one that soon becomes inconspicuous and that people quickly start to take for granted. Computers are equally pervasive. In 1998, more than 80 per cent of Finnish 8- to 10-year-olds had computers in their homes, and half were reportedly using them.[41] In 2001, 26 per cent percent of children in the same age group had computers in their rooms, and nearly all teenagers aged 13 to 19 years used computers at least occasionally; the devices were used most frequently to access the Internet, followed by gaming, writing, listening to music and drawing.

Internet use among young people in developed countries is continually increasing. The most elaborate and extensive surveys on the ICT behaviour of youth are conducted by commercial entities. According to one such survey, Internet use among 12- to 19-year-olds in the United States primarily involves e-mailing and instant messaging between friends. The next most common uses are online gaming, downloading digital music and retrieving educational resources. Young people also use the Internet to engage in online chatting and to follow sports and world events.

In a survey conducted in Finland, 8- to 10-year-olds reported using ICT primarily to access the Internet and play computer games, but also for information searches and drawing.[42] One of the most striking features of children's involvement in computer activities is the surprisingly low level of school-related use. Without too much exaggeration, it can be argued that ICT and the media culture represent a world of entertainment for children and youth.

Current trends suggest that as the number of broadband and wireless connections increases and usage costs drop, and as new mobile terminal devices are produced for the market, young people's use of the Internet for all of the purposes mentioned above will rise. Internet use costs are subject to market forces; more users and more service providers (increased competition) mean lower consumer prices.

Children and youth in the developed world have taken to the wonders of the media culture like fish to water. They are able to incorporate the use of ICT into their media-filled lives with relative ease and flexibility, alongside and often in association with more traditional activities. The mere existence of ICT makes the lives of today's children and youth differ in important ways from the lives of earlier generations. The media culture and its products teach children different attitudes as well as a vast range of informal skills and information. However, children's everyday learning is often compromised and complicated by the stereotypical attitudes and cultural fantasies of a less-than-ideal adult world (examples include Internet child and teenage pornography sites).

The effects of the new media culture on youth

One could argue that children and youth in ICT-rich countries are currently experiencing the second stage of the media culture, characterized by two types of phenomena. First, ICT are used multimodally, which is to say that the different technologies interconnect in many ways in the lives of children and young people. Second, the technologies are becoming an increasingly important part of the everyday lives of children and young people, which has implications for the ways in which they use their time and interact with people close to them.

Some have expressed their concern that reducing human contact to calls and messages transmitted through the mobile phone may foster a sense of insecurity in children and young people. Research undertaken recently by the present author and H. Lehtimäki indicates that one-third of 8- to 10-year-olds perceive their parents as too busy.[43] With older children, reachability through the cellular network creates a situation characterized by constant (tele)presence and accessibility; mobile communication creates what one might call an extended umbilical cord between youth and their parents.

Research also shows that the home is often the place where children and parents negotiate the meaning of the media culture. In addition to everyday family matters, these negotiations often concern the limits of media use. In family interviews, the limitations are rarely described as problematic, but are instead seen as useful and necessary ways to determine the proper meaning of ICT. In other words, the negotiations are used to construct the idea of the information society in practice.

In her case study of Japan, Yasuko Minoura sheds light on another social consequence of mobile communication: "The mobile phone has blurred the distinction between 'at home' and 'not at home', and parents seem to be under the comforting illusion that their children, who are still connected via the mobile, are always 'at home'."[44] Minoura believes that this development threatens to render the relationships between parents and children entirely placeless and to demolish the familial social bonds that are continually constructed in the joys and sorrows, quarrels and happy moments experienced in face-to-face interaction.

In developed countries, children and young people tend to become involved in various leisure pastimes. In many cases, this has generated active groups of children and teenagers who are versatile in their use of the new ICT but also engage in sports and culture-related activities. What has also emerged, however, is a group of passive young people whose everyday lives are filled with television viewing, which, incidentally, is now considered one of the central factors in diminishing social capital and solidarity between people.[45] Extending this idea further, the claim has been made that, in developed countries, public spaces are disappearing and life in general is undergoing a process of privatization,[46] leading to the erosion of social cohesion and trust.

An examination of the power relations at work in commercial media opens up another global dimension of ICT use by children and teenagers. The content of the media culture targeted at children and young people is decided by a small number of global ICT and entertainment companies that dominate the culture industry. Although the issue is kept relatively quiet, the ICT market is revolving increasingly around children and young people. There are three main reasons for this: young people and children have more uncontrolled access to these media; they are exposed to ICT and are absorbing and acting upon new information at an ever-earlier stage in their development; and youth are becoming an increasingly important group of consumers who have their own money and can influence their parents' purchasing decisions.

The main producers of television shows for children and young people distribute their programmes worldwide; consequently, the world of children and teenagers is filling up with programmes produced for commercial gain by a handful of companies, and programmes produced locally with the support of public funding are becoming increasingly rare. The result has been an accelerating stereotyping and simplification of the global culture. This type of development can hardly be seen as desirable if, instead of uniformity, the objective is to enhance plurality within children's and young people's media culture.

The centralization of television programming targeted at children and young people represents a good example of how the existence of information and communication technologies by themselves means nothing, and how the technological possibilities contained in them are not necessarily developed or put to use unless money can be made from them. The media culture of children and young people appears to constitute a microcosm of the more general homogenization of values occurring in the global media culture.

Access to increased opportunity for interactivity through digital technology does not seem to be altering the technology-related wishes or use patterns of children and young people; from the beginning, games have been the true "killer" applications, first on television and computer screens and later in game consoles.

As the Internet spreads across the globe, it is likely that no matter what form digital technology takes, the younger generation will be the first to adopt it. From a global perspective, however, traditional media will long maintain their position as the most important means of information and communication and will continue to exist alongside the new ICT far into the future.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES AS NEW FORMS OF SOCIALIZATION

Information and communication technology as a cultural phenomenon

In examining young people and ICT, it is impossible to overlook the fact that the youth of today inhabit multiple worlds simultaneously. On the one hand, they are forced to struggle with a range of vastly different livelihood and adjustment issues. While some young people live in extremely poor conditions, others contemplate their identities in their bedrooms, chatting away at their personal computers. While some strive to escape the authority of parents, others look for someone to offer security and consolation.

On the other hand, the youth of today are faced with a global media culture that represents a unifying force, a type of cultural pedagogy that teaches them how to consume and act "and what to think, feel, believe, fear, and desire".[47] Many young people around the world are dreaming about living the glamorous life of a pop star or a top athlete. The global media culture, saturated with popular culture, is bumping against the world's adolescents like a pressure wave. The compulsion towards unification effected by the media culture varies from one society to another and depends on a young person's media competence and his or her power to resist outside influences.

Culture permeated by ICT creates a setting in which the traditional modes of socialization are altered and, at least to an extent, replaced with new ones. In today's world of mediated popular culture, ICT constitute a socialization force potentially more powerful than the home or school.

In previous sections of this chapter, the evolution and significance of ICT have been examined from quantitative and general perspectives. However, it is important to understand that, above all, the emergence and development of ICT constitute a cultural phenomenon. As Jennifer Light states, "Technology is not a neutral tool with universal effects, but rather a medium with consequences that are significantly shaped by the historical, social, and cultural context of its use."[48] This means that ICT should always be examined contextually or socio-historically—in this instance, as part of the changes that have occurred in the living environment of young people.

Margaret Mead's three-way division of culture based on postfigurative, cofigurative and prefigurative socialization patterns provides an interesting opportunity for this kind of examination.[49] It is worth noting here that analyses of cultural forms offer typifications and a general picture of the phenomenon, hiding from view the specific activities and practical everyday details of the culture. In addition, it must be made

clear that the three cultural forms explored below do not represent a clear temporal continuum but can exist and prevail simultaneously in different parts of the world, as is the case at present.

In a postfigurative culture, socialization occurs as knowledge and traditions are passed down from the older to the younger generation. In a cofigurative culture, people also learn from peers and organize a versatile formal education. In a prefigurative culture, the direction of socialization changes so that the younger generation may instruct the older generation on how to function in a new cultural situation. The sheer speed of cultural change is an important reason for this reversal. In a new cultural setting, old skills, knowledge and attitudes lose their meaning. Naturally, the transformation is never complete; even in a society thoroughly permeated by ICT, postfigurative and cofigurative cultures continue to live on through traditions nurtured by people.

Given the present cultural position of young people, however, the notion of a prefigurative form of culture acquires new importance, for its central idea corresponds with what in this chapter has been termed the global media culture.

The assumption that in a prefigurative media culture socialization would occur exclusively in one direction, from the immaturity of childhood to the maturity of adulthood, is clearly problematic. The problem derives from the essence of culture itself. In postfigurative and cofigurative contexts, it is possible for culture to be transmitted exclusively from the older generation to the younger. In a media culture, the situation is altered, as cultural transmission can move in both directions.

The acceleration of cultural change serves as the basis for two-way socialization, making it possible for adults not only to teach but to learn from children and young people, and for children to teach each other and their parents and to learn from one another. Popular stories and narratives become part of the experiences of childhood and youth, while at the same time children and youth become part of the narratives of popular culture.

This type of cultural change is one reason why the cultural practices and meanings generated by children and young people need to be listened to, read, explored and studied with particular sensitivity. As part of the living environment of children and teenagers, ICT create public spaces in which new connections are formed between knowledge, skills and pleasure.[50]

Developments in learning

School can be seen as an institution that both upholds and reforms tradition. School is a sanctuary of closed knowledge, protecting its educational autonomy with every means available. The closed code of school can be contrasted with, for example, the open code of the Internet. For the media-savvy teacher, ICT constitute a never-ending source of information and pedagogical challenges, as they provide an opportunity to establish virtual classrooms uniting school classes in different parts the world. In a progressive school, ICT might serve a fundamental pedagogic purpose: to generate discussion across all barriers. The purpose should not be to persuade those who think, act and look differently to conform, but to look for opportunities for a common understanding and a better future together.

As documented in the previous sections, young people use ICT to participate in and complete various learning tasks, whether formal or informal. It is interesting to consider the unprecedented range of opportunities for learning ICT use offers young people. The literacy requirements of the media culture extend from the ability to read text to the capacity to operate and understand the meanings delivered by various devices such as compact disc and other music players, the computer, the mobile phone and video equipment—skills that often precede the acquisition of traditional literacy.

It is possible to conceive of online chat rooms as a pedagogical forum that facilitates learning in a wide range of areas including skilled word use, interaction unattached to gender, and demarcations crucial for identity work. Sending text messages through the mobile phone produces its own media lore and in its way functions to reform the language, and the gaming culture enhances sensory and aesthetic perceptions and produces cognitive skills that have so far been studied very little but have already been identified as a means of access to the digital future. In addition, increasingly affordable computers and powerful and versatile software are enabling young people to produce their own music in self-made studios. A range of subcultures is springing up around the globe and appears to be spontaneously generating a new generation of communication.

According to Paul Willis, confidence in one's own skills and the motivation for the creative learning that occurs in the media culture arise from creative consumptionand the copying of pleasure-generating cultural products.[51] Learning based on the consumption of culture should be perceived as normal, and no distinction should be made between production and consumption in this context. Cultural practices are the practices of learning, and learning—even in school settings—is filled with meanings linked to the media culture. According to Willis, humanity is on the verge of a new electronic folk age.

Developments in the world of work

The prefigurative media culture has important implications for the position of young people in the labour market. Young people seem to absorb knowledge, skills and attitudes from the media culture almost by osmosis. Some of these skills are highly useful in a prefigurative context: language skills become tradable assets, and computer literacy is hard currency in ICT companies investing in the field. In other words, the new qualifications acquired through informal learning serve to construct a more skilled and knowledgeable labour force.

By attaching their identities to popular cultural messages, young people have embraced some of the ideals and ways of thinking promoted by the media culture. However, they are currently finding themselves in a situation in which it is impossible to feel secure enough to make any long-term plans, let alone model their lives and futures according to the principles and standards adopted from the media: "A hit soap opera is generally the only place in the world where Cinderella marries the prince, evil is punished and good rewarded, the blind recover their sight, and the poorest of the poor receive an inheritance that turns them into the richest of the rich."[52]

The construction of a new, individualistic work culture is founded on the promulgation of a new philosophy of education. The principles of this philosophy can be summarized as follows: rather than subjects, young people are taught competencies and skills; students learn problem-solving methods rather than didactic principles; individual learning contracts are introduced in which students assume responsibility for their own development; emphasis on business training and cooperation between schools and companies is increased; and the importance of technology education and computer literacy, as well as a commitment to corporative lifelong learning, is perceived as imperative for success in working life.[53]

In this context, young people can easily become defined as mere instruments of economic activity. Their value may be determined based on the extent to which they can benefit the corporate culture, "an ensemble of ideological and institutional forces that functions politically and pedagogically to both govern organizational life through senior managerial control and to produce compliant workers, depoliticized consumers, and passive citizens".[54]

The relationships and causalities between ICT, young people and the economy are often observed slightly too deterministically. It is claimed that the success of ICT companies has a direct effect on the growth of the economy and thus on the well-being of young people. As has been successfully indicated by a number of scholars, the relationship is actually reversed. Generally speaking, the social infrastructure of society (democratic government, equitable income distribution, social security and public services) must be intact to allow the adoption and utilization of ICT for the purpose of enhancing sustainable development benefiting everyone.

The changing nature of social interaction

It seems reasonable to claim that the mediated practices of young people, at least in many developed countries, point towards a phenomenon called "network sociality". This concept can be understood in contrast to the idea of community, which evokes associations such as stability, coherence, common history, embeddedness, belonging and a certain social recognition, and involves strong interaction and long-lasting ties as well as rich narratives of the collective.[55] Conversely, network sociality derives not from a common narrative but from informational acts; as observed by Andreas Wittel, it is "not based on mutual experience or common history, but primarily on an exchange of data".[56] The social bond is created on a project-by-project basis.

Information and communication technologies and the media culture in general are shaping the thinking of children and young people, as they form their understanding of themselves and others in close interaction with ICT and the messages carried by them. Pessimists might argue that society is moving towards a mode of sociality that is likely to significantly narrow the relationship between the young and their immediate environment, and that sociality maintained via ICT will erode enduring relationships and alienate people from one another.

Richard Sennett has been one of the most prominent social critics of processes contributing to the decline of lasting and trusting relationships.[57] He argues that flexible project-to-project life without routines and security leads to a number of losses, including the loss of commitment and trust both at work and within the

family. These losses then turn into psychological and social pathologies such as loneliness, violent behaviour and unnecessary divorces, as well as everyday problems ranging from harmless unfriendliness to social exclusion and racist stigmatization.

There are also positive interpretations of the current situation, however. Margaret Mead was among the first optimists to suggest that the modern prefigurative era carries with it the seeds of change for a better future.[58] In her view, the new era has necessitated a number of shifts in social relations between people and has turned the learning process upside down. For the first time in the history of humanity, children are being given the opportunity and responsibility of teaching their parents and teachers, of guiding their elders on their way to the future.

In a similar vein, Pippa Norris mentions generational differences as the most important determinant of ICT adoption.[59] With regard to Internet use, for example, a person's generation is a more important factor than income, education or profession. In other words, the cultural and social capital and material resources available to an individual are not everything: "The Napster generation is already experiencing a virtual world as they develop that is different from formative lives of their parents and grandparents".[60] Thus, the young are not just experiencing the new era, but are also actively shaping the future with their digital practices.

Mead demands that adults teach themselves to change their behaviour and give up old ways of thinking in order to keep their minds open to new ideas generated by the younger generation.[61] According to her, only by developing new ways of communicating and new modes of interacting is it possible to free people's imaginations from the past. It is her conviction that the development of culture is dependent on a continuous dialogue between younger and older generations.

The dialogue between generations can occur in many ways: the use of ICT is one possibility if, at the same time, it is remembered that communication over distances can never replace personal interaction. The physical closeness necessary for and nurtured in interaction remains of crucial importance in relationships, not only between youth and parents, but also between adults.

In this prefigurative period, it is highly probable that, as Mead suggests, the competencies necessary in media cultures are best achieved through parent-adolescent, teacher-adolescent and parent-teacher dialogue, with young people given the opportunity to be heard as experts and as teachers. In the present media culture, it is imperative for parents and teachers to perceive children's and young people's informal skills in the use of ICT not as threats but as opportunities for personal growth and social change and as gateways to mutual respect.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Globalization is powered in part by tremendous and rapid ICT advances, and young people are often among the first to take advantage of new developments in this area. Youth are capable of using ICT in diverse and novel ways, as a result of which traditional forms of socialization such as the family and school are increasingly being challenged and overtaken. Many of the perceptions, experiences and interactions that young people have daily are "virtual", transmitted through various forms

of information and entertainment technology, the foremost of which continues to be television rather than the Internet. These technologies offer a culture of information, pleasure and relative autonomy, all of which are particularly appealing to young people.

Youth are at the forefront of the information revolution, but they face the challenge of reconciling the reality of their daily existence with the popular images presented in the media. Many young people are simultaneously experiencing life within the global and local spheres. They may develop a global consciousness yet still have to function and survive in their own locality and culture. At the same time, many young people, particularly in developing countries, are excluded from the information revolution, leaving them on the wrong side of the digital divide. A fundamental question about how ICT and the digital divide relate to the process of global development is not about technology or politics; it is about reconciling global and local practices. The challenge is to give culturally valid meaning to the use of new technologies.

While the importance of ICT use for development cannot be underestimated, it should not be seen as a panacea that will solve problems of unemployment or social exclusion in the near future. This observation is of particular relevance to young people, because there is ample reason to question whether the adoption of technology-based development strategies will produce results of real benefit to all young people. It will take many years for all youth to gain access to the opportunities promised by ICT. Notwithstanding these caveats, there is reason to be cautiously hopeful and optimistic about the potential of ICT, especially in view of the relative advantage young people have in embracing these technologies for their own benefit. ■

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Chapter 13.

HIV/AIDS
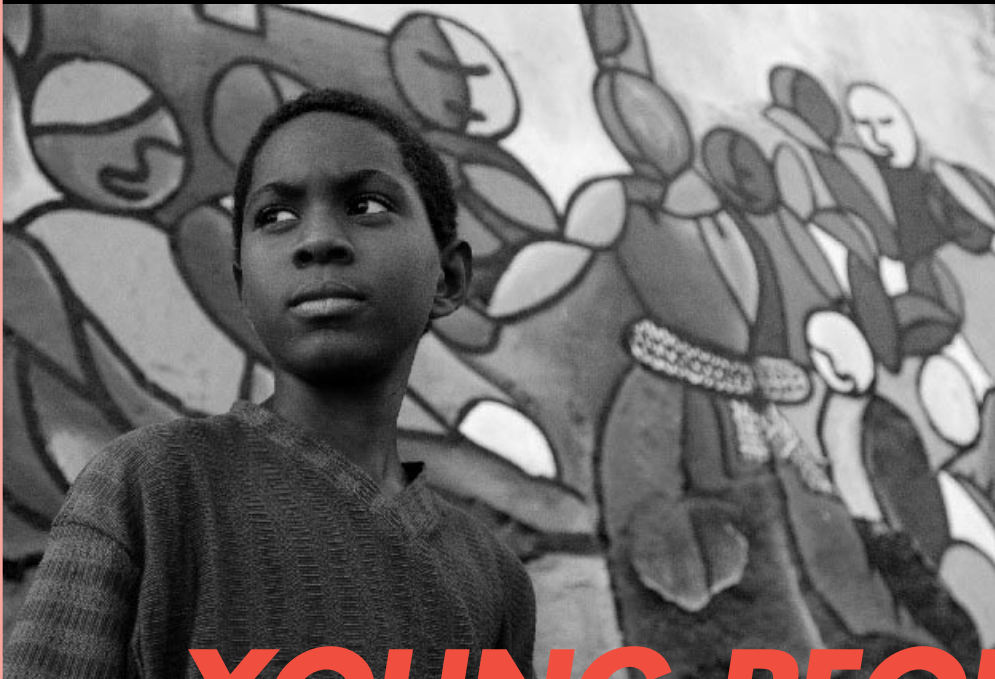
and YOUNG PEOPLE

Familiarizing the reader with *the current thinking and data on the HIV/AIDS epidemic as it relates to young people is the primary goal of this chapter. To the extent possible, an unbiased, fact-based description of the problem has been presented; the conclusions are largely left for the reader to make. Most of the data incorporated here come from published papers or recently released data sets produced by researchers already widely published in the field of AIDS. The chapter provides information on the number of young people living with HIV/AIDS, who they are, where they live, and why they were infected. It also addresses the short- and long-term impact of AIDS on young people, and examines strategies to help prevent infection among youth, to mitigate the impact of the epidemic, and to prepare young people to survive in a world with AIDS.*

THE STATE OF THE AIDS EPIDEMIC AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE
Young people infected with HIV/AIDS

In the mid-1980s AIDS was recognized as a global crisis.[1] At that time there were 100,000 cases of AIDS worldwide, and between 5 million and 10 million people were infected with HIV. Researchers predicted that the annual number of deaths from AIDS would peak at 1.7 million in 2006,[2] vastly underestimating the impact the disease would have. In 2001, over 40 million people were believed to be living with HIV/AIDS; 5 million were newly infected, and 3 million died.[3] HIV/AIDS is now the fourth largest cause of death globally and the leading cause of death in Africa.[4]

Although the impact of AIDS has been most severe in sub-Saharan Africa, the disease has transformed the lives of children and youth all over the world. More than 60 million people have been infected since the epidemic began over 20 years ago. An estimated 22 million have died of AIDS,[5] and half became infected between the ages of 15 and 24.[6]

Every day an average of between 6,000 and 7,000 young people become infected with HIV; at present 11.8 million are living with HIV/AIDS (*see table 13.1*).[7] At the onset of the epidemic few would have predicted that young people would constitute the group most seriously affected by the spread of the disease.

Table 13.1
Estimated number of women and men aged 15-24 years living with HIV/AIDS, December 2001 (thousands)

Region	Young women	Young men	Young people
Sub-Saharan Africa	5,700	2,800	8,500
Middle East and North Africa	101	46	156
East Asia and the Pacific	340	400	740
South Asia	670	390	1,060
Central Asia and Eastern Europe	85	340	425
Latin America and the Caribbean	240	320	560
Industrialized countries	83	160	243
The World	7,300	4,500	11,800

Source: UNICEF, UNAIDS and WHO, *Young People and HIV/AIDS: Opportunity in Crisis* (New York, UNICEF, June 2002), available at http://www.unicef.org/aids/publications.htm.
Note: Figures are rounded.

National and regional differences

The impact of AIDS has been most serious in sub-Saharan Africa. The region contains almost three-quarters of all young people living with HIV/AIDS, even though only 10 per cent of the world's youth live there. [8] Some 8.6 million of the 28.5 million Africans living with HIV/AIDS are young people. The majority of new infections in the region are among those 15-24 years of age. AIDS has become generalized[9] among youth in almost half of the sub-Saharan African nations. In nearly 20 countries in the region, it is estimated that at least 5 per cent of young women aged 15-24 years are infected with HIV.[10]

Substantial differences exist in HIV prevalence among African nations. Southern Africa has the worst epidemic, especially among young girls. Many researchers assumed that the high prevalence rates in some countries would have reached a plateau, but this has not yet occurred. In Botswana, median HIV prevalence among pregnant women was 38.5 per cent in 1997 and has risen to 44.9 per cent since. These prevalence rates, as devastating as they are, do not entirely reflect the actual toll AIDS is taking on certain population groups. Women 25-29 years old receiving antenatal care in urban areas of Botswana had a prevalence rate of 55.6 per cent, and for those in Zimbabwe, the rate was 40.1 per cent.[11]

Until recently, HIV prevalence remained low in most western and central African countries. However, rapid increases in infection rates are now being reported in Cameroon and Nigeria. Other countries in the region, including Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal and Togo, have thus far been able to keep their rates steady.

In the Middle East and North Africa HIV infection among young people exists, but the numbers are small. According to statistics published by the Organization of Islamic Conference, 0.3 per cent of females and 0.1 per cent of males in the region were living with HIV/AIDS at the end of 2001. Sexual interaction remains the dominant

route of transmission in the region, though new research indicates that injecting drug use is on the rise.[12] All countries in the region except Sudan and Yemen have reported HIV transmission through injecting drug use. This may soon beget a wave of infection that could increase overall HIV rates among young people.

In East Asia and the Pacific, Cambodia, Myanmar and Thailand have the highest infection rates and are the only countries in the region with HIV prevalence greater than 1 per cent among youth. Drug injection is leading to the explosive growth of HIV infection in several areas including Kathmandu, Nepal, where over half the injecting drug users (IDUs) have HIV, up from less than 1 per cent in the early 1990s.[13] In Asia, sexual transmission of HIV is predominantly through men having sex with other men (MSM), though high rates among sex workers have been noted for many years.

While HIV prevalence in Central Asia and Eastern Europe is relatively low, this region is experiencing the fastest-growing rate of infection worldwide. There were an estimated 250,000 new infections in 2001, bringing the total number living with HIV/AIDS in the region to 1 million. In the Russian Federation, increases in HIV infection continue, with new reported diagnoses nearly doubling annually since 1998.[14] In Ukraine, more than 1 per cent of young men aged 15-24 years are currently infected. The epidemic is spreading most rapidly among young men because of unsafe drug injection practices. There is also evidence that young males and females in several of the region's countries are becoming sexually active at an earlier age.

In Latin America and the Caribbean HIV prevalence continues to vary widely. The Caribbean is the second most affected region after sub-Saharan Africa, with 2.3 per cent of 15- to 49-year-olds infected. In the Bahamas, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Haiti, and Trinidad and Tobago, at least 2 per cent of young women are infected with HIV, and transmission is predominantly through heterosexual contact. In contrast, Central and South America continue to report epidemics driven by sexual transmission of HIV between MSM. For instance, although adult prevalence in Mexico is under 1 per cent, prevalence among MSM is 15 per cent. Drug injection is a growing social phenomenon in the region, affecting Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay in particular.

Only a few industrialized countries/areas[15] have infection rates of 0.5 per cent or higher. These countries and territories had a combined total of about 243,000 youth living with HIV/AIDS in 2001, representing approximately 2 per cent of the world total.[16] There is cause for concern, however, as a rise in sexually transmitted infections (STIs) has been observed, signalling a rise in unsafe sex, particularly among young people in many of the industrialized countries[17] In the industrialized world the number of young men infected is twice that of young women because sexual transmission of HIV is predominantly through MSM, and injecting drug use, the second most important mode of transmission, is more prevalent among young men than among young women.[18] In 1999, half of the AIDS cases in young men aged 13-24 years in the United States were among those who had had sex with other men.[19] Figure 13.1 shows corresponding figures for Vancouver, Canada, for the period 1995-2000.

Table 13.2 provides an overview of HIV/AIDS prevalence among 15- to 24-year-olds worldwide in 2001.

Figure 13.1
Increase in new HIV infections among young males who have sex with males, Vancouver, 1995-2000

Intracountry differences

National HIV/AIDS statistics for the general population often conceal dramatic variations within countries. Cities generally have higher HIV prevalence than rural areas, and disadvantaged people have been shown to be at greater risk than others.[20] Among youth as well, HIV disproportionately affects the poor and the marginalized.[21]

General population statistics also conceal significant gender differences in HIV infection. Where heterosexual transmission of HIV is dominant, generally more young women are infected than young men. Where the HIV epidemic is widespread among IDUs, most cases occur among young men.[22] In epidemics that are driven primarily through MSM, more men are at risk, though numerous studies have confirmed that many men who have unprotected sex with other men also have unprotected sex with women.[23]

Table 13.2
Percentage of young people (aged 15-24 years) living with HIV/AIDS, end-2001

(see opposite page)

Note: The proportions of young people (aged 15-24 years) living with HIV/AIDS were derived by dividing the estimated numbers of young people living with HIV/AIDS at the end of 2001 by the total numbers of young people 15-24 years of age.

Region and country	Females	Males	Region and country	Females	Males
Africa			*Asia and the Pacific*		
Angola	4.1-7.3	1.6-2.8	Cambodia	2.0-3.0	0.8-1.2
Benin	3.0-4.5	0.9-1.4	India	0.5-1.0	0.2-0.5
Botswana	30.0-45.0	12.9-19.3	Malaysia	0.09-0.14	0.56-0.84
Burkina Faso	7.8-11.7	3.2-4.8	Thailand	1.3-2.0	0.9-1.3
Burundi	8.0-14.1	3.6-6.3			
			Latin America and the Caribbean		
Cameroon	0.1-15.2	4.3-6.5	Argentina	0.27-0.40	0.7-1.0
Central African Republic	10.8-16.2	4.7-7.0	Bahamas	2.0-4.1	1.7-3.6
Chad	2.8-5.8	1.5-3.2	Belize	1.6-2.4	0.9-1.3
Democratic Republic of the Congo	4.3-7.5	2.1-3.7	Brazil	0.38-0.58	0.51-0.77
Republic of Congo	5.1-10.5	2.1-4.4	Chile	0.08-0.17	0.23-0.48
Côte d'Ivoire	6.7-10.0	2.3-3.5	Colombia	0.12-0.25	0.55-1.2
Equatorial Guinea	1.8-3.7	0.9-1.9	Costa Rica	0.18-0.36	0.38-0.79
Ethiopia	5.6-10.0	3.2-5.6	Dominican Republic	2.2-3.3	1.7-2.5
Gambia	0.88-1.8	0.34-0.71	El Salvador	0.23-0.48	0.5-1.0
Ghana	2.1-3.9	0.9-1.8	Guatemala	0.55-1.1	0.6-1.2
Guinea-Bissau	1.9-4.0	0.7-1.4	Guyana	2.6-5.4	2.1-4.4
Kenya	12.4-18.7	4.8-7.2	Haiti	3.2-6.7	2.6-5.5
Lesotho	24.8-51.4	11.3-23.5	Honduras	1.2-1.8	0.96-1.4
Malawi	11.9-17.9	5.1-7.6	Jamaica	0.69-1.0	0.66-0.98
Mali	1.4-2.8	0.9-1.8	Mexico	0.06-0.12	0.26-0.47
Mozambique	10.6-18.8	4.4-7.8	Panama	0.9-1.6	1.4-2.4
Namibia	19.4-29.1	8.9-13.3	Peru	0.13-0.23	0.30-0.53
Nigeria	4.7-7.0	2.4-3.6	Suriname	1.0-2.1	0.8-1.6
Rwanda	9.0-13.4	3.9-5.9	Trinidad and Tobago	2.1-4.4	1.6-3.3
Senegal	0.4-0.7	0.1-0.2	Uruguay	0.16-0.24	0.42-0.63
Sierra Leone	4.9-10.2	1.6-3.4			
			Eastern Europe and Central Asia		
South Africa	20.5-30.8	8.5-12.8	Belarus	0.13-0.26	0.38-0.79
Swaziland	31.6-47.4	12.2-18.3	Russian Federation	0.53-0.79	1.5-2.2
Sudan	2.0-4.2	0.7-1.5	Ukraine	0.6-1.1	1.4-2.5
Tanzania	6.4-9.7	2.8-4.3			
			Industrialized countries		
Togo	4.7-7.1	1.6-2.5	United States	0.18-0.27	0.38-0.57
Uganda	3.7-5.6	1.6-2.4	Portugal	0.15-0.22	0.33-0.49
Zambia	16.8-25.2	6.5-9.7	Spain	0.19-0.29	0.41-0.62
Zimbabwe	26.4-39.6	9.9-14.9	Switzerland	0.32-0.47	0.37-0.55

How young people become infected

Young people, like adults, contract HIV primarily in three ways: through injecting drug use; through unprotected sexual activity between men and women; and through unprotected sexual activity between men (MSM).[24]

HIV can also be transmitted via blood transfusions, through the sharing of non-sterile equipment that breaks the skin,[25] and from a woman to her baby during pregnancy, birth or breastfeeding. While the first generation of babies infected by mother-to-child transmission would now be adolescents, the proportion of such children still living is small.[26]

Blood transfusions

Transfusion with contaminated blood readily transmits HIV since large quantities of the virus are directly infused into a person's body.[27] In most high-and middle-income countries, routine screening of donated blood for HIV antibodies has greatly reduced the risk of infection from blood transfusions or blood products. However, youth living in low-income countries, where donated blood is not always tested for HIV, are more vulnerable to infection.[28] Where such tests are not routinely conducted, young women may be particularly at risk of infection if they receive transfusions during childbirth.[29]

Injecting drug use

Injection of drugs using needles contaminated with HIV is playing a major role in the spread of AIDS among young people, especially young men. By the end of 1999, injecting drug use was reported in 136 countries, and 114 of them had recorded cases of HIV infection via intravenous drug injection.[30]

Youth who share drug-injecting supplies are at high risk of HIV infection, as the virus is introduced directly into the bloodstream. This is one of the main reasons why HIV tends to rise very rapidly among injectors. In some countries, including Argentina, Bahrain, Georgia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, Kazakhstan, Portugal and Spain, over half of all AIDS cases are linked to drug use. In Canada, China, Latvia, Malaysia, Moldova, the Russian Federation, Ukraine, and Viet Nam, more than half of all new infections during the period 1998-1999 were among IDUs.[31]

Importantly, epidemics deriving from injecting drug use do not remain limited to the IDU population, since most IDUs are young males who are sexually active and not married. In Ukraine, the male-female ratio of reported HIV infection dropped from 12 to 1 in 1993 to 6 to 1 in 2000, reflecting both the increasing importance of sexual transmission in the spread of the epidemic and an increase in the number of female drug injectors.[32]

Injecting drug use is often linked to the sex trade, with users selling sex to finance their drug habits.[33]

Although many IDUs are already relatively young, the average age for starting drug use is declining further in several countries.[34] The number of adolescents attending a drug outreach programme in St. Petersburg, Russian Federation, more than tripled in two years.[35] By 1996, over half of the IDUs interviewed in Odessa were under 25 years old. In Buenos Aires, two-thirds of such users said they had begun injecting before the age of 18.

A person's first drug injection can be extremely risky. New drug users often lack equipment and need help with the injection process. Such individuals are more likely to share potentially contaminated equipment with other IDUs.[36]

Another issue to take into account is that "occasional" injectors are becoming more common in Eastern Europe. Many young people fall into this category, and programme planners must be aware that these individuals will not respond to outreach targeting dependent IDUs because most do not readily identify themselves as such. These young people are at tremendous risk because, like first-time users, they frequently lack their own equipment and may need to share with others. In addition, as the sexual networks of these youth are not likely to be limited to the IDU population, the crossover from one high-risk group to the general population of young people should be expected.

Unprotected sexual activity

It is not having sex, but rather having unprotected sex, that places young people at serious risk of HIV infection. Because high levels of sexual activity among adolescents have not been accompanied by the consistent use of condoms, this population group faces a high risk of infection. In surveyed countries of sub-Saharan Africa, the proportions of unmarried, sexually active women aged 15-19 years who reported the use of condoms in their most recent sexual encounter ranged from 2 to 18 per cent. Studies have found that even among adolescents who report recent condom use, less than half used condoms for each episode of sexual activity.

Younger adolescents are even less likely to use condoms (see figure 13.2). A survey in Burkina Faso indicated that 64 per cent of young men in their twenties used condoms, while only 45 per cent of younger adolescent males did so; for Malawi, the respective figures were 47 and 29 per cent. In Colombia, Kazakhstan and Peru a mere one-fifth to one-third reported using condoms. Among young men in Peru who identified themselves as homosexual, 40 per cent reported having recently engaged in unprotected anal intercourse.[37] These low rates of condom use are particularly troubling if one considers that in a number of countries with generalized epidemics, over two-thirds of young people have sex while in their teens.

Figure 13.2
The relatively low prevalence of condom use among younger males in four African countries

Percentage of young males using a condom with an irregular sex partner

Legend: 15-19, 20-24, 25-29
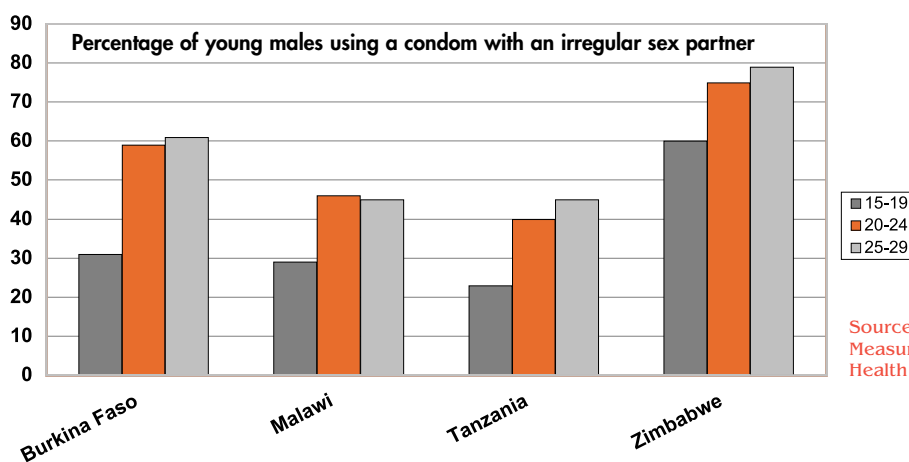
Source: UNICEF/MICS, Measure Demographic and Health Surveys, 1999-2001.

Sexual activity among both male and female adolescents is a contemporary reality. Although the systematic collection of information has been difficult, some broad patterns of adolescent sexual behaviour have been identified. Many adolescents are sexually active at a very young age. In several countries, unmarried girls and boys become sexually active before the age of 15 (*see figure 13.3*). Recent surveys of boys aged 15-19 years in Hungary and Kenya reveal that over a quarter of boys are having sexual relations before their fifteenth birthday, and the proportion is about 40 per cent for teens in Brazil and El Salvador.[38] In North America, 40 to 60 per cent of adolescents have initiated sexual activity by age 16.

Figure 13.3

Percentage of adolescents (aged 15-19 years) engaging in sexual activity before age 15, 1998-2001
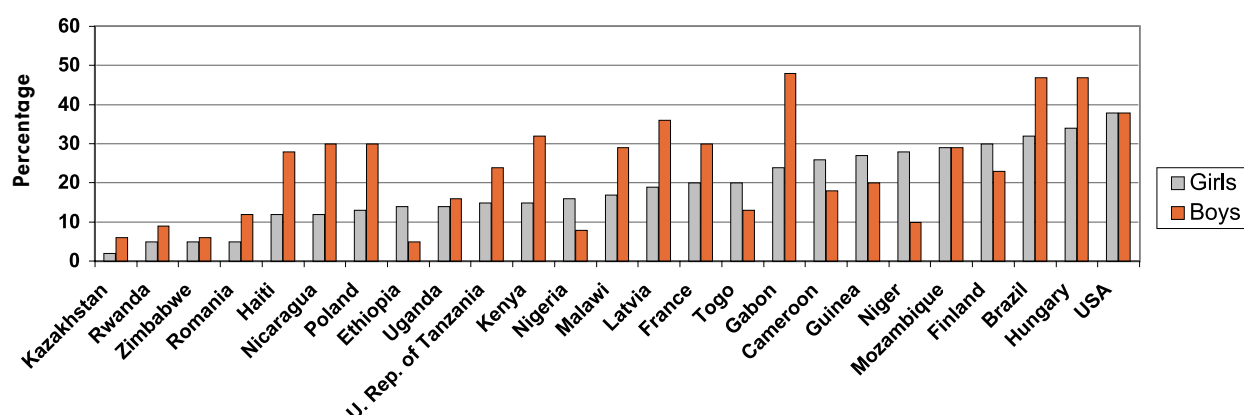
Source: UNICEF/MICS, Measure Demographic and Health Surveys, 1998-2001.

A number of young girls in various countries are sexually active because of early marriage. In Niger, 76 per cent of girls are married by the age of 18; in India and Nepal the proportions are 50 and 60 per cent respectively.[39] Overall, however, more sexual activity and a higher incidence of multiple relationships are reported among young men than among young women.[40] A study in Bangladesh found that 88 per cent of unmarried boys, compared with 35 per cent of unmarried girls, were engaging in sexual activity.[41]

The number of young men who engage in sexual activity with other men, young or old, is not yet known, but the risks are clear. In the industrialized world an estimated 70 per cent of HIV transmission occurs through MSM; worldwide, the range is 5-10 per cent.[42]

Data from the United States suggest that young men in same-sex relationships are at substantial risk. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 50 per cent of all AIDS cases reported in the country among young males aged 13-24 years in 1999 involved MSM.[43] Although national rates of HIV infection appear to have declined among adult males in this category, infection rates for young MSM are rising, especially among minorities (*see figure 13.4*).[44]

Figure 13.4

HIV Prevalence among men who have sex with men (aged 15-22 years) by race/ethnicity and age group in selected United States cities, 1994-1998
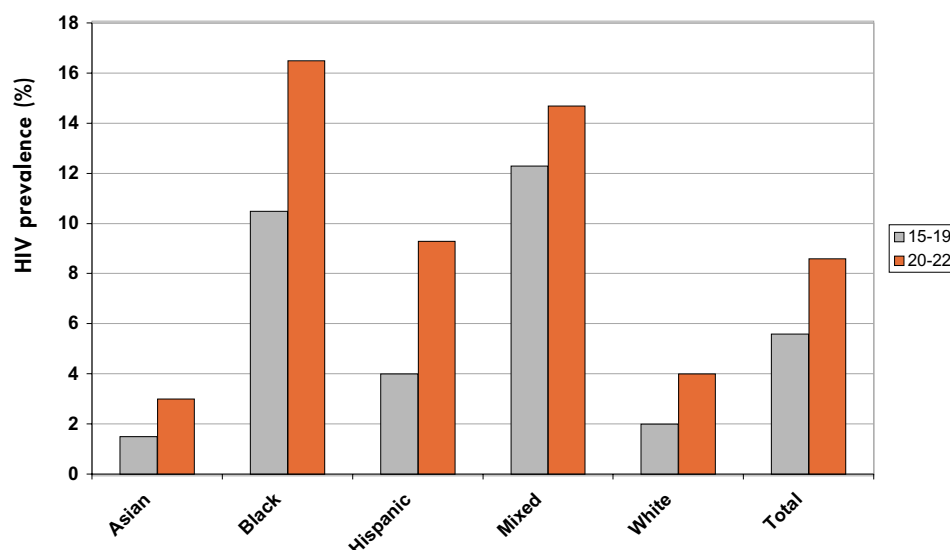
Knowing how much sexual activity among young people is unprotected can provide a better understanding of the risks they face. Towards this end, adolescent pregnancy and STI rates may be examined, as such statistics provide an indication of the extent of unprotected sex among youth. Demographic Health Surveys conducted in sub-Saharan Africa between 1990 and 1996 showed that nearly 70 per cent of women in Burkina Faso, Guinea and Uganda were pregnant by age 19, and over half of the women in Benin, Cameroon, Namibia, Tanzania and Zambia became pregnant as adolescents.

The under-25 population accounts for approximately one-third of the 333 million new STI cases per year. Increases are being reported in several countries, and in many, young people have the highest STI rates of any age group.[45] For example, STI cases reported in China rose from 430,000 in 1997 to 860,000 in 2000, suggesting that unprotected sex with non-monogamous partners is growing.[46] If these infections are left untreated—as tends to happen with many young people owing to the lack of access to or information about youth-friendly health services—the risk of acquiring HIV during intercourse increases by as much as tenfold.

Unprotected sexual activity among young people is also very risky because members of this group often carry HIV for years without knowing they are infected.

An added risk relates to the fact that HIV-positive youth, having recently acquired the virus, are extremely infectious. HIV is most infectious when viral loads in the blood are high, resulting in HIV shedding in many body fluids. Normally, there are two such periods. The first period, or primary stage, occurs immediately after HIV infection and lasts a few months. The second period is at the end, when HIV infection progresses to AIDS.[47] [48]

Why young people engage in unprotected sex
Lack of information

Studies from around the globe have established that the vast majority of young people remain uninformed about HIV/AIDS. For more than 15 years the need to communicate prevention messages related to HIV/AIDS has been internationally recognized; however, young people today still have only limited opportunities to learn about the disease.

Some adults believe that sex education encourages sexual experimentation. Consequently, programmes and campaigns have been, and continue to be, limited in terms of what they can discuss.[49] Reviews of programme evaluations indicate that HIV/AIDS education does not hasten the start of sexual activity, nor does it increase the frequency of sex or the number of sex partners. In fact, some programmes that have included discussion of contraception have delayed the debut of sexual activity and increased the likelihood of condom use.[50]

While the importance of informing young people about HIV/AIDS is widely recognized, 44 of 107 countries recently evaluated did not include AIDS education in their school curricula.[51] In interviews with 277 secondary school principals in South Africa, 60 per cent acknowledged that their students were at moderate or high risk of acquiring HIV/AIDS, but only 18 per cent of the schools offered a full sex-education curriculum.[52]

Studies researching young people's understanding of AIDS-related issues found that while both sexes were vastly uninformed, the level of unawareness was particularly high for girls aged 15-19 years (see figure 13.5). In countries with generalized epidemics, such as Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea and Sierra Leone, more than 80 per cent of young women aged 15-24 years did not have sufficient knowledge about HIV. Half of the girls in this age group in Tanzania and more than a quarter in Nicaragua (27 per cent) did not know how to protect themselves from the virus.

Although a large percentage of young people have some knowledge about AIDS, their understanding often lacks depth. For example, when students in Papua New Guinea were asked how to protect against HIV, 27 per cent said it was enough to get to know a partner first or to make sure their partner had not had sex in the previous six months.[53] In Ukraine, 99 per cent of young women had heard of AIDS, but only 9 per cent could correctly identify the three primary ways of avoiding sexual transmission.[54]

Misconceptions are widespread among young people and persist alongside accurate knowledge, potentially undermining the protective value of that knowledge where it does exist. Surveys from 40 countries indicate that over 50 per cent of young people harbour serious misconceptions about HIV transmission; figure 13.6 illustrates the extent of this problem among young women living in different parts of the world.[55] In Lesotho and South Africa, for example, 50 to 75 per cent of females aged 15-19 years do not know that a person with HIV may look healthy.[56]

Figure 13.5

Percentage of girls aged 15-19 years who have heard of AIDS and percentage who know the three primary ways of avoiding infection, 1999-2001
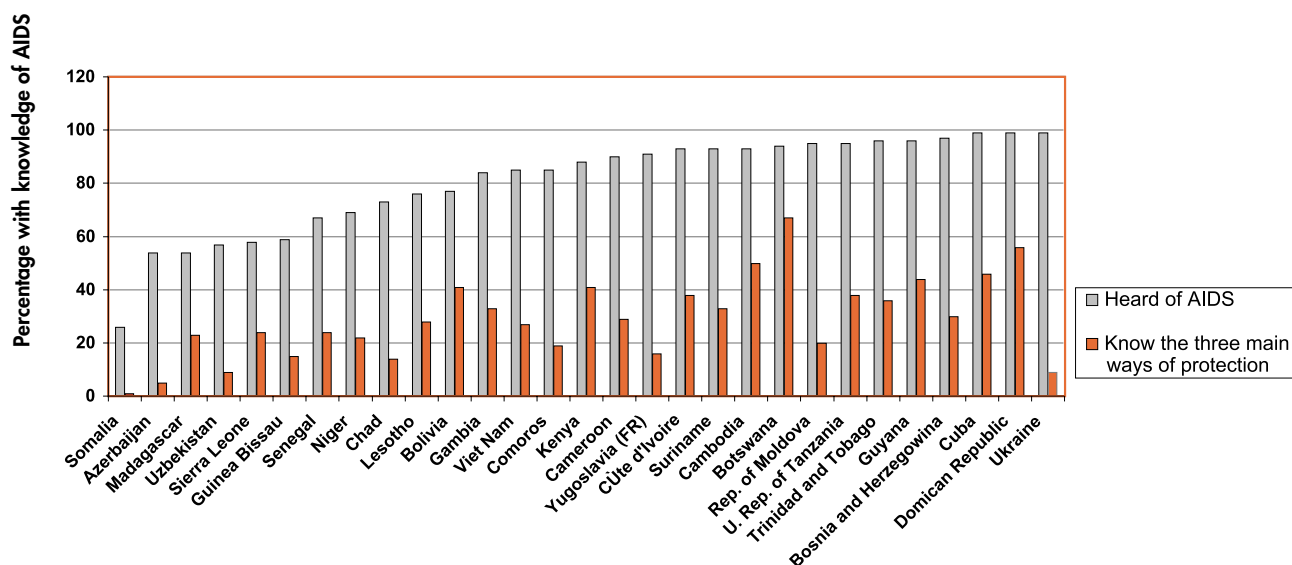
Source: UNICEF/MICS, Measure Demographic Health Surveys, 1999-2001.

Figure 13.6

Proportion of girls with at least one misconception about HIV/AIDS
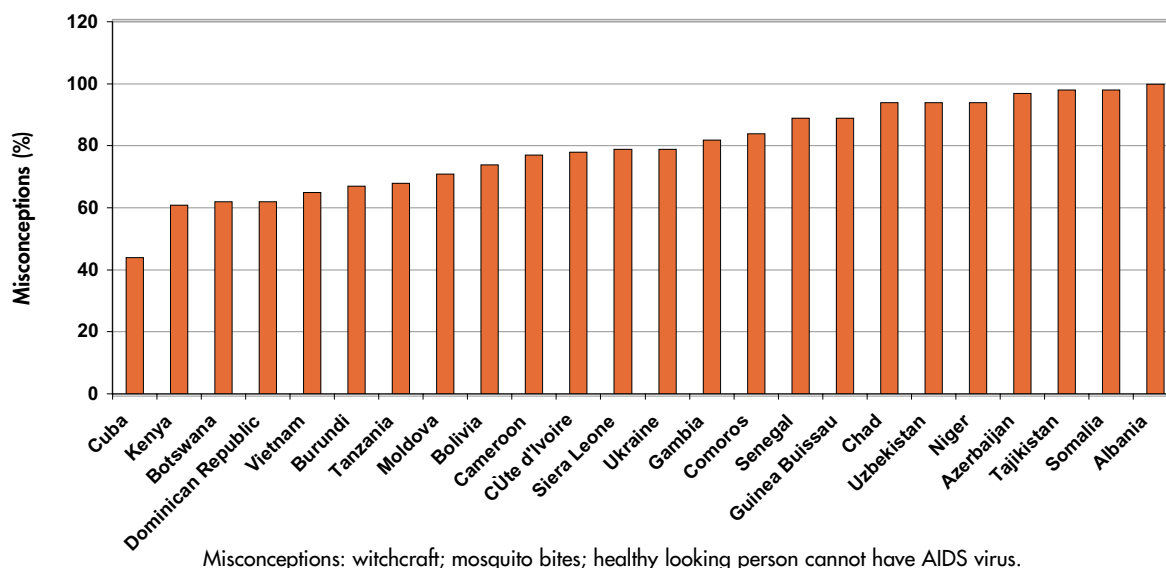
Misconceptions: witchcraft; mosquito bites; healthy looking person cannot have AIDS virus.

Source: UNICEF/MICS, Measure Demographic Health Surveys, 1999-2001.

Correct knowledge does not always translate into appropriate behaviour. A study in Kenya including a survey of boys aged 15-19 years revealed that among those who mentioned abstinence as a protective measure against HIV, 40 per cent were themselves sexually active. Adolescents' difficulty in understanding and integrating information that is not immediately relevant to them may partially explain such findings.[57]

Inability to calculate risk

Despite the devastation caused by AIDS, young people may not change their risky behaviour because the consequences of their actions are not immediately apparent owing to the long incubation period between infection and disease onset.

The inability of adolescents to fully comprehend the extent of their exposure to risk and the potentially dangerous results makes them vulnerable. Lacking the judgement that comes from experience, adolescents often cannot appreciate the adverse consequences of their behaviour. Younger adolescents in particular may lack the ability to use abstract thought to predict how their actions may relate to the future or to understand the consequences of certain acts. A survey conducted in 1999 indicated that a significant proportion of sexually active young men in Burkina Faso, Nigeria and Tanzania did not feel at risk of contracting HIV (*see figure 13.7*).

Figure 13.7
Percentage of young, unmarried, sexually active men aged 15-24 years who did not use a condom at last sexual intercourse, selected countries, 1999
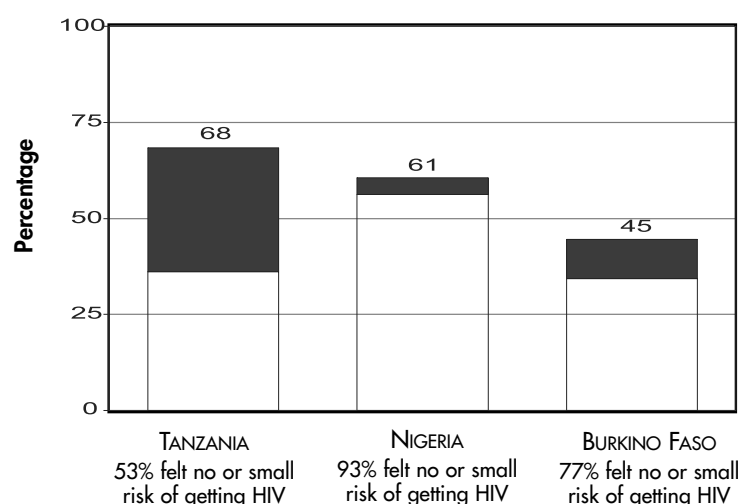
Source: UNICEF/MICS, Measure Demographic Health Surveys, 1999.

Even when youth know the risks, however, many believe themselves invulnerable. In Zimbabwe, over 50 per cent of young women interviewed said they were not at risk for HIV/AIDS.[58] In Nigeria, 95 per cent of girls aged 15-19 years perceived their risk of HIV infection to be minimal.[59]

Emotional factors, particularly for young people, can strongly influence risk calculation. An eight-country study in sub-Saharan Africa found that both men and women avoided using condoms with their marital or regular partners because of "trust".[60]

Faulty risk assessment can also occur at a more intellectual level; in addition to not feeling at risk, young people often do not think they are at risk because they are not properly educated. For example, one study reported that youth felt more comfortable having sex with partners who did not suggest condom use because they thought them less likely to have a sexually transmitted infection, including HIV.[61]

Sometimes, when young people are educated about AIDS, they are rightly taught that the three best ways of avoiding infection are abstinence, monogamy and condom use. However, this education is frequently superficial, and many youth are left without a full understanding of concepts such as abstinence and monogamy. Various surveys have indicated that young people believe abstinence refers only to vaginal intercourse. Other studies have shown that for many young people, practicing monogamy (having one partner at the same time), which is correctly seen as preventing HIV/AIDS, does not necessarily lead to preventing them from having frequent changes of sexual partners. For example, in the 1998 Demographic Health Survey from Kenya, 30 per cent of young men and 37 per cent of young women said that they were "sticking to one partner"; however, a third of those young men also reported having had sexual relations with two or more women in the past year.

Internalizing risk may be difficult for young people, who, as mentioned previously, tend to feel invulnerable. In Tanzania only 26 per cent of the male students interviewed felt they were at high risk for HIV/AIDS, though 48 per cent felt that their friends were at high risk.[62] Adolescents who deny their personal risk of contracting HIV/AIDS often ignore AIDS prevention messages, dismissing their relevance,[63] and their failure to take precautions places them at a higher risk of infection.[64]

Willingness to take calculated risks

Even when the risk of infection is understood, some young people ignore it. Young women may intentionally engage in risky sexual behaviour, especially in cultures where marriage is highly valued and a woman's status is linked to finding a husband and having children.[65] Many young people purposely downplay or overlook the risks because they are afraid to ask about a partner's sexual history or that a condom be used, for fear it might endanger the relationship.[66] Others engage in risky sex for money, which may seem, or indeed be, a more urgent priority.

Intoxication

At times, adolescents cannot calculate the risks of their behaviour because they are under the influence of mind-altering drugs and/or alcohol. The lack of inhibition associated with high alcohol consumption and some drug use may result in unprotected sex. Furthermore, intoxication can complicate condom use and the ability to negotiate safer sex with another person. Promiscuity, rape and coerced sex are also associated with drug and alcohol use.

Other factors influencing decision-making among youth

Most young people are keenly sensitive to peer opinion:

"Especially among older adolescents, perceptions of what peers think often has a greater influence on sexual and other risk-taking behaviour than the opinions of parents and other adults."[67]

Several studies have shown that the sexual behaviour of friends influences young people's own sexual behaviour. When adolescents believe that their peers think unprotected sex is not risky, they are more likely to have unprotected sex as well.[68] In Kenya, for example, adolescent men whose friends were sexually active were seven times more likely to be sexually active themselves.[69]

Another developmental aspect that may affect the use of condoms among youth involves the influence of parental values and expectations. When young people know that their parents or other adults in the community disapprove of adolescent sexual activity, they may be less likely to obtain contraception beforehand since that would be an admission of their intention to do something perceived as wrong.

Limited condom availability

Condoms are the only technology available for protection from sexually transmitted HIV and are vital to controlling the spread of the disease. This is true for both young people and adults. Despite the growing need, and the increasing education of young people regarding their necessity, worldwide donor support for condom purchases declined from about $68 million in 1996 to $38 million in 1999.[70]

Where condoms are generally available, limited distribution systems have made access problematic. The few government outlets available tend to be widely dispersed, and private sector sources are frequently limited to urban areas, resulting in uneven availability throughout countries.

To date, there has been no donor-government-private sector coordination or streamlining of condom supply and distribution systems, often resulting in a system breakdown and wasted resources.

On an individual basis, many young people face difficulties obtaining condoms because of the cost and limited accessibility for young adolescents. Condoms have not been made sufficiently available in places young people frequent, such as schools.

Why infection rates among girls are increasing

At the global level more men than women are infected with HIV (20.6 million men, compared with 16.5 million women). However, a demographic shift is taking place. Young women today are becoming infected at a much faster rate than young men, and younger adolescents are being exposed to the virus with increasing frequency.[71] In 2001, an estimated 7.3 million young women and 4.5 million young men were believed to be living with HIV/AIDS.

Women are, on average, 10 years younger than men when they contract HIV; consequently, many will die of AIDS at an earlier age than will men in the same circumstances. This shift will dramatically change the face of AIDS in years to come. The United States Census Bureau projects that there will be more men than women of reproductive age by 2020.

In most African countries, infection rates among young women are at least twice as high as those for young men.[72] In Ethiopia, Malawi, Tanzania and Zimbabwe, there are five to six girls aged 15-19 years infected for every one boy infected in the same age group. In some parts of Kenya and Zambia, teenage women have HIV prevalence rates of around 25 per cent, compared with 4 per cent among teenage men.[73] Epidemiological studies have shown that in major urban areas of eastern and southern Africa, 17 to 22 per cent of girls aged 15-19 years are already infected with HIV, compared with 3 to 7 per cent of boys of similar age. This derives largely from frequent age-mixing—older men having sex with younger girls, with or without the latter's consent. A broad range of issues highlighting the gender-differentiated impact of HIV/AIDS are addressed below.

Biological susceptibility

Females are biologically more susceptible to infection by HIV than are males. It is now well documented that the risk of becoming infected with HIV during unprotected sex is two to four times greater for a woman than for a man.[74] Male-to-female transmission is more likely during vaginal intercourse because a woman's genital tract has a larger surface area exposed to her partner's sexual secretions than does that of a man. HIV concentration is also generally higher in a man's semen than in a woman's sexual secretions.[75]

Adolescent women are at greater risk than adult women, because the vagina and cervix of young women are less mature and less resistant to HIV and other STIs such as chlamydia and gonorrhoea. Changes in the reproductive tract during puberty make the tissue more susceptible to penetration by HIV. In addition, hormonal changes associated with the menstrual cycle are often accompanied by a thinning of the mucus plug, the protective sealant covering the cervix. Such thinning can allow HIV to pass more easily. Young women produce only scant vaginal secretions, increasing the likelihood of HIV transmission.[76]

STIs are more likely to be asymptomatic in women than in men. Between 50 and 80 per cent of women with gonorrhoea or syphilis experience no symptoms and are therefore unlikely to seek treatment, increasing their risk of HIV infection if exposed. Early acquisition of a sexually transmitted infection increases the probability of recurrent infection because of the longer exposure to sexual opportunities and the likelihood of a greater number of partners over a lifetime. Recurrence can exacerbate the health consequences of STIs. For example, repeat chlamydial infection is more likely than primary infection to be associated with fallopian tube damage. Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), typically resulting from lower genital tract infections such as chlamydia or gonorrhoea, is more common among sexually active female adolescents than among older women.

Damage to the female genital tract can also increase the risk of HIV infection, and this can be linked to other reproductive tract infections (RTIs). Factors contributing to the most common types of vaginal infections, vaginitis and cervicitis, include unfavourable hygienic conditions frequently associated with poor living conditions, genital mutilation, and trauma related to the insertion of foreign objects for contraception or abortion.[77]

For both young men and young women, STIs greatly increase the risk of HIV infection. People who have other STIs are two to eight times more likely to contract HIV/AIDS during sex with an infected person.[78] The presence of another STI makes an HIV-positive person more infectious and also makes an HIV-negative person more susceptible to infection. Some STIs increase the replication of HIV.[79] Those that cause lesions and ulcers provide openings through which HIV can pass from person to person.[80] The presence of STIs also increases the presence of CD4 lymphocyte cells in the genital tract. These lymphocytes carry HIV in seropositive persons.[81] STIs can increase the amount of HIV shed into genital secretions by more than 100 times,[82] raising the probability that the secretions will contain enough HIV to cause infection.[83] Thus, while there is normally a greater risk of HIV transmission from men to women, in the presence of an STI in either partner HIV transmission is equally likely in both directions.[84]

Another factor that may heighten young women's susceptibility to infection is currently being researched. Some studies have recently suggested that, for reasons still unknown, women require lower viral load levels to become ill than do men.[85]

Women's lack of financial security

In many countries, young women lacking income-earning opportunities seek support from men, at times trading sex for economic security. In countries where economic conditions make it difficult for girls and young women to cover school fees and other living expenses, some may acquire a "sugar daddy", an older man who offers compensation in cash or in kind in exchange for sexual favours.[86] Recent studies from South Africa reveal that many young women have sexual relationships in exchange for favours, gifts and cash.[87]

Engaging in transactional sex—the occasional exchange of sex for money or goods—may be instigated by periods of financial hardship or temporary displacement in, for example, refugee or IDP camps.

Survival

Poverty and the scarcity of employment opportunities are the principal reasons why young people enter into sex work.[88] Of the estimated 2 million sex workers in India, 20 per cent are under the age of 15 and nearly 50 per cent are not yet 18. Some girls become sex workers to pay for school or to support their families. In certain Asian countries, young women join the sex trade with their parents' approval in order to make money to send home.[89] The unfortunate reality is that young women often become sex workers because they make more money from prostitution than they would in other occupations.[90]

Sex work carries a tremendous risk of infection. In Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, as many as 70 per cent of adolescent sex workers are HIV-positive. A study in Jakarta, Indonesia, found that one in seven street children, many of them sex workers, had a history of STIs.[91] In Cambodia, over 25 per cent of the sex workers aged 15-19 years are infected with HIV.[92] Figure 13.8 illustrates the situation in Myanmar in the year 2000.

Figure 13.8
High HIV prevalence among young sex workers in Myanmar, 2000
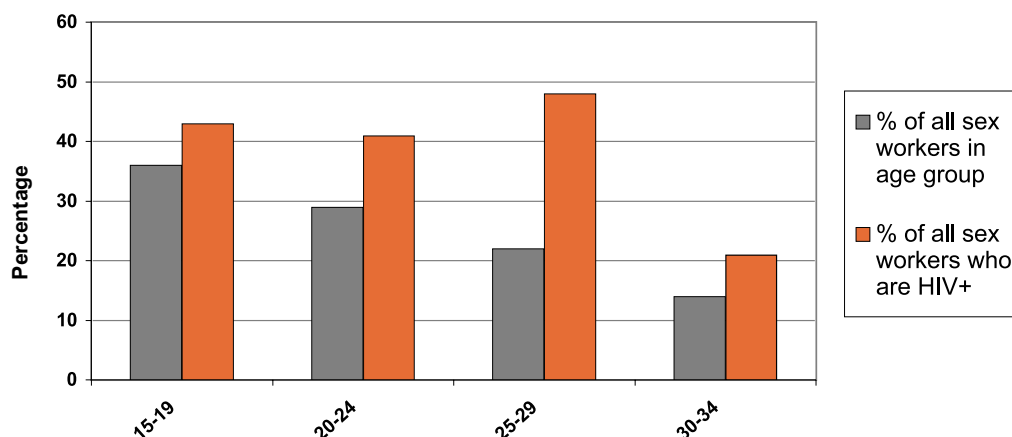
Source: Myanmar, Department of Health, AIDS Prevention and Control Project, Sentinel surveillance data for March-April 2000.
Note: Most are female sex workers in the age group 15-24.

Tragically, many girls and women are forced into sexual relations with older men through marriage, as a result of abuse, rape or incest, or because they are sold or abducted into the sex trade. Economic hardship and civil unrest have pushed more and more young people away from home and into towns and cities to look for work. Female migrant workers, many of them unmarried girls seeking domestic or seasonal work, are often sexually exploited.[93]

Forced and early marriage

In certain cultures, the premium placed on having children often leads to child-hood marriage and early childbearing. Girls as young as ten are wed to older men to cement friendships and economic ties between families. When girls are married to older men, they may be vulnerable to HIV infection because their husbands have generally already had a number of sexual partners. They may also remain vulnerable within their marriages, as many husbands continue to have other sexual encounters.[94] A study in Pune, India, found that 25 per cent of women visiting an antenatal clinic had a sexually transmitted infection and 14 per cent were HIV-positive; 93 per cent of these women were married, and 91 per cent had never had sex with anyone other than their husbands.[95]

In some societies a man must pay a sum of money to the family of the woman he marries. Once the marriage is sealed with the bride price, the woman is considered "paid for" and often cannot leave her husband even if his behaviour places her at risk of HIV infection.[96] Other cultural and legal norms, including the lack of divorce laws, also consign women to similarly desperate situations.

Polygamy, the practice of having multiple spouses,[97] occurs in various countries. A husband may have sexual contact with a number of women in the process of seeking a new wife, potentially bringing HIV home.[98] In many regions, men look for wives by dating several women, frequently engaging in premarital sex with some or all of them.

Wife inheritance, a tradition in which a woman is given to her brother-in-law upon her husband's death, is practised in some cultures. Either partner may be at risk of HIV infection if the other is infected. Younger widows are particularly at risk because they are more likely to be sought.[99]

Rape and sexual abuse

Far too often, adolescent girls endure sexual coercion and abuse. Societal attitudes towards women and girls contribute to a higher incidence of violence against them. In addition to the pain and trauma caused by violence, forced sex can injure the genital tract, increasing the odds of acquiring HIV and other STIs. Reports of partner violence are 10 times higher among young HIV-positive women in Tanzania than among HIV-negative women.[100]

The extent of sexual coercion is alarming. In Cameroon 40 per cent of female adolescents reported that their first intercourse had been forced.[101] In Kenya 40 per cent of sexually active female secondary school students said that they had been forced or tricked into having sex.[102] In Peru, a study found 90 per cent of young mothers aged 12-16 years to be victims of rape, often by a family member.[103]

South Africa, one of the countries in which the epidemic is growing fastest, has reported a significant increase in the rape and sexual abuse of girls. Girls aged 17 and under constitute approximately 40 per cent of the reported victims of rape and attempted rape nationally.[104] Some researchers have attributed the increase in rape among young girls to a belief gaining credence in some communities that sexual intercourse with a virgin can "cleanse" a man of HIV or AIDS.[105] Others have suggested that child rape is being committed as a preventive measure to avoid contracting HIV from older women.

A Gauteng area study in South Africa indicated that eight in ten men believed women were responsible for causing sexual violence, and two in ten thought women enjoyed being raped. Nearly 50 per cent of male youth said they believed a girl who said "no" to sex meant "yes". Although the majority of men thought "jack-rolling" (gang rape) was "bad", many young men aged 15-19 years said it was "just a game", and 11 per cent said it was "cool".

The pressures and dangers for young girls in this society are numerous. At the same time that virgins are being targeted for sexual assault, the practice of confirming the virginity of girls has continued, predominantly in KwaZulu-Natal.[106] To avoid failing these tests, some young women adopt extremely risky sexual practices such as unprotected anal sex, which can increase the likelihood of acquiring HIV or other STIs.

Early sexual victimization of young women can leave them less skilled at protecting themselves, unsure of their worth and their personal boundaries, and more apt to accept victimization as a part of being female. These effects increase the chances of future victimization.[107] Studies have also related early sexual victimization with high-risk behaviours in adolescence and adulthood, including excessive drug and alcohol use, unprotected sex with multiple partners, prostitution, and unwanted pregnancy.[108]

The Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders, held in Vienna from 10 to 17 April 2000, stated that the trafficking of young women had skyrocketed in recent years because of the huge profit potential, weak laws, and inadequate prosecution of traffickers.[109] Parents desperate for survival sometimes sell their sons or daughters, and traffickers may also kidnap children, especially from orphanages, and then sell them to brothels. Young children are being "recruited" from rural villages in poor countries and sold as slaves in neighbouring nations. Street children in urban areas are being used by pimps, who force these children to become addicted to inhalants in order to control them. Reports of girls as young as 15 being transported across Eastern Europe through well-established criminal networks and sold at auctions have also been documented.[110]

The environment of young people at risk
Armed conflict

Political strife, war and conflict greatly exacerbate the magnitude of sexual violence, rape and forced sex, and often lead to reliance on sex for economic survival, interruptions in schooling, the destruction of secure family life, the disruption of basic services, violations of basic human rights, psychological trauma, and heightened fears regarding threats to life and safety. War offers a fertile breeding ground for HIV/AIDS owing to the mobilization of young men (already a high-risk group for STIs) and the displacement of refugees. The use of rape and sexual violence as an instrument of war and repression adds another serious dimension. Young people in conflict situations are especially vulnerable to HIV/AIDS owing to the higher risk of sexual abuse, forced military recruitment and prostitution.

At the beginning of the new millennium, 35 million people worldwide were considered refugees or internally displaced; 80 per cent were women and children.[111] Countries in conflict have documented increases in HIV infection rates. In Angola, 8.6 per cent of women visiting antenatal clinics in Luanda were infected with HIV in 2001, compared with 1.2 per cent in 1995. It is suspected that once surveillance can be conducted in war-torn areas, rises in infection will also be reported in other countries such as Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda.

After war, soldiers usually return to their towns and villages. Military men, who are predominantly young and unmarried, are at above-average risk for STIs, including HIV/AIDS.[112] It is estimated that the prevalence of STIs is two to five times higher in the military than in the general population in peacetime and as much as 50 times higher during conflicts.[113] Military boys and men who have been infected with HIV may transmit the disease to their girlfriends, partners and wives.

Poverty

As Louis Pasteur stated, "The microbe is nothing, the terrain everything." HIV spreads fastest and farthest in conditions of poverty—conditions in which many young people live.[114] Worldwide, the AIDS epidemic is most severe in the poorest countries.[115] Poverty both creates the conditions for greater susceptibility to infectious diseases and substantially limits treatment options.

There is ample evidence indicating that poverty is the greatest threat to the health and well-being of any child. However, analysis of the myriad factors that influence HIV transmission among poor young people has been limited.

The environment in which any infection is transmitted in poor countries is very different from that of more developed countries. The development, spread and impact of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, pneumonia, and nearly all other infectious diseases is different in rich and poor nations.

It is well documented that pre-existing health conditions play a role in susceptibility to disease. Research now indicates that biological susceptibility resulting from poverty may play a determining role in the high rates of HIV transmission. Populations living in poverty are often characterized by malnutrition and parasite infection, factors that increase vulnerability to infection.

Malnutrition

Between 1970 and 1997, sub-Saharan Africa was the only world region to experience a decrease in per capita food production, calorie supply and protein supply. In 10 countries, including Kenya, Malawi, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe, the protein supply fell by more than 15 per cent. Eighteen of the nineteen famines worldwide from 1975 to 1998 were in Africa, and 30 per cent of the region's total population was considered malnourished. Refugees from internal and external conflicts crowded into unsanitary camps where food rations were deficient in necessary nutrients.

Protein-energy malnutrition (general calorie deficit) and specific micronutrient deficiencies such as vitamin-A deficiency weaken every part of the body's immune system, including the skin and mucous membranes. These are particularly important in protecting a young person from STIs, including HIV.

Parasite infection

Almost all of sub-Saharan Africa is tropical, with a very high prevalence of parasite infection including malaria, schistosomiasis and various intestinal and skin ailments. Parasite infestation plays a dual role in suppressing immune response. It aggravates malnutrition by robbing the body of essential nutrients while increasing calorie demand. In addition, the presence of parasites chronically triggers the immune system, impairing its ability to fight infection from other pathogens.

Access to services

Populations in poverty tend to have limited access to preventive and curative care. In Africa, Latin America and South Asia, even when health care is available to the poor, the clinics may have no antibiotics. This means bacterial STIs that act as co-factors for infection go untreated, as do other infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, the leading cause of death among people who are HIV-positive. Each of these diseases speeds up the progress of the other, and when treatment is not available, people with compromised immune systems can fall ill and die.

Youth-friendly health services that offer access to STI diagnosis and treatment, family planning services, antenatal and obstetric care, counselling, and condoms are not commonly found in poverty-stricken areas. These services are essential for ensuring health and reducing the vulnerability of youth to infection.

In sum, young people living in poverty have an increased risk of infection because they are more likely to be malnourished and in poor general health, to leave STIs and other infectious diseases untreated, and to have limited access to health and social services.

Acknowledging the synergistic relationship between malnutrition, parasite infestation and infectious disease does not deny that HIV is sexually transmitted. The fact is, however, that the sexual transmission of HIV has diverted attention from the broader epidemiological environment in which heterosexual epidemics have developed in sub-Saharan Africa and may further develop in other regions of the world. Plans and programmes have largely failed to address these problems and take action that could have helped increase young people's resistance to infection from the virus. Serious consideration must be given to these fundamental health issues in future prevention planning efforts.

THE IMPACT OF HIV/AIDS ON YOUNG PEOPLE
Orphans

One of the most serious consequences of the AIDS epidemic has been the death of parents. A total of 13.4 million children have been orphaned by AIDS since the epidemic began (*see figure 13.9*),[116] and this number is projected to increase to 25 million by 2010.[117] Africa has the highest proportion of young orphans. In 2001, a third of the 34 million orphans in sub-Saharan Africa were the children of AIDS casualties. Almost 1 million children under the age of 15 have been orphaned by AIDS in Ethiopia and Nigeria. In South Africa, an estimated 660,000 children have lost their parents to the disease. Asia, with its large population, has the greatest number of orphans; in 2001, there were 65 million, with approximately 2 million orphaned as a result of AIDS. Even a relatively small increase in HIV prevalence in Asia could lead to a significant rise in the number of orphans from AIDS in that region.

Figure 13.9
Estimates of children orphaned as a result of AIDS, by region, 2001
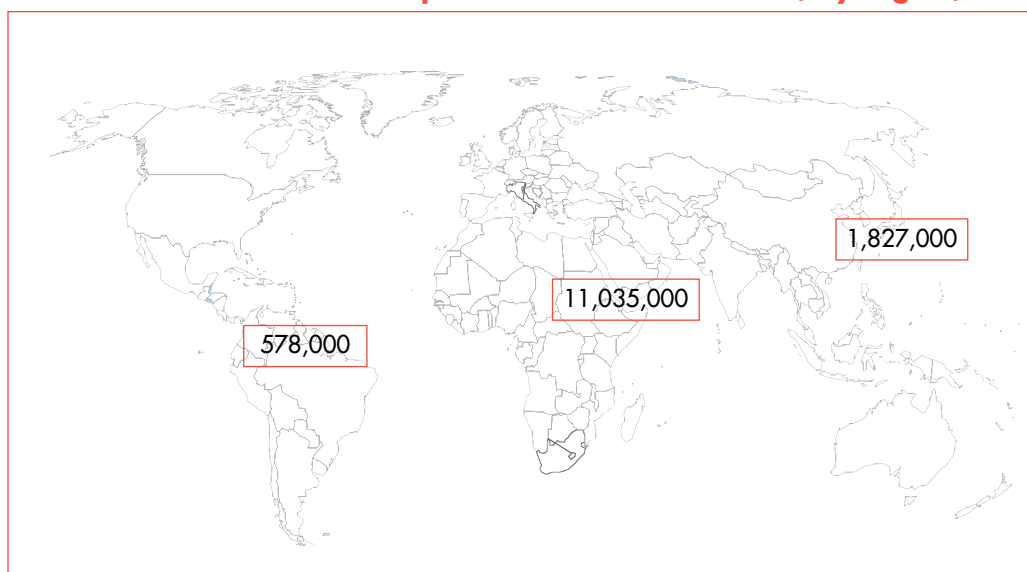
1,827,000

11,035,000

578,000

Source: UNICEF, UNAIDS and WHO, *Young People and HIV/AIDS: Opportunity in Crisis* (New York, UNICEF, June 2002), available at http://www.unicef.org/aids/publications.htm.

Illness and death brought about by AIDS can have a devastating impact on household income. In AIDS-affected households, the disease interferes with parents' ability to earn money, and what funds there are tend to be diverted to cover the cost of medical treatment. When parents die, the economic repercussions can be serious. In Zambia, monthly disposable income dropped by more than 80 per cent in two-thirds of families in which the father had died.

Diminishing family income has resulted in young people being withdrawn from school and/or forced to seek work to help support the household economy. A survey conducted a few years ago indicated that 15 per cent of rural families affected by AIDS in Thailand had taken a child out of school. In Benin, a mere 17 per cent of children whose parents had died attended school, compared with 50 per cent of those whose parents were both still living.[118] According to the World Bank, the number of primary school pupils will shrink by 24 per cent in Zimbabwe, 14 per cent in Kenya and 12 per cent in Uganda by 2010.

Young people may be separated from their families when their parents die. As orphans, some are sent to foster homes, orphanages or church-run facilities, while others take to the streets.[119] Many, however, are left as heads of households, with the difficult responsibility of supporting themselves and their siblings.[120]

Studies have found that orphaned youth tend to be in poorer health than youth living with their families. Their health situation has been attributed to poverty, inadequate access to needed health services, and repeated exposure to infections commonly associated with HIV such as tuberculosis, pneumonia, diarrhoeal diseases, and respiratory infections from having resided in AIDS-affected households.

The psychological impact of the long-term care of sick parents and relatives and the escalating number of AIDS deaths in the family and wider community are problems unique to young people affected by HIV/AIDS and remain difficult to assess. School performance studies, however, have provided some indication of the debilitating impact that grief and depression have on young people's ability to carry out their normal tasks.

Higher mortality rates and lower life expectancy

AIDS has increased mortality rates and reduced life expectancy. The mortality rates for those under age five in seven countries of sub-Saharan Africa have risen by 20 to 40 per cent as a result of the disease. The number of AIDS-related deaths among South Africans aged 15-34 years is projected to peak between 2010 and 2015, with an estimated 17 times as many deaths as there would have been in the absence of AIDS.[121]

The onslaught of AIDS and its impact on people of reproductive age has resulted in an overall decline in life expectancy in eight countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Because of the high mortality from AIDS, populations in some of this region's countries will begin to shrink within the next three years. This will continue to affect the labour supply and national productivity.

Diminishing productivity

The trend in most developing countries has been towards older people out-numbering younger people. However, by 2020 there will be 12 times as many children under age 15 as adults over age 64 in sub-Saharan Africa.[122]

The vast majority of people living with HIV/AIDS worldwide are in the prime of their economically productive lives. By 2005, Zimbabwe will have lost 19 per cent of its workforce to AIDS; Botswana, 17 per cent; South Africa, 11 per cent; Tanzania, 9 per cent; and Côte d'Ivoire, 8 per cent. As an increasing number of adults die of AIDS, younger adults will become responsible for managing government, including such key services as civil security, the justice system, education and health care. They will also be responsible for producing and manufacturing goods.[123] Some regions are already reporting diminished cultivation of food crops. Youth who lack experience as farmers are unlikely to know much about irrigation, soil enhancement or effective livestock management. This could result in a shift away from cash crops and towards subsis-tence farming, as young people would be able to grow only what they could manage by themselves.[124] These trends could jeopardize food security.[125]

Teacher shortages

The supply of teachers is diminishing as teachers die or stop working because of illness or to care for family members. The impact of teacher shortages on the future of young people is likely to be felt in many ways, including lost opportunities for schooling and larger class sizes. In rural communities where schools depend heavily on only one or two teachers, the loss could be especially devastating.

In the Central African Republic 107 schools have already closed because of teacher shortages, largely owing to HIV/AIDS.[126] In 1999 alone, an estimated 860,000 children in sub-Saharan Africa lost their teachers to AIDS.

Currently, over 30 per cent of teachers in Malawi and Zambia are believed to be infected with HIV. Although the effect is difficult to quantify, the presence in the classroom of a teacher who gradually succumbs to AIDS is likely to have a debilitating psychological impact on students.[127]

The loss of traditional skills

With the death of family and older community members, youth have fewer opportunities to learn skills and practices traditionally passed down from one genera-tion to the next. Production methods and survival techniques in particular form a valu-able part of a young person's education, and this loss is likely to adversely affect their ability to fend for themselves when they lose their parents or leave their homes.

The lack of sufficient health services

AIDS is placing incredible pressure on the health sector in many countries. In areas where per capita health expenditure is low, health budgets are seriously strained as facilities try to provide STI treatment programmes, voluntary counselling and test-ing (VCT), mother-to-child-transmission (MTCT) services, and HIV treatment and care. The increase in hospitalizations related to HIV/AIDS has resulted in a shortage of beds for people with other illnesses as well as a decline in the quality of care in some

hospitals operating above capacity. Young people, who generally suffer less morbidity than other age groups, are likely to miss out on needed preventive services as the sector focuses its limited resources on curative and palliative interventions.

The vicious cycle

Numerous factors—including the cost of medical care to treat infections, the reduction in wages owing to illness-related work absences, the loss in family income from the death of a parent, and funeral expenses—make the possibility of an AIDS-affected family becoming impoverished extremely likely. Poverty, as explained throughout the chapter, renders young people vulnerable to infection. Infection can, in turn, lead to poverty. This vicious cycle may persist for generations to come if action is not taken now to prevent infection among young people and mitigate the impact of AIDS on children and youth.

MITIGATING THE IMPACT OF AIDS ON YOUTH
Care and support for young people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS

Assessments of the needs of young people in AIDS-affected families indicate that education, general health and food security, along with social welfare, protection and emotional health, are the priority issues requiring immediate action to lessen the impact of HIV/AIDS on this very vulnerable population.

Education can play a key role in both preventing HIV infection and moderating the impact of AIDS (*see figure 13.10*). Efforts should be made to strengthen education systems that are collapsing as a result of HIV/AIDS. Teachers who have died need to be replaced with qualified personnel that are trained and well prepared to deal with the new reality. Recruitment can be accelerated by creating new incentives to enter teacher training, establishing policies for teacher retention, and facilitating more flexible approaches to part-time work and job-sharing among teachers.

Figure 13.10
Percentage of adolescent boys and girls (aged 15-19 years) reporting condom use during last sex, by educational level, Côte d'Ivoire, 1998
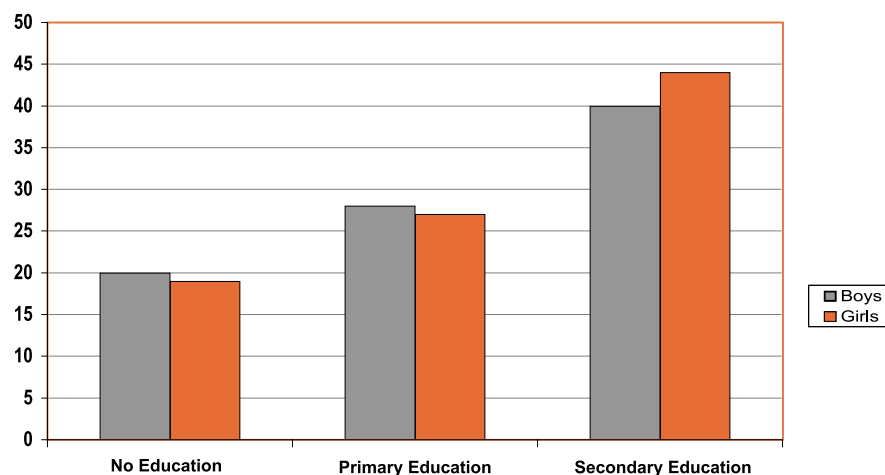
Source: UNICEF/MCIS, Measure Demographic Health Survey, 1998.

Young people who need to drop out of school to help at home or because of diminished household income ought to be provided with other opportunities to study, as well as vouchers to help cover school fees and uniform costs. In addition, making informal education available for working youth would help many acquire numeracy and literacy skills and possibly reduce their reluctance to enrol in school once they are again able to do so.

For older children who have missed out on schooling and need to support themselves and possibly their families, vocational training and apprenticeships may offer a solution. Vocational education and job training can prepare young people for specific careers; such programmes are particularly effective when they incorporate strong labour market links and job placement components.

Food security and nutrition

HIV/AIDS poses a major threat to food security and adequate nutrition, principally by diminishing the availability of food[128] and reducing access to food for households with less disposable income. Efforts to ensure food and nutritional sufficiency for children and young people are essential for their basic survival and may also help reduce their susceptibility to HIV infection. School-based meal programmes are one option. In communities seriously affected by AIDS, broader feeding programmes may be necessary.

Strengthening the immune system helps protect people from a number of infectious diseases and from some of the consequences of unsafe sex. Vitamin A plays a vital role in supporting the immune system and keeping mucous membranes functioning. Vitamin A supplementation sufficient to prevent blindness and other deficiency-related diseases for one person for an entire year costs less than one condom. Fortifying the food supply with iron to prevent anaemia and increase disease resistance and work capacity costs about 20 cents per person per year.

Treatment for people with HIV/AIDS

AIDS-related care is a vital and powerful investment that directly benefits people living with HIV/AIDS, reduces the social and economic impact of the epidemic, and enhances prevention efforts. Treatment for those with HIV/AIDS is both compassionate and cost-effective. The cost of not treating AIDS includes the burden of opportunistic infections in, and the early death of, 25 to 35 per cent of the workforce in Africa over the next 10 years.

Only a fraction of those in need—roughly 730,000 people worldwide, including 500,000 living in high-income countries—were receiving antiretroviral treatment in mid-2002. Although the price of highly active antiretroviral therapy (HAART) for one patient dropped from $10,000-$12,000 per year in 2000 to $500-$800 in 2001, covering the cost of treatment remains a challenge in most low-income countries. Significant external financing is needed to provide antiretrovirals to all HIV-infected persons.

Treatment can also help keep parents alive, and this benefits children and young people directly, as they are allowed to remain at home and are not forced into adult roles prematurely.

STEPS TO PREVENT HIV INFECTION AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

Preventing young people from acquiring HIV and properly caring for those living with the virus are the only ways to manage and eventually halt the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

The key to a good prevention programme is understanding the dynamics of disease transmission. The approach adopted in each country should reflect the epidemiological patterns of infection there.

All countries, however, should ensure that adolescents have access to a full range of services fundamental to their healthy development and to reducing their risk of contracting HIV. Principally, they need schooling, youth-friendly health services and counselling, access to a distinct juvenile justice system, and opportunities for livelihood that are appropriate for evolving capacities, contribute to their development and offer adequate remuneration. Reducing HIV transmission among young people will also require prevention education, condom availability, and a broad assault on malnutrition and multiple infectious diseases.

Below are a number of recommendations focusing on the establishment of policies and programmes aimed at controlling the spread of HIV/AIDS.

National policy recommendations to promote young people's rights and reduce their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS

Recommendation

Implement national policies to protect children and young people from all forms of abuse, violence, exploitation, discrimination, trafficking and loss of inheritance.

Adolescents need opportunities to develop their individual capacities in safe and enabling environments that promote their participation in and contribution to society. Action is required to strengthen national legislation focusing on protection issues in order to prohibit discrimination related to HIV serostatus, to protect property rights, to ensure access to information and services, and to reduce the abuse, exploitation and trafficking of young people. Governments should be required to enact and enforce laws that protect young people from all forms of sexual violence, and to impose severe criminal penalties on their abusers.

Recommendation

Ensure the implementation of a standard package of youth-friendly health services both in and beyond the health system.

Action should be taken to strengthen the capacity of public and private health and social support facilities to provide youth-friendly services and health promotion activities. Efforts should also be made to ensure that these services are accessible to young people who are especially vulnerable, including displaced adolescents and street youth. Forms of assistance that can have a direct impact on AIDS such as STI services, antenatal care and VCT are critical, as are meaningful drug rehabilitation programmes and facilities.

Recommendation

Treat sexually transmitted infections.[129]

Because STIs greatly increase the risk of contracting HIV, treating youth with such infections must be a priority. The four most common STIs—syphilis, gonorrhoea, chlamydia and trichomoniasis—can all be cured fairly easily with antibiotics. Ensuring correct diagnosis and the availability of appropriate medications could reduce infection rates.[130]

Recommendation

Promote and establish voluntary counselling and testing services.

Nine out of ten people infected with HIV do not know they are carrying the virus. Because young people are highly contagious, and because they are likely to have been recently infected and not very likely to be using condoms, implementing VCT services for this population is essential. Educating young people who test positive and convincing them to protect themselves and their partners has been shown to be an effective strategy for controlling the epidemic. Referring youth who test positive to treatment programmes can decrease their infectivity, as treatment can help lower their viral load. For those young people who test negative, as most will, VCT provides an opportunity to educate them on how to reduce their future risk of contracting the virus.

Recommendation

Support the supply and distribution of condoms.

Male and female condoms are an essential component of any AIDS prevention campaign. Condoms are a simple and affordable lifesaving technology. They are easy to use, do not require medical supervision, can be distributed just about anywhere, and are highly cost-effective. Therefore, condoms should be widely accessible, and their use promoted among sexually active people of all ages.

Promoting condom use among young people has been shown to be a very effective prevention strategy. In Brazil, the percentage of young men who reported using condoms during their first sexual encounter rose from 5 per cent in 1986 to 50 per cent in 1999.[131] This coincides with a significant price reduction in condoms in the early 1990s.

Condoms should be made more accessible to young people—affordable or, if necessary, free of charge and available at a variety of locations where young men and women can obtain them. Diversifying points of distribution can maximize the reach of prevention programmes.

In addition to offering protection from HIV, condoms are effective in preventing STIs and can reduce current and future morbidity resulting from these infections, allow youth to avoid treatment costs, and lower their susceptibility to HIV infection.

Recommendation

Improve outreach to IDUs by implementing awareness and information programmes and by providing access to sterile needles and syringes as well as age-appropriate drug dependency treatment and rehabilitative services.

It has been shown that a comprehensive response before prevalence reaches 5 per cent can curtail the spread of HIV via injecting drug use. If attention and resources are not directed at monitoring this form of transmission, the consequences can be serious. Evidence exists that HIV can explode to include over 40 per cent of the IDU population within 6-12 months.

Recommendation

Ensure blood safety.

Young people are overrepresented in statistics on trauma and complications of pregnancy that may require the transfusion of blood or blood products. Ensuring the safety of blood and blood products is necessary for young people as well as the rest of the general population.

Education

Recommendation

Provide basic education for all young people.

The pursuit of an education in itself offers a measure of protection against HIV/AIDS, reducing the levels of risk and vulnerability to the disease by providing information and skills, increasing young people's connectedness and security, facilitating access to a trusted adult, and increasing literacy.

Some education planners are calling for new approaches such as distance learning for teachers and students, as well as enhanced on-the-job training and the expansion of teacher-training facilities, in order to improve the quality of instruction and the provision of education. They are also proposing efforts to help teachers learn how to avoid AIDS and to communicate appropriate prevention messages to their students.

Action to provide education to those young people outside the formal school system is urgently needed, as out-of-school youth are generally at higher risk of HIV infection. Introducing specific measures such as subsidies, scholarships, and the provision of educational alternatives, including vocational training, may help young people to complete their schooling.

Recommendation

Strengthen life skills education in both schools and out-of-school programmes.

For AIDS prevention, life skills are as important as information about disease, as they enable young people to act on that information, to increase their autonomy in sexual encounters, and to exercise good judgement and responsible behaviour. Life skills are those skills that enhance psychosocial development. They include skills for effective decision-making and problem solving, creative and critical thinking, strengthening communication and interpersonal relations, raising self-awareness, and coping with emotions and causes of stress.

Studies have shown that skills-based education can have a significant and sustainable impact. A global assessment of school-based programmes found that education about sexuality and AIDS prevention incorporated into programmes administered with schools not only delayed the start of sexual activity, but also reduced the number of sexual partners and increased contraceptive use among those who became sexually active.

Because the risks young people are exposed to often cannot be predicted, HIV/AIDS education should begin early, that is, before they become sexually active. In addition, the ever-changing context of young people's lives today requires that they learn to think, not just receive information.

Information, education and communication

Recommendation

Devise youth-oriented information, education and communication (IEC) campaigns with measurable objectives, focusing on key messages to which every young person should be exposed.

Young people cannot protect themselves if they do not know the facts about HIV/AIDS. They need to learn these facts before they become sexually active or engage in drug use, and the information they receive needs to be regularly reinforced and augmented.

Programmes should promote the ABCs of prevention—abstinence, being faithful to one's partner (or limiting the number of partners), and consistent and correct condom use—and not just isolated or selected parts.

Communication programmes must inform youth about the risks of unsafe sex and drug use, making the reality of these risks very clear to them. Such programmes should promote a range of safer sex behaviours and options. It is extremely important for young people that promotion strategies reinforce the idea that condom use is responsible, not promiscuous, behaviour. Mass media can play a key role in this respect, and should be decisively engaged to achieve critical goals.

Mobilization of young people, families and communities

Recommendation

Mobilize youth, families and communities in the campaign to fight HIV/AIDS.

Young people are increasingly being recognized as a key resource for changing the course of the HIV epidemic. Studies have shown that they can be both responsive to HIV prevention programmes and effective promoters of action to control the spread of the disease.

There are special reasons why young people's involvement is essential for action on HIV/AIDS. Their understanding of life is developed both with and among their peers. Friends shape young people's understanding of social relationships and the acquisition of negotiation skills, and enable them to develop a sense of personal competence and responsibility. This kind of peer support is invaluable for AIDS action, as it can be used to channel correct information about HIV prevention. It can also draw young people into productive activities that contribute to increased competence and confidence.

Training and support of parents and adults responsible for working with and for young people may be required to enhance their ability to interact more effectively with youth.

Measurement

Recommendation

Conduct situation analyses at the country level, reviewing the current status of young people's health and development, with a focus on HIV/AIDS.

The availability of data is crucial. Surveillance programmes must be expanded to include the collection of data by age, sex and year. Such data are critical to achieving an accurate understanding of the extent of the epidemic among young people, identifying those most affected, and ascertaining patterns of transmission.

Monitoring the impact of HIV/AIDS will better allow organizations to take appropriate, targeted action. In addition to improving and expanding surveillance measures, it is critical that there be monitoring and evaluation of interventions in order to assist leaders and programmers in formulating decisions with regard to human and financial resource allocation. Such data will be especially meaningful as Governments prepare to bring programmes to scale at the national level.

Recommendation

Provide countries with technical support to establish and strengthen their HIV/AIDS/STI surveillance capacity.

Capacity-building at the country level will be necessary for the collection and analysis of data at national and communal levels to measure HIV/AIDS and other adolescent health and development indicators.

CONCLUSION

The likelihood that a young person will become infected with HIV is influenced by a host of factors relating to the individual and his or her environment. Today all young people are at risk for HIV, though that risk is not shared equally among them. It is evident that education, poverty, employment, geography, and social isolation both shape and limit young people's choices and vulnerabilities.

Interventions to prevent HIV among youth require a broad focus that encompasses, but is not limited to, behaviour change among young people. Social and economic development strategies for poverty reduction are necessary and should be geared towards reducing inequalities, increasing public expenditure on essential services for children and youth (including health and education), and developing employment opportunities. Though these are by no means new necessities, the AIDS pandemic has made realizing them all the more urgent.

This chapter has failed to find evidence to validate sexual behaviour as the single explanation for HIV prevalence as high as 25 per cent of the adult population in some African countries and less than 1 per cent in developed countries. An assault on the biological, socio-economic and sociocultural factors that make youth vulnerable is necessary, and programming for young people ought to reflect this reality more concretely.

For the time being, however, abstaining from sex, mutual monogamy between uninfected partners, and the correct and consistent use of condoms are the only options that can be presented to young people for avoiding the sexual transmission of HIV. In order to decrease their risk of HIV infection today, it is essential that youth receive education about HIV, obtain condoms and clean needles when needed, and have access to health and rehabilitative services.

For those designing prevention programmes for youth, it is also very important to remember that whatever the initial point of entry into a population, HIV eventually spreads through sexual transmission. Therefore, all young people need information on the risks of sexual transmission and means of protection, even if the region is not currently experiencing a sexually driven epidemic. Young people must be prepared to survive in the world's fast-changing contexts. ■

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Chapter 14.
YOUTH &
CONFLICT

This chapter is divided into *five sections. Following the definition of relevant terms, the social, economic, political, health-related, psychological and cultural dimensions of conflict are explored and the frequent failure of preventive measures highlighted. Recent United Nations and other international instruments addressing the issue of conflict prevention and peace-building are then examined. A case study of Sierra Leone details the various elements of conflict as well as efforts to achieve and sustain peace, and recommendations that may help to deter future conflicts are presented. A conclusion offers a summary of the chapter's main points and an overall assessment of developments relating to youth and conflict.*

INTRODUCTION

Preventing violent conflict is imperative for development. While wars and violent confrontations are not new, the scale of violence perpetrated against civilians and the complexity of the emergencies occurring in the past couple of decades are unprecedented. During conflicts of such magnitude, masses of people are displaced after their homes and communities are destroyed, rapidly increasing the ranks of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) throughout the world.

Youth are often a targeted group during conflict. Young people's participation in armed hostilities is facilitated through the trade of small arms and light weapons. The dearth of opportunities in their communities often leads them to gravitate towards violent conflict and acts of terrorism. Many are successfully mobilized through the ideologies of war. As victims and witnesses, they cannot help but be affected by the grim realities surrounding them.

Traditional prevention mechanisms have proved top-heavy and ineffective in addressing the root causes of conflict and problems leading to the escalation of tensions. It is not surprising, then, that young people have taken on active roles and created youth networks to try to build peace and prevent outbreaks of violence. As one young Nigerian articulated, "The older generation has failed us, and we cannot continue watching while our future is being mortgaged."[1]

In response to the increasing prevalence of armed conflicts, the international community has incorporated in its peace-building agenda early warning and prevention systems to identify and address risks. However, the types of indicators and variables to be used for monitoring and evaluation are still under discussion. The new policies and approaches present major opportunities for progress. More importantly, the role of youth is now recognized as critical in creating long-term stability, producing effective outcomes within communities, and offering protection from future conflicts.

Defining various field-specific terms will allow a clearer understanding of the material to be presented. *Conflict* occurs naturally and involves two or more parties with differing interests and perspectives. It takes place at personal levels (between family members and friends and even within oneself) and at formal levels (between politicians, diplomats and businesses). It can also act as a stimulus for addressing complaints.[2] However, if channeled improperly, conflict has the potential to intensify

and erupt into violence. The focus of this chapter will be on *armed conflict*, which is an example of *violent conflict*. Armed conflict commonly refers to the use of manufactured weapons by different parties against one another, with at least one of the parties being the Government of a State.[3]

Early warning denotes "the systematic collection and analysis of information coming from areas of crises for the purpose of ... anticipating the escalation of violent conflict; ... the development of strategic responses to these crises; ... and the presentation of options to critical actors for the purposes of decision-making."[4]

Conflict prevention involves addressing "the structural sources of conflict in order to build a solid foundation for peace. Where those foundations are crumbling, conflict prevention attempts to reinforce them, usually in the form of a diplomatic initiative. Such preventive action is, by definition, a low-profile activity; when successful, it may even go unnoticed altogether."[5]

Conflict transformation and *conflict resolution* work in conjunction with conflict prevention. While prevention entails maintaining peace before and after violence by correctly interpreting and acting upon early warning signs, conflict transformation involves shifting existing violence into constructive dialogue. Non-violent modes of conflict resolution can then be applied to achieve peace and prevent future conflicts through the use of early warning systems (EWS). Although the definitions of the two terms differ, they are often used interchangeably in peace literature and contain similar elements in their modes of application, such as the building of trust and reconstruction (*see figure 14.1*).

Figure 14.1
Cycle of peace-building during conflict

EW

Warning signals

Prevention

Measures to avoid reigniting violent conflict

Build trust

Resolution

• More dialogue
• Traditional*/ non-traditional modes

Transformation

*Top-heavy and do not address root problems.
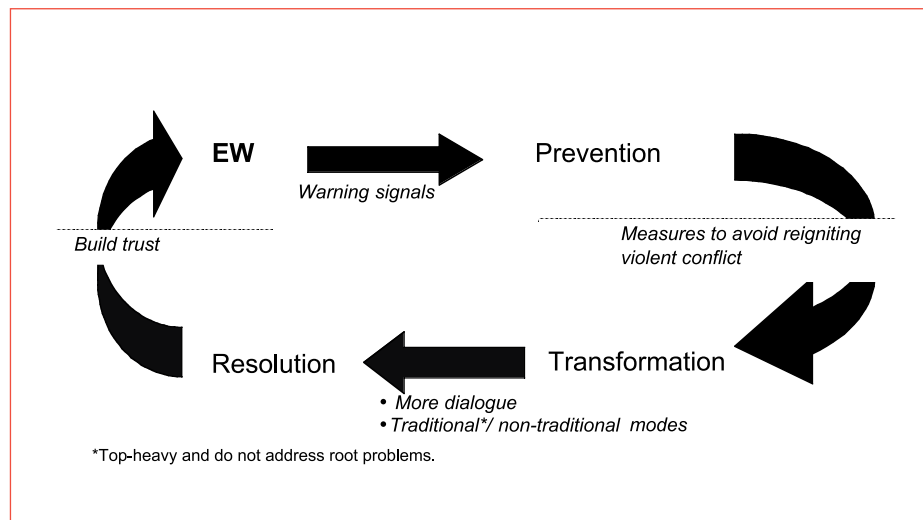
FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO ARMED CONFLICT AND ITS IMPACT ON YOUTH

Young people today encounter greater and more unique challenges than ever before. During a crucial phase of their development, not only are they confronted with the biological and psychological growth processes that characterize youth and adolescence, but they must also grapple with formidable external pressures such as poverty, disease and violence. The eruption of war further compounds the adversities many face. Young people have much at stake, yet they have little say in the policies and activities that pertain to their lives.

Warfare magnifies existing impoverishment and despair. Between 1989 and 2000 there were 111 reported armed conflicts; seven involved fighting between States, and the remainder were internal disputes. All were characterized by the use of light weapons and small arms as well as decentralized fighting groups. The smallest number of new conflicts occurred in the year 2000. Unfortunately, this does not represent a decline in the overall total, as few of the disputes initiated in years past have shown any signs of abatement or resolution. The chances of ending prolonged armed conflicts are modest owing to their complexity and to negative experiences with peacemaking, as exemplified by Angola, Chechnya, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka. Regional politics often add to the complexity of these situations, as illustrated by the conflicts in the Balkans, Central Asia and Western Africa.[6]

A tally of recorded victories during the cold war brings into question the conventional wisdom of intervening in wars being fought for territorial gain; negotiations led to 34 ceasefires during the cold war (1946-1989), but conflict continued in 33 cases.[7] When EWS signal rising conflict, conveying the likelihood of such an outcome to inherent fighting parties could potentially be a valuable incentive for them to turn, instead, to non-violent modes of expression.

The debate over the precise causes and effects of armed conflicts continues. Many interlinking components—including social, health, economic, political, psychological and cultural factors—can lead to violent conflict (*see figure 14.2*).

Figure 14.2
Underlying roots of conflict

- Denial of basic human needs
- Violent conflict
- Intensified aggression
- Sense of existential threat by conflicting parties
- Structural, economic, political and social inequalities
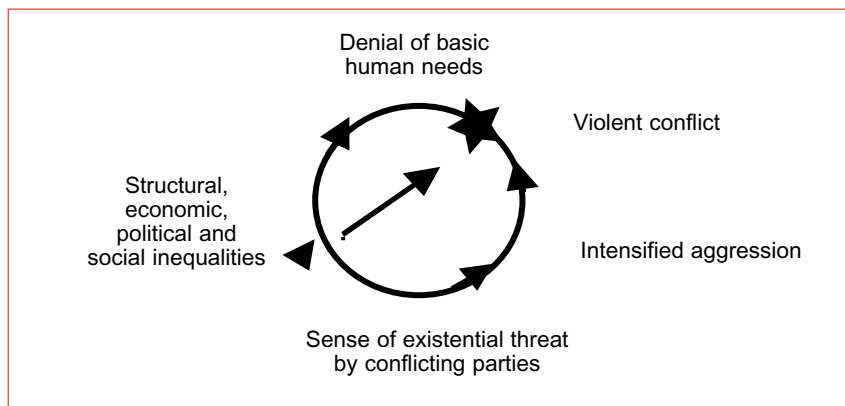
Source: United Nations, Department of Political Affairs, *Early Warning and Preventive Measures: Building United Nations Capacity*, Manual for the United Nations Staff College Project, Rev. 6 (2001), p. 34.

Social dimensions

Civilian casualties as a proportion of the total number of casualties of armed conflict have risen from 5 per cent during the First World War to more than 80 per cent today, and most of those affected are women and children. In the past decade, 2 million children have been killed as a result of armed conflict, and 6 million have been disabled, mainly through mutilation and landmine explosions. A total of 12 million have been left homeless, more than 1 million orphaned or separated from their parents, and more than 10 million psychologically traumatized.[7] For young people, survival takes precedence over education, environmental protection and other development issues.

The majority of warfare takes place in developing countries—particularly in Africa, where some of the highest numbers of child soldiers are found. An estimated 300,000 young soldiers, most of who are between the ages of 10 and 24, currently risk their lives in the course of armed conflicts. Their recruitment may be either voluntary or forced. Many are compelled to join through conscription, abduction and coercion. Their survival becomes a challenge as they face the dangers of violence and illicit substance use on a daily basis. Drug abuse becomes an integral part of their lives, shielding them from physical and emotional pain and forcing them to stay awake.[9] Another motive behind pushing drugs on child soldiers (and on repressed youth in general) is to subdue rather than resolve their pent-up frustrations. Drugs are used as an effective mechanism to control their actions and minds.

During warfare, girls and women encounter threats of rape, sexual mutilation and exploitation, trafficking and humiliation. Many are beaten regardless of their level of compliance with the demands of their attackers. Rape is common, and its aftereffects serve as a constant reminder of the horrific experiences they have undergone. When the conflict ends, they attempt to overcome their own personal traumas and sustain the livelihood of their household members. Often, however, they do not receive the services that would help them deal with their situation, and integrated national policies give insufficient attention to factors that would help deter further violence, such as specialized education and training.

An inevitable result of armed conflict is the enormous flood of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs); the present count is approximately 50 million, according to UNHCR. They are regularly denied access to health care, education, income-generating opportunities and psychological counselling. Friction between them and local community members, who believe their resources are being drained by the influx of outsiders, adds more tension to their lives. Access to food and security both inside and outside camps is a major concern for refugees and IDPs. Often they lack the skills and coping strategies that could help them deal with their emotions and reintegrate into society. More than 80 per cent of the victims are women and children. They have to worry about not only basic survival and safety, but also sexual exploitation and diseases aggravated by war. The monitoring of food aid distribution by international donors is often weak, and structures tend to be established by male traditional leaders in groups of refugees, returnees and IDPs, placing the more vulnerable groups at the mercy of outsiders. The youth are often exploited and do not have access to appropriate measures or laws that could protect them and help secure their future livelihood.

Health dimensions

Approximately 3 billion people worldwide are currently without adequate sanitation, and 1.3 billion have no access to clean water.[10] During war, access to resources becomes even more difficult, particularly under unaccountable Governments. Health-care facilities are often destroyed during conflicts, and even in peacetime they are able to provide only rudimentary services owing to human and material resource constraints. Health indicators decline in warring countries with no social safety nets, and surveillance to control the progression of diseases becomes an arduous task.

Problems are intensified, if not triggered, by war. High mortality rates among women and children are further exacerbated during conflict. Countries such as Afghanistan, Angola, Niger and Sierra Leone have the highest rates of infant and under-five mortality.[11] Preventable conditions such as malnutrition, malaria, acute respiratory infections, diarrhoea and measles account for some of the highest death rates. These illnesses are prevalent in war-affected areas such as Afghanistan, where 50 per cent of the children suffer from chronic malnutrition.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic has contributed greatly to the disintegration of societies already under enormous stress. The disease has infected 34.3 million people worldwide, with an average of between 6,000 and 7,000 new cases among youth alone appearing every day, mainly in Africa and Asia. The rates have surged in areas of armed conflict. More than three-quarters of the 17 countries with the highest numbers of children orphaned by AIDS are engaged in hostilities or are on the brink of an emergency involving conflict.[12] The disease itself unravels the fibre of a society, affecting not only communities, but also national security,[13] as high rates of HIV infection in the military reduce the size and capability of the armed forces and place civilians in greater danger of contracting the disease.[14] Sexually transmitted infection rates (STI) are two to five times higher for the military than for comparable civilian populations during peacetime in most countries, and those with STIs are at a greater risk of contracting—and subsequently spreading—HIV. Infection rates among both soldiers and civilians jump dramatically during armed conflict[15] through systematic rape and large-scale population displacements. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where the rate of HIV infection in the armed forces is known to be about 60 per cent,[16] the prolonged war led to the death of the parents of 680,000 children. In Ethiopia, at the end of the war with Eritrea, the corresponding figure reached 1.2 million.[17] In Colombia, child soldiers are vulnerable to HIV owing to sexual violence by older officers or pressure by peers to engage in sexual activity. In the five years following the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, 2,000 women—the majority of whom were raped—were tested for HIV. Many had been sexually inactive before the genocide, yet 80 per cent tested positive.[18] Without access to information and services, these women will die, and the spread of the disease will weaken socio-political and economic foundations and effectively cripple the nation.

In some areas, the spread of the disease is insidious. Many in the general population are unaware of its prevalence, as some victims remain silent, fearing reprisals from their attackers or rejection from their families; others commit suicide to end their torment. Many face sexual prejudice and exploitation while they struggle to provide for

their families. Facilities and services to address associated physical and mental problems are seldom available, and those that are currently operating can be unfriendly towards youth in particular, discouraging them from seeking information about their health and receiving treatment.

Economic dimensions

Armed conflict affects education, social welfare and economic development and aggravates unemployment. Deficiencies in employment opportunities and social safety nets, including rationing systems and basic health services, generate more tension and leave civilians with limited options for a sustainable livelihood. In a wartime economy, the situation turns catastrophic as civilians are left to fend for themselves without sufficient State or international assistance. This places the youth population in a particularly vulnerable position, as they are the group most targeted for recruitment and abductions, and more likely to turn to black markets for survival and use armed conflict as a way to vent their anger.

At present, insufficient opportunities exist for young people to earn a living, substantially heightening their chances of facing poverty and turning to illicit activities. Of the 3 billion people surviving on less than $2 a day, approximately half are below the age of 24 and live in developing countries. Over 70 million young people are unemployed, and many more are struggling for survival on low wages and must endure poor (and often exploitative) working conditions. More than 1 billion jobs must be created by 2010 to reduce unemployment and accommodate young workers entering the labour force.[19]

Creating jobs for youth, while vital, is not sufficient to produce a level of economic development and stability that will ensure peace. There are other factors at the national and regional levels that work against peace-building through economic means. Internally, the absence of skilled workers—owing to, for instance, the prevalence of deaths from war, starvation and diseases such as HIV/AIDS—lowers the GDP of some nations, as exemplified in sub-Saharan Africa. In other places, the destruction of the country sets the economy back decades. This was the case in Lebanon during the 1990s, when GDP remained at about 50 per cent of what it had been before the troubles began in 1974. Conflict may affect resources as well, placing the welfare of the country's population at risk—as in the case of Angola during its civil war, where 80 per cent of the agricultural land was abandoned, greatly affecting the food supply.[20]

Economies are also affected by outside factors that threaten peace. The production and distribution of illicit drugs, tremendous in scope and highly profitable, often feed into armed conflicts. In many regions, the profits from trading in illicit drugs are used to fund fighting by insurgent and guerrilla groups. Violence is often employed to protect their business interests.

Some economists believe that the economic dimensions of war are the most important, taking precedence over other factors such as social grievances. According to a World Bank paper, a country is at risk of civil conflict if the primary commodity exports—diamonds, oil and agricultural products—comprise the greatest portion of the national income. The paper contends that a country in which commodity dependence reaches 26 per cent of GDP is prone to rebellion. The same country with no

primary commodity exports has only a 0.5 per cent probability of engaging in rebellion.[21] While this view provides interesting insights, it reduces the complexity of war to the economic interests of the insurgency groups. Further, it does not, for example, account for variables that contribute to the mobilization of the masses, who often receive little or nothing in the way of financial gains during or after rebellions.

Political dimensions

Democracy and political stability are closely associated with maintaining peace and preventing the eruption of violent conflict. The demise of countries is linked to the application of non-democratic tactics, which marginalizes groups of people and contributes to the inequitable distribution of resources. Non-transparent parties withhold or alter information on basic rights to benefit determined leaders, in the process breaching human rights laws.

Corruption, extortion and abuse are woven into the fabric of most political systems, signalling State failure. The greatest misappropriations, however, occur in areas in which the Government feels no accountability towards its subjects. Without established social safety nets, the struggle for survival may turn dangerous as people set out on desperate searches for food, risking their lives in the process, as exemplified in Sudan. This type of situation is generally reflected in low standards of living and in both quantitative and qualitative analyses. Signs of State failure and high levels of tension may be seen in indicators such as high mortality and low life expectancy rates, destruction of the environment, and "brain drain" (or capital flight). Some Governments, fearing an intensification of violence, establish formal or informal safety nets to meet the immediate needs of the populace.

Injustice and the lack of transparency in local and national governments create an environment in which corruption, covert markets and crime can take root and flourish. Youth often receive severe penalties for petty infractions, and no measures exist to challenge inappropriate judicial decisions, resulting in the marginalization of these young people. Mistrust is bred if neither the legal nor the traditional justice system can offer adequate means of settling disputes, making extrajudicial violence easier, as in the case of Colombia, where drug organizations illicitly control some security and justice officials to help protect their business interests.

Social learning processes, especially ideologies and cultural norms, underpin much of the violence. One way oppressive regimes seek to gain advantage is through the media, often controlled or threatened by the dominant political faction. Such regimes use mass communications to spread propaganda and divert attention away from outstanding issues. Leaders use emotional appeals—placed within religious, cultural and political contexts—to mobilize people; youth are targeted in particular, as they are more susceptible to ideological messages. Young people are especially vulnerable because they lack the necessary skills to communicate through non-violence. The media also transmit negative models that young people imitate. As studies show in Latin America and West Africa, perpetrators look up to gunfighters as their role models and mimic their behaviour because they can relate to the characters' convictions and portrayed emotions of an outcast.

Psychological and cultural dimensions

A major psychosocial cause of conflict is the repeated marginalization of particular persons or groups. As a host of people are excluded from the social, economic and political spheres, tension increases, and marginalization makes it easier for contending parties to cause individuals and groups to engage in extreme actions and mobilize others to act as perpetrators. The effects of marginalization differ for every individual and are linked to personal traits and environmental circumstances.

Historically, those who have become rebel leaders felt victimized and humiliated during an earlier period of their lives. They may have experienced repression, human rights violations, deprivation of needed resources and/or alienation. Their aggression appears to be a form of retaliation deriving from past feelings of indignity and degradation. A theory that closely examines the notion of humiliation underlying structural violence contends that one contributing factor is the absence of recognition and respect, which creates divisions between "masters" and "underlings" and feelings of humiliation. As the "underlings" rise to power, they engage in extreme acts, inflicting tremendous indignities and perpetuating the cycle of humiliation. This is particularly true in hierarchical societies such as Burundi, Rwanda, and Germany under Hitler's reign. Followers may be successfully instrumentalized with notions of avenging humiliation, where there may simply be frustration.[22] Examples of this are depicted in the Sierra Leone case study below but may also be seen in Colombia, the Philippines and Rwanda. When rebel leaders are in a position to vent their feelings through actions, the majority of the population is made to suffer, with many killed, wounded or exploited.

Similarly, youth and adolescents who experienced early aggression and a violent childhood are at the highest risk of perpetrating violence. Unaccompanied children[23] are both victims and sources of violence in Africa and Latin America. Studies indicate that uneducated youth and school dropouts are more likely to engage in violence and other behaviours that are detrimental to their health.[24] This is perhaps because they are less secure than their educated peers and feel inferior to or less capable than other members of the community—or, in a word, humiliated.

Youth and women are often marginalized in decision-making processes. At the local and national levels, they are expected to obey political and religious community leaders. At the international level, they have little say in the formulation and implementation of policies that are meant to protect their interests and well-being during peacetime and wartime. Nonetheless, they must endure the sometimes brutal socioeconomic effects of these decisions, and their long-term needs are left unmet, as in the case of rape victims who do not receive health and counselling services.

During armed conflict, girls and women assume non-traditional roles as heads of households. Although it becomes their responsibility to produce meals for their families, during emergencies these individuals—many of whom are children and adolescents—are seldom consulted about issues related to food aid, nor are they informed when the deliveries they are depending on are delayed or cancelled.[25] These situations may easily be avoided by including them in the planning and execution of humanitari-

an aid procedures. Likewise, the women may be empowered through their inclusion in high-level decision-making processes. Their participation would most likely contribute to an improvement in social welfare and more equitable resource distribution.

As explained above, many variables are linked to the causes and effects of armed conflict (*see figure 14.3*). Clearly, these conflicts violate human rights from multiple angles. Most of the violence takes place in the poorest regions of the world, where a viable future for youth seems unlikely. Aggression and threats of violence break down societal structures. The increased stress and feelings of hopelessness that are indirectly linked to poverty, unemployment, low educational attainment and poor governance constitute part of a global pattern in areas of armed conflict. The higher rates of poverty, drug use and disease in these areas will have the most negative impact on poorer households and on youth, leading to separation from families, exploitation, child labour—and violence, with the fighting process used as a means of venting anger and frustration and assigning blame. Youth-sensitized conflict prevention and peace-building procedures may produce positive long-term results. By mainstreaming their participation in policy-making and formulating procedures, the impact of their current contributions to their communities can be expanded to reach larger segments of the population.

Figure 14.3
Fragmented dimensions of conflict
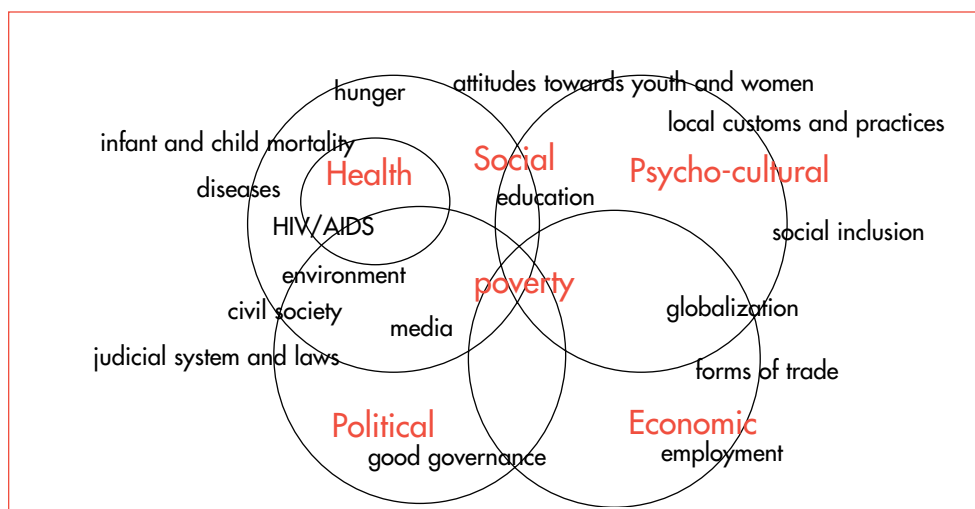
INTERNATIONAL RESPONSES TO YOUTH IN ARMED CONFLICT

Recognizing the critical importance of addressing prevailing trends and issues in the area of armed conflict, the United Nations has integrated relevant measures into mandates and reports dealing with other priority concerns, including reintegration and resolution, peacekeeping, disarmament, security and human rights. The importance of conflict prevention for youth at the domestic and international levels is reflected not only in United Nations resolutions, but also in the increase in funds (from private sector grants) for non-governmental conflict prevention projects.

Affirming the Organization's pivotal role in addressing underlying security and conflict issues, the Secretary-General pledged in a report released in 2000 "to move the United Nations from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention", providing recommendations that covered a broad range of issues of concern to children affected by armed conflict.[26] A year later, he reviewed the United Nations' progress in developing conflict prevention capacity and issued a second report that upheld 29 recommendations formulated to help achieve this goal.[27] In support of the findings of a report prepared by Graça Machel in 1996 (described below), both of the Secretary-General's reports on children and armed conflict stress the importance of incorporating child protection concerns into peace negotiations and practices during and after conflicts. They also emphasize the need for States to comply with the provisions of international instruments such as the Rome Statute, which deals with the prosecution of persons accused of war crimes and genocide, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child's Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, which raises the minimum age of recruitment for compulsory military service from 15 to 18 years and bans participation in armed forces before the age of 18.[28] The intention of indicated measures such as consolidating these normative frameworks is to protect children from the impact of illicit activities and trade, re-recruitment, exploitation, abuse and HIV/AIDS, and to ensure their involvement in justice-seeking processes. Security Council resolutions 1325 of 2000 and 1366 of 2001 reaffirm that the Council's role in the prevention of armed conflicts constitutes an "integral part of (its) primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security". Beyond the Council's integration of conflict prevention in the maintenance of peace and security, a number of its earlier decisions—notably resolutions 1261 and 1265 of 1999—give full legitimacy to the protection of children in armed conflict and emphasize that the impact of conflict on youth has implications for global peace and security.

The impact of armed conflict is clearly outlined in the 1996 Machel report and in a detailed follow-up by the same author published in 2001.[29] Using the Convention on the Rights of the Child's framework of operative principles and standards as a guide, the 1996 report broke new ground, incorporating a complete and innovative agenda for action to improve the protection and care of children in situations of conflict.[30] The report described and assessed the situation of war-affected children, underscoring the plight of child soldiers, internally displaced and refugee children, child victims of landmines and sanctions, and the physical and psychological impact of conflict on children. Machel presented a preview of her 2001 publication at the International Conference on War-Affected Children, held in Winnipeg, Canada, in September 2000, reviewing the accomplishments since 1996 and recommending strategies to advance children's protection in armed conflict.[31] The new publication includes expanded coverage of small arms and light weapons, women's role in peace-building, peace and security, HIV/AIDS, media and communications, and education to promote peace. Earlier instruments referring to the impact of violence on youth—such as the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond (1996) and the Lisbon Declaration on Youth Policies and Programmes (1998)—affirm the importance of addressing these themes. A recent General Assembly resolution reiterates the importance of formal and non-formal education within the framework of the

International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World and recommends actions to promote safety and security at different levels.[32] All of these responses highlight the need for a comprehensive approach in preventing violent conflicts—an approach that includes the adoption of short-term and long-term political, diplomatic, humanitarian, human rights, developmental, institutional and other measures.

## SIERRA LEONE: A CASE STUDY OF YOUTH IN CONFLICT

Success in preventing conflict requires an understanding of the root causes of war, local capacities and interests, and the magnitude and type of provisions made by the international community. The present case study elaborates on the many dimensions of warfare and the impact of armed conflict on youth. It also shows that while young people are invisible actors during international negotiations, they play an important role in peace-building and conflict prevention.

The conflict

The conflict in Sierra Leone dates back more than 40 years but escalated in 1991 when the Revolutionary United Front launched a war near the border with Liberia to overthrow the Government. The army tried to defend the Government with the support of the Economic Community of West African States Military Observer Group (ECO-MOG). However, the following year, the army itself overthrew the Government. Two attempts were made (in 1996 and 1997) to implement a peace agreement, but both failed. Intensified restlessness led the Front and some dissidents in the army to invade and wreak havoc across Freetown, resulting in the deaths of more than 5,000 civilians on 6 January 1999.

Following this notorious event, a third attempt was made to resolve the armed conflict with the Lome Peace Agreement of 7 July 1999, which included special provisions for children. Initially, the ceasefire was successful, but the attacks and killings resumed, and demobilized child soldiers accompanied by ECOMOG were abducted once again. Non-United-Nations British intervention and the deployment of 17,500 personnel by the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) to guarantee security for the Programme on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) helped stabilize the election and peace processes.[33] In the interim, the premeditated, systematic perpetration of violence left more than 200,000 people dead and countless others—mainly young people—maimed, mutilated, suffering the effects of rape, and distraught.

A combination of factors contributed to the prolonged armed conflicts and war in Sierra Leone. One was the lack of political equity, which allowed the exploitation of people through military dictatorships, government unaccountability and anti-democratic tactics. Another factor was the dire social situation, characterized by the inequitable distribution of resources, poverty, the lack of health care and safety nets, and high levels of illiteracy and unemployment. Sierra Leone itself was largely neglected and ignored, except by those attempting to exploit the country's diamond and mineral deposits.[34] Illegal gold and diamond dealings and the transfer of small arms and light weapons expanded the black market and marginalized civilians, providing a rationale for making violence acceptable behaviour. The
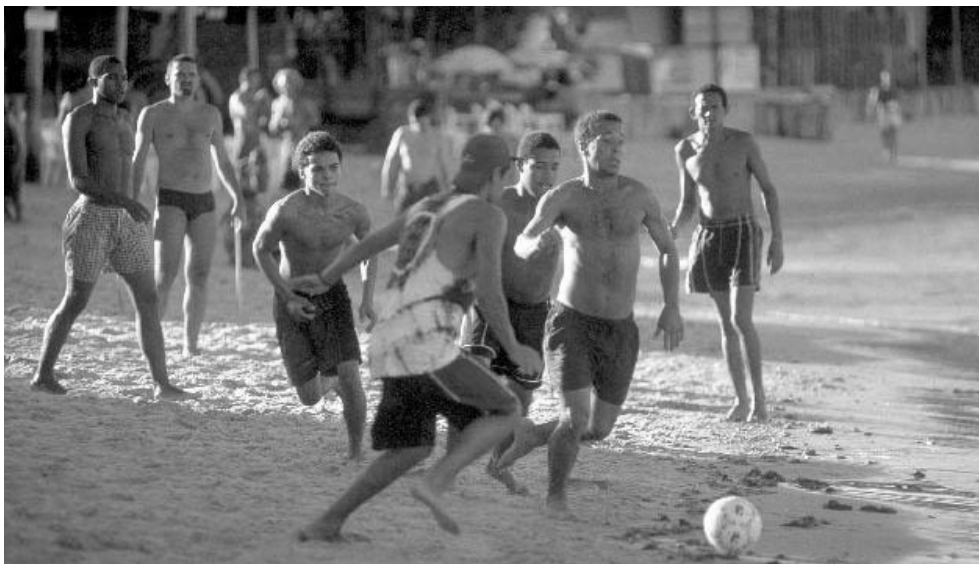
revival of multinational interest in diamond reserves, marked by the increased presence of foreign "security-cum-mining" companies, contributed to the black market expansion and fueled the conflict.[35]

The precarious state of their society dimmed any hopes young people might have had for a brighter future and better opportunities. In due course, the possession of arms was viewed as a means of subsistence by youth and child soldiers—and particularly by the footloose and often angry core members who faced educational difficulties and social exclusion.[36] Moreover, the rebel groups provided their soldiers with food when their own Government would not. Some perpetrators deliberately maimed and raped villagers and amputated limbs. Their attacks included humiliating community members in positions of authority as acts of revenge or demonstrations of power—expressions of rebellion against traditions that during peacetime had resulted in their ostracism.[37]

Through a strategy known as "de-institutionalization", youth were made to murder their own family members and neighbours, making them pariahs in their own communities. A number of perpetrators imitated well-known action heroes such as Rambo, placing bandanas on their heads, reciting lines from the movies and adopting the names of heroic characters. Others, some as young as seven, were forcibly recruited as child combatants and, along with their 18- to 24-year-old commanders, consumed drugs to perform the atrocious acts that destroyed their family and community bonds.[38]

During the war the development process was disrupted in Sierra Leone—a country that already ranks last in the human development index and that had a life expectancy at birth of 37 years in 2000.[39] The overall destruction of already inadequate materials, socio-economic resources and infrastructures, including schools and health centres, exacerbated uncertainties and placed youth, who had undergone 10 years of instability and violence, in an even more vulnerable position. In addition, the civil war produced more than 2 million IDPs and refugees—mainly young women and children—out of a total population of 4.9 million; more than 90 per cent of these victims are civilians.[40] Most are traumatized witnesses or victims or perpetrators—or all three.

Female social welfare, already poor to begin with, was further compromised during the protracted conflict. Polygamy (marrying multiple wives) and female genital mutilation have long been widely practised, subjecting the female population to major health risks. In 2000 the infant and child mortality rate was one of the highest in the world, and some 80 per cent of the general population had no access to adequate health services. The decade of armed conflict devastated the female population. Many have been forced to become heads of families but have only marginal economic, social and political opportunities. Education levels among women are low. In 1995, a few years after the onset of the war, illiteracy among females older than 15 stood at 82 per cent, versus 55 per cent among males older than 15,[41] making them more

vulnerable to mental and physical exploitation. While many sustain themselves through agricultural occupations,[42] reports indicate an increase in the number of commercial sex workers.

Physical violence, including rape and sexual abuse, was prevalent even prior to the war. The legal system did little to prosecute offenders, contributing to the widespread devaluation of women's human rights in the country. An effective EWS would have flagged this as an indicator of the probability of increased violence against women during periods of armed conflict. It is no surprise that today's evidence of war-related sexual violence perpetrated against young women and girls is overwhelming.[43]

Sexual violence during the war seriously affected a majority of the victims, resulting in the transmission of diseases, including STIs and HIV/AIDS, and producing unwanted pregnancies and mental and physical illnesses and trauma. Statistics on post-war trends show that rape and sexual assault in IDP and refugee camps remain high. The camps provide a fertile environment for the rapid spread of infectious diseases. The results of two separate reports indicate that the HIV rate among people below the age of 48 jumped from 68,000 in 1999 to 170,000 in 2001. According to one of the reports, prepared by UNAIDS, the estimated HIV prevalence rate for females aged 15 to 24 years was more than double that for young males.[44]

Under the country's constitution gender discrimination is illegal, a position reinforced by Sierra Leone's ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the mandate established in 1998 that addresses gender issues and identifies the gaps in all development goals for programming and influencing national policies. In practice, however, there has been a failure to implement constitutional and CEDAW provisions at the domestic level, and women continue to face structural discrimination under the coexisting English, Islamic and customary laws. As in other war-affected countries with similar laws, such as Afghanistan, the impact of discriminatory inheritance is particularly appalling. The rise in female-headed households, the poorest in the world, creates survival dilemmas. In camps, women responsible for supporting their families are often faced with predominantly male aid distributors who coerce them into having sex in exchange for food and other goods.

A decade of lost educational opportunities, the disintegration of communities and families, and widespread unemployment all place a tremendous burden on the local, national and international communities. A State needs to be reconstructed, and this applies not only to its socio-economic infrastructure, but also to its human capital, distressed physically and emotionally from war.

At the international level, global advocacy against the recruitment of child soldiers is ongoing, with United Nations agencies, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and religious groups playing a leading role. In 2000, during a visit by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and the Foreign Minister of Canada, the Government of Sierra Leone agreed to establish the National Commission for War-Affected Children, which was accomplished after some delay. The purpose of setting up the Commission was to translate the concerns of children into policy-making, priority-setting and resource allocation during peace consolidation and reconstruction.

After the sporadic fighting had been quelled and the end of the war was declared by President Ahmad Kabbah on 18 January 2002, thousands of small arms and other weapons were destroyed in a symbolic bonfire to mark the conclusion of the disarmament process and a new beginning. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission assumed responsibility for compiling an accurate history of the war and using the resulting document as an instrument of recourse for victims, assisting them in bringing responsible parties to justice and preventing future conflicts. Efforts to reconstruct Sierra Leone, reintegrate ex-combatants and disseminate information to help various groups were already under way. In the disarmament portion of the DDR programme for children, a central feature of the Lome accord, the registered count exceeded 60,000 child soldiers, who in exchange for their arms were promised three meals a day from the Government and allowances once a month.

Resolution and healing
International support

United Nations agencies on the ground supported interim care centres, where children were transferred upon the completion of the demobilization process. At the centres, health partners conducted routine check-ups and found that most of the children were suffering from illnesses such as malaria and STIs. Psychosocial support was provided to create a stable environment for them. Education and vocational training programmes were offered in conjunction with various forms of recreation including sports, cultural and group activities. In addition, a commitment was made to trace relatives and reunite children with their families as quickly as possible. The centres were frequently ill-equipped to work with higher-risk children suffering disproportionately from their past actions.[45] Addressing their needs, however, was vital for the prevention of future conflicts. As a former child soldier cautioned, "I am asking you to help us, or we are going to become rebels again, or thieves."[46]

Through a network of services, sexually abused girls who sought help received counselling, education, skills training and legal support. For girls and young women living on the street and engaged in commercial sex work, a separate programme was set up in Freetown offering a drop-in centre, education, family reunification and medical services. Not all abused girls have sought assistance, however, and identifying them has been difficult as some abductees have remained with their commanders for various reasons (including coercion or feelings of shame). Alternatively, some have returned anonymously to their communities to avoid further social degradation and the stigma attached to victims of rape and sexual abuse.[47]

NGO initiatives

Many NGOs have tailored their activities to the specific needs of the population at the grass-roots level. Young people themselves have been active agents in their communities—a trend evident in the number of NGO programmes run by youth themselves.

One international NGO,[48] Search for Common Ground, uses the media to promote conflict resolution through national and subregional dialogue. A radio network and youth network were mobilized for the May 2002 elections.[49] The Independent Radio Network (IRN) was formed when it became apparent that the Government and
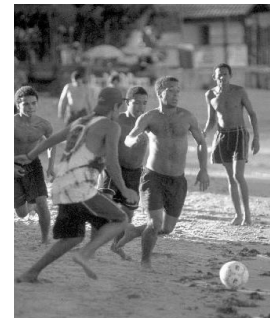
UNAMSIL bodies had no coordination mechanisms in place. Four independent FM stations were linked together to provide ongoing broadcast coverage of voting day. Search for Common Ground held workshops to prepare the journalists, teaching them the most effective methods of newsgathering, creating guidelines for reporting, and identifying appropriate behaviour to prevent tensions from escalating. The feedback on the IRN process indicated that it had added transparency to and increased confidence in the electoral process, reducing anxiety across Sierra Leone. The Network has remained in place to facilitate increased public awareness of and interaction with the country's political institutions and processes.

The commitment and capabilities of the youth network became increasingly apparent with their involvement in the election process and a wide range of conflict prevention activities. Young people (defined in Sierra Leone as those between the ages of 16 and 35) gathered from various areas to obtain accreditation and take part in the monitoring of the domestic elections. They helped with voter education and reached out to marginalized people to ensure their participation in the registration and electoral processes. The youth network has continued to engage in advocacy for peace and reconciliation in the country, addressing a wide range of issues using various means.

Further examples of community and countrywide initiatives—many carried out by and for youth, alone or in cooperation with other social sectors and organizations—are presented below.

Talking Drum Studio—Sierra Leone radio programmes have aired on all stations in the country. Some programmes combine entertainment with educational messages. For instance, the *Golden Kids News*, a show for children produced and presented by children from mixed backgrounds, includes discussions of their hopes and fears as well as the positive aspects of their country. *Home Sweet Home* uses a soap opera format to disseminate information to refugees about issues they will have to deal with when they return home. Other programmes, such as the *Common Ground Feature*, are more informational and aim to foster the process of peace-building and reconstruction by conducting interviews and covering stories that reflect the interests and concerns of the contending parties. This series creates a public forum, providing an opportunity for communication and delving into a wide range of topics that interest opposing groups—a step towards conflict prevention through dialogue and reconstruction.

Attempts to reconstruct social norms and build confidence among local and national community actors can be seen in programmes such as *Wi Soja en Police Tiday*, in which security forces (army and police representatives) are given equal airtime and community viewpoints are integrated. As part of the reconstruction and reintegration process, shows endeavour to assist their target audience by providing them with helpful information. *Salone Uman* is a show that collaborates with local human rights groups to identify and address key issues affecting the status of women in post-conflict Sierra Leone. Another show, *Troway di Gun*, is co-hosted by a retired colonel from the Revolutionary United Front and a senior trainer from the Civil Defense Forces who have both disarmed and are undergoing their own reintegration. This programme seeks to assist ex-combatants and provide them with details about the short- and long-term processes of reintegration. The specific objectives are to inform them about the

opportunities available through the National Commission on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration, to encourage them to be patient and work towards reconciliation with their communities and vice versa, to identify obstacles in the reintegration process that ex-combatants need to overcome, and to provide a forum for them to discuss their own problems.

The Sierra Leone Youth Advocate Programme (SLYAP), started by a young man in his twenties, operates according to the principle that empowering young people encourages them to become positive contributors to society and "rulers of their destiny". Aside from advocacy at various levels, the Programme has undertaken a number of projects. One involves mentoring youth by providing them with care and support. Other initiatives facilitate the reintegration of former child soldiers. SLYAP managed to open two primary schools that accommodate a total of approximately 145 children between the ages of 5 and 14. An economic development collective was started to provide women and youth emotionally affected by the war with an opportunity to develop income-generating skills and ensure their families' livelihoods. In partnership with other NGOs, the Programme provides one-on-one counselling to former child soldiers, and general aid is offered to youth in overcrowded refugee camps. To further the goal of empowering youth to be positive contributors, methods are applied to sensitize them towards civic responsibilities and peace-building. One way to achieve reintegration and harmony is through sports; coupled with peace-building curricula, athletic activity promotes the release of war-related tensions. This was shown to be true in a series of football matches in which youth from contending parties, including child soldiers and victims, played against each other as well as on the same teams. Although initially tensions were high between the players and within the crowd, by the time the final game arrived the ice had been broken and a friendly environment prevailed. The games forced victims and soldiers to cooperate and trust each other. The disarmed soldiers were allowed to interact with other community members and break down walls of defensiveness and feelings of marginalization and separation from those around them.

The Sierra Leone Chapter of the Society of Women Against AIDS in Africa promotes HIV prevention by disseminating information on the virus. In collaboration with other organizations and the Government, the Chapter also runs sensitization programmes and offers training and counselling services for a variety of groups, including those in high-risk brackets such as commercial sex workers. Prior to the war, the Society owned one of the largest resource centres.

Preventing future conflicts

It is too early to assess the impact of these and other activities in the case of Sierra Leone. Instruments of comparison for the various developments are either non-existent or unreliable. However, several lessons have been learned and conclusions drawn by the international community from the post-conflict experiences with regard to demobilizing, reintegrating and preventing the recruitment of youth and child soldiers, as follows:

- There is a need to strengthen preventive measures. Educational opportunities, including the teaching of peace and tolerance, should be provided for all children, and interim care centres should be maintained for street children. Projects for which there is high demand, such as the World Rehabilitation Fund's income-generating and skill-building initiatives (supported by UNDP and other international organizations) need to reach greater numbers of people.[51]

- Advocacy work with local organizations, the media, former child soldiers, teachers, health workers, and religious and community leaders is critical.

- For demobilization, channels of contact with non-governmental armed groups need to be identified. Coordinated efforts among NGOs and international organizations could facilitate this process.

- In the reintegration of child soldiers, trust needs to be established before they can engage in a dialogue about their future. When reunification with relatives other than their parents seems to be an uncomfortable solution, alternatives should be provided.[52]

- While respect for native customs and traditions is considered tremendously important in Sierra Leone, as in most developing countries, local conventions should not be observed to the extent that the rights and protection of youth are jeopardized. Transitional periods offer a window of opportunity, otherwise unavailable during peacetime, to modify harmful traditions and empower marginalized groups, which primarily comprise women and children. According to local custom, for example, unaccompanied girls are absorbed into families; often they are forced to serve in households against their will, and they may be exposed to various forms of violence. Even if such customs are to be maintained, mechanisms need to be established to help these people and provide them with more promising prospects for the future; one option might be to establish a centre that furnishes them with educational and vocational skills and allows them to air their grievances confidentially.

- Increased youth participation at all levels, including within the political sphere, would help put an end to negative feelings towards traditional authority and governance structures. Media can assist in reconstructing trust by, for example, disseminating important information to a wide audience during elections. In addition, youth-oriented programmes should better assess the effectiveness of measures designed to address the needs of their stakeholders—by listening to them. Failure to listen means a failure to meet the needs of stakeholders. During a 1997 field visit to Bo, the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children interviewed former child soldiers who had returned to civilian life with the assistance of various NGOs. Their comments strongly suggested that they needed youth programmes such as New Life Services that provided the spiritual consolation they sought.[53] However, no mention was made of a spiritual component in the any of the materials that described psychosocial care until somewhat recently. Even when this need is recognized, programme formulations generally leave spiritual demands to separate entities instead of integrating this component into the main agenda.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM
THE CONFLICT IN SIERRA LEONE

In order to gain more in-depth knowledge about best practices, the information void needs to be filled with indicators and disaggregated data on variables that may be addressed to determine which factors are likely to lead to violence. Such instruments would provide support for early warning and prevention mechanisms. Some general recommendations can be made on the basis of the experiences in Sierra Leone. As the fragile realities of global peace increasingly manifest themselves, concrete measures that focus on addressing problems to prevent future eruptions of violence become increasingly important.

For violence to be channelled constructively, the measures adopted must reflect consideration of all the dimensions of armed conflict and its underlying causes. In public forums, youth are often the least visible. However, their involvement in decision-making processes during conflict transformation and resolution can greatly reduce the likelihood of violent outbreaks. The views and concerns of all parties must be understood and taken into account, as any decisions that are made will affect not only individual groups or sectors, but also future generations and society as a whole. Youth communication forums are important as well, as they allow frustrations to be aired and channelled constructively. Young people's participation in programme implementation and needs assessment must be congruent in order to ensure optimal outcomes. Otherwise, youth will retreat from participation in the programmes, and the benefits will decline when their needs are no longer met. In formulating such programmes, it is highly recommended that they be approached from a holistic angle that incorporates physical, spiritual and psychosocial components and involves youth-adult interaction and peer mediation.

Appropriate conflict prevention mechanisms and EWS can jointly signal progression towards peace. Owing to their non-linear nature, conflict indicators that provide early warning signs are not easily measurable, and the data tend to be more qualitative than quantitative. Unlike poverty indicators, which can define income as an end point, conflict indicators are not linked to a clear end point called peace.[54]

Early warning guidelines remain incomplete, but any system must integrate cross-sectoral strategies to identify the factors contributing to violent conflict (including poverty, poor health, the absence of good governance and certain types of local activities). Based on national and regional indicators and activities, applications can attempt to forecast events more effectively. For IDPs and refugees in West Africa, for instance, the current stability of certain groups can be determined (and their future stability predicted) using education and political components.

An early warning system must facilitate the compilation, standardization, analysis and dissemination of information that helps strengthen collaboration and guide the design of customized programmes. Coordination between other warning systems and conflict prevention measures is vital, as this provides an overall picture that allows better monitoring and response, thereby decreasing the likelihood of conflict.

A principal factor determining the success of early warning efforts is whether the system maintains its integrity within communities, preferably through a checks-and-balances mechanism.

The likelihood of conflict decreases with the adoption of measures and the establishment of institutions that address basic needs, including youth-oriented NGOs, peace organizations, regional initiatives, programmes, humanitarian assistance, cultural activities, and common services such as health care. Conversely, the likelihood of conflict increases when destructive practices—such as the scapegoating of youth by the media, youth involvement in the shadow war economy (as child soldiers and traffickers), the exclusion of young people from peace processes and civil society forums, the short-term empowerment of youth, the expansion of extremist movements, and insensitive responses to youth concerns and crises by international actors—are allowed to continue.[55]

The examples above illustrate the important role youth and other community actors can and should play in preventive measures. Young people have become increasingly involved in addressing the indicators and circumstances of the escalation of violence (*see figure 14.4*), but they must also develop the skills and attitudes (appropriate within the local context) that enable them to handle conflict, which can be acquired through participation in decision-making processes and through education.

The skills that empower young people derive from formal and non-formal education. Through participation in training and cultural workshops, policy and advocacy forums, and peace-building mediations and institutions, opposing parties can learn to engage in constructive dialogue. Information campaigns can sensitize youth to the detrimental effects of violence. Peace and security education integrated in schools from an early age and maintained up through adulthood can teach students safety (especially where landmines are common), communication skills, and non-violent measures for handling conflict.

Figure 14.4
A sample scenario of the progression towards conflict

One factor leads to another, then to conflict: a sample scenario

- Poorest people living in environmentally degraded regions
- Poverty increase
  - Privatization of natural resources
  - Lack of resource access (50% of world's population will face water shortages by 2025)
  - High levels of population growth
  - Lack of economic growth
  - Increase in tensions
  - Heightened likelihood of violent conflict

Post-war peace-building skills are particularly beneficial for ex-combatants and government officials (police, army and court personnel), who are prone to reverting to past behaviours. Non-formal education that teaches strategies for coping with post-conflict trauma is vital for areas in which rape and sexual violence have been used as weapons of war. In collaboration with local authorities and women's groups, Governments should provide regional, national and community-level education that promotes human rights for women. The needs of the victims may be addressed through health-care provision, psychosocial counselling (Western or traditional), vocational training and therapeutic leisure activities that are in accordance with local customs.

In order to have peace, society must be at ease with the idea of peace and be willing to maintain an environment in which it can be sustained. Shifting to a more peaceful orientation can be fostered through the use of conventional or unconventional tools that promote commonalities, facilitate reliance on non-violent channels for dealing with a wide range of intense emotions, and prevent violent outbreaks. While multiple-method approaches can increase the overall impact in many locations, their application should be guided by local determinations of their appropriateness and acceptability within the community environment.

Thus far, some of the most effective measures have included joint activities and projects (community centres and health-care services) as well as artistic, cultural and athletic activities (music, theatre, festivals and sports). Using existing local customs and practices (including traditional metaphors and symbols) to promote peace and understanding can also be extremely effective in resolving and preventing conflicts.

Mass media such as radio and television play an important part in promoting tolerance and dialogue. Inflammatory reporting that ignites violence needs to be replaced with new scripts and images that illustrate how conflict may be channelled constructively. Creative programmes similar to those produced in Sierra Leone can be effective means of transmitting positive messages and information. In addition to airing such programmes (features and soap operas), the mass media can promote public reward systems that encourage non-violent practices.

The impact on youth of trade in small arms and light weapons is well-known. Groups and initiatives such as the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers and the Global Campaign against Child Soldiers advocate child protection, but procedures must be implemented to ensure that efforts in this area are not being neutralized by harmful business practices, including the sale and distribution of small arms and landmines and exploitative diamond mining. Adopting measures such as the Kimberley Process, which monitors the diamond trade so that revenues cannot be used to purchase arms and thus fuel conflict, help to deter illicit commercial activities.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Between 1989 and 2000, 111 armed conflicts were reported in the world, with the majority occurring in the poorest developing countries—particularly those in Africa. Many involved internal disputes and were characterized by the perpetration of violence by groups using light weapons and small arms. Armed conflict has put many youth at risk of succumbing to violence. Currently, there are some 300,000 child and youth

soldiers fighting in 49 countries. There is no conflict without youth participation; indeed, young men constitute the majority in most armed forces. In the past decade, an estimated 2 million children and youth have died in armed conflict, and 5 million have been disabled.

Conflict prevention has become an international priority. Previous efforts have accessed peace-building strategies from a macro level, taken a narrow approach determined by top-level ideals of peace, and neglected cross-sectoral approaches. To understand the dynamics surrounding youth and violence, however, the underlying social injustices must be analyzed at various levels. Building a more complete picture of realities on the ground provides a solid foundation for the development of appropriate prevention mechanisms.

In implementing prevention strategies, injustices must be addressed not only in areas where armed conflict is prevalent, but also in areas where high tension levels threaten the security of civilians. To ascertain and address the roots of the problems that cause violent acts, conflict prevention and peace-building processes must incorporate efforts to identify the frustrations and interests of youth, who bear the brunt of these injustices, as well as those of other groups in society. Aid agencies and Governments must ensure the integration of religious leaders, teachers, youth, their relatives and other community actors in these processes, and each actor must take on specific responsibilities.

Conflict is one of the most complex issues the global community is facing today; its impact is apparent in every part of the world. Preventive measures have become an essential component of efforts to ensure a brighter future. Enabling youth to make major positive contributions is one way to minimize or neutralize factors that contribute to violence, increase global security, and prevent further armed conflict.

Exposure to violence during the formative years can have a defining influence on the character of young people involved in armed conflict—either as perpetrators or as victims. The effects of armed conflict on the physical and psychological well-being of young people, and on their future prospects for leading normal lives, are a cause for serious concern. Existing prohibitions against the use of child soldiers should be strictly enforced, and special attention should be given to protecting civilians, particularly children and youth, and preventing them from falling victim to conflicts. Notwithstanding these considerations, there have been numerous examples of young people taking part in activities that build peace, promote a culture of peace, and ultimately prevent conflict. These efforts should be strengthened and supported. ■

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[2] United Nations, Department of Political Affairs, *Early Warning and Preventive Measures: Building United Nations Capacity*, Manual for the United Nations Staff College Project, Rev. 6 (2001), p. 7; also see Stiftung Wissenschaft and Politik/Conflict Prevention Network, "Peace-building and conflict prevention in developing countries: a practical guide", draft (June 1999), p. 40; and H. Miall, O. Ramsbotham and T. Woodhouse, *Contemporary Conflict Resolution* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1999), p. 20.

[3] M. Sollenberg, ed., "States in armed conflict 2000", Report No. 60 (Uppsala University (Sweden), Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Universitetstryckeriet, 2001), p. 21.

[4] The definition comes from the Forum on Early Warning and Early Response (FEWER) "Thesaurus and glossary of early warning and conflict prevention terms", available at http://www.fewer.org.

[5] United Nations, "Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations" (Brahimi report) (A/55/305-S/2000/809), para. 10.

[6] M. Sollenberg, op. cit., pp. 7-14.

[7] Ibid.

[8] See http://www.globalissues.org/Geopolitics/Children.asp.

[9] UNICEF, *Adolescence: A Time that Matters* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.01.XX.13), p. 36.

[10] See http://globalissues.org/TradeRelated/Facts.asp

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[15] Ibid.

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[18] UNICEF, HIV/AIDS Unit, "Fact sheet: HIV/AIDS and children affected by armed conflict"…

[19] United Nations, "Report of the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel of the Youth Employment Network" (A/56/422).

[20] Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, *Preventing Deadly Conflict: Final Report* (Washington, D.C., 1997).

[21] P. Collier, "Economic causes of civil conflict and their implications for policy" (Washington, D.C., World Bank/Development Research Group, 15 June 2000).

[22] E.G. Lindner, "Moratorium on humiliation: cultural and 'human factor' dimensions underlying structural violence", a paper prepared for the Expert Group Meeting on Structural Threats to Social Integrity: Social Roots of Violent Conflict and Indicators for Prevention, New York, 18-20 December 2001, pp. 1-9.

[23] "'Unaccompanied children' are persons under eighteen years of age who have been separated from both parents and are not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, is responsible to do so." (See http://www.hrw.org/campaigns/spain/learn_kids. htm.)

[24] A. McAlister, *Juvenile Violence in the Americas: Innovative Studies in Research, Diagnosis and Prevention* (in English and Spanish) (Washington, D.C., PAHO, Health Promotion and Protection Program/Adolescent Health, September 1998); and D. Keen, *The Best of Enemies: A Study of the Sierra Leone War* (Oxford, James Currey, forthcoming).

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[27] United Nations, "Report of the Secretary-General on children in armed conflict (7 September 2001) (A/56/342-S/2001/852).

[28] The age limit under the Protocol protects children under 18 and excludes a large group of young people over the age of 18; this issue has thus far remained unresolved.

[29] G. Machel, "Impact of armed conflict on children: report of the expert of the Secretary-General, Ms. Graça Machel, submitted pursuant to United Nations General Assembly resolution 48/157" (A/51/306) (1996 report); and G. Machel, *The Impact of Armed Conflict on Children: A Review of Progress since the 1996 United Nations Report on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children* (London, Hurst & Company, 2001).

[30] G. Machel, "Impact of armed conflict on children: report of the expert of the Secretary-General, Ms. Graça Machel, submitted pursuant to United Nations General Assembly resolution 48/157"…

[31] G. Machel, "The impact of armed conflict on children: a critical review of progress made and obstacles encountered in increasing protection for war-affected children", presented at the International Conference on War-Affected Children, Winnipeg, Canada, September 2000, available at http://www.waraffectedchildren.gc.ca/machel-e.asp#ch14.

[32] This resolution followed two reports of the Secretary-General ("International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World" (A/56/349 of 13 September 2001) and "International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World" (A/55/377 of 12 September 2000)), which provide an overall strategy for the implementation of the International Decade and for the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace (pursuant to General Assembly resolution 53/243 of 13 September 1999).

[33] World Bank, "Sierra Leone: critical support for disarmament/demobilization: an analysis of the Bank's role in countries coming out of conflict", accessed on 13 February 2002 at http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/essd/essd.nsf/Post-Conflict/SierraLeoneDisarmament.

[34] In his article, "Blair's good guys in Sierra Leone", David Keen attributes young people's deep anger to the long-standing problems of mismanagement and exploitation. The proliferation of small arms and the level of anger are marked not only by the inability to isolate a group of Revolutionary United Front members to eliminate them, but also by the fact that new groups—such as the West Side Boys, who took British soldiers hostage in 2000—continually crop up. (The article appeared in *The Guardian* on 7 November 2001 and is available at http://www.guardian.co.uk/sierra/article/0,2763,589002,00. html.)

[35] P. Richards, "The social life of war: Rambo, diamonds, and young soldiers in Sierra Leone", *Track Two*, vol. 8, No.1 (July 1999), available at the Centre for Conflict Resolution web site: http://www.ccrweb.ccr.uct.ac.za/two/8_1/p16_social_life_of_ war.html.

[36] Ibid., p. 7.

[37] D. Keen, in *The Best of Enemies: A Study of the Sierra Leone War*, details the extent to which the youth felt marginalized—for example, by the community elders, who married several wives. Some of the perpetrators are said to have been young men driven away from the community because they were in love with some of the women. However, according to local traditions, these women had no choice but to marry the elders. Elders would neglect others (who subsequently became perpetrators) because they were not the relatives of a favorite wife. The aggression of the perpetrators (including the raping and maiming, and often the humiliation of community members, in particularly the elders) was an act of revenge and an assertion of their own power.

[38] D. Keen, in *The Best of Enemies: A Study of the Sierra Leone War*, and P. Richards, in an article entitled "The social life of war: Rambo, diamonds, and young soldiers in Sierra Leone" (p. 7) explain the parallels between the Revolutionary United Front fighters and Rambo.

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[45] UNICEF, Office of Emergency Programmes, *Children Affected by Armed Conflict: UNICEF Actions*, advance copy (New York, May 2002), pp. 40-41.

[46] As stated by one of Sierra Leone's cub reporters, Stephen Swankay, who was captured at age 12 by the Revolutionary United Front and freed a couple years later. The article was published on 29 May 2002 by Agence France-Presse (AFP, Cairo) and featured in broadcasts by the Talking Drum Studio, and is available at http://www.sfcg.org/locdetail.cfm?locus=SL&name=programs&programid=307.

[47] UNICEF, Office of Emergency Programmes, *Children Affected by Armed Conflict: UNICEF Actions...*, p. 66.

[48] Search for Common Ground, information available at http://www.sfcg.org.

[49] See http://www.sfcg.org/locdetail.cfm?locus=SL&name=programs&programid=447.

[50] See http://www.sierraleoneyouths.org/slyap/mission.html.

[51] Refer to http://www.worldrehabfund.org for general information.

[52] Refer to Global Information Networks in Education; information available at http://ginie1.sched.pitt.edu/childsoldiers/sierraleone.html.

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[55] See S. Schmeidl with E. Piza-Lopez, *Gender and Conflict Early Warning: A Framework for Action* (London, International Alert, June 2002).

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Chapter 15.

Intergenerational RELATIONS

The importance of maintaining *productive and mutually beneficial relations between all generations is the focus of this chapter. Major economic, social, cultural, political and demographic changes have disrupted and redefined traditional family and social structures and intergenerational relationships. Policy adjustments are needed to reflect the new realities, with particular attention given to developing new economic and social opportunities, strengthening patterns of reciprocity and exchange, and maintaining mutual support structures. The sections of this chapter focus on shifts in intergenerational activity at the micro and macro levels, achieving the objectives for intergenerational integration and solidarity set out in international instruments, the transitions occurring in interaction between generations, and the need to renegotiate the "intergenerational contract". The intergenerational dimensions of poverty are also explored. The conclusion calls for appropriate policy responses that support possibilities for multigenerational contributions to society and the strengthening of integration and interdependence between age groups.*

"Solidarity between generations at all levels—in families, communities and nations—is fundamental for the achievement of a society for all ages." [1]

INTRODUCTION

The combined effects of a rapid increase in the ageing population and a decline in birth rates are producing fundamental changes in many societies. Changing expectations are also having a profound impact. Many older people, rejecting the stereotypes of old age, are pursuing more active lives and are receiving greater recognition for their important ongoing contributions to their families and communities. Many younger people are seeking greater responsibility for the important life choices and decisions that must be made. Family and community networks, which are important for providing informal care for their members, are under increasing strain as family ties evolve and economic requirements or incentives lead growing numbers of women—the traditional caregivers in most societies—to move into the workforce. The ability of Governments to respond to changing needs and to provide adequate services in the face of rising costs is being threatened.

By the middle of this century, the old and the young will represent an equal share of the world's population. Globally, the proportion of those aged 60 years and over is expected to double, rising from 10 to 21 per cent between 2000 and 2050, and the proportion of children will decline by a third, from 30 to 21 per cent. The same trend is expected in developing countries, where the proportion of older persons is expected to rise from 8 to 19 per cent by 2050, while the proportion of children will

fall from 33 to 22 per cent (*see figure 15.1*).[2] Regional figures will vary significantly; Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean, in particular, are expected to see major shifts in their ageing-to-youth ratios, but Europe will still have the highest rates and Africa the lowest, with almost three people aged 60 years and above for every child under 15 in the former, and almost three children under 15 for every person aged 60 years and over in the latter.[3]

In developed countries the demographic shift is already having a profound impact on every aspect of society, requiring adjustments in economic and social policies and the societal infrastructure. The demographic transition in developing countries will occur at a much faster rate than it has in developed countries, and in many cases, the necessary infrastructure and policies will not be in place to deal with the consequent developments.

Figure 15.1
Population distribution by age
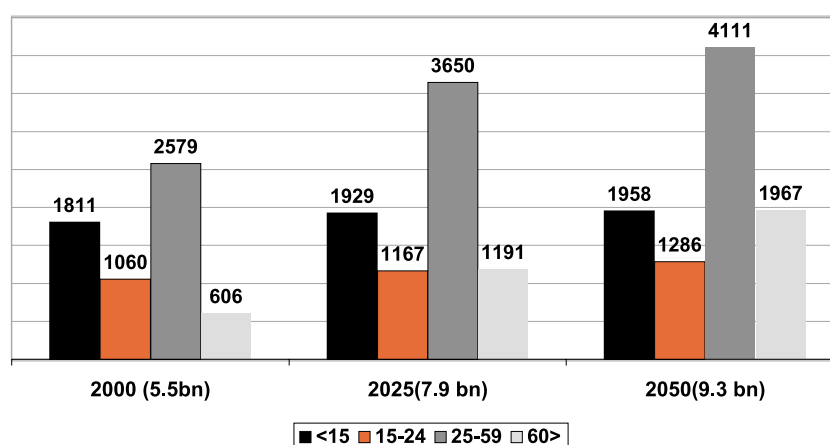
Source: United Nations, Population Division, World Population Prospects 2002 update, available at http://www.unpopulation.org.

It was with these issues in mind that Member States of the United Nations gathered in Madrid in April 2002 to participate in the Second World Assembly on Ageing, where they adopted the Political Declaration and Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing.[4] The Vienna International Plan of Action on Aging had been adopted at the first World Assembly on Aging, held in 1982.[5] A comparison of the two documents reveals vastly different approaches to the ageing population. The Vienna Plan espoused a more traditional "welfare" approach to older persons that was not unreasonable considering the era in which it was written—during the heyday of the welfare state in both Western countries and the former Soviet Union, and before the scale and speed of population ageing in developing countries had been fully realized. The Madrid Plan takes a "developmental" approach to the ageing of societies (not just individuals), with emphasis on the mainstreaming of ageing and older persons into policies and planning.

The Madrid approach had its roots in the lead-up to the United Nations International Year of Older Persons in 1999 with the theme "a society for all ages".[6] This represented an extension of the 1995 World Summit for Social Development's

vision of "a society for all"—an inclusive society posited as the aim of social integration. The Summit also coined the term "people-centred development", stressing the need for the participation of all.[7] Many saw the Social Summit as a landmark event in that it placed social issues on the global agenda at the highest levels of Government. It also took a first step towards bringing marginalized groups into mainstream development discussions. Intergenerational issues and concepts are incorporated in the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, albeit in a small way. These earlier contributions provided the foundations for the Madrid Plan of Action, which is built upon on the "society for all ages" concept and the intergenerational approach to policy.

This chapter represents an attempt to initiate a dialogue that explores the basis of intergenerational solidarity and relationships at both the individual and societal levels and some of the major changes that have occurred in recent history. In advocating the adoption of an intergenerational perspective in policy development as promoted by the Madrid Plan, the chapter examines the intergenerational transmission of poverty. This issue has been selected because many researchers in developing countries are citing poverty as the foremost structural threat to the traditional mutually supportive role of families, and also because the poor have traditionally been viewed as a monolithic group or statistic. Research being undertaken in this area points to new perspectives on, and a better understanding of, the nature of poverty when an intergenerational analysis is applied.

Intergenerational activity can occur at both the macro and micro levels. Most research, discussion and policies have tended to focus on macro concerns such as financial transfers, in particular public pension issues and long-term care (transfers between generations in the general sense); less attention has been given to the micro-level private sphere of intergenerational services and care (transfers between biological generations). In general, the private sphere of intergenerational relationships is discussed as it relates to the wider macro issue of financial costs to Governments and, in some developed countries, the cost to the younger generation. This is evidenced in a recent report by the Treasury of the Australian Government that considers the different variables affecting budgetary trends and projections against the backdrop of an ageing population. According to the report's conclusions, "the projections … suggest that, if policies are not adjusted, the current generation of taxpayers is likely to impose a higher tax burden on the next generation".[8] The Australian Treasury focus is on sustaining a healthy government financial position while ensuring that current policies do not compromise the well-being of future generations. Similar studies have been undertaken and are ongoing in some European countries and the United States, and the OECD has conducted research along these lines as well.

Under the first of three priority directions in the recommendations of the Madrid Plan,[9] intergenerational solidarity is addressed at both the macro and micro levels within the context of such solidarity being one of the basic foundations of society. The Plan acknowledges that changing demographic, economic and social circumstances will necessitate adjustments in macro-level policies relating to the pension, social security, health and long-term care systems in order to sustain economic growth

and development;[10] this process will require a review of existing policies to ensure generational equity as well as efforts to promote the idea of mutual support and solidarity between generations as a key element in social development.

Another issue addressed by the Madrid Plan of Action is the importance of kinship relations. The Plan refers to the fact that close family ties have largely been maintained in the face of major societal change, with all generations providing contributions; it is acknowledged, however, that all sectors of society must work to strengthen those ties[11] by promoting dialogue aimed at boosting solidarity and providing for the specific needs of caregivers.[12]

One of the central themes running through the Madrid Plan is "recognition of the crucial importance of families, intergenerational interdependence, solidarity and reciprocity for social development."[15] The Plan links the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms—including the right to development—to the achievement of "a society for all ages". Again, reciprocity between the generations is emphasized as key.[14] Time and again at the United Nations, Member States have pointed to the maintenance of intergenerational solidarity as a priority concern when they speak about the situation of older persons, even if the means of achieving this objective have not always been clearly identified. Interestingly, in articles on youth and children, there is a dearth of references to the importance of intergenerational relationships. Member States of the United Nations are similarly silent on the topic when discussing young people, which leads one to suspect that perhaps societies have taken the view that older people need young people more than the young need the old.

THE INTERGENERATIONAL CONTRACT

Intergenerational relationships, and what is referred to as the intergenerational contract, are governed by rules, norms, conventions, practices and biology, with the "contract" being implicit rather than arrived at through individual negotiation. Though perhaps not as common today, it was standard for some cultures in the past to take steps to ensure that power over resources and assets lay with older persons (and invariably with older men, not older women). In many Western countries, the welfare of older persons has become largely a community rather than a family concern; in some countries the conventional role of the family has been minimalized.[15] These examples point to the fact that all societies have different starting points in their perceptions of what constitutes the intergenerational contract, solidarity and relationships, of how formalized those relationships are, and of whether they exist at the macro or micro level of society (or both).

INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONS IN TRANSITION

It is generally agreed that there has been a shift in the nature of intergenerational relationships in all societies over the years, and discussions of the reasons for this change have generally focused on two possibilities: (a) that it is the result of changing beliefs and values that have affected the role of the family and the relationships between its members; and (b) that it is the effect of socio-economic transformation that has led to changes in the institutional organization of family life and a change in family relationships.

The extended family structures typical in many developing countries, traditionally the focus of family production, are generally based on weak emotional links between immediate family members and reliance on the wider kinship network. With the decline in family-based production systems, some argue that it is changing beliefs and values that have brought about a shift in attitudes about family and a change in the flow of wealth, with parents investing in children and their education and older persons losing control over the means of production—further contributing to the decline in fertility. Chief among the influences cited is the spread of education and its value as a stepping-stone to wealth, power and wisdom. The migration of younger family members and the consequent independence (and disruption in intergenerational dialogue and interaction) this brings are also cited.

Others argue that demographic transitions are linked not only to changes in values but also to the changing socio-economic environment that affects the family structure and relationships. The residence of older people within the extended family or alone is not an indicator of well-being or the state of intergenerational solidarity, but rather a reflection of the wider social and cultural processes that regulate societies and the place of individuals. Chief among these influences has been the changing role of women and their increased participation in the labour force, apparent in developed countries for some time but now affecting family caregiving in developing countries as well, and there is also the larger issue of the status of women and older women. In terms of family structure, there was once only two or three generations in existence at the same time whereas now there are many more (though the number of cohorts within each generation is smaller), which has led to a blurring of intergenerational boundaries. As a result of these developments, there are many different kinds of families and "social contracts" within societies at the same level of demographic transition.

Many believe that the reasons for the changes in intergenerational relationships lie somewhere between the two possibilities mentioned above, since the development of any generational cohort is based on a combination of multiple variables such as class, gender, values, the State and economics. Many attribute the change in intergenerational relations to industrialization, globalization and economic development; however, while these processes set the conditions for the direction of social policy development, they do not dictate the content of these policies and therefore cannot be the sole determining factors in any "one size fits all" theory. The historical

development and political processes of any given country are also extremely important in shaping policy evolution.[16] For example, the individualistic policy bias in the United States reflects the traditional American values of equality of opportunity, liberty, and "getting ahead" through hard work.[17]

As Stephanie Coontz points out, "Changes in … values and behaviours are seldom a result of people suddenly becoming nicer or meaner, smarter or more irresponsible. They reflect realignments in the way families articulate with larger social, economic, and political institutions, as well as changes in environmental demands on adults and children."[18]

In developed countries, intergenerational relations have traditionally been based on rights and duties linked to the status of age and sex, with social policies shaping patterns of dependence and interdependence between age groups. However, demographic, social and economic changes are leading to a rethinking of relations and expectations. Gunhild Hagestad warns that the modern, age-segregated lifestyle, reflected in both living arrangements and production/education settings, "may breed ageism and rob all age groups of valuable socialization experiences and support".[19]

Hagestad points out that discussions about macro- and micro-level intergenerational relationships "have tended to reflect 'apocalyptic demography' views of population ageing, with a strong emphasis on the dependencies of old age and the old as recipients".[20] Alan Walker asserts that policy makers "have not grasped the fundamental importance of intergenerational solidarity … they perceive only a funding/spending relationship."[21] He maintains that the economic relationship is but one consideration; the intergenerational contract also includes an ethical dimension that represents the social cohesion of societies, achieved by ensuring security for all citizens—not only those able to pay for it. The point Walker makes is that the increasing promotion of individual responsibility for old age as the primary, if not total, focus of policy may contribute not only to a decline in intergenerational solidarity but also to a general weakening of overall social cohesion. He argues that while it makes sound economic sense to adjust to the demographic realities of an ageing society, a one-dimensional interpretation of the intergenerational contract or intergenerational relationships will undermine efforts to maintain intergenerational solidarity.

Instead of pursuing arguments about intergenerational transfers, Governments should be researching interactions between public and private transfer systems. Many believe, for example, that the high level of support for public transfer systems endures in most developed countries because benefit recipients are able to redistribute trans-

fers within the family, thereby strengthening private transfers.[22] A better understanding of such dynamics would likely contribute to more effective decision-making.

At a more fundamental level, attention needs to be focused on what happens when social conditions under which intergenerational contracts are formed are profoundly altered by political, economic, cultural or social system changes.[23] Can it be assumed, for instance, that cultural pressures will continue to ensure that family relations remain unchanged? This does not appear to be the case in Japan, where compulsory social care insurance premiums were recently introduced for those 40 years and older when the Government realized that the combined changes in the economic and social climate were such that women could no longer be consistently relied upon to perform the role of caregiver long dictated by tradition. Up until the new policy was instituted, Japan's social care system was relatively underdeveloped for a developed country because of this culturally determined role of women vis-à-vis dependents.[24]

POVERTY AS AN INTERGENERATIONAL POLICY ISSUE

The commitment made by States Members of the United Nations at the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly[25] to reduce by half the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by the year 2015 was reaffirmed in the Madrid Plan of Action, as it has become clear that older persons are generally excluded from poverty reduction programmes and targets. Apart from statistics indicating the poverty status of children, major gaps exist in poverty data on specific age groups owing to the lack of detailed data sets in many developing countries. The Madrid Plan takes an intergenerational approach to poverty reduction and development because it is becoming increasingly apparent that there is an intergenerational cycle to poverty that has remained largely unacknowledged by the development and donor community. The NGO HelpAge International argues that "poverty experienced in adulthood is likely to deepen with age, and this in turn has an intergenerational impact within households".[26] The Organization's research in Lao shows that while existing family support structures are essentially very strong, "in essence they can be stretched to breaking point by a reduced framework of capacity arising from the ageing process."[27] HelpAge has also found that the exclusion of older persons from society is both a cause and an outcome of poverty.

In the intergenerational network, assets and pensions enable older people to maintain their status through continuing contributions to the family. In South Africa the social pension, a non-contributory basic pension for all older members of society, increases the income of poor older persons but has also been found to constitute a source of support for unemployed adults, young grandchildren and other relatives; a large proportion of the pension is used to cover schooling expenses.[28] Similar evidence of the resources of older persons being overwhelmingly invested in family maintenance and the education of the young has been reported in Latin America and the Caribbean.[29]
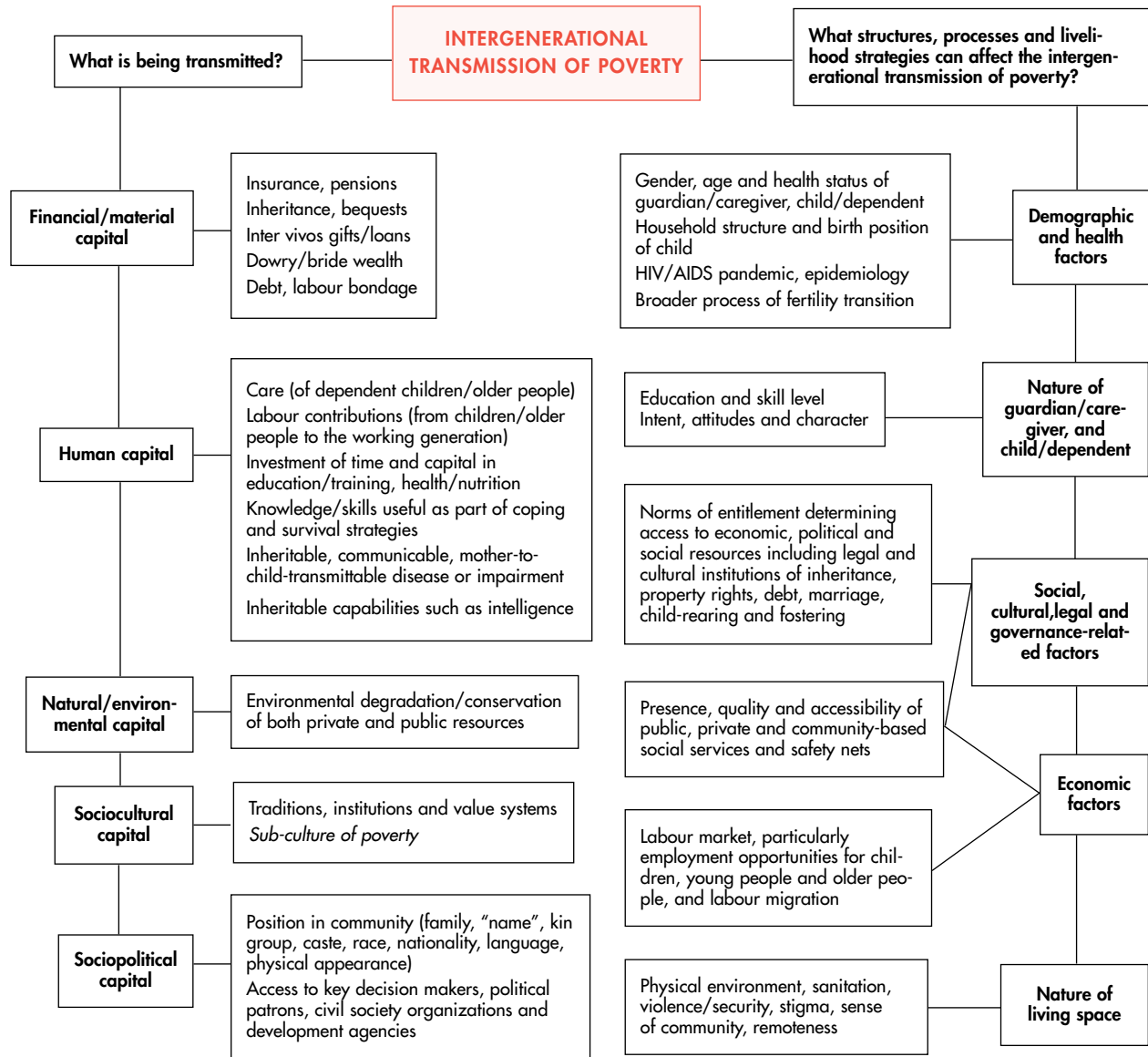
If poverty is not considered within a context that extends beyond individual age groups, poverty reduction strategies will most likely fail because only one part of the problem is being addressed. This is slowly starting to be recognized as a legitimate policy issue. The United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS, held in New York from 25 to 27 June 2001, called for financial support for grandparents bringing up grandchildren when research showed that in many countries the majority of adults succumbing to HIV-related illnesses were leaving their orphaned children in the care of older parents; in Ethiopia, for example, this was true in 68 per cent of the cases reported.[30] Before this, the fact that whole families were falling into poverty when left to survive on the income of a grandparent was not being addressed. At the other end of the spectrum, the structural damage being inflicted upon intergenerational relationships within families as a result of chronic poverty is now coming to light, with conflicts over the control of scarce resources increasingly leading to the physical and psychological abuse of older people who have legal possession of property. This is particularly an issue when inheritance laws or traditions dictate that material assets devolve from a deceased husband to his wife and are then passed on to his sons in the event of her death. In South Africa, research is indicating growing rates of elder abuse (both economic and physical), particularly at the household level, and the perception is that this is related to escalating unemployment and endemic poverty in a country where the aforementioned social pension is often the only family income.[31]

In a working paper for the Chronic Poverty Research Centre in the United Kingdom, Karen Moore examines the intergenerational transmission of poverty, focusing on developing countries.[32] She has designed a framework that illustrates the complex nature of intergenerational transfers, taking into account the different kinds of capital that can be transmitted (*see figure 15.2*). Beyond the issue of poverty, the framework offers a useful tool for analyzing intergenerational exchanges in general.

While the issue of intergenerational relations has been around for some time in the social policy arena, it has invariably been viewed at the micro level and from a paternalistic and welfare perspective. For example, while the 1982 Vienna Plan of Action mentions age integration "in which solidarity and mutual support among generations are encouraged",[33] within the body of recommendations the link between young people, the family and older persons is referred to primarily within the context of the burden and care of older persons; recommendation 32 goes so far as to state that "the involvement of young people—in providing services and care and in participating in activities for and with the elderly—should be encouraged, with a view to promoting intergenerational ties."[34]

Social policies have tended to reinforce and perpetuate the dominant view of older people as passive dependents within multigenerational families, clearly ignoring the fact that most of them are actively engaged in sustaining intergenerational transfers within the social and economic spheres. The older women of one tribe in Ghana, for example, have a tradition of gifting small trading businesses to younger female household members in exchange for reciprocal support arrangements for themselves. The older women continue to operate a smaller doorstep trading business from the home, generating a small income, but also provide childcare and household services for the younger women working in the market.[35]

Figure 15.2
Intergenerational transmission of poverty

| What is being transmitted? | INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSMISSION OF POVERTY | What structures, processes and livelihood strategies can affect the intergenerational transmission of poverty? |

Financial/material capital
- Insurance, pensions
- Inheritance, bequests
- Inter vivos gifts/loans
- Dowry/bride wealth
- Debt, labour bondage

Demographic and health factors
- Gender, age and health status of guardian/caregiver, child/dependent
- Household structure and birth position of child
- HIV/AIDS pandemic, epidemiology
- Broader process of fertility transition

Human capital
- Care (of dependent children/older people)
- Labour contributions (from children/older people to the working generation)
- Investment of time and capital in education/training, health/nutrition
- Knowledge/skills useful as part of coping and survival strategies
- Inheritable, communicable, mother-to-child-transmittable disease or impairment
- Inheritable capabilities such as intelligence

Nature of guardian/caregiver, and child/dependent
- Education and skill level
- Intent, attitudes and character

Social, cultural, legal and governance-related factors
- Norms of entitlement determining access to economic, political and social resources including legal and cultural institutions of inheritance, property rights, debt, marriage, child-rearing and fostering

Natural/environmental capital
- Environmental degradation/conservation of both private and public resources

Economic factors
- Presence, quality and accessibility of public, private and community-based social services and safety nets

Sociocultural capital
- Traditions, institutions and value systems
- *Sub-culture of poverty*

- Labour market, particularly employment opportunities for children, young people and older people, and labour migration

Sociopolitical capital
- Position in community (family, "name", kin group, caste, race, nationality, language, physical appearance)
- Access to key decision makers, political patrons, civil society organizations and development agencies

Nature of living space
- Physical environment, sanitation, violence/security, stigma, sense of community, remoteness

In developed countries, government social policies must move beyond reliance on "traditional" family ideals and models (which some do not acknowledge as having ever existed in many societies) and start integrating provisions aimed at helping family members support each other, at connecting the worlds of work and family, and at breaking down the barriers between what is considered public and private.[36] For instance, policy discussions might address community care for all ages rather than focusing separately on the issues of care for children, care for older persons, and care for those with disabilities. The same is true for all policy issues that apply to multiple age groups.

Further attention should also be given to the essential structural components of an intergenerational approach; more specifically, action should be taken to ensure the availability of disaggregated information and statistics, and to mainstream social group perspectives, issues and needs into overall policy-making. More specific and accurate data on the situation of youth and older persons, particularly with regard to poverty, would help ensure that policy makers are not blind to the circumstances of those groups. Disaggregated information could provide a better understanding of how youth and older people experience poverty, and indicate whether their experience is different from that of other groups and from what policy makers assume. The failure to recognize and assign value to the particular situations and experiences of specific group is likely to lead to the development and implementation of inappropriate policies and programmes. A focus on the intergenerational nature of policies also provides a "side door" to mainstreaming, as it increases recognition that all generations are affected by all policies, not only those directed towards them; younger and older persons are no exception.

The Madrid Plan of Action promotes this philosophy throughout, supporting a life-course approach to policy-making in the employment, health, education and other sectors in recognition of the fact that policy decisions should benefit all age groups because ageing is a lifelong process that begins at birth. Just as the Madrid Plan affirms that solidarity between generations is "a major prerequisite for social cohesion",[37] many countries are now recognizing that the dramatic increase in the ageing population will make life-course and multigenerational policies a prerequisite for economic development. In the EU, for example, labour policies now reflect a serious commitment to workforce expansion (including the retention of older workers) as the Union faces the ageing and shrinking of the labour force.

CONCLUSION

The time has come to employ a more age-integrated approach in constructing policies and programmes. "Development thinking is still clearly locked into the old paradigm: social investment is for the young—educating the young … is the path to development. But this paradigm emerged out of a world which was largely three generational: and increasingly, our new world is four and five generational."[38] In developing countries, less time should be spent focusing on the costs of ageing populations; energies must be directed instead towards developing opportunities for social and economic participation for multigenerational households, strengthening patterns of exchange and reciprocity, and maintaining mutual support structures.[39] As Alan Walker argues, what is called for is not a collection of policies that become mired in short-term economic solutions, but rather a new intergenerational contract that reflects an adjustment to the realities of an ageing society in terms of resource distribution and thinking—a contract that reaffirms its own value and ensures future reciprocation for future recipients.

Intergenerational interdependence and reciprocity are reflected in the notion of the "common good" underlying much of social policy and the provision of social services. Built into this notion is the understanding that the "payoffs" from resource allocations are both direct and indirect. Investments in education, health care and social welfare services benefit not just the immediate recipients but the entire socie-

ty, which as a consequence is more engaged, more competitive and healthier. As competition becomes global, education and lifelong learning grow ever more important. Today's workforce must be more capable and productive and sufficiently flexible to respond to changing conditions and new demands and opportunities.

Policies and programmes based on an intergenerational approach should promote an essential interdependence among generations and recognize that all members of society have contributions to make and needs to fulfil. While the nature of these contributions and needs may change during the progression from infancy to old age, the giving and receiving of resources over time is crucial to promoting intergenerational trust, economic and social stability, and progress. The means by which resources are transferred are also important, whether they be formal mechanisms provided by the State or informal kinship and community networks. The continued ability of these mechanisms and networks to collect and allocate resources effectively and equitably builds confidence, trust and social capital that are fundamental to social integration. ■

[1] United Nations, Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, adopted at the 10th plenary meeting of the Second World Assembly on Ageing, Madrid, 12 April 2002 (part 3 of 5 of the *Report of the Second World Assembly on Ageing, Madrid, 8-12 April 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.IV.4) (A/CONF.197/9)), para. 42.

[2] Ibid., paras. 3 and 4.

[3] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *World Population Ageing, 1950-2050* (New York, 2002).

[4] See United Nations, *Report of the Second World Assembly on Ageing, Madrid, 8-12 April 2002...*

[5] See United Nations, *Report of the World Assembly on Aging, Vienna, 26 July – 6 August 1982* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.82.I.16).

[6] See General Assembly resolution 47/5 of 16 October 1992.

[7] See United Nations, *Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6-12 March 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.8) (A/CONF.166/9).

[8] Commonwealth of Australia, "Intergenerational report, 2002-03", 2002-03 Budget Paper No. 5 (Canberra, 14 May 2002), p. 1.

[9] United Nations, Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002..., paras. 42-44.

[10] Ibid., para. 42.

[11] Ibid., para. 43.

[12] Ibid., para. 44.

[13] Ibid., para. 12(g).

[14] Ibid., para. 13.

[15] R. Malhotra and N. Kabeer, "Demographic transition, inter-generational contracts and old age security: an emerging challenge for social policy in developing countries", IDS Working Paper No. 157 (Brighton, United Kingdom, Institute of Development Studies, 2002).

[16] A. Heidenheimer, H. Heclo and C.T. Adams, *Comparative Public Policy*, 3rd edition (New York, St. Martin's Press, 1990).

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[18] S. Coontz, *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* (New York, Basic Books, 1992), p. 215.

[19] G.O. Hagestad, "Intergenerational relationships" (Geneva, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Gender and Generations Programme, Population Activities Unit, August 2000), p. 15.

[20] Ibid., pp. 18-19.

[21] A. Walker, "My mother and father's keeper? The social and economic features of intergenerational solidarity", a paper presented at the Conference on the Finnish Welare State at the Edge of Change, Jyväskykla, Finland, 26 May 1993 (Helsinki, National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health, May 1993), p. 20.

[22] G.O. Hagestad, op. cit.

[23] Ibid.

[24] T. Ogawa, "Is ageing an issue of social contract in welfare transfer, or generational conflicts? The case of Japan", a background paper prepared for the conference on Ageing, Development and Social Protection, held by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development in Madrid on 8 and 9 April 2002.

[25] The twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, entitled "World Summit for Social Development and beyond: achieving social development for all in a globalizing world", was held in Geneva from 26 June to 1 July 2000 to assess the achievements of the Social Summit and to discuss new initiatives.

[26] A. Heslop and M. Gorman (HelpAge International), "Chronic poverty and older people in the developing world", CPRC Working Paper No. 10 (Manchester, United Kingdom, Chronic Poverty Research Centre, 2002), p. 4.

[27] S. Beales, "Intergenerational approaches to poverty eradication and social exclusion" (London, HelpAge International, February 2001), p. 6

[28] S. Devereux, "Future uncertain: social pensions in South Africa", *ID21 Insights: Communicating Development Research*, vol. 42 (Institute of Development Studies, June 2002).

[29] HelpAge International, *State of the World's Older People 2002...*

[30] Ibid.

[31] A. Heslop and M. Gorman, op. cit.

[32] K. Moore, "Frameworks for understanding the intergenerational transmission of poverty and well-being in developing countries", CPRC Working Paper No. 8 (Manchester, United Kingdom, Chronic Poverty Research Centre, 2001).

[33] United Nations, Vienna International Plan of Action on Aging, adopted by the World Assembly on Aging (Report of the World Assembly on Aging, Vienna, 26 July – 6 August 1982..., para. 25(h)).

[34] Ibid., Recommendation 32.

[35] N. Apt, "Informal care for older people: the African crisis", background paper prepared for the conference on Ageing, Development and Social Protection, held by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development in Madrid on 8 and 9 April 2002.

[36] N.R. Hooyman and J. Gonyea, *Feminist Perspectives on Family Care: Policies for Gender Justice* (Thousand Oaks, California, Sage Publications, 1995).

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