

The Case for Investing in Young People

as part of a National Poverty
Reduction Strategy



A paper commissioned by the United Nations Population Fund, New York

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Reference notes on Population and Poverty Reduction

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Table of contents

<i>Foreword</i>	v	Young People and the MDGs	13
<i>Executive Summary</i>	vi	How are young people faring in relation to the MDGs?	13
1. Introduction	1	Young people and poverty, hunger and employment	13
Adopting a Public Policy Perspective.....	1	Young people and education	16
2. Young People's Poverty and its Coverage in National Poverty Reduction Strategies	3	Basic literacy not enough.....	17
Understanding Young People's Experience of Poverty	3	Young people and the consequences of gender inequality.....	18
Coverage of Young People's Poverty in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers.....	4	Young women's education levels and reproductive health.....	19
Youth inclusion in poverty reduction consultations	4	Young people and high exposure to HIV/AIDS	22
The identification of youth as a major group experiencing poverty.....	5	Argument 4:	
Incorporation of youth poverty in PRSP's action plans and budgets.....	5	The macro-economic case for investing in young people.....	23
Young people and HIV/AIDS, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Gender Issues in PRSPs	6	Argument 5:	
Young People's Poverty Missing as a Cross-cutting Issue.....	7	The micro-economic case for investing in young people.....	25
3. The Case for Investing in Young People	9	Benefits of investing in sexual and reproductive health.....	26
Argument 1:		Argument 6:	
Governments have made commitments.....	9	Young people in poverty are socially vulnerable during their transition to adulthood.....	27
Argument 2:		Three ways to categorise the poor	28
Young people deserve their fair share	10	The poor as disadvantaged and marginalised.....	29
Argument 3:		Argument 7:	
Young people are central to achieving the MDGs	11	Capitalising on the demographic transition.....	29
The MDGs are grounded in human rights, which are young people's rights	12	Argument 8:	
		Youth bulge and the increased potential for social conflict.....	31
		The youth bulge and its association with civil conflict	32

4. How to Present the Case.....	35	5. Conclusion.....	43
Four steps to engaging in a policy dialogue	35	Attachment 1:	44
1. Identify the processes in place to develop poverty reduction strategies	35	Overview Analysis of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and young people	44
2. Identify the stakeholders and decision-makers in the PRS process.....	35	Youth inclusion in PRSP processes.....	44
3. Tailor advocacy messages and supporting evidence to strategic audiences.....	35	Identifying youth as a group in poverty.....	44
4. Determine an effective communications strategy.....	36	Identifying youth in action plans and budgets	45
The value of robust evidence and rigorous evaluation	36	Attachment 2:	46
Acknowledging data limitations in making strong case.....	39	Content analysis of PRSPs with an emphasis on population and health issues related to young people	47
Use of vulnerability profiles	39	Reproductive health and HIV/AIDS related PRSP initiatives for young people	47
The benefits of working directly with young people.....	41	Attachment 3:	48
		Integrating a human rights-based approach into PRSPs to benefit young people	48
		Attachment 4:	50
		Countries ranked in order of their population's share of young people (defined as 10 to 24 years of age)	50



Foreword

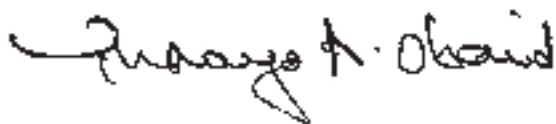
Countries cannot afford to postpone investing in their most promising and innovative of assets—the high numbers of young people that populate the majority of developing countries today. Investing in young people makes sense from a number of perspectives.

For one, it endorses the many international and regional agreements and commitments that have affirmed young people's central role in achieving equitable development. From a human rights perspective, young people are recognized as active agents in their own lives who hold both rights and obligations for the promise of a poverty-free life. From a population dynamics perspective, the sheer numbers of young people in the developing world compared to other age groups warrant concrete investment. Young people aged 10 to 24 years in developing countries now account for nearly 30 per cent of the population, with an even higher share in the poorest countries.

Moreover, as the entire international community works concertedly towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals in the final countdown to 2015, the gap between young people's current reality and the MDG targets provides a sense of urgency to scale up efforts to secure young people's education, employment, access to quality health services, and participation.

Investing in young people also makes good economic sense. Young people can drive economic growth forward. In the case of investing in adolescent girls and young women, the positive effects go beyond labour force participation and productivity. Improvements in the status of girls and women lead to better maternal health, lower child mortality, and an increase in reinvestment to households and communities.

For more than a decade, Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers have been a part of development efforts and increasingly provide a framework to enhance country-owned poverty reduction efforts. A major evaluation in 2003 by the World Bank's Independent Evaluation Group noted that countries need more help in understanding which actions will deliver the greatest poverty reduction pay-off in their particular context. This publication outlines the tremendous opportunities to be gained, and risks to be averted, from increasing investment in young people.



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Executive summary

A comprehensive national strategy to reduce poverty must include a major focus on young people. There are an estimated 1.8 billion young people in the world today (defined as aged 10 to 24 years), accounting for nearly a third of the world's population.¹ Just below 90 per cent live in developing countries, and that proportion will increase during the next 20 years.² Young people account for well over 30 per cent of the population of some 92 countries (see Attachment 4). However, almost half of all young people, close to 550 million, survive on less than \$2 a day.³ An estimated 71 million adolescents were out of school in 2007, and more than half of these were girls.⁴ Approximately 2,500 youth become newly infected with HIV every day, resulting in over 900,000, or 40 per cent, of new infections each year.⁵ Between one-quarter to one-half of girls in developing countries become mothers before age 18 and 14 million girls aged 15 to 19 years give birth each year, despite being at greater risk of dying from pregnancy complications than women in their 20s.⁶ This does not bode well for the fastest-growing segment of the population in many countries, whose health and well-being is fundamental to future economic growth and social progress.

This situation calls for governments to invest additional resources in adolescent development, and to pay explicit attention to gender inequalities, in order to provide targeted policies, programmes and services. This paper presents evidence and analysis to support the integration of young people's rights, needs, and aspirations in poverty reduction strategies. It shows how to make a convincing and evidence-based case for prioritizing the needs of young people among other competing claims for resources for the poverty eradication agenda.

A PUBLIC POLICY PERSPECTIVE

The paper adopts a generalized public policy perspective. It offers a framework for policy advisors and development partners, as advocates for young people, to arrive at the most appropriate arguments and supporting evidence for making young people part of a national poverty reduction strategy.

The generic term "young people", used throughout the paper, should not be taken to imply that all young people's

needs are of equal importance. Evidence specific to each country's situation is essential to ensure that those most in need are the focus of policy attention. Extensive evidence of girls and young women's disadvantages in access to health and education means that their needs will be at the forefront.

CURRENT COVERAGE OF YOUNG PEOPLE'S POVERTY IN PRSPS

Coverage of young people's poverty has deteriorated. UNFPA's first analysis of young people in national Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) in 2003 found that roughly half (55 per cent) appeared to have consulted young people in the development of the strategy. Only a third of the 66 PRSPs, (33 per cent) available in 2010 consulted young people. More than 30 per cent of all PRSPs do not identify youth as a group in poverty at all, compared with 22 per cent of PRSPs in 2003. Only 11 PRSPs (less than 17 per cent) identify youth as a crosscutting area that requires integrated interventions across sectors and topics, the same percentage as in the 2003 analysis.

The attributes identified in PRSPs probably apply to national development strategies generally. Though the analysis was undertaken on PRSPs (because these are readily available on the International Monetary Fund's website) the arguments and evidence in favour of including the needs of young people are applicable to all national development policy processes, such as national policies to achieve the MDGs, assessment frameworks for aid and external financing or progress and information reports, such as national Human Development Reports.

A full analysis of the 66 PRSPs is offered in Attachment 1 and 2 and discussed throughout the text. The review offers some important insights as to what makes a poverty reduction strategy responsive to the needs of young people. Essentially, a PRSP is youth-friendly when it:

- Shows evidence of mechanisms to engage youth in its development and implementation. The participation of young people, particularly the most vulnerable, in identifying how poverty affects them is an essential starting point for developing or revising a country's

The Case for Investing in Young People

poverty eradication strategy. This must include building the capacity of young people and youth organizations to understand, contribute and learn from the process.

- Recognizes that young people are not a homogeneous group. To do this, a PRSP uses available data to identify vulnerable subgroups, particularly young adolescent girls, which require targeted interventions and protection.
- Adequately addresses the needs of young people, not only in the PRSP's description of poverty and related diagnostics, but also in the strategy's other key components, such as the action plan matrix and budgets. Many PRSPs convey concern for youth poverty in their main discourse, but specific interventions, programmatic responses, dedicated expenditures, and delegated responsibilities are less evident.
- Is transparent and clear in its investment allocations. This information is often presented within sector categories such as education, health, energy, agriculture, and infrastructure, without sufficient detail based on factors such as available resources, demographics, delivery systems, and cost parameters. In order to be monitored and evaluated, a PRSP must provide some evidence of a bottom-up approach to resource allocation, one that better accounts for populations in need of services and the coverage of related interventions.
- Integrates young people throughout the strategy, rather than making piecemeal efforts to support young people's transition to adulthood (for example, ensuring primary schooling, but exposing young people to HIV/AIDS for lack of access to reproductive health services). One strategy used by some PRSPs is to fully integrate the achievement of the MDGs, which requires a comprehensive approach to youth development across sectors. This is further explored in the paper.

Examples of PRSPs that succeed in grappling with these challenges are presented throughout the text.

EIGHT ARGUMENTS, SUPPORTED BY EVIDENCE

To make the case for more public policy focus on young people in low and middle-income countries and improve coverage of young people's poverty in development strategies, the publication presents eight arguments, supported by evidence. Some refer to the benefits of a long-term development perspective; others highlight more immediate results. Their relative usefulness depends on the stage in the policy process at which advocates are making their case – consultation; evidence assessment; policy formulation; implementation, or monitoring/evaluation. The case is also likely to be shaped by the nature of the stakeholders. The last section of the paper presents a framework for deciding which arguments to put to whom, and when.

Argument 1: Governments have made commitments

Governments have made commitments to improve the lives of young people, at both the international and regional levels. This includes platforms for action, such as the International Conference on Population and Development (1994) and the World Programme of Action for Youth (1995) as well as legally binding conventions such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990). The widespread recognition of the importance of young people's role in poverty reduction and development means that governments, with the assistance of international agencies and other partners, must start by collecting and analysing evidence at the national level about how young people are faring.

Argument 2: Young people are due their fair share of resources

The most straightforward argument is based on equity: young people's large share of the population in all developing and transition countries justifies providing them with their fair share of resources. This argument has the most weight in the least-developed countries, where young people are a higher proportion of the population as a whole, and even more likely to experience extreme poverty.

Executive summary

Argument 3: Young people are central to achieving the millennium development goals

A more sophisticated rights-based argument presents a moral and legal basis for directing more resources to young people, especially girls and young women because of their great vulnerability to poverty. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) embody most elements of a human rights perspective by identifying the social and economic entitlements to development and the extent of disadvantage suffered. Showing the gap between current reality and the targets of the MDGs in relation to young women's access to education, for example, can help give policy makers a sense of how their country compares with others at the same income level or in the same region.

Arguments 4 and 5: Economic benefits at macro and micro levels

Two arguments emphasising the medium-term benefits of investing in young people can also be made. The first relies on evidence of the macro-economic benefits that can come from a virtuous circle of investing in the health and education of children and then building on this investment in the adolescent years to consolidate the initial investment. A micro-economic argument can also be made about the economic returns from investment in certain programmes, based on cost effectiveness data and information about which interventions are likely to have the greatest impact.

Argument 6: Supporting young people through key transitions

Why should young people require special attention? An argument based on young people's critical stage in the lifecycle highlights the compounding effects of the hurdles young people, in particular girls, often encounter in their transition from dependence to independence.

Argument 7: Capitalising on the demographic transition

Looking at the long term, policy makers must appreciate the effects of a country's changing age structure on economic development, in particular the one-time "demo-

graphic dividend" when mortality and fertility rates fall, and the cohort of working-age adults grows relative to the dependent population.

In policy terms, realizing the demographic dividend depends on investing in employment opportunities, public health, gender equality and education. Conversely, failure to take advantage of the demographic dividend will result in low educational attainment and high levels of unemployment. Health and social welfare systems will come under growing strain as the large working age population gets older and the dependency ratio increases once more.

Argument 8: Long-term benefits: reduction in the chances of civil disorder

The second long-term argument, one that may have particular appeal to risk-averse policy makers, is based on improving national security by lowering criminal activity and the likelihood of civil strife. Young people are both disproportionately responsible for violent crime and more likely to be its victims. Research shows that a "youth bulge" in the population while the economy is weak and governance is poor is associated with political violence and internal social conflict. Overlapping factors include the extent of the youth bulge, a higher level of urban population, a higher proportion of the population in unpaid work or looking for work and the extent of ethnic fractionalisation of the population.⁷

PRESENTING THE CASE - USING VULNERABILITY PROFILES

The paper concludes with considerations of how to present the case for investing in young people. Given competing claims for the attention of policy makers, the paper suggests that carefully targeted investments based on social vulnerability offer the prospect of substantial reductions in poverty for modest expenditures. It proposes as an advocacy tool the use of representative data to compile social vulnerability profiles for different groups of young people.

Girls and young women from the age of 10 to mid-20s in most poor countries are particularly vulnerable. Data at

The Case for Investing in Young People

a country level can be used to show levels of education attainment, child marriage rates, early childbirth rates and age-specific maternal mortality rates.

Working directly with poor adolescents to support their sense of agency, drawing upon their intimate knowledge and experience of their own situations, can be effective. The paper presents the Tackling Poverty Together project as an example of working with youth organizations towards constructive engagement in the PRSP process.

CONCLUSION

Perhaps the best case for substantial investment in young people rests on the wide gap between the MDG targets and the current reality for young people. Poverty gaps for the 10-24 age group are particularly noticeable in relation to the key indicators concerning income and hunger, lack of access to employment and education, lack of gender equality, poor maternal health, and HIV prevalence.

The paper presents empirical evidence showing that programmes for young people could have multiple beneficial effects, with spillover effects in reducing poverty.



1. Introduction

This publication makes the case for investing in young people (defined as 10–24 year-olds) as part of a national strategy to reduce poverty. Its aim is specific — to demonstrate how to put forward evidence-based arguments that ensure the needs of young people are prioritized among other competing claims for resources in the poverty eradication agenda. The case revolves around eight arguments that show why a focus on young people is essential to any national understanding of and solution to poverty. The arguments are tailored to policy makers engaged in a multi-stage policy process, such as the development of a national poverty reduction strategy.

The paper is intended for use by the UN Population Fund's (UNFPA) development partners, among whom are policy advisors and advocates working towards the attainment of young people's universal wellbeing. The paper is grounded in the Fund's commitment to rights-based programming for adolescents and youth in the areas of population, gender, and sexual and reproductive health, including the prevention of HIV/AIDS. The arguments are also guided by UNFPA's four key areas for programme and policy actions outlined in the Fund's Framework for Action on Adolescents and Youth. This includes creating a policy-making environment that makes effective use of evidence-based population analysis and its impacts on development; expanding access to gender-sensitive, life skills-based sexual and reproductive health education; promoting a core package of sexual and reproductive health services, including HIV prevention; and facilitating young people's leadership and participation.⁸

ADOPTING A PUBLIC POLICY PERSPECTIVE

This paper adopts a public policy perspective. This differs from an academic or research perspective, which may be grounded in a specific discipline. It also differs from a single-stakeholder perspective, which represents a specific constituency or predetermined position. A perspective based on a single field of study or specific constituency often finds it hard to construct and assess the costs and benefits of a variety of choices to achieve

a common goal. A public policy focus, on the other hand, acknowledges the complexity of the decision-making processes within policy development. It takes into account the need for decision-makers to weigh the relative costs and possible trade-offs that are needed to select priorities among competing claims for limited resources and capabilities.

Developing public policies, such as a national development or poverty reduction strategy, is complex for many reasons. For one, it requires the involvement of a wide range of actors from within and across different sectors. Each stakeholder brings distinct motives and interests that weigh-in on determining priorities. These may vary from self-interest (such as protecting the work of his or her ministry), to pragmatism (wanting to comply with the conditions for loans or the debt reduction process) to the tension between immediate versus long-term needs (directing resources toward slow-moving but necessary change). The policy process is also usually subject to rushed timelines and interdependent tasks. Another challenging aspect in the policy-making process is accessing sufficient information and data, and then presenting it in such a way as to facilitate prioritization and decisions. Incomplete information, such as the absence of data disaggregated by sex, age, education level or place of residence, greatly hinders the effectiveness of the policies. Finally, policies are made within a context of overall uncertainty and risk, such as a major change in economic growth or the occurrence of a natural disaster.

Given the complexities of the policy-making process, it is not hard to identify why young people's issues and concerns, and consequently some of the best investment choices, have been left out of poverty reduction strategies. As one redress, this report aims to demonstrate how information and data can be accessed, analysed, and presented in support of better policy-making processes, specifically with the needs of young people in mind. The studies and data used to make the arguments in this report are publicly accessible and can be adapted to suit a specific country context or development scenario.



2. Young People's Poverty and its Coverage in National Poverty Reduction Strategies

UNDERSTANDING YOUNG PEOPLE'S EXPERIENCE OF POVERTY

A logical place to begin advocating for a more robust focus on young people in poverty reduction strategies is to understand poverty in relation to their lives. It is now widely accepted that poverty refers to more than a lack of income.⁹ In its interpretation of poverty, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has described it as “a human condition characterized by sustained or chronic deprivation of the resources, capabilities, choices, security and power necessary for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living and other civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights.”¹⁰

This broader view of poverty owes much to the work of Amartya Sen who contends that poverty is best understood as various forms of “unfreedoms” or “capability deprivations” that prevent people from realizing and enlarging their full potential.¹¹ For example, young people's ability to participate fully in their societies is severely constrained by increasingly bleak employment prospects. The youth unemployment rate in 2009 was 13.0 per cent, representing the highest number ever of nearly 81 million unemployed youth aged 15 to 24 years.¹² The ILO warns of a “lost generation” comprised of young people who have dropped out of the labour market, having lost all hope of being able to work for a decent living. Unemployment and underemployment of young people is a consequential form of marginalization, creating further capability deprivations that restrict young people's ability to participate in social and political life.

Over time, measures of poverty have moved beyond income-based factors. In the case of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), progress towards eradicating poverty is measured by three principle indicators, namely (i) income (target 1.A), (ii) employment (target 1.B) and (iii) food security (target 1.C).¹³ The 2010 Human Development Report introduces the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), a measure designed to provide a

fuller, more accurate picture of acute poverty by assessing a range of critical deprivations at the household level.¹⁴ Taken together, from education to health to access to services, these factors provide a fuller portrait of acute poverty. For example, in Ethiopia 90 per cent of people are “MPI poor” compared to the 39 per cent who are classified as living in extreme poverty under income terms alone.¹⁵ The MPI also reveals great variations within countries: Nairobi has one level of MPI poverty, whereas Kenya's rural northeast is far poorer in MPI terms.¹⁶ It is now increasingly clear that the development targets contained in the MDGs will be fully achieved only by addressing the needs of those most disadvantaged by age, gender, and geography.¹⁷

An expanded and more dynamic understanding of poverty is particularly beneficial for young people. For one, it recognizes that young people's poverty is often expressed as an inability to obtain an education, secure a decent livelihood, or access quality health care. Secondly, a dynamic view of poverty uses risk profiles for different groups of the poor by measuring vulnerabilities. Substantial gains in poverty reduction can be made when mapping techniques are used to locate concentrations of vulnerable adolescents for programming that is sensitive to gender, age, schooling, and marital status.

UNFPA and the Population Council have developed a series of Adolescent Data Guides for over 45 countries that illustrate how the most vulnerable youth populations may be excluded from the very programmes intended to help them.¹⁸ The Adolescent Data Guides disaggregate data from a country's Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) and provide meaningful analysis that can be used to target and advocate for vulnerable sections of the youth population. The Guides note that the beneficiaries of youth policies and programmes are often adolescents who already have an advantage (typically they are urban, older, male, unmarried, and go to school). Poverty reduction strategies that do not make use of vulnerability profiles risk repeatedly ignoring

large, neglected and pivotal subgroups of adolescents, such as 10-14 year old out-of-school girls, girls at risk of child marriage or already married adolescents, rural adolescents living without their parents, internally displaced youth and young migrants at risk of unsafe, exploitative work and trafficking.¹⁹

Poverty as experienced by young people fluctuates throughout their transition to adulthood and is shaped by their legal rights, entitlements and support systems, as well as an individual's attributes such as level of education attainment and physical health.²⁰ Thus, to address young people's poverty, either in a PRSP or other national development policy, requires a cross-cutting approach. As will be discussed below, this is presently lacking in the majority of current PRSPs.

COVERAGE OF YOUNG PEOPLE'S POVERTY IN POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY PAPERS

The PRSP approach, initiated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank just over a decade ago, aims to produce a comprehensive, nationally-owned strategy for poverty reduction (See Box 1). In 2003, when UNFPA undertook its first youth-focused analysis of PRSPs, there were 31 completed PRSPs available. There are now 66 countries with full or interim PRSPs, more than double the number used in the 2003 analysis. This report revises and compares the analysis with regards to factors such as the inclusion of young people in the consultation process, the identification of youth as a major group experiencing poverty, and the incorporation of youth in the PRSP's action plan and budget (See Attachment 1 for complete results). It also looks specifically at the coverage of young people in relation to education, employment, sexual and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, gender issues and human rights (see Attachment 2 for complete results). The findings of this analysis takes on larger significance in light of the fact that the attributes identified in PRSPs likely apply to other national poverty reduction and development strategies, more generally.

Youth inclusion in poverty reduction consultations

One of the core principles underlying the PRSP approach is that the process should include the broad-based participation of civil society.²¹ Increasingly participatory approaches are encouraged in all aspects of the PRSP process, including poverty diagnostics, policy formulation and reform, budgeting and public

BOX 1 POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY PAPERS

Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) were introduced around 1999 by the World Bank and the IMF as a framework to enhance country-owned poverty reduction efforts; a means to improve coordination of development assistance; and a precondition to access debt relief and financing from both institutions. A PRSP sets out a country's policies and programmes to promote growth and reduce poverty, as well as associated external financing needs. Countries will typically prepare a PRSP every three to five years in a participatory process that is supposed to involve a broad range of stakeholders. A PRSP generally consists of a description of the participatory process that was used, comprehensive poverty diagnostics, costed priorities for macroeconomic, structural, and social policies, and appropriate targets, indicators, and systems for monitoring and evaluating progress.

The number of national PRSPs has increased rapidly over the last few years to 66 countries. In many cases, countries have benefited from the last decade of experience and have refined the "next generation" of their strategies considerably. As the definition of poverty and an understanding of its determinants expands, so too has the range and depth of issues under deliberation in the strategies. Many are aligned with the MDGs, as well as other key policy documents, such as national employment, education and health strategies. Some PRSPs are supported by better data and poverty diagnostics.

The World Bank's Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) undertook a comprehensive evaluation of the PRSP process in 2003. It found that while the PRSP initiative is relevant to the development challenges of low-income countries and warrants continued Bank and IMF support, more help is required for countries to understand which actions will give them the greatest poverty pay-off in their particular circumstances. Further, there should be greater emphasis on improving domestic processes geared towards poverty reduction and less on the completion of documents. This provides considerable opportunity to apply the case for investing in young people as part of a PRSP.

Source: Based on information retrieved from <http://go.worldbank.org/CSTQB0F730> and <http://www.worldbank.org/ieg/prsp/>

expenditure management, as well as monitoring and evaluation. It is also increasingly understood that within the range of stakeholder groups to be engaged, special efforts must be made to secure the participation of vulnerable groups, such as young people, in order to incorporate their perspectives into the design and implementation of the strategy.²²

The initial 2003 youth and PRSP analysis found that roughly half (55 per cent) appeared to have consulted youth in the development of the strategy. This

situation has not improved over time. At present, only a third of the PRSPs (33 per cent) available in 2010 have consulted youth in their process. This is problematic because the absence of firsthand accounts of young people experiencing poverty means that there is less likelihood of a concerted effort to address their situation. Finding ways to promote the participation of young people, particularly the most vulnerable, and to identify how poverty affects them is an essential starting point for developing or revising a country's poverty eradication strategy.

The methods and mechanisms for enabling youth participation in the PRSP process are numerous. They include national, regional, and local workshops, public information strategies (using written or broadcast media), participatory poverty assessments, focus groups and interviews, supporting networks or coalitions of youth organizations, young citizen report cards, preparing alternative PRSPs or policy proposals, demystifying budgets into simple summaries, and ensuring youth representation on sector-specific working groups.²³

The Kyrgyz Republic's PRSP process undertook a series of television debates on the national TV channel "Jashtar Unu" ("The Voice of Youth") to discuss the role of young people in the implementation of the strategy.²⁴ In Sierra Leone, the preparatory process included a working group dedicated to "Employment and Youths", focus group discussions that held specific spaces for youth representatives, and the use of popular theatre and mobile multimedia vans to involve young people in the dissemination of materials on the PRSP.²⁵

The identification of youth as a major group experiencing poverty

Only 16 of the PRSPs single out youth for emphasis as a group experiencing poverty. Thirteen PRSPs identify youth as a group in poverty in a minor way, and 17 list youth as one of several groups experiencing poverty (see Attachment 1, Figure A2). For example, Mauritania's PRSP identifies the most vulnerable groups as "unskilled youths, female headed households, poor rural households, the disabled and the elderly".²⁶ Tanzania's PRSP refers to the existence of "lifecycle-linked conditions" and defines vulnerable social groups throughout the text as "children, persons with disabilities, youths (unemployed, youths with unreliable income and female youths), elderly persons, people living with illness and HIV and AIDS, and women (widows, other

women who are not able to support themselves)".²⁷ It is particularly concerning that 30 per cent of all PRSPs do not identify youth as a group in poverty at all. This is an increase over the 22 per cent of PRSPs that failed to mention youth in 2003.

Some of the PRSPs take youth living in poverty a beneficial step further by defining specific subgroups of the youth population that require tailored interventions. The Honduran Government highlights the special needs of street children, victims of child abuse, adolescent mothers, and adolescents in conflict with the law. It also notes the need for protective measures for adolescents involved in high-risk work, such as fishing, mining, and occupations exposed to toxic substances, as well as for adolescents working in domestic service and at risk of exploitation.²⁸ The Rwandan PRSP states, "The first step in elaborating a youth development strategy is to acknowledge that the problems and challenges faced by different groups of young persons vary widely. Consequently, any comprehensive strategy to promote the participation of youth in the country's economic and social development will consist of a portfolio of policies and programmes, each of which is targeted at particular groups of young people."²⁹

Incorporation of youth poverty in PRSP's action plans and budgets

Under a third of PRSPs (29 per cent) give specific attention to youth in their action matrices, which spell out the key features of each country's poverty reduction strategy (Attachment 1, see Figure A3). A full 30 per cent of PRSPs (20 in number) do not have any mention of youth in their action plans. Limited inclusion in a PRSP's action matrix underscores a common disadvantage for youth issues in many PRSPs: concern for youth poverty is conveyed in the PRSP's main discourse, but specific interventions, programmatic responses, dedicated expenditures, and delegated responsibilities are less evident. For example, in Chad's PRSP, there are no corresponding strategies in the action plan to address the well-described, desperate situation of young women. The average age for first marriages for women in Chad is 15.8 and 30 per cent of women stated they were either married or were victims of marriage against their will during their youth.³⁰ Although the PRSP notes that female genital cutting, an obligatory rite of passage for girls in several ethnic groups, remains a form of violence against women with serious health implications,

there are again no measures described in the strategy to accord greater support and protection to young women.

It can also be noted that despite coverage in the action plan, only a few PRSPs link suggested programmes focused on youth to specific budget outlays. In fact, the majority of PRSPs, close to 70 per cent, do not include specific budget allocations for youth-related priorities (Attachment 1, see figure A4). Inclusion in PRSP budgetary allocations is also important for youth concerns because public expenditure is a practical tool for monitoring the PRSP's implementation.

Senegal has one of the few PRSPs to mention youth as a stakeholder group that must be involved in helping the PRSP's programmes reach target populations. The Senegalese PRSP outlines an "institutional framework for PRSP steering and monitoring/evaluation" to help ensure "interventions on the ground adhere to the priorities defined in the PRSP".³¹ In Nicaragua, the ability to monitor the effectiveness of interventions has prompted the need to establish a Statistical Information System on Children and Adolescents within the larger national statistics system.³² Such efforts bring to light key under-allocations. For example, Lesotho's PRSP notes "It has also become apparent that the Department of Youth Affairs is under-resourced and under-staffed. Only 15-20 programme staff work in the Department, including District Youth Officers. The budget for the Department has remained minimal and resource limitations have a negative impact on morale".³³

Young people and HIV/AIDS, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Gender Issues in PRSPs

Among the issues in PRSPs that are related explicitly to young people, by far the most are education (both formal and informal) and employment. Over 90 per cent of PRSPs contain strategies for addressing both these issues in relation to youth (see Attachment 2, Figure A5). Next is HIV/AIDS, as approximately 68 per cent of PRSPs address this concern in relation to youth. However, only 48 per cent of PRSPs address sexual and reproductive health services, and less still gender considerations and the needs of girls and young women.

While 45 PRSPs mention young people in relation to HIV/AIDS prevention, only 32 (less than half) incorporate a focus on sexual and reproduction health. In the Ghanaian PRSP, SRH strategies include "educating the youth on sexual relationships, fertility regulation, adolescent health, marriage and child bearing", as well as

increasing "access to voluntary counseling and testing, condoms, and integrated youth friendly services". The Dominican PRSP describes SRH concerns as:

*... the persistence of teenage pregnancy and motherhood despite the availability of free contraception at clinics. Amongst households with children under 18 years, teenage pregnancies are found in 17 per cent of cases... The incidence of teenage sexual activity remains high with over 60 per cent of adolescents aged 15-19 years having had sexual intercourse, while only a quarter stated that they used contraception every time they had sex. STDs make up a large proportion of all medical consultations and the spread of HIV infection is of concern. With the present atmosphere of denial and stigmatization, along with the resistance on the part of males to condom use, an AIDS epidemic could become a major social and economic problem.*³⁴

In terms of proposed actions, Dominica's PRSP is less detailed and refers only to an "HIV/AIDS/ Teenage Pregnancy Awareness Programme". This is the case with many other PRSPs, such as Bolivia, Georgia, and Malawi to name a few, which provide detailed descriptions of the critical need for better SRH services for young people without further elaborating a responsive strategy.

Gender is covered in a major way in many PRSPs generally, but only 25 (or 38 per cent) explicitly relate it to the situation of girls and young women. A fundamental gender issue is girls' improved access to education, though its conceptual links to poverty and wider social choices in relation to early marriage and adolescent childbirth are typically sketchy in most PRSPs. Some gender-specific education strategies include Benin's granting of scholarships to young girls and the facilitation of girls' access to university residences.³⁵ Guinea's PRSP mentions measures to renovate the water sector in order to ease the burden of water collection on households, especially on young girls, to enhance their ability to attend school regularly.³⁶ However, PRSPs are once again more accomplished at detailing the situation versus forming concrete policies with designated responsibility. Vietnam's PRSP notes "Policies on gender equality are adequate but not strictly implemented. Poor women and young girls in remote and isolated areas and ethnic minority women benefit less from those policies. They are negatively affected by backward

beliefs, customs and practices. In many areas, they are victims of female trafficking and family violence.”³⁷

Young People’s Poverty Missing as a Cross-cutting Issue

Most daunting is the finding that only 11 PRSPs (less than 17 per cent) mention youth as a crosscutting area that requires integrated interventions across sectors and topics. These include: Côte d’Ivoire, Djibouti, The Gambia, Haiti, Lesotho, Liberia, Rwanda, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, and Zambia. This is the same percentage of PRSPs that treated youth issues as a cross-cutting manner in the 2003 analysis, suggesting that little progress have been made in recent years.

Integrating youth across sectors is arguably the most important test of whether a PRSP addresses youth issues in a comprehensive way. Piecemeal or single programme interventions are not likely to deliver the range of benefits of an integrated approach. Not surprisingly, treating youth as a crosscutting priority results in greater inclusion of youth issues in action matrices, monitoring targets, and budgetary allocations. In Liberia’s PRSP, there is a strategy brief on children and youth that integrates youth issues in the strategy’s four main pillars (national security, economic revitalization, infrastructure and governance).³⁸

Although an increasing number of countries are making some reference to young people in their PRSPs, the initiatives are often piecemeal and, hence, limited in their scale and potential impact. When PRSPs do give attention to young people, it is often in the descriptions of poverty, rather than in the programmes, specific targets, ministry delegation, and budget contained in the PRSP. The next section outlines a series of eight arguments that can be applied throughout a poverty reduction strategy process to begin to rectify this situation.

BOX 2 EXTRACT FROM HAITI’S GROWTH AND POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY

Gender, youth and HIV/AIDS are three of twelve crosscutting themes in Haiti’s PRSP. In explaining the centrality of youth, the strategy states:

“One of the categories most affected by the ongoing multi-dimensional crisis is Youth, which accounts for over 50 per cent of the overall population. Learning and experimentation tend to be forgone owing, among other factors, to the disastrous socioeconomic conditions prevailing in Haiti. This being so, our young people lack both the time and the resources to fully experience their youth, as indicated by the fact that 17 per cent of those under age 30 are heads of household. They engage in all manner of activities (car washing, small-scale retail trade, prostitution, theft, etc.) to be able to bring something back to the household at the end of the day or evening.

This kind of fragility can be readily identified on the basis of selected data:

- 5.2 per cent of those ages 15 to 19 were infected by STIs/ HIV-AIDS in 2003
- 59 per cent of first childbirths occurred among those ages 15 to 30 in 2001
- Over 40 per cent of those ages 15-24 fall outside the Haitian education system
- 40.6 per cent of young males and 54.8 per cent of young females are unemployed.”

The strategy goes on to note that 55 per cent of young women and 95 per cent of young men reported having had high-risk sex. Only 29 per cent of young women and 43 per cent of young men indicated that they had used condoms during sexual relations.

Source: Government of Haiti, 2008, Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (SNCRP), p 56-7.



3. The Case for Investing in Young People

The lack of progress in addressing young people's experience of poverty into the majority of existing national development policies indicates a need for better use of available data and continued advocacy. A number of strong analytical arguments can be offered in favour of expanding the coverage of young people's issues as part of poverty reduction strategies. Elaboration of these arguments is the focus of this section of the publication.

ARGUMENT 1:

The need to implement existing commitments

Commitments to improve the lives of young people have been made at the international level as early as 1965 when the United Nations endorsed the Declaration on the Promotion among Youth on the Ideals of Peace, Mutual respect and Understanding between Peoples. In 1985, the UN General Assembly observed the first International Youth Year and the discussion culminated ten years later with the adoption of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond.³⁹ In 2007, the Programme was updated to include new challenges facing youth in the twenty-first century by adding commitments in the areas of globalization, information and communication technology, HIV/AIDS, armed conflict, and intergenerational issues. Most recently, the UN General Assembly proclaimed the year commencing on 12 August 2010 as the second International Year of Youth with the theme of Dialogue and Mutual Understanding.⁴⁰

There are many international instruments that include commitments to young people in the area of poverty eradication, including some that are legally binding. UNFPA's work is especially grounded in the Programme of Action that was adopted in Cairo at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). The Conference shifted the

emphasis of population planning from reaching demographic targets to promoting human rights and sustainable development. At ICPD, young people put forth the Cairo Youth Declaration that asserted their rights and needs in the area of population and development.

A review of progress since the Cairo Conference has occurred at regular intervals, including an international forum at The Hague in 1999 (ICPD +5). Related issues have also been discussed and monitored at events such as the meetings for the follow-up to the 4th World Conference on Women and at the UN Special Session on HIV/AIDS in June 2001. At this special session, Heads of State and representatives of governments issued the Declaration of Commitments on HIV/AIDS, including specific commitments to adolescents and youth. The Convention on the Rights of the Child formally binds governments to meet the obligations and responsibilities outlined in the Convention for those below the age of eighteen years. Attachment 3 specifies additional human rights conventions that pertain to young people. Excerpts from some of these international commitments that pertain specifically to young people are outlined in Box 3.

These existing international commitments have been complemented most recently by regional mechanisms also directed at supporting the development of young people. The Beijing Declaration of the Ministers Responsible for Youth of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the People's Republic of China on ASEAN-China Cooperation on Youth was endorsed by ministers in September 2004. The declaration acknowledges the role of youth as major contributors to social change and poverty reduction through sustainable economic development. In March 2008, the Ibero-American Convention on Young People's Rights entered into force after its ratification by Costa Rica, Ecuador, the Dominican Republic, Honduras and Spain. The convention sets out specific rights for young people between 15-24 years old and recognises them as strategic actors in development. The African Youth

BOX 3 EXCERPTS OF EXISTING INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS ON ADDRESSING POVERTY AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

Poverty is inseparably linked to lack of access to or loss of control over resources, including land, skills, knowledge, capital and social connections. Without those resources, people have limited access to institutions, markets, employment and public services. Young people are particularly affected by this situation. Therefore, specific measures are needed to address the juvenilization and feminization of poverty (World Programme of Action for Youth, paragraph 40).

Youth should be actively involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of development activities that have a direct impact on their daily lives. This is especially important with respect to information, education and communication activities and services concerning reproductive and sexual health, including the prevention of early pregnancies, sex education and the prevention of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. (ICPD, Paragraph 6.15)

Develop at national and other levels, as appropriate, action plans for adolescents and youth, based on gender equity and equality, that cover education, professional and vocational training and income-generating opportunities. Such programmes should include support mechanisms for the education and counseling of adolescents in the areas of gender relations and equality, violence against adolescents, responsible sexual behaviour, responsible family planning practices, family life, reproductive health, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV infection and AIDS prevention. (ICPD +5 Paragraph 73.c)

States Parties recognize the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. (Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 27.1)

Figure 1 Estimated population aged 10 to 24 years for least, less and more developed countries⁴³, 2008, and per cent of total population in each region

Region	Population aged 10 to 24 years	10 to 24 year olds as proportion of total population in this group of countries, per cent
Least developed countries	274,842,000	32.2
Less developed regions	1,595,761,000	28.1
More developed regions	226,440,000	18.3
Total	1,822,201,000	26.4

Source: Population Division of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *World Population Prospects: The 2008 Revision*, <http://esa.un.org/unpp>

action plans are the outputs of concerted stocktaking, debate, and discussion. A case for investing in young people should reference the now widespread recognition of the central role young people play in developing their societies.

ARGUMENT 2:

Young people deserve their fair share

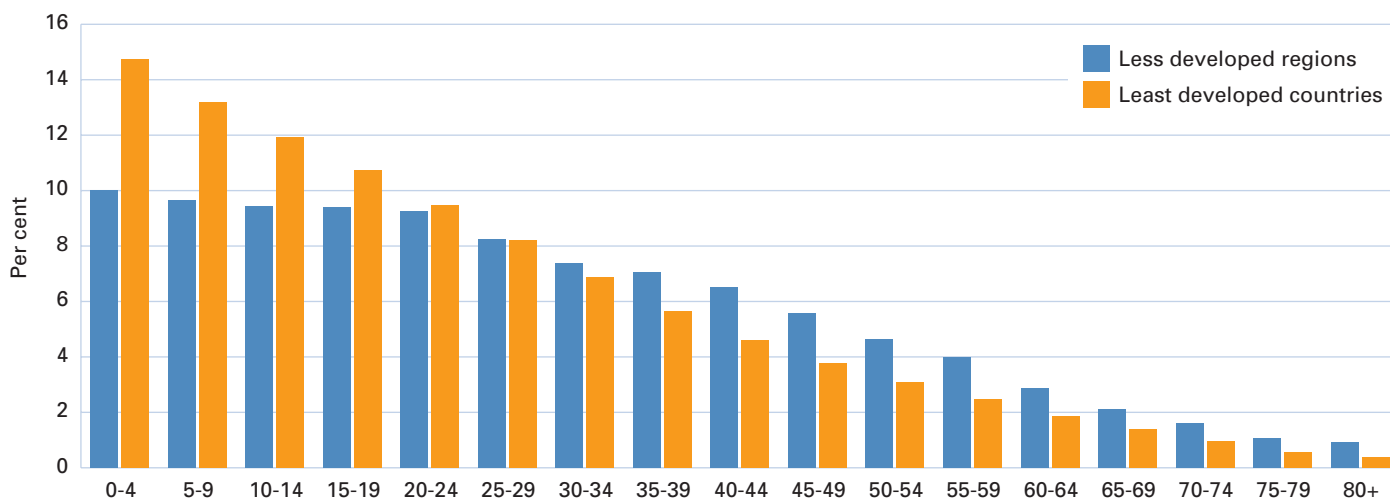
The demographics of young people provide a compelling justification for investing in ways to improve their economic and social welfare. Young people aged 10 to 24 years in developing countries now account for nearly 30 per cent of the population, with an even higher population share in the poorest countries (see Figure 1). The poorer the country, the greater the share young people have in that country's population. In effect, this means that young people are likely to account for a large share of those who are living below the poverty line of \$1.25 a day, the World Bank's revised international poverty measure.⁴⁴ Moreover, the impacts of the recent global financial crisis have shown increased poverty rates in comparison to what they would have been without the crisis.⁴⁵

The number of young people aged 10 to 24 years in less developed countries is estimated to be just over a quarter of the world's population (28 per cent) or 1.8 billion people (see Figure 1). In relation to least developed countries, which is a smaller group of 49 countries, just below a third of the population (32.2 per cent) is aged 10 to 24 years. By contrast, the relative share of young people in

Charter, which was adopted by the Assembly of the African Union, entered into force in August 2009 and has been ratified by more than 20 African countries. The Charter creates a legally binding framework for governments to develop supportive policies and programmes for young people and provides a platform for youth to fulfill their responsibility to contributing to the continent's development.

With such widespread recognition of the importance of young people's role in poverty reduction and development, governments, with the assistance of international agencies and other partners, must work towards the full implementation of their commitments. It is not acceptable to brush aside these agreements, as they represent broad-based political consensus on development priorities. While less analytical than the other arguments presented in this report, existing declarations and

Figure 2 Population distribution – less developed regions and least developed countries compared



Source: Population Division of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, World Population Prospects: The 2008 Revision, <http://esa.un.org/unpp>

the more developed countries is much less, accounting for less than a fifth of the population (18.3 per cent).

As the share of young people in the population of least developed countries grows, these individuals will face increasing competition for jobs and other economic opportunities. Against a background of slowed economic growth, the greater absolute numbers of young people in the least developed economies present significant challenges for addressing poverty amongst youth.

The lopsided age profile in favour of children and youth in less developed regions and least developed countries is shown in Figure 2. While the countries of the less developed regions overall have a somewhat more even age distribution, the age profile for the poorest countries remains heavily concentrated in the youngest age groups. The youngest age groups in these countries in terms of their sheer numbers dominate the other age groups. The effect of this age cohort on the demographic profile of a poor country will persist long into the foreseeable future due to population momentum. This suggests that investment in the education and health of the current generation of young people in poor countries will bear fruit, as the population ages, in terms of improved productivity, reduced health costs and enhanced social capital through increased capacity of the society to cope with unexpected shocks.

The above observation also highlights the importance of the reverse side of this argument. Failure to respond to the education, health and employment needs of a large share of the population will further entrench

poverty for generations. This point is taken up further in the final argument, highlighting the downside in failing to respond to the challenges offered by what has been coined the “demographic bonus”.

ARGUMENT 3:

Young people are central to achieving the MDGs

Governments, the UN system, and other development partners have aligned themselves to support the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), a set of targets created by the international community to be achieved by 2015. Progress in the MDGs, from eradicating extreme poverty, to promoting gender equality, to combating HIV/AIDS, will be determined in part by the situation of young people and bridging the gap between their present reality and many of the MDG targets.

To do this, advocates for young people need to collect and interpret data on how young people are faring in relation to the MDG targets. Data are readily available at a country level for a range of indicators concerning young people and education, employment, gender equality, health and other indicative measures. Disaggregated data, along the lines of sex, level of income, urban versus rural location, and subgroups within the youth cohort (e.g. very young adolescents aged 10 to 14 years) are

increasingly accessible. The United Nations system issues a yearly report on the progress toward implementation of the MDGs, based on information drawn from the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on MDG Indicators.⁴⁴ UNDP Human Development Reports also compile country-specific data for a number of development indicators.⁴⁵ These sources can be used to compile profiles of young people differentiated by gender to help make the case for investing in young people in relation to achieving the MDGS.

The MDGs are grounded in human rights, which are young people's rights

The MDGs are an important source of authority because they reflect the broad consensus of the international community. The Goals are based on the economic, social and cultural rights enumerated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (articles 22, 24, 25, 26) and other human rights instruments.⁴⁶ This is exemplified in the Millennium Declaration, on which the MDGs are based (See Box 4).

The MDGs should be viewed by all as claimable rights that carry obligations on the part of many – government, citizens, corporations, international organizations, and other duty bearers – to refrain not just from violating these rights, but also to promote and protect their realization. In 2003, a group of UN agencies, including UNFPA, committed to integrating human rights into their national development cooperation programmes. As further detailed in Attachment 3, they adopted a common understanding of a rights-based approach based on the principles of universality, non-discrimination, participation and inclusion, access, and accountability.⁴⁷ Understanding the MDGs as a moral and legal framework to achieving universal human rights and adopting a rights-based approach to development has important consequences for young people. Aside from recognizing young people's right to education, skills, and services, a right-based approach brings into focus the needs of socially marginalized and vulnerable subgroups of adolescents to grow up healthy and safe. As evidenced in the data discussed below, specific rights violations are experienced by adolescent girls, from being deprived of access to education to forced early marriage to greater risk of contracting HIV/AIDS.

A key element of a focus on human rights is identifying duty bearers and having them fully accept the responsibility. Thus fulfilling young people's rights is

BOX 4 EXTRACT FROM THE UNITED NATIONS MILLENNIUM DECLARATION

25. We resolve therefore:

- To respect fully and uphold the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- To strive for the full protection and promotion in all our countries of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights for all.
- To strengthen the capacity of all our countries to implement the principles and practices of democracy and respect for human rights, including minority rights.
- To combat all forms of violence against women and to implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
- To take measures to ensure respect for and protection of the human rights of migrants, migrant workers and their families, to eliminate the increasing acts of racism and xenophobia in many societies and to promote greater harmony and tolerance in all societies.
- To work collectively for more inclusive political processes, allowing genuine participation by all citizens in all our countries.
- To ensure the freedom of the media to perform their essential role and the right of the public to have access to information.

Source: Resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly 55/2, 8 September 2000

not a form of charity. Relevant duty bearers include government ministry or ministries, supported by international agencies, non-government organisations and international corporations.⁴⁸ Furthermore, under a rights-based approach, young people are recognized as key actors in their own development. As rights-holders, with both entitlements and obligations, they are not passive recipients of services.

Viewing the MDGs through a rights-based lens highlights the inequality, exclusion, and accountability failures that lie at the root of many young people's poverty and deprivation. A number of countries have adopted the MDGs as an important reference point for policymaking purposes. For example, Kenya's PRSP specifies an increase in government spending on health from its current 5.6 per cent as a share of total public expenditure to 12 per cent over the time of the PRSP

program. While such an increase is ambitious, it notes “the commitment of the government to make significant progress towards the Millennium Development Goals justify such an increase”.⁴⁹ Numerous other PRSPs have integrated the MDGs, such as Bangladesh, Cape Verde, Tanzania, Yemen, to name but a few.

Young People and the MDGs

It is important to acknowledge that the MDGs are not exhaustive in the poverty-related issues they cover, particularly in relation to young people. Nor do the Goals, in and of themselves, offer a model for development. Individual countries need to set their own priorities for reducing poverty through a national strategy, such as a PRSP, as the causes of poverty vary both between and within countries.

It can be argued that all of the MDGs indirectly relate to young people because they account for such a large share of the population in poor countries. In addition, several of the Goals, such as those related to education and employment attainment, gender equality, improved maternal health, and combating HIV/AIDS, explicitly relate to young people because they cover activities in which predominantly young people are engaged. Table 2 summarizes some of the ways in which young people’s lives are highly implicated in the achievement of the MDGs.

More investment in improving adolescent health, education and employment levels will have a major impact on achieving the targets across the MDGs. For example, efforts to ensure that young people have access to complete primary education will support better employment prospects for young people, as well as improved information for choices regarding their health. Most definite are the inter-linkages that stem from Goal 3 on gender equality and women’s empowerment, which is essential for the achievement of all MDGs. Pervasive gender discrimination put girls at a disadvantage in terms of completing school, securing decent employment, negotiating safe sex, avoiding unsafe abortions, and having control in the decisions that affect their lives. The two MDGs relating to sexual and reproductive health (Goals 5 and 6) implicitly refer to young people as this age group accounts for most of the people who can potentially benefit from actions directed at achieving these two goals. In relation to MDG 5, young women under the age of 25 years account for many of the women who will benefit from more investment of resources to improve maternal health and

efforts to end child marriage. About 16 million women 15–19 years old give birth each year, about 11 per cent of all births worldwide, and 95 per cent of these births occur in low- and middle-income countries.⁷¹ The proportion of births that take place during adolescence is about 2 per cent in China, 18 per cent in Latin America and the Caribbean and more than 50 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa.⁷² Adolescent girls between the ages of 15 and 19 are twice as likely to die during pregnancy or childbirth as women in their 20s. For those under 15, the risks are 5 times higher.⁷³ Box 5 describes more specifically why a focus on adolescent girls, particularly those from the poorest communities, is crucial for the achievement of the MDGs.

People advocating for a greater focus on young people in poverty reduction and national development strategies need to highlight to policy makers the essential links between investing in young people and achieving all of the MDG targets. Increasingly more data is available, much of it disaggregated by sex, to be used in demonstrating how young people need further investment in the areas covered by the Goals. The remainder of this argument demonstrates how this evidence can be used to this end.

HOW ARE YOUNG PEOPLE FARING IN RELATION TO THE MDGS?

Young people and poverty, hunger and employment

The first Millennium Development Goal, “to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger”, seeks to reduce by half between 1990 and 2015 the proportion of people living on minimal incomes. Eradicating poverty is essential to realizing adolescents’ rights. The World Bank estimates that 1.4 billion people in the developing world, or one in four, are living on less than \$ 1.25 a day.⁷⁴ The proportion of young people affected is likely to be similar overall, and is likely to be higher in the least-developed countries, where young people are 32 per cent of the population. This is a rough estimate. Other studies that examine additional elements of deprivation, such as nutrition and sanitation, have estimated that every second person under the age of 18 years living in the developing world experiences extreme poverty.⁷⁵

In relation to reducing hunger, young women in particular are also a key target group for action. A key performance indicator to show the reduction in hunger is the prevalence of underweight children. The nutritional

Table 2 Implications of the Millennium Development Goals for Young People

Select MDG targets and indicators that relate to young people	Some implications for young people
Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	
<p>Target 1.A: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day</p> <p><i>Sample indicator:</i> Proportion of population below \$1 (PPP) per day</p>	<p>Globally almost 9 out of 10 young people live in developing countries.⁵⁰ Almost half of all young people, close to 550 million of them, survive on less than \$2 a day.⁵¹ Poverty in young people, particularly young women, has been linked with lower school enrolment, higher adolescent birth rates, greater child and maternal mortality, and less information about HIV/AIDS prevention (See implications on other MDGs below)</p>
<p>Target 1.B: Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people</p> <p><i>Sample indicator:</i> Growth rate of GDP per person employed; Proportion of employed people living below \$1 (PPP) per day</p>	<p>In 2009, 81 million young people were unemployed, the most ever. In 2008, young people accounted for 24 per cent of the world's working poor. An estimated 152 million young workers live in poor households (i.e. per-capita expenditure of less than \$1.25 a day).⁵²</p>
<p>Target 1.C: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger</p> <p><i>Sample indicator:</i> Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption; Prevalence of underweight children under-five years of age</p>	<p>Based on FAO country estimates of undernourishment, at least 160 million young people aged 15 to 24 years of age are undernourished worldwide.⁵³</p> <p>Research shows that educated girls and women are more likely to be informed about nutrition for themselves and their children. Their children have higher survival rates than those of uneducated women and tend to be better nourished.⁵⁴</p>
Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education	
<p>Target 2.A: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling</p> <p><i>Sample indicator:</i> Net enrolment ratio in primary education; Literacy rate of 15-24 year-olds, women and men</p>	<p>An estimated 71 million adolescents were out of school in 2007, and more than half (54 per cent) were girls.⁵⁵ 30 in every 100 young people aged 15 to 24 year old are illiterate in least developed. For every 100 literate males, 88 females are literate.⁵⁶</p>
Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women	
<p>Target 3.A: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015.</p> <p><i>Sample indicator:</i> Ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education.</p>	<p>While some countries have improved gender parity in primary education, in most countries, far more girls than boys are deprived access to secondary and higher education.⁵⁷ Poverty puts girls at a distinct disadvantage.⁵⁸</p>
Goal 4: Reduce child mortality	
<p>Target 4.A: Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate.</p> <p><i>Sample indicator:</i> Under-five and infant mortality rates; proportion of 1 year-old children immunised against measles.</p>	<p>The WHO's Global Health Indicators for 2010 confirm that, in general, countries with a higher rate of female primary education have lower levels of under-five mortality.⁵⁹ Research shows that educated women are more likely to ensure their children are immunized.⁶⁰</p>
Goal 5: Improve maternal health	
<p>Target 5.A: Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio</p> <p><i>Sample indicator:</i> Maternal mortality rate.</p>	<p>Maternal deaths related to pregnancy and childbirth are the leading cause of mortality for girls aged 15-19 worldwide, accounting for at least 70,000 deaths each year.⁶¹ Between one-quarter to one-half of girls in developing countries become mothers before age 18 and 14 million girls aged 15 to 19 years give birth each year, despite being at greater risk of dying from complications than women in their 20s.⁶²</p>
<p>Target 5.B: Achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health.</p> <p><i>Sample indicator:</i> Contraceptive prevalence rate; Adolescent birth rate.</p>	<p>Contraceptive use is four times higher among women with a secondary education than among those with no education.⁶³ Progress has stalled in reducing the number of teenage pregnancies, putting more young mothers at risk. In 2007, there were 65 out of 1,000 births per women aged 15-19, in the developing regions, up from 52 per 1,000 births in 1990. Poverty and lack of education perpetuate high adolescent birth rates.⁶⁴</p>
Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases	
<p>Target 6.A: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS.</p> <p><i>Sample indicator:</i> HIV prevalence among population aged 15-24 years; Proportion of population aged 15-24 years with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS.</p>	<p>In 2008, young people aged 15 to 24 accounted for an estimated 900 000 new HIV infections, or approximately 40 per cent of new HIV infections among adults worldwide. The HIV epidemic has been harsh specifically on the lives of young women, who comprise 66 per cent of infections among young people worldwide.⁶⁵ Many young people still lack the knowledge to protect themselves against HIV. Mounting evidence also shows a link between gender-based violence and HIV.⁶⁶</p>

Table 2 Implications of the Millennium Development Goals for Young People cont.

Select MDG targets and indicators that relate to young people	Some implications for young people
Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability	
<p>Target 7.C: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation</p> <p>Target 7.D: By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers</p> <p><i>Sample indicator:</i> Proportion of population using an improved drinking water source; Proportion of population using an improved sanitation facility; Proportion of urban population living in slums.</p>	<p>In 2008, an estimated 2.6 billion people around the world lacked access to an improved sanitation facility.⁶⁷ Over the last decade, the share of the urban population living in slums in the developing world has declined, but in absolute terms, the number of slum dwellers in the developing world is growing. Also in 2008, for the first time, more than half of the world's population will live in urban areas, and the number and proportion of urban young people is increasing dramatically.⁶⁸</p>
Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development	
<p>Target 8.B: Address the special needs of the least developed countries</p> <p>Target 8.F: In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications</p> <p><i>Sample indicator:</i> Levels of Official Development Assistance (ODA); Cellular subscribers per 100 population; Internet users per 100 population.</p>	<p>Aid remains below the UN target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income for most donors.⁶⁹ A strong economic environment and access to foreign markets can help to create jobs for young people. A reduction in external debt may enlarge the policy space of countries to invest in young people and ODA may complement these investments.</p> <p>By the end of 2009, global subscriptions to mobile cellular services had ballooned to an estimated 4.6 billion—equivalent to a mobile cellular subscription for 67 out of every 100 people.⁷⁰ However, access to the World Wide Web is still closed to the majority of the world's people. Young people are innovative users of new technologies and growth in this area can provide opportunities and increased access to information.</p> <p>Overall, part of the global partnership for development should include alliances with youth-led and youth-serving organizations.</p>

Source: Based on the Official List of MDG Indicators, (effective January 2008), retrieved from <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/mdg/Host.aspx?Content=Indicators/OfficialList.htm>

intake of mothers and freedom from diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis are crucial influences on child mortality and malnutrition. This is due to the fact that low birth weight is the single most important determinant of infant mortality and child growth up to the age of seven. The high prevalence of births to mothers aged 15 to 19 years in the least developed countries shows that the health of adolescent mothers is a pivotal point of intervention to lower infant mortality and child malnutrition.⁷⁶ Improving female adolescent health will, therefore, have a major impact on achieving MDG 1 by reducing the prevalence of children who suffer from hunger.

A major contributing factor to young people's poverty is their high unemployment and underemployment. MDG target 1.B. concerns achieving decent and productive work for young people. In 2009, 81 million young people were unemployed, the most ever that the world has seen.⁷⁷ Across the globe, the economic crisis has had a dramatic impact on the challenges facing young people seeking jobs. Youth unemployment rate rose from 11.9 per cent to 13.0 per cent between 2007 and 2009, an increase of 7.8 million. Young women have more difficulty than young men in finding work. The female

youth unemployment rate in 2009 stood at 13.2 per cent compared to the male rate of 12.9 per cent.⁷⁸

Compared to adults, youth are almost three times as likely to be unemployed than adults. Persistent discouraging trends of increasing youth unemployment rates over time are found in South-east Asia and the Pacific, South Asia and the Middle East. More than 20 per cent of the youth labour force in the Middle East and North Africa in 2008 was unable to find jobs.⁷⁹

The high number of unemployed youth only tells half the story. Young people suffer disproportionately from decent work deficits, measured in terms of working poverty and employment status. Evidence shows that young people have a higher likelihood than adults of being among the working poor. In 2008, an estimated 152 million young workers—or nearly 25 per cent of the world's working poor—were living with their families on less than US\$1.25 per person per day.⁸⁰

High labour force participation rates of the young working poor, most of which are engaged in the agricultural sector, reflect lost opportunities for many of the youth who might otherwise attend school and acquire skills and education that could raise their future productivity and potential earnings. The lack of productive

BOX 5 WHY A FOCUS ON ADOLESCENT GIRLS IS CRUCIAL TO ACHIEVING THE MDGS

It is generally recognized that a focus on adolescent girls, particularly those from the poorest communities, is crucial for the achievement of the MDGs. The rationale for prioritizing investments in these girls is based not only on an urgent need to rectify their current situation in terms of upholding their human rights, but also on the special promise they bring to the achievement of the MDGs. Adolescent girls represent a huge untapped potential, and could be said to hold the key to breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty.

Establishing a strong economic base for adolescent girls—building their social and economic assets—can contribute to the poverty-reduction targets of MDG 1. Increased female access to and control of resources has been confirmed to have stronger returns to human capital compared to income under male control. A rising proportion of families rely upon females, often young females, to provide sole or substantial support to children.

Educated girls are more likely to marry later and to have better maternal and child health outcomes, and are more able and inclined to invest in the health and education of their children. These outcomes produce critical returns on public investments (particularly if the girls complete secondary school) for MDG 2.

Too often marginalized adolescent girls bear the burden of discrimination and human rights violations that hinder the achievement of women's empowerment and gender equality of MDG 3. Programmes that promote schooling, the building of livelihood skills and social assets, freedom from violence, positive health-seeking behaviours and better access to sexual reproductive health education and services for these girls, before they become mothers, will have ripple effects across different MDGs. These programmes will help reduce child mortality and associated maternal mortality (MDGs 4 and 5), and reduce HIV infection (MDG6)—cognisant that, in many countries the infection is rapidly increasing among those who are young, poor, and female. Programmes targeting slum dwellers, as part of ensuring environmental sustainability (MDG7), will affect millions of marginalized girls in urban settings. Developing global partnerships for development (MDG8) must include civil-society partnerships in which the social assets of marginalized girls can be mobilized and enhanced.

Source: Excerpt from the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Adolescent Girls. 2009. *Fulfilling the Rights of Marginalized Adolescent Girls: A Joint Programming Framework*. New York: UN-ITFA.

livelihoods. In some countries, virtually the only paid occupation open to many young men is to join the various armed groups involved in civil conflict. For young women, the dangers of entrapment in the sex industry are widespread.⁸¹

In response to the youth employment crisis, the UN Secretary General has set up the Youth Employment Network. The task of the Network is to coordinate the efforts of the UN agencies, the ILO and the World Bank in the area of employment for young people and to support Governments in the creation and implementation of National Action Plans.⁸² There are presently 17 developing countries that have become Lead Countries of the YEN and voluntarily agreed to participate in a regular benchmarking exercise of youth employment policies and programs. YEN is also building the evidence base through rigorous programme evaluation to enable Governments to best identify and implement the most effective programmes and policies to create jobs for youth.

There is no one-size-fits-all solution to the youth employment challenge. Policy responses depend on national circumstances and must promote both economic development and employment growth. The best labour market entry path for young people remains a good basic education, vocational training or higher education and initial work experience. Other solutions may include programmes that provide incentives to enterprises to hire young people, promote youth entrepreneurship, and facilitate access to finance and other targeted active labour market measures.⁸³

Young people and education

In relation to the second MDG, which is to achieve universal primary education, many young people in poor countries continue to miss out on a basic education. The latest data show as many as 13 in every 100 young people aged 15 – 24 in developing countries are still illiterate.⁸⁴ In the least developed countries, this number is much higher, as 30 in every 100 youth aged 15 – 24 are still illiterate. Many illiterate young people are female, as Table 3 shows — this gender imbalance is analysed further under MDG 3.

The averages of illiterate young people reported in Table 3 mask major variations between developing countries. This is particularly the case for the countries in Africa that have been identified as priorities in terms of the assistance required for reaching the MDGs.⁸⁵ Table

work for young people has a number of highly damaging economic and social consequences. The inability to find stable employment can create a sense of frustration and idleness among young people. It perpetuates the intergenerational cycle of poverty and places young people at risk of having to engage in hazardous or exploitative

Table 3 Literacy rate of young people aged 15 to 24 years and ratio of literate females to males, aged 15 to 24 years

Country type	Youth literacy rate — per cent of age 15-24 years, 2005–2008*		Ratio of literate females to males (age 15-24), 2005–2008
	Male	Female	
World	91.7	86.4	0.95
Developing countries	90.3	84.1	0.94
Least developed countries	74.5	65.5	0.88

* Data refer to the most recent year available during the period specified in the heading.

Source: UNESCO's Institute for Statistics, Regional literacy rates for youths (15-24), April 2010 release, Retrieved from <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/ReportFolders/ReportFolders.aspx>

4 shows the literacy rate for young people aged 15 to 24 years in the designated priority countries in Africa. The table shows the value of using country specific data to ensure that resources are properly targeted to the areas of most need. The data show that there is no consistent relationship between the youth literacy rate and priority status, as some countries such as Kenya and Zimbabwe have near universal literacy for this age group.

The lack of basic education for young people is clearly evident for several priority countries. These countries have literacy rates below or near the least developed country average (see Table 3). The Gender Parity Index for literacy in individual countries, therefore, can be used as a valuable pointer to a need to direct more resources to the basic education of children and young people, and especially for girls and young women.

Basic literacy not enough

It is critical to bear in mind that the youth illiteracy rate refers only to basic literacy – the capacity to read a simple sentence in any language. For purposes of operating in the modern world, the attainment of basic literacy and numeracy is insufficient to ensure their employability. The capacity of a country's education system to prepare young people by imparting to them the means to operate at middle to high performance levels in reading and mathematics is a major factor affecting young people's options in the labour force.

In recent years, many countries have accepted an independent assessment by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) of the outcomes produced by their education systems. In the Asia Pacific Region, for example, Indonesia and Thailand

Table 4 Youth literacy rates and Gender Parity Index for some of the priority countries in Africa—disaggregated by sex, percent, 2008

Top priority countries	Youth literacy rate — per cent of age 15-24 years		Gender Parity Index for youth literacy rate
	Male	Female	
Burkina Faso	46.7	33.1	0.71
Central African Republic	72.1	56.4	0.78
Chad	53.5	37.2	0.70
Comoros	85.7	84.1	0.98
Congo, Dem. Rep.	68.8	61.8	0.90
Côte d'Ivoire	72.0	60.1	0.83
Gambia	70.1	58.1	0.83
Guinea-Bissau	77.6	61.6	0.79
Kenya	91.8	92.9	1.01
Niger	52.4	23.2	0.44
Nigeria	78.3	64.6	0.82
Rwanda	77.1	77.1	1.00
Tanzania	78.7	76.3	0.97
Togo	87.0	80.0	0.92
Zambia	82.1	67.5	0.82
Zimbabwe	98.3	99.4	1.01

Source: UNESCO's Institute for Statistics, National literacy rates for youths (15-24), April 2010 release, Retrieved from <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/ReportFolders/ReportFolders.aspx>

have sought this assessment by participating in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey. This survey is a representative national survey of the knowledge and skills of 15 year-olds undertaken by the OECD every three years since 2000. More than 400,000 students from 57 countries took part in PISA 2006. The survey, among other things, undertook assessments of students' reading and mathematics abilities.

The results for Indonesia and Thailand showed that the quality of education in terms of reading proficiency were far below that of the high-income countries. For example, more than one in five 15-year-old students (22 per cent) surveyed in Indonesia scored below Level 1 reading proficiency.⁸⁶ A further two in three students (66 per cent) scored at the basic reading proficiency Levels of 1 and 2. Thai students performed only slightly better, with one in six (16 per cent) scoring below Level 1 and 63 per cent scoring at Levels 1 and 2. Only 5 per cent of Thailand students have attained the top two levels of reading proficiency.

Table 5 Countries with low Gender Parity Index for youth literacy, (ratio of literate females to males, ages 15 to 24 years), 2008 (based on UIS estimates).

Country	Gender Parity Index, 2008 estimates
Niger	0.44
Ethiopia	0.62
Benin	0.66
Sierra Leone	0.69
Chad	0.70
Burkina Faso	0.71
Yemen	0.74
Pakistan	0.75
Guinea	0.76
Central African Republic	0.78
Guinea-Bissau	0.79
Mozambique	0.80
Angola	0.81
Morocco	0.81
Nigeria	0.82
Zambia	0.82
Côte d'Ivoire	0.83
Nepal	0.87
Democratic Republic of the Congo	0.90
Mauritania	0.90

Source: UNESCO's Institute for Statistics, National literacy rates for youths (15-24), April 2010 release, Retrieved from <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/ReportFolders/ReportFolders.aspx>

UNESCO has developed the Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme (LAMP) to assess out-of-school youth and adults in countries at all stages of development.⁸⁷ Five levels of literacy and numeracy skills are measured. Level 3 and above requires the ability to integrate several sources of information and solve more complex problems. Such attention to the quality of education suggests that even those young people who have obtained some level of literacy may require secondary and tertiary education, as well as technical and vocational training.

Young people and the consequences of gender inequality

As with any other social group in societies, young people are adversely affected by pervasive gender inequalities. Millennium Development Goal 3 is “to

promote gender equality and empower women” and is measured through indicators such as the ratio of literate females to males of 15-24 year olds, as reported in Table 3. For developing countries as a whole, for every 100 young men who are literate, only 95 young women in this age group are. In the least developed countries, the ratio of illiterate females to males aged 15 to 24 years is even greater, with only 88 young women literate compared with every 100 young literate men (see Table 3). Table 5 also shows wide gender disparities within select high priority countries for achieving the MDGs.

Data are available for individual countries on the ratio of literate females to males for 15-24 year-olds. Table 5 lists some of the countries with the lowest young female to male literacy ratios for which data is available. Being able to point to a low ratio of female to male literacy for the younger generation is one simple way of highlighting the need for more resources for basic education which need to be targeted to girls and young women, especially to support their transition from primary to secondary education (or other forms of post-primary education).

Another indicator of gender inequity is the ratio of females to males in primary, secondary and tertiary education. Girls still account for the majority of the world's out-of-school youth. Of the nearly 71 million adolescents who were out of school in 2007, 54 per cent were girls.⁸⁸ Poverty and inequality continue to thwart girls' education. In most developing regions, girls in the poorest 20 per cent of households are 3.5 times more likely to be out of school than girls in the richest households and four times more likely to be out of school than boys from the richest households.⁸⁹ Table 6 presents information on gender-based enrolments in the three levels of education for a sampling of countries in Central and Southern Asia. Almost universally, gender parity in school enrolment deteriorates from primary to secondary education.

Poverty and other forms of social disadvantage magnify gender disparities. Once in school, girls' progress is often hampered by teacher attitudes and gender-biased textbooks that reinforce negative gender stereotypes. These school-based factors interact with wider social and economic factors that influence school performance along gender lines. The 2010 Education for All Global Monitoring Report highlights the need to address the root causes of marginalization, especially as inequalities often combine to exacerbate further the risk of leaving girls behind. For instance in Turkey, 43 per cent of Kurdish-

Table 6 The ratio of female to male enrolments in primary, secondary and tertiary education, for the select countries Central and Eastern Asia, 2006-2007

Central and Eastern Asian	Ratio of female to male enrolments		
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
Afghanistan	0.63	0.38	0.28
Bangladesh	1.08	1.06	0.57
Cambodia	0.93	0.82	0.56
India	0.96	0.83	0.72
Lao, People's Democratic Republic	0.90	0.79	0.72
Nepal	0.99	0.91	0.40
Pakistan	0.82	0.76	0.85
Sri Lanka	1.00	1.02	–

Source: United Nations Statistics Division, Millennium Development Goals Database, Assessed at UN Data at <http://data.un.org/> Source: UNDP Human Development Report 2003, p 204

speaking girls from the poorest households have fewer than two years of education, while the national average is 6 per cent; in Nigeria, 97 per cent of poor Hausa-speaking girls have fewer than two years of education. These gender-based disparities hold countries back from achieving the MDGs.

Some of the strategies that are proving successful in helping countries to address gender disparity in education include paying financial incentives, providing water and sanitation in schools (including separate latrines for boys and girls), recruiting female teachers and providing incentives for their deployment to rural areas, and giving teachers gender sensitization training.⁹⁰ In Chad, progress has been achieved by addressing financial and cultural barriers to girls' schooling by providing scholarships and backing community sensitization campaigns. This includes programmes that support local agents for change, working through mothers' associations, religious figures, local government and village leaders to promote girls' education.⁹¹ It has been noted that for many countries, progress towards gender parity will require a two-pronged approach. Getting girls into school requires action to change attitudes and household labour practices, while keeping them there once they reach puberty poses another layer of challenges, especially in countries where early marriage is common and where girls' disadvantage interacts with other aspects of marginalization, such as poverty or ethnicity.⁹² However the benefits are multiple. As dis-

cussed below, educating young women has benefits that spill over into other MDGs, such as lower levels of child and maternal mortality and better nutrition.

Young women's education levels and reproductive health

What are the consequences of low levels of education attainment for young women in particular? Notable effects are higher infant mortality, which affects the achievement of MDG 4 to reduce child mortality, and a higher rate of adolescent fertility, which is linked to MDG 5 to improve maternal health.

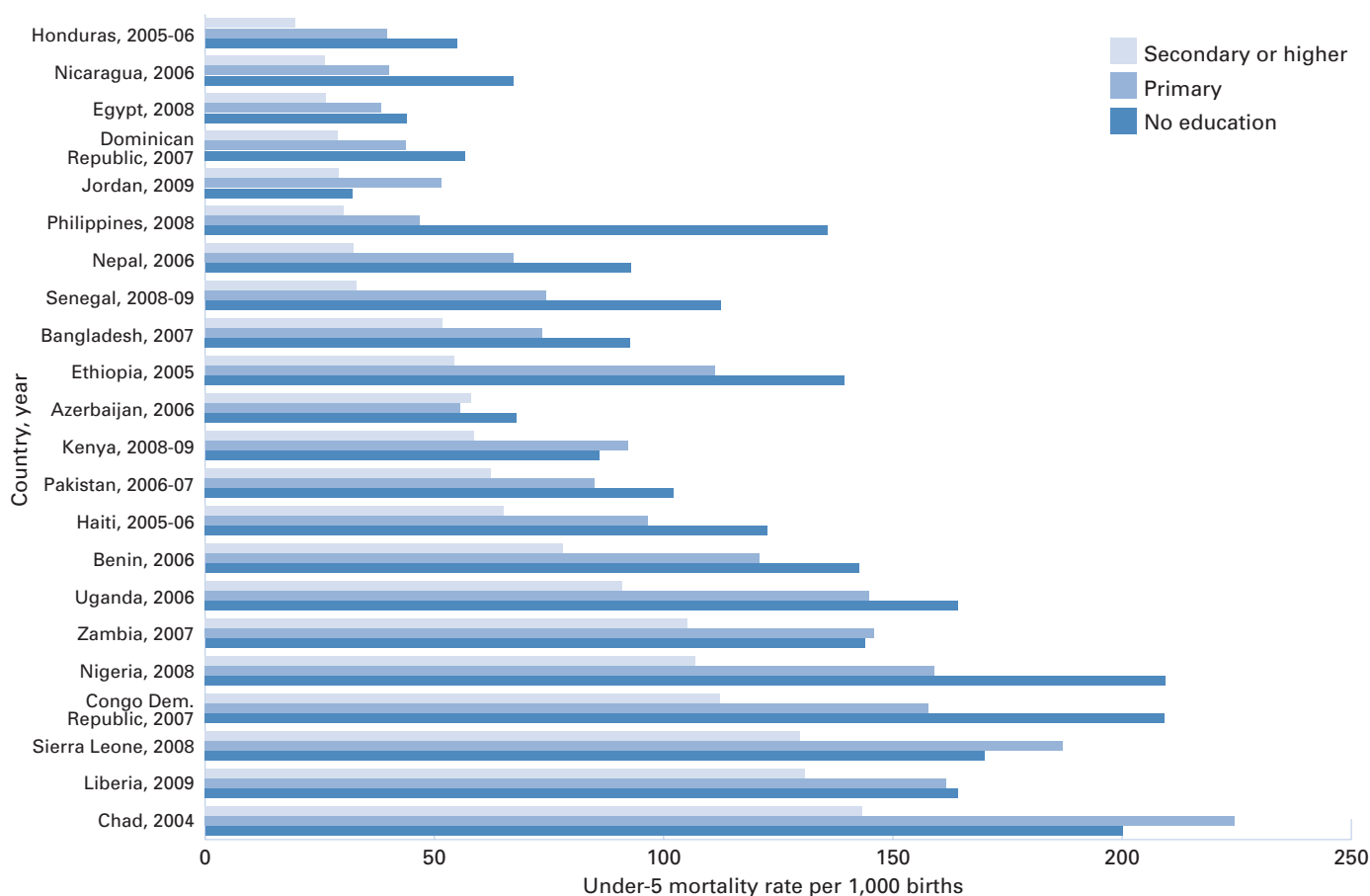
The links between education and child mortality are often overlooked. However, education is associated with lower levels of infant mortality and better child nutrition and health, even when controlling for factors such as income.⁹³ In many countries, having a mother with primary education more than halves the risk of child mortality, relative to mothers with no education (See Figure 3).

For example, in the Philippines, the child death rate is reduced from 136 deaths per 1,000 births among mothers with no primary education to less than 50 deaths per 1,000 if the mother has primary education. Based on its examination of available data from 120 countries, the WHO's Global Health Indicators for 2010 confirm the correlation, noting that, in general, countries with a higher rate of female primary education have lower levels of under-five mortality.⁹⁴ In terms of child nutrition, higher levels of parental education also have a positive impact. For example, recent research using household survey data found that mothers who have completed primary education reduce the risk of child stunting by 22 per cent in Bangladesh and 26 per cent in Indonesia.⁹⁵ This was after controlling for factors such as household wealth, location and family size.

Having a mother with secondary education or higher dramatically reduces the risk of child death even more consistently than having a mother with just primary schooling. Figure 3 illustrates this particularly well for countries such as Nigeria, Ethiopia, Senegal, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic. This reinforces the argument for education and gender equity goals that look beyond the primary level.

Levels of education also have an important bearing on maternal mortality. MDG 5 seeks to improve maternal health. This goal, and its targets of reducing the maternal mortality ratio by three quarters and achieving universal access to reproductive health, offers the basis

Figure 3 Under-five mortality rate by mother's level of education, select countries, most recent year



Source: Macro International Inc, 2010. MEASURE DHS STATcompiler, Retrieved August 30 1010 from <http://www.measuredhs.com>.

for justifying a major investment of resources in health related initiatives for girls and young women. Maternal deaths related to pregnancy and childbirth are the leading cause of mortality for girls aged 15–19 worldwide, accounting for at least 70,000 deaths each year.⁹⁶

Adolescent females under age 20 in the least developed countries were estimated to account for 16 in every 100 births (see Table 7). This is more than double the rate for developed regions (6 in every 100 births) and much higher than the rate for developing regions in general (12 in every 100 births).

There are regional variations to be noted in the adolescent birth rate. The number of births per 1,000 women under the age of 20 ranges from 121 in sub-Saharan Africa, to 74 in Latin America and the Caribbean to 53 to South Asia. As Figure 4 shows, while some progress in reducing the number of adolescent births had been achieved from 1990 to 2000, advances have since slowed, and in some cases, reversed. The number of adolescent pregnancies has increased in the

regions of sub-Saharan Africa, Western Asia, South-Eastern Asia and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). This stalled progress places more young mothers at risk. Again, individual country level data are available to enable policy change advocates to develop specific profiles in helping to make the case for investing in youth.

Poverty and unequal access to schooling perpetuate high adolescent birth rates, jeopardizing the health of girls and diminishing their opportunities for advancement. In many countries in sub-Saharan Africa, for example, the birth rate among girls with no education is over four times higher (207 per 1,000) than those with secondary education (48 per 1,000) (see Figure 5).⁹⁷

Where an adolescent girl lives or whether she belongs to a poor or wealthy household should not be a decisive factor in her sexual and reproductive choices. However, data for 24 countries in sub-Saharan Africa show that adolescents in the poorest households are three times more likely to become pregnant and give birth than those

Table 7 Percentage of births to women under age 20 years, 2005–2010

	Percentage of all births to women under age 20
More developed countries	6
Less developed countries	12
Least developed countries	16

Source: Population Division of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, World Population Prospects: The 2008 Revision, <http://esa.un.org/unpp>

in the richest households. In rural areas, adolescent birth rates are almost double those of urban areas (see Figure 5). The decline in adolescent birth rate was largest among adolescents living in urban areas, among those with at least a secondary education, and among those belonging to the richest 20 per cent of households.⁹⁸

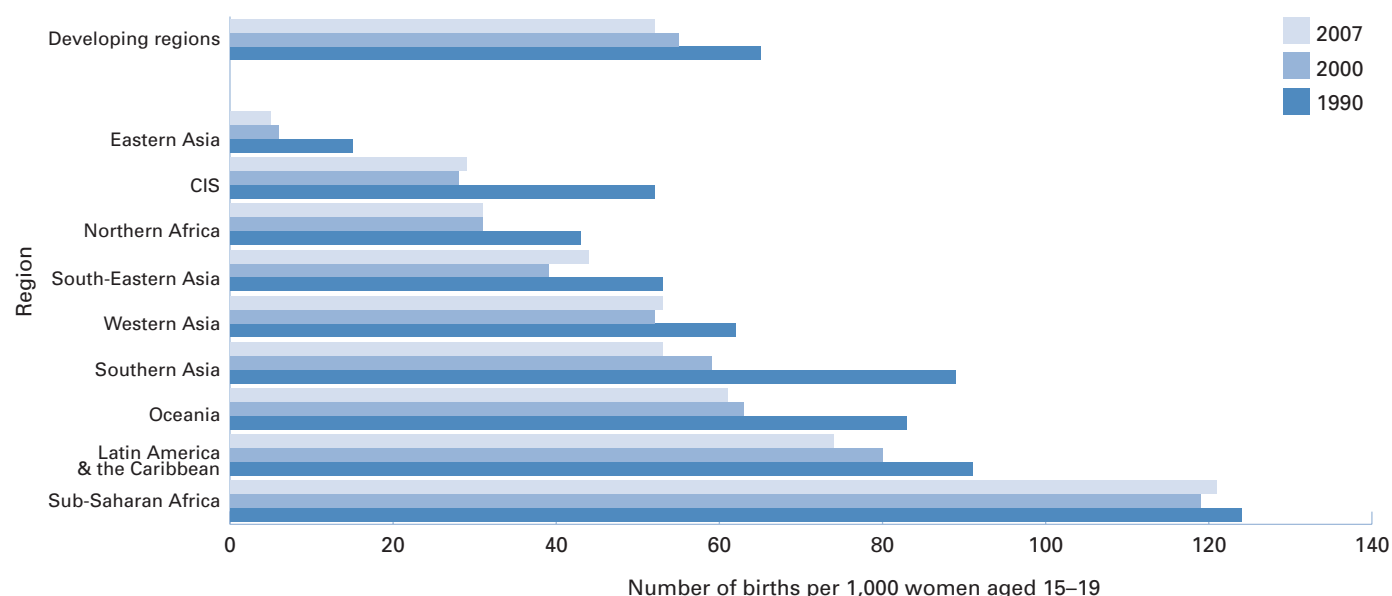
Adolescent childbearing carries particular risks. The younger a girl is when she becomes pregnant, the greater the health risks. Adolescent girls between the ages of 15 and 19 are twice as likely to die during pregnancy or childbirth as women in their 20s; for those under 15, the risks are 5 times higher.⁹⁹ Younger adolescents may not be physiologically mature, often have few resources, and may lack essential information and access to health services and support.¹⁰⁰ Adolescents, in general, face greater obstacles than adult women in accessing repro-

ductive health services.¹⁰¹ Prolonged, obstructed labour is especially a risk for young, physically immature, first-time mothers, increasing the chance of infection, obstetric fistula, and other complications. Annually, an estimated 2.2 million to 4 million adolescents resort to unsafe abortion, which adds significantly to the number of deaths and permanent injuries.

Gender norms, inequality, and power imbalances between girls and their partners make adolescent girls vulnerable to pregnancy and unsafe sex. This is especially the case in the situation of child marriages. Worldwide, more than 60 million women aged 20–24 were married before they reached the age of 18. Child marriage is particularly prevalent in South Asia, where 49 per cent of women aged 20–24 years were married or in union before they were 18 years old, and West and Central Africa, where the rate is 44 per cent.¹⁰² In addition to an increased risk of maternal death from pregnancy and childbirth, adolescent wives are also susceptible to violence, abuse and exploitation. Child marriage increases the risk that adolescent girls will drop out of school, with all the attendant negative implications described above.¹⁰³

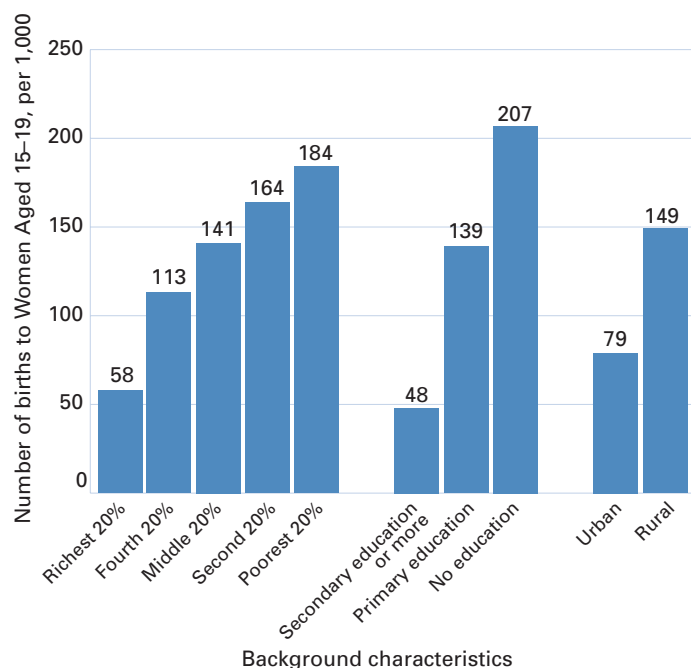
The situation of girls and young women offers a compelling case to invest in young people in order to achieve multiple MDGs. There are many strategies that can support adolescent girls' development. First and foremost,

Figure 4 Number of births per 1,000 women aged 15–19, by region, in 1990, 2000 and 2007.



Source: United Nations, 2010. *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2010*. New York: United Nations, p. 35

Figure 5 Adolescent birth rates by background characteristics in 24 sub-Saharan african countries (1998-2008), number of births to women aged 15-19 per 1,000 women.



Source: United Nations, 2010. *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2010*. New York: United Nations, p. 35

setting clear equity targets for achieving universal education is one of the most important things governments can do in rethinking planning approaches.¹⁰⁴ Adolescent girls must have access to quality education and complete schooling, with particular support around their transition from primary to post-primary education and training. They must equally have access to age-appropriate health information and services, including life skills-based sexuality education.¹⁰⁵ In terms of reproductive health, policy-makers can target the youngest-first time mothers to use antenatal and delivery services, which are accessible and youth-friendly. There may also be a need to combat child marriage specifically, and more generally prevent all forms of gender-based violence, abuse and exploitation. An advocate for young people may use demographic health survey data (a web-based resource) to exemplify the situation of girls and young women for a particular country (or from another country within the same for region).¹⁰⁶

Young people and high exposure to HIV/AIDS

Young people in developing and transition countries, particularly young girls, need to be a major focus of investments to address MDG 6: combating HIV/

AIDS, malaria and other diseases. An estimated 5 million people young people between the ages of 15 and 24 are living with HIV.¹⁰⁷ The vast majority of these young people (62 per cent) live in sub-Saharan Africa, of which 76 per cent are female. In 2008, young people aged 15 to 24 accounted for an estimated 900,000 new HIV infections, or approximately 40 per cent of new HIV infections among adults worldwide. The HIV epidemic has been harsh specifically on the lives of young women, who comprise 66 per cent of infections among young people worldwide.¹⁰⁸

Table 8 reports on the countries with the highest prevalence rates for young people aged 15 to 24 years (using high-end estimates). Two features of these estimates are worth highlighting. The first is the high absolute risk of HIV infection young women aged 15 to 24 years face, ranging from almost a third of all young women in Swaziland to a fifth of young women in Botswana. The other feature is that the ratio of young female to male infection is triple in almost all the reported countries. This means that young women are becoming infected at a faster rate than young men, making gender equality central to combating the AIDS epidemic.

The reasons for the higher vulnerability of young women to HIV are to do, in part, with gender discrimination which results in lack of power to negotiate sexual relationships, violence against them, economic deprivation and lack of education, which are all factors which make women more susceptible to unwanted and unprotected sex (see Box 6). The Government of Lesotho's PRSP states, "because of societal changes over the last 30 years, many children and youth engage in early sexual activity, often with older partners, and lack access to quality information and services to protect their sexual health. As a result, many are falling victim to HIV and AIDS".¹⁰⁹ Lesotho's Government has made HIV/AIDS, gender, and youth the three overarching and crosscutting issues in its PRSP. The global HIV epidemic cannot be reversed without sustained success in reducing new HIV infections among young women.

On a positive note, efforts have shown that it is possible to empower young people to protect themselves from HIV/AIDS. New data in the 2009 AIDS epidemic update show that new HIV infections have been reduced by 17 per cent over the past eight years.¹¹² These declines are largely to the result of falling new HIV infections among young people.¹¹³ Young people in some countries

Table 8 Countries with the highest high-end estimates of HIV prevalence rate in young people (15-24 years), percent, 2007

Country	HIV prevalence rate (per cent) in young people (15-24), 2007	
	Female high estimate	Male high estimate
Swaziland	27.2	9.3
Botswana	20.8	7.9
Lesotho	18.4	9.6
South Africa	17.0	6.0
Namibia	14.5	5.3
Zambia	14.2	5.2
Zimbabwe	11.7	4.4
Mozambique	11.1	4.2
Malawi	10.4	3.8
Central African Republic	7.0	1.5
Gabon	6.3	2.4

Source: UNAIDS/WHO Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic 2008.

are proving that the right policies and interventions can yield results. Figure 6 shows that condom use during high-risk sex is gaining acceptance in some countries and is one facet of effective HIV prevention. Between 2000 and 2008, increases of 10 or more percentage points in condom use during risky sex were reported among women in 11 of the 22 countries where trends can be documented, reaching levels of 60 per cent or more in some of them.

However, to sustain the declines in HIV/AIDS among youth, education and services will need to overcome existing inequalities. In sub-Saharan Africa, disparities in knowledge about HIV prevention among women and men aged 15 to 24 are linked to gender, household wealth and place of residence.¹¹⁴ Figure 7 shows that for both men and women, the likelihood of being informed about HIV increases with the income level of one's household. Gender disparities in knowledge also diminish slightly among the rich and among those living in urban areas.

Overall, progress in combating HIV/AIDS will continue to depend upon countries to implement a comprehensive set of programmes that put young people's leadership at the centre of national responses, to provide rights-based sexual and reproductive health education and services and to empower young people to prevent sexual and other transmission of HIV infection among their peers.

BOX 6 THE TOLL OF DISCRIMINATION AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Many women experience sexual and economic subordination in their personal relationships and at work, and cannot always negotiate safe sex or refuse unsafe sex. Access to information is a key defence against infection, but so too is an end to the discrimination and violence experienced by many women. Discrimination on the basis of gender can prevent young women from fully participating in decisions that are critical to their own lives, as well as to their households, communities, and nations. Gender inequities and discrimination also foster tacit social acceptance of violence against women. In four countries surveyed, nearly one in four young women reported that their first experience of sexual intercourse was forced.¹¹⁰

A tradition of child marriage and the practice of female genital mutilation/cutting are still prevalent in many countries. Marriages with older husbands tend to preclude the establishment of an equal, consensual relationship. Child brides have limited or no capacity to negotiate sexual relations, contraception, and other reproductive decisions, including the terms of childbearing, as well as other aspects of their lives. In the context of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, this lack of power is disastrous, as they are at risk of frequent unprotected, sometimes forced, sexual relations and, by extension, HIV infection.¹¹¹

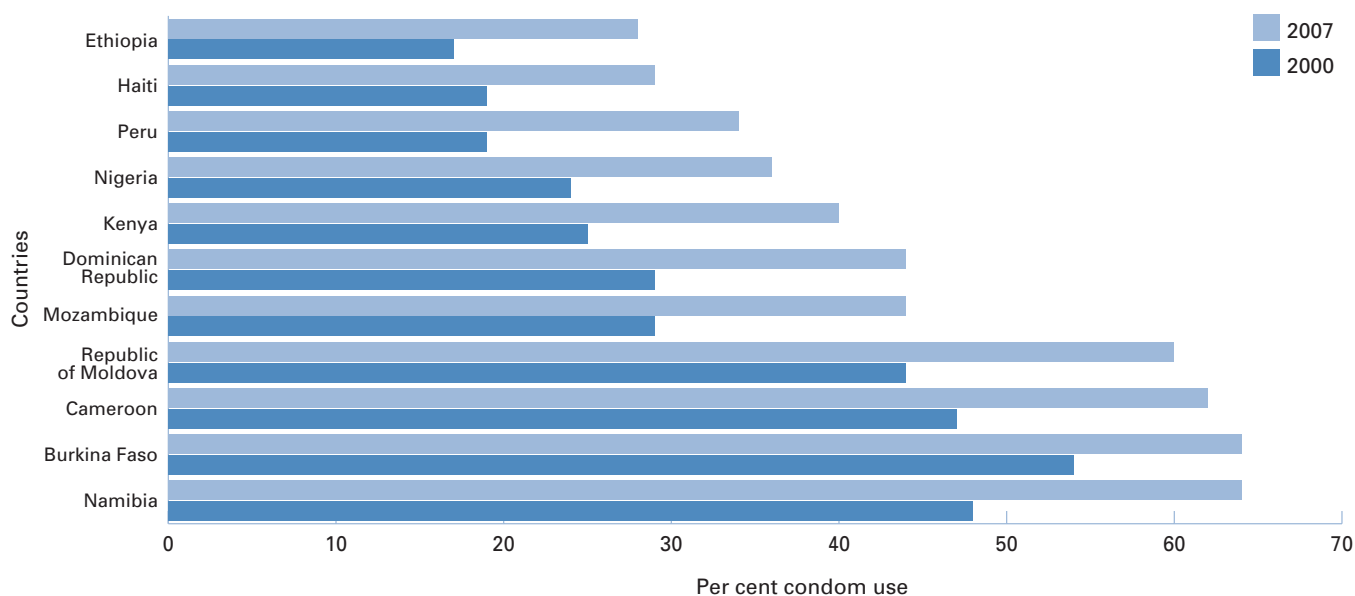
Gender-based discrimination and violence – often based on tradition and cultural norms – has numerous pernicious effects. It can deny girls and young women access to education, prevent them from receiving or seeking adequate health care and vital life skills to protect them against sexually transmitted infections; constrain their income-earning capacity when they become women and can force them into a life of servitude and subservience.

ARGUMENT 4:

The macro-economic case for Investing in young people

Adolescence is an important time to acquire the skills, health, social networks, and other attributes that form the social capital needed for a fulfilling life. The fact that the human capital formed during adolescence and in youth is also an important determinant of long-term growth makes a strong macro economic argument to support investing more in young people.¹¹⁵ Social investments in young people's education, health, and employment can enable countries to build a strong economic base, thereby reversing intergenerational

Figure 6 Condom Use at last higher-risk sex among young women aged 15 to 24, in selected countries, 2000-2007, percentage



Source: United Nations, 2010. *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2010*. New York: United Nations, p. 43

poverty. Enhancing young people’s capacities can yield larger returns during the course of their economically active lives. Thus, strategic investments in this group can have the most long-term, cost-effective impact and can help lead to serious poverty reduction.

Young people are also an enormous resource for growth in the short run. Having young people sit idle is costly in forgone output, as they are not contributing to the economic welfare of the country. The loss of income among the younger generation translates into a lack of savings as well as a loss of aggregate demand. Societies lose their investment in education. Governments fail to receive contributions to social security systems and are forced to increase spending on remedial services, including on crime or drug use prevention efforts.¹¹⁶ A study undertaken on seven Caribbean countries estimates that lowering youth unemployment could raise GDP by anywhere from 0.3 to 2.7 per cent based on forgone earnings alone.¹¹⁷

The argument can also rest on the connection between improvements in health and better economic growth. An association between infant mortality and a country’s per capita income is presented in Box 7.

The macro economic argument posits that there is a two-way link between human development and economic growth. On the one hand, investment in human development promotes economic growth, and this in turn makes it easier for governments and people to

invest in their own human development. However, the opposite case also applies. Poor human development is likely to contribute to economic decline, leading to a further deterioration in human development. Investment in improving the health of young children can be easily dissipated by not addressing the health issues faced by adolescents such as preventing HIV/AIDS, adolescent pregnancy and poor nutrition.

One area of strong evidence is the impact of HIV/AIDS on growth and productivity. In South Africa, where prevalence is over 20 per cent, the spread of the epidemic is estimated to reduce the growth of GDP in the range 0.8 to 1.5 percentage points a year.¹¹⁸ As noted above, 15-24 year olds make up for the bulk of new HIV/AIDS cases every year. The costs of the pandemic have been estimated in terms of arrested development, lost agricultural output, lost education, excess training costs to provide for personnel losses, health facility overloads, treatment (where available) and care. The Commission on Macroeconomics and Health estimated the benefits from one averted HIV/AIDS infection in a poor country as \$34,600 in settings with annual average earnings of \$1,000 per year.¹¹⁹

Further evidence of the negative impact on the economy in the failure to address adolescent health issues is available for seven Caribbean countries. The data relate to the cost of adolescent pregnancies compared with pregnancies after age 20. Two components of the costs

are identified: the financial costs (direct expenditures) and the economic costs (opportunity costs for alternate uses of resources and marginal effects on other expenditures). The estimates costs are outlined in Box 8.

ARGUMENT 5:

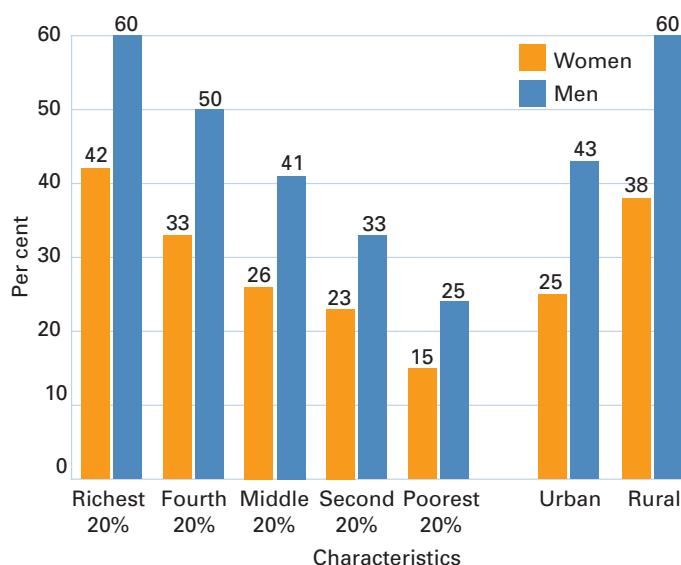
The micro-economic case for investing in young people

There is also a good micro-economic case for investing in programmes in education and health directed at young people, particularly in terms of the benefits accrued at the individual, household, and community levels. In essence, the status of young people, in terms of education and health, determines the productivity of the future workforce in both its formal and informal sectors.

A well-documented relationship is between education and future earnings. Overall, studies have determined the global average rate of return to one extra year of schooling to be 10 per cent.¹²⁰ These returns vary by level of country income and the highest returns are recorded for low and middle-income countries. For example, average returns to schooling are highest in the Latin America and the Caribbean region (12.7 per cent return per extra year of education) and for Sub-Saharan Africa (11.7 per cent return per extra year of education). Returns to schooling for Asia are at about the world average.¹²¹ A rigorous analysis of return of investments in education for 42 countries concluded “Above all, returns to schooling are a useful indicator of the productivity of education and incentive for individuals to invest in their own human capital. Public policy needs to heed this evidence in the design of policies and crafting of incentives that both promote investment and ensure that low-income families make those investments.”¹²² Furthermore, a study has found that increased schooling extends beyond the better wages, for instance, as educated farmers are more likely to adopt new technologies, which in turn yield higher returns on their land.¹²³

Economics benefits are particularly great for investing in the education of young women. Girls with more schooling participate in greater numbers in the labour force when they grow up, and they are able to earn more for

Figure 7 Young women and men aged 15-24 years in select countries with comprehensive knowledge of HIV by sex, residence, and wealth, 2003-2008, percentage



Source: United Nations, 2010. *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2010*. New York: United Nations, p. 45

BOX 7 A LINK BETWEEN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Consider the average growth in per capita incomes in several dozen developing countries between 1965 and 1995, grouped by their incomes and infant mortality rates in 1965 (using infant mortality as a general proxy for overall disease levels.) In countries starting with per capita incomes below \$75, and infant mortality rates above 150 per 1,000 live births, incomes grew by an average of 0.1 per cent a year — while those countries with infant mortality rates between 100 and 150 grew by an average of 1.0 per cent a year and those with infant mortality rates below 100 grew by an average of 3.7 per cent a year.

In countries with initial incomes of \$750 to \$1,500, those with infant mortality rates above 150 experienced negative growth averaging -0.7 per cent a year, while those with rates between 100 and 150 averaged 1.1 per cent annual growth and those with rates below 100 averaged 3.4 per cent annual growth. Thus, even after accounting for initial incomes, countries with better health conditions were more likely to be associated with higher growth. While it is difficult to prove a direct correlation between declines in disease and higher income, it is possible that economic growth provides more resources to invest in health, which creates a more productive workforce, thereby creating a virtuous cycle.

Source: UNDP, 2003, *Human Development Report 2003 Millennium Development Goals: A compact among nations to end human poverty* New York: UNDP, pp 68-69.

BOX 8 ESTIMATING THE ECONOMIC COSTS OF ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY

The net social financial cost over the lifetime of a single cohort of adolescent mothers in the Caribbean region ranges from \$1 million in Guyana to \$86 million in the Dominican Republic. ...The social financial costs, which include health care, government transfers, the financial costs of crime committed by [some of the] children, and child support, average from \$28 per year per birth to \$262 per year per birth...

The net social economic cost over the lifetime of one cohort of adolescent mothers ranges from \$1.6 million in Guyana to more than \$335 million in the Dominican Republic...The sum of forgone tax revenues, the opportunity cost of the criminality of [some of] the children when they become adults, and the forgone benefits from spending government transfers and health care on others averages from \$33 annually in Guyana to \$363 annually in St. Kitts.

Source: The World Bank, 2003. *Caribbean Youth Development Issues and Policy Directions*. Washington, DC: The World Bank Country Study, p 50.

the “demographic window”. A country goes through the demographic transition toward lower levels of mortality and fertility, a large cohort of young workers enter their productive years. At the same time, these workers have relatively few children and older people to support. This affects income at the aggregate level, but also at the household level. Thus population dynamics have a critical impact on a country’s development prospects and specifically on prospects for raising the living standard of the poor. Poverty perpetuates poor health and rapid population growth, and vice versa, and high fertility can exacerbate poverty.¹²⁸

It is well recognized that it is hard for adolescents to recover from early setbacks in human development.¹²⁹ Because human development is cumulative, missed opportunities to invest in and prepare adolescents are extremely costly to reverse, for both young people and their societies. For example, the capacity to learn is much greater for the young than for older people, so missed opportunities to acquire skills, good health habits, and the desire to engage in public life can be costly to remedy.¹³⁰ Furthermore, micro level investments in young people extend farther into the future, as they have the bulk of their productive years ahead of them.

Beyond the benefits in investment in education, another study has examined the cost benefit data on 41 World Bank programmes focused on young people that fall into six broad categories: formal schooling, civilian and military training, work, reproductive health, school-based health, other health, community and other. The analysis determined that several programmes offer a good return on investment and concluded that there are good efficiency reasons for using public resources to fund the cost effective programmes directed at young people.¹³¹ For example, health and nutrition investments are cost effective in almost all country contexts.

Benefits of investing in sexual and reproductive health

Investments in better health, including reproductive health, are central for individual security but also for reducing mortality and morbidity, which in turn improve a country’s productivity and development prospects. Programmes that improve the sexual and reproductive health of young people have been found to provide a range of quantifiable benefits. Box 8 summarises the benefits associated with several forms of health interventions. In relation to averting HIV

their families and society. Box 9 specifically discusses the returns on investment in terms of young women’s schooling. However, it is important to also note that beyond economic gain, the benefits of girls’ schooling and other improvements in welfare ripple throughout the community and extend to other cost savings.¹²⁴ Communities with educated women are able to staff their basic health facilities with nurses and their primary schools with local teachers, both important professions that increasingly rely on women. For example, in Pakistan, rural communities that have had a girls’ secondary school have been able to staff schools with female teachers from the local community over time. In rural communities that do not have a girls’ secondary school, the schools have to hire teachers from outside the community who tend to have higher rates of absenteeism.¹²⁵ Furthermore, educated women are more likely to participate in civic life and to advocate for community improvements.¹²⁶

Through the effects on labour force productivity, reduced fertility, and other determinants of economic growth, girls’ secondary schooling and gender equality have been identified as pro-growth strategies. A World Bank study concluded “econometric evidence suggests that societies have to pay a price for gender inequality in terms of slower growth.”¹²⁷ This is especially true in terms of benefits to reduced fertility. Access to family planning can offer powerful economic benefits by opening

infection, for example, seven broad beneficial effects are identified. These are: greatly improved life expectancy and health prospects for the individual, no risk that a HIV-infected person will infect others, less chance of TB infection, reduced personal and societal cost of medical care, avoided social exclusion, decreased in number of orphaned children, and increased likelihood of parents investing in children's education.¹³²

Up to six potential beneficial effects are identified in relation to delayed marriage for young women. They include increased chances of gaining more education, lower risk of adolescent pregnancy, lower risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, reduced lifetime fertility and lower chances of physical and/or sexual abuse. Avoiding adolescent pregnancy can achieve up to five benefits. The first is improved health prospects because adolescent pregnancies and deliveries often involve complications with much greater risk of maternal mortality and morbidity when they are poor compared with the pregnancies of older women in the same socio-economic status. Not becoming pregnant while an adolescent also means a greater likelihood of obtaining higher levels of education and having opportunities to build a skill set. If married, not getting pregnant in the adolescent years can mean more control over reproductive health, including birth spacing, as well as less likelihood of social isolation, restricted movement outside the home, and disconnection from the public sphere.

Box 10 further details the benefits of additional forms of investment and programs, namely avoiding sexually transmitted infections, lower lifetime fertility resulting from offering incentives to stay at school, avoiding unsafe abortions for young women and averting female genital cutting. Readers are advised to consult the original report to obtain more detailed information with references to the supporting evidence.¹³³

ARGUMENT 6:

Young people in poverty are socially vulnerable during their transition to adulthood

A fifth argument in favour of a greater focus on young people as a means of eradicating national poverty is

BOX 9 RETURNS ON INVESTMENT IN THE EDUCATION OF YOUNG WOMEN

The returns to investment in girls' education are, on average, higher than for boys, especially for secondary schooling. Providing girls one extra year of education beyond the average boosts their eventual wages by 10–20 per cent; for boys, the returns are 5–15 per cent. The economic returns to primary education, in terms of eventual wages, are much higher for boys (20 per cent) than for girls (13 per cent), while girls experience higher returns to secondary education investment (18 per cent) than do boys (14 per cent). This suggests that the returns for girls in secondary school have a greater positive effect on the lifetime welfare of women than does any other level of education.

The value of secondary education for girls is rising. The changing returns to education investments are probably due to a larger share of the population having acquired primary schooling and to rewards for more skills in a global economic climate characterized by increased international trade and private sector activity. While most education-employment studies are based on the experience of men, the returns for women are likely to be changing as well—and possibly more rapidly. Indeed, data from all regions show that women with higher levels of education are more likely to engage in paid employment.

The positive economic effects of fair access to education and employment for women go beyond labour force participation and productivity. Improvements in the status of girls and women, including but not limited to more schooling, also lead to lower rates of childbearing. In fact, whether a woman has any secondary schooling has long been recognized as the most universal and strongest correlate of having relatively few children. As childbearing declines, countries can exploit a period when the number of dependents per worker is low.

Source: Excerpt from Levine, R., Lloyd, C., Greene, M., and Grown, C. (2008). *Girls Count - A global investment and action agenda*. Washington, D.C.: The Center for Global Development, p. 18-19.

based on the value of reducing their vulnerability to a range of adverse outcomes during their transition to adulthood. Adolescence is a period of human development when minds, bodies, values and personalities are being formed. It brings with it a number of transitions. One transition is securing a decent and productive livelihood, which requires attaining an education and finding means to earn a living. Another transition is leaving the parental home, forming new relationships, and possibly entering into marriage and/or parenthood. Yet another is the transition to full citizenship, which means participating politically and claiming the ability to shape one's society. These changes occur

simultaneously and at different paces for each adolescent with gender, social, and environmental factors often impacting the transition.¹³⁴ For example, girls tend to experience puberty much earlier than boys (a full two years earlier than boys, meaning they have two fewer years of childhood from a social point of view), which has important programmatic implications.¹³⁵

In light of the significant growth and development that takes place during these years, policy makers must understand stages within adolescents so that they can tailor interventions accordingly, craft appropriate messages, set suitable goals, and provide the level of support that young people need. The capacity of children and young adolescents to make a successful transition to adulthood will be strongly shaped by their society, and within that context, by their gender, socio-economic background, family support, ethnicity, race, or complex combinations of these factors. It is a

practical question for each country to identify what vulnerabilities young people or subgroups of young people are likely to face in this period of simultaneous uncertainty and potential.

Three ways to categorise the poor

Linked to this perspective on young people's vulnerability is a more general issue of how the poor are defined. Three groups of poor have been identified: the chronic poor, the excluded and the capable poor. The chronic poor are those with little or no capacity to move out of poverty such as the elderly with no access to family care or pension, physically challenged persons unable to work, people suffering from chronic illnesses, and drug addicts. 'The excluded' refers to the poor who are severely limited in their capacity to move out of poverty because they do not have a right to the benefits, such as they are, of being part of a wider community and politi-

BOX 10 THE BROAD EFFECTS IDENTIFIED FOR PROGRAMMES FOCUSING ON SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Form of investment/program	Broad effect of investment/program						
Averted HIV infection	Improved health	Averted secondary HIV infections	Averted TB infections	Reduced cost of medical care	Averted social exclusion	Averted orphans	Increased education
Delayed marriage (females only)	Increased education	Averted adolescent pregnancy	Averted HIV infection	Averted STIs	Reduced fertility	Averted physical/sexual abuse	
Improved self esteem	Improved mental health	Averted adolescent pregnancy	Averted crime	Averted drug/alcohol abuse	Reduced tobacco use		
Averted physical/sexual abuse	Improved mental health	Averted crime	Averted adolescent pregnancy	Averted HIV infection	Averted STIs		
Averted adolescent pregnancy	Improved health	Increased education	Reduced fertility	Averted unsafe abortion	Averted social exclusion		
Averted STIs	Improved health	Reduced cost of medical care	Averted HIV infection	Averted infertility			
Reduced fertility	Enhanced labour productivity	Averted adolescent pregnancy	Improved health				
Averted abortion	Improved health	Reduced cost of medical care	Averted infertility				
Averted female genital cutting	Improved health	Improved mental health					

Derived from: Knowles, J. C., and Behrman, J.R., 2005. *The Economic Returns to Investing in Youth in Developing Countries: A Review of the Literature*. Washington, DC: World Bank: Health, Nutrition, and Population Discussion Paper January 2005.

cal system. This group of the poor includes displaced communities such as refugees.

A third group can be termed the capable poor — those with scope to manage risk in some way through developing coping strategies.¹³⁶ It is this latter definition of the poor that applies particularly to many young people. The capable poor might be found among: rural agriculture producers, children in difficult circumstances, people living with HIV/AIDS, disadvantaged women (particularly women raising children independently, malnourished rural pregnant and nursing mothers, adolescent mothers and commercial sex workers), residents of urban slums (including unemployed youth), the victims of harmful practices (such as child marriage), and the unemployed.¹³⁷ Young people are likely to be found in most of these groups of the capable poor.

The poor as disadvantaged and marginalised

Identifying disadvantage and marginalisation as causes of poverty has specific implications for policy. From the perspective of the capable poor, young people are active agents who are negotiators of the uncertainties they face. This perspective on poverty acknowledges first the importance of recognising the poor's different capacities to respond. It then looks to ways to reduce an individual's or a group's exposure to adverse outcomes. This dual nature – enabling and protective – of effective youth policies can be described as follows:

Policies for adolescents must be based on two essential and interlocking objectives: the enablement of young people to make a constructive contribution now and in the future towards the economic, social, and cultural development of their own country; and the recognition that youth are vulnerable, and that safeguards must be created to prevent the exploitation of youth, politically, economically and morally. Thus youth policy is primarily developmental, but also protective and remedial.¹³⁸

Burkina Faso's PRSP exemplifies both the potential, but also the vulnerability in young people's transitions to adulthood. It notes:

More than 55 per cent of the population in Burkina Faso is young. This young population is a precious source of innovators, entrepreneurs, consumers, citizens, and members of civil society for Burkina

Faso against the backdrop of political, economic, and social globalization. It is the country's young who will take the lead in revolutionary new information and communication technologies. Their creativity, enthusiasm, and energy are an asset for economic and social development. Yet, the young are the most vulnerable to unemployment and underemployment, to sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS, and these things can lead them to crime, lawlessness, drugs, and prostitution... Promoting youth requires a genuine political commitment to factor youth into all development policies in all sectors.¹³⁹

As noted above, young people vary in their social vulnerability capacities in the face of the uncertainties involved in the transition to adulthood. These different capacities will differ by factors such as sex, region and the income level of household of origin. In the poorest countries, the more socially vulnerable among young people are likely to be girls and young women, as noted in Box II.

A successful transition to adulthood recognizes the value of increased agency and personal development. An important aspect of this transition for young people is the negotiation of sexual and reproductive health issues during and beyond adolescence. This transition may be invisible or barely noticeable where, for example, a girl without formal education is forced to marry before puberty and transferred from one state of dependency to another. Concerning marriage, this agency entails participation in the choice of partner and the time of the union. This helps to ensure a young person acquires an appropriate amount of human and social capital (for example, through schooling), the knowledge and means to sustain their health during adulthood, and the capability to make choices by developing a sense of self and personal competence.¹⁴⁰ Breaking the cycle of poverty requires addressing young people's vulnerabilities and empowering them to be agents of change for development.

ARGUMENT 7:

Capitalising on the demographic transition

The sixth argument in favour of more public investment in young people is one based on the long-term

BOX 11 WHO ARE THE DISADVANTAGED AND MARGINALIZED ADOLESCENT GIRLS?

The UN, governments and experts have identified categories of marginalized girls based on programme evidence, carefully considering a broad range of reports and commitments. These categories could be summarized as:

- **Girls affected by harmful traditional practices** including female genital cutting/mutilation, unsupported child marriage and early and unattended child-bearing;
- **Girls belonging to socially excluded and vulnerable groups** such as ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, indigenous and nomadic communities, and populations living in remote areas and urban slums;
- **Girls living in areas that are insecure and vulnerable** to natural disasters, the effects of climate change, HIV/AIDS, armed conflict, and gender-based and generalized violence;
- **Girls who do not have adequate protection at household level**, such as girls in institutions, girls living apart from both parents, girls in violent households, girls in domestic labour, girls who are trafficked or living on the streets, and girls without families in IDP and refugee camps;
- **Girls excluded from education** due to poverty, lack of safety and security, disability or traditional practices which force them to leave school early, and
- **Girls living with physical or mental disabilities.**

Many of these specific groups of girls – though at high risk of discrimination and violation of their rights – remain largely unaccounted for in research, statistics, policy and programme interventions. Social isolation is also often their reality. Research has demonstrated that a substantial proportion of adolescent girls aged 10-14 are effectively de-linked from key protective structures: they are neither living with their parents or families nor attending school.

Source: UN Adolescent Girls Task Force (2010). *Accelerating Efforts to Advance the Rights of Adolescent Girls: A UN Joint Statement*. New York: UN Adolescent Girls Task Force

1 For a sampling of listings of the categories of marginalized adolescent girls, which may be adapted to varying local situations, see Annex I, page xx.

size of each age group in a population changes, so does the relative impact of their economic activity on a country's economy. Large numbers of young people in the population offer countries an opportunity to deepen their human capital. As youthful populations become older and have fewer children than previous generations, a swell in the working-age population can result. For this reason, a greater share of young people in a country's population means the need for more intensive investment in education and reproductive and related health care. On the other hand, when there are more working-age adults (usually defined as ages 15 to 64) relative to children under age 15 and older people, then working-age people have a lower dependency burden—fewer people to support with the same income and assets. An economy with a preponderance of prime-age adults can take advantage of a good tax base and an increased propensity to save.¹⁴²

This new analysis contends that policy makers need to recognise this complex relationship between economic and human development by taking into account the effects of a country's own changing age structure. In policy terms, the potential impact is called the demographic bonus or dividend. Essentially, when mortality and fertility rates fall, governments can reap the benefits of having a growing cohort of working-age adults relative to the dependent population. Reaping the benefits of a declining dependency burden depends on the levels of investment in creating more employment opportunities, improvements in public health, greater gender equality and improved education outcomes.¹⁴³ As costly as it may be, public investment in young people is well worth it.

There are both opportunities and risks that can result from the demographic bonus of having a large youth share of the population. The achievement of this demographic bonus requires not only good public sector policies, such as a comprehensive youth and social sector policy, but also health and education policies. Seizing the demographic bonus is highly dependent on young people finding productive and remunerative employment. This requires an investment in human capital, as well as physical capital, for instance, infrastructure and technology.¹⁴⁴

Some studies posit that countries with a large youth share of the population and rapid urban population growth are more likely to be politically unstable and more vulnerable to violent civil unrest.¹⁴⁵ This is a

benefits. Recent demographic analysis has shifted from a focus on population growth per se to looking more closely at the importance of a population's evolving age structure and its implication for development.¹⁴¹ This new analysis suggests that as the relative

potential concern particularly if young people's potential cannot be expressed in positive ways and they have few opportunities to fulfil their aspirations. A large youth share of the adult population may indicate a source of strain on limited resources such as access to education and jobs. The issue of the relationship between the youth bulge in the population and a country's greater susceptibility to civil conflict is discussed further under Argument 7.

Figures 8 and 9 show the impact of a large working age population on gross national income (GNI). Chart 8 shows that the association between an increased working age population share and per capita income in the East Asia and Pacific regions is a markedly positive one over the last 25 years. Chart 9, on the other hand, shows for Sub-Saharan Africa over the same period that a lower and stable working age share of the population has been associated with only a small increase in per capita income.

How much time do developing countries have to take advantage of this demographic dividend? The window of falling dependency rates can stay open for up to 40 years, depending on the rate of fertility decline.¹⁴⁶ In countries where fertility has declined sharply in the last two decades, the share in the population of the

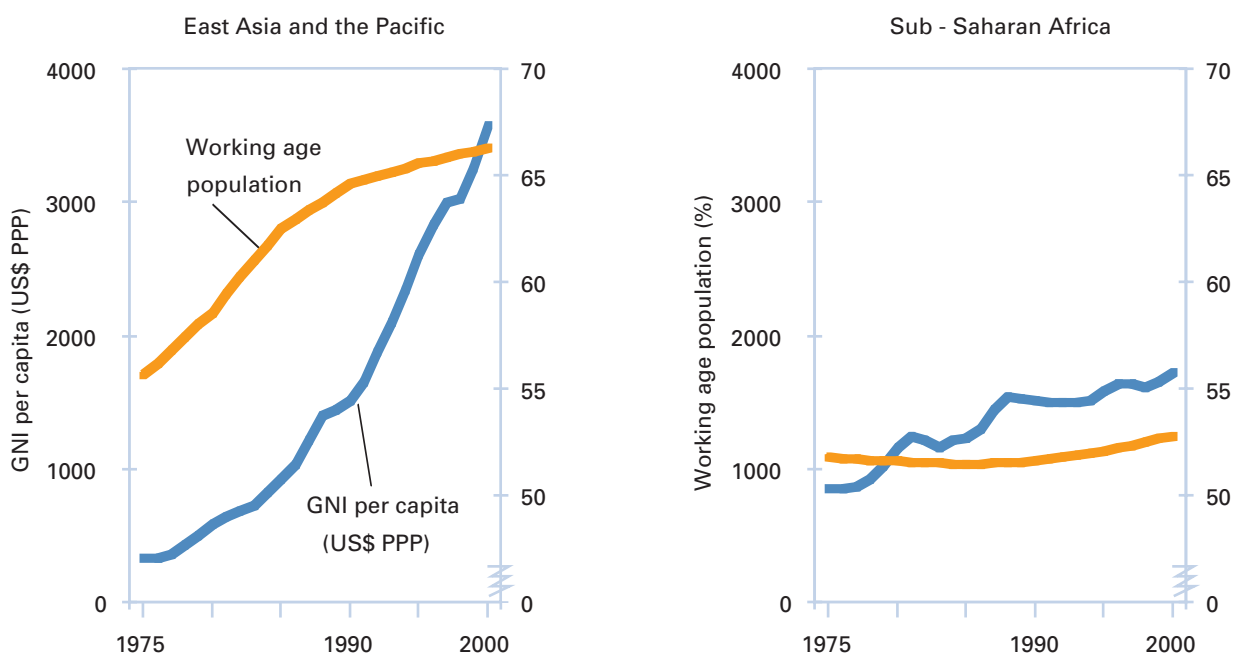
productive age group (15 to 60 years) has increased. This is the case for many countries in Latin America and the Caribbean where the window of opportunity will be at its peak in years 2018-2019. However, in the least-developed countries, with continuing high fertility rates and the slowest declines, the window of opportunity will not open for nearly fifty years (see Table 9).

ARGUMENT 8:

Youth bulge and the increased potential for social conflict

The final and perhaps most emotive argument to put to policy makers in favour of investing resources in young people relates to the benefits to national security and a lessening of a country's exposure to civil disorder and possibly armed conflict. Young people are both the perpetrators and victims of conflict. Crime and the fear crime and violence are widely acknowledged to decrease investment, both public and private. For example, the estimated costs of Sri Lanka's civil war between 1984

Figures 8 and 9 Association between share of the working age population, per cent and gross national income per capita, East Asia and the Pacific and Sub-Saharan Africa, 1975-2000



Source: UN Population Fund, 2003, Achieving the Millennium Development Goals: Population and Reproductive Health as Critical Determinants, New York: UNFPA, p 5.

and 1996 have been estimated at between \$1.6 to \$2.8 billion, or between 13 and 23 per cent of GDP.¹⁴⁷ The direct costs of crime and violence to young people are high too. In Columbia, school enrollment is lower among households in municipalities where homicide rates are above the national median.¹⁴⁸

The youth bulge and its association with civil conflict

Research shows that an important factor associated with political violence and internal social conflict is when young people are a prominent group within in the population, referred to as a youth bulge, while the economy is weak and governance is poor.¹⁴⁹ In 2010, some 90 countries will have populations with bulges in young people of 35 per cent or more (see Attachment 4 at the end of this paper for a listing of the countries). The majority of countries with a population of young adults higher than 45 per cent are in sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East. Exceptions include Timor-Leste, Tajikistan, Lao DPR and Guatemala. Countries with youth cohorts aged 15-24 who make up at least 35 per cent of the adult population, run the risk of internal armed conflict, after taking into account a range of factors such as the country's level of development and the extent of democracy.¹⁵⁰

This latter point is quite important. It is simply not valid to equate a large youth cohort with violence and conflict, without taking into account other factors such as economic growth rates and channels for political participation and citizenship (See Box 12). The reasons why young people are prone to political violence may be due to several overlapping factors. Analysis shows that the statistically significant demographic and social variables associated with state failure are: the extent of youth bulge (the ratio of the population aged 15-29 years to the 30-54-year age group), a higher level of urban population, a higher proportion of the population without paid work or looking for work, and the extent of ethnic fractionalisation of the population.¹⁵¹

It has been observed that the larger the size of the youth cohort, the fewer the opportunities that exist for young people in a weak economy.¹⁵² The capacity of countries to invest in young people can erode with a growing number of people, but investments in young people are of utmost importance for countries to cope with their demographic changes. As noted in Cameroon's poverty reduction strategy "Nearly 42 per cent of Cameroonians are under 14 and more than two-thirds are under 30.

Table 9 Timing of the demographic window of opportunity for developing countries

Region or sub-region	Period when productive age groups (15 to 60 years) at maximum size
Less developed region excluding Least Developed Countries	2036-2038
Least Developed Countries	After 2050
Latin America and the Caribbean	2018-2020
Western Asia	2023-2028
South-Central Asia	2037-2038
Sub-Saharan Africa	After 2050

Source: UN Population Fund, 2003, *The State of World Population 2003: Making 1 Billion Count: Investing in Adolescents' Health and Rights*. New York: UNFPA

As is the case everywhere, this population tends to concentrate in urban areas, resulting in increased pressure on social services, infrastructures, and labour markets. This is a situation that calls for heightened and sustained attention by all."¹⁵³

Also important in explaining the connection between young people and political violence is their lack of opportunity to participate both economically and politically. The lack of alternative income opportunities is a reason for concern for conflict, especially for less educated youth who join rebel forces as a source of income.¹⁵⁴ When large groups of youth seeking recognition are excluded from political participation in a state that is neither fully autocratic nor fully democratic, youth may engage in violent conflict behaviour to force democratic reform.¹⁵⁵ This would include riots, demonstrations, and other low-level political violence rather than full-scale war. For example, Niger's PRSP notes, "youthfulness is a lever for boosting economic recovery" but also that youth can be "left to themselves and prey to a multidimensional crisis characterized by unemployment, under-employment, illiteracy, begging, delinquency, exodus, immigration and low participation in development activities, various diseases, including STI/HIV/AIDS, violence, etc. Such a situation has often led to violent reactions by youths (universities, schools, unions) demanding that their grievances be solved".¹⁵⁶

The impact of armed conflict on the lives of young people and on society as a whole is enormous. Conflict seriously endangers the socialization process, affecting young people's chances of becoming economically and socially independent adults. Conflict often destroys the

safe environment provided by a family, adequate nutrition, schooling and employment. During conflict, youth health risks increase, especially for young women.¹⁵⁷ Anxiety and depression, extreme stress, high-risk drug use and suicide are disturbing aspects of youth health that are particularly prevalent in countries experiencing war, occupation or sanctions.¹⁵⁸ In countries in which HIV prevalence is high in peacetime, rates of HIV infection among both soldiers and civilians can jump dramatically during periods of conflict, spurred by an increase in sexual violence and prostitution, massive population displacements, and the breakdown of health systems.¹⁵⁹ Trauma and the lack of social support and services seriously affect young people and cause lasting harm to their physical and mental health.

An essential component of maintaining peace in war-affected and other fragile nations is to ensure effective methods for including and engaging with youth.¹⁶⁰ Liberia's PRSP states, "the prevailing risk of a return to violence, coupled with the breakdown of traditional values and norms as a result of the war, means the situation of youth is a potentially volatile security challenge".¹⁶¹

Overwhelmingly, youth in post-conflict situations identify both security and education as their top two priority needs.¹⁶² Education enables youth to recover some degree of normalcy, psychologically, and begins to help them rebuild their lives economically. There are many challenges, including the fact that many war-affected youth have been out of school for long periods, and that many have the responsibility of supporting family members.

Working with young people in poor and unstable areas hinges on providing them with viable, appropriate options based on their needs and choices.¹⁶³ For example, young people migrate to cities for a number of reasons. This may be to diversify the household income, to make use of perceived opportunities, to claim more adult-like freedom, or a number of other reasons combined. Although governments and institutions may not want to promote youth migration to cities, trying to relocate young people to rural areas may prove counterproductive unless the reasons for urban migration are well understood. Guinea-Bissau's PRSP includes a strategic objective to reduce the rural exodus of youth is to improve living conditions in rural areas by: (i) creating youth and adult training and qualification centres in an equitable manner; (ii) supporting farming or farming-related activities; (iii) creating infrastruc-

BOX 12 TIMING OF THE DEMOGRAPHIC WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Any discussion of the youth bulge in Africa risks veering into the land of breathless alarmism – young men and street gangs and guns, oh my!...

...The relationship between youth bulges and violence is important, but it speaks to just one manifestation of youth frustrations and desires. Other avenues for affecting the future include partisan political action, participation in civil society organizations, student activism, and engagement in transnational religious movements. Regardless of whether these manifold forms of expression are accompanied by violence, in light of youths' demographic dominance, all of them will affect the region's future. In one way or another, young Africans are in the market for alternatives to the status quo. People interested in Africa's future ought to concern themselves not just with potential conflict, but also potential political change.

Source: Gavin, M. 2007. *Africa's Restless Youth* in *Current History*, May 2007, Council on Foreign Relations, Brookings Institution Press.

tures to end isolation; (iv) upgrading supply in the area of education, health and water resources; (v) creating an adequate lending system for youth; (vi) raising the awareness of the populations, particularly local officials, as to the necessity of giving youths access to the land so that they can grow cash crops".¹⁶⁵ Other PRSPs that include strategies to encourage youth to settle in rural areas include Grenada, Guinea, Mali, and São Tomé and Príncipe, to name a few.

Specific to post-conflict situations, youth often emerge from war with new skills, experiences, and identities, and may have no interest in a return to the past. Integration of young people, by working with them and giving them a voice, but more importantly an audience that listens to their needs and integrates them into poverty reduction strategies, is likely to be highly more effective than trying to reintegrate them into the pre-conflict status quo.

In many ways, this argument based on the threat to civil disorder young people can represent is merely the reverse of the preceding argument about the benefits to be gained from a country responding to the demographic window of opportunity. Failure by policy makers to direct poverty reducing resources to a large youth cohort within their country's population is likely to increase the risk of civil disorder and societal insecurity.



4. How to Present the Case

This section of the publication discusses some of the ways to present the case for greater investments in young people most effectively. It first examines some of the key steps, information needs and decisions that need to be identified in this process. Next, it discusses the value of robust data and rigorous evaluation, including the use of adolescent vulnerability profiles. Finally, it looks at the benefits of working directly with young people in advancing this work together.

FOUR STEPS TO ENGAGING IN A POLICY DIALOGUE

1. Identify the processes in place to develop poverty reduction strategies

Whether a government official, development partner, or a young person, any advocate working for a greater focus on young people within national development strategies will face many challenges. The first is to determine what national policy processes are in place, if any, to develop or refine strategies that tackle poverty. There are likely to be several opportunities for doing this. One opportunity that exists for many developing countries is the preparation of a PRSP as a precondition to access to debt relief and concessional financing from both the World Bank and the IMF. As noted, 66 countries have completed either an initial or final Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper as of August 2010. Several countries have completed the implementation of their first PRSP and have entered into the next generation of the strategy. In these cases, the countries have undertaken in-depth poverty and social impact analyses to assess the medium-term and distributional impact of their policies.¹⁶⁵

Other opportunities for developing comprehensive poverty reduction strategies at a country level are outlined in Table 10. These instruments include Millennium Development Goals Reports, National or Regional Human Development Reports, Common Country Assessments, and the UN Development Assistance Framework. Another context for developing a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy may be

offered by government and donors seeking to achieve better aid harmonization, particularly under the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.¹⁶⁶

2. Identify the stakeholders and decision-makers in the PRS process

The second step for a change advocate is to form a good overview of the different steps in the policy process, keeping in mind the decision-makers and other stakeholders likely to be involved, which can be contacted as entry points to the process. Table 11 outlines five steps that are typically used in policy development and describes the likely actors who may be involved at these different stages.

It is worth noting that the policy process outlined in table 11 does not suggest that policy formulation is a simple, linear process with clearly delineated stages. Policymaking is often complex, requiring the revisiting of different stages to respond to changes in information and expectations. For this reason, a PRSP should not be viewed as a static exercise committed to paper, but rather a living document that is a part of a process that shifts in light of experience, feedback and changing poverty dynamics.

3. Tailor advocacy messages and supporting evidence to strategic audiences

The third step for a change advocate is to determine which messages and supporting evidence are likely to have greatest impact on various strategic audiences. The choice of argument and evidence will depend on the stage of the policy process at which the advocate is seeking to put their case and who the key decision makers are at this stage of the process.

Presenting a case at the initial consultation stage may require use of realistic examples that can be easily digested at open meetings. At the poverty diagnosis/assessment stage, more systematic evidence will be needed, based on reliable data that are representative of the population as a whole so that comparisons between subgroups can be made. At the policy formulation stage, evidence about the

Table 10 Key Advocacy and/or Analysis Instruments for United Nation Agencies

Report	Output	Purpose	Partners for preparation	Primary target group
Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper	Medium-term action plan describing national poverty reduction efforts	Strategic policy document and pre-condition for some World Bank and IMF lending and debt relief	Government leads the process with World Bank assistance and UN/ donor support	World Bank and IMF boards, implementing Governments, and national development partners
Millennium Development Goals Report	User-friendly report on status of progress to date and remaining challenges to reach MDGs	Monitor progress and mobilize action to attain the goals; Public information and advocacy tool for raising awareness	Governments (including national statistics offices) with support of UN country team	General public, parliamentarians, civil society, professional associations, media and donors
National/regional Human Development Report	In-depth, nationally owned policy analysis document with bold policy messages	Generate debate and catalyse action for human development progress	Participatory and inclusive process involving leading national experts and intellectuals; UNDP facilitates process	Policy makers in government, NGOs, private sector, general public, UN country team, World Bank/IMF and donors
Common Country Assessment	Comprehensive and concise overview of development situation in a country	Instrument used by UN country teams as a basis for coherent programming	UN with government inputs	UN country team, donor community and government
UN Development Assistance Framework	UN's business plan to support national priorities	Identifies areas of development support	UN with government inputs	UN country team, donor community and government

Source: Derived from UNDP's Human Development Report Toolkit for national and regional HDR Teams (<http://hdr.undp.org/nhdr/toolkit/>)

impacts and relative cost effectiveness of different forms of intervention (e.g. the results of pilot projects) to meet a particular policy goal will be needed. At the monitoring and evaluation stage, carefully collected evidence gathered about outcomes is required and can be coupled with well-articulated recommendations.

4. Determine an effective communications strategy

The fourth step is for the policy advocate to work out innovative ways to communicate the relevant arguments and supporting evidence in an effective way. This involves developing a thoughtful communication strategy that includes creative ways to package key messages. Examples include the use of development narratives based on simplified stories or scenarios, making good use of personal experiences in delivering programs, or the use of an expert to offer an authoritative opinion.¹⁶⁷ Effective communication also often involves tapping into formal or informal networks of like-minded people who are interested in sharing ideas around common interests. There are many channels through which to communicate messages, from formal policy papers,

to websites, to public media messages and the use of emerging social media tools. Box 13 highlights some effective communication strategies and campaigns that are helping to advance greater attention and investment in the needs of adolescent girls.

The value of robust evidence and rigorous evaluation

Providing strong arguments and supporting evidence to justify more investment in meeting the needs of young people in PRSPs helps to reduce the uncertainty over the outcomes that policy makers may face in deciding in which programmes to invest.

One of the best examples of this is the case of Mexico's programme *Oportunidades* (formerly *Progresas*). As part of an overall strategy for poverty alleviation in Mexico, the programme paid families to send children to school and visit health care providers. *Oportunidades'* budget of approximately \$777 million in 1999 was equivalent to 0.2 per cent of Mexico's GDP.¹⁶⁹ The credible proof of the programme's success helped to ensure its continuity and expansion, even as Mexico experienced a major change in governments in 2000.

Table 11 Outline of a Policy Process to develop a Poverty Reduction Strategy

Consultation	Both informal and structured opportunities that are designed to encourage participation of key stakeholders in identifying key issues to be taken into account at various stages in the policy process - e.g. in the design, implementation and subsequent monitoring and evaluation of the strategy	General public, poor and vulnerable groups organized civil society, private sector, Government, Representative assemblies/ parliamentarians, and donors.
Poverty diagnosis/assessment	Research that is undertaken to deepen the country context of poverty and to reflect the diversity of experiences according to age, gender, regional location, and so forth. Ideally it identifies vulnerable groups and how they are affected by socio-economic, structural and institutional constraints.	Likely to involve main line ministries and service providers, official central secretariat, monitoring unit, or coordinating body such as a Ministry of Planning. Ideally it also incorporates elements of a participatory poverty assessment.
Policy formulation and prioritization that includes costing and budgeting	Analysis of the poverty assessment data and the formulation of responsive policies. Prioritization should be guided by the identification of actions that will have the most impact on poverty reduction. Costing involves determining the required resources needed to implement poverty reduction programmes and budgeting reviews the impact of a range of public expenditure options.	Thematic groups involving different agencies for policy formulation; Centralized agencies such as the Ministry of Finance, Central Planning and Coordinating body for the prioritization, costing and budgeting.
Policy implementation	A defined time frame in which the public policy's strategies are implemented; Involves assigning responsibilities and defining medium and long-term goals for poverty reduction outcomes (monetary and non-monetary) using targets and indicators of progress.	Various line ministries, public and private entities, civil society and ideally, the broad range of constituencies that have been build through the preparation process; Coordination can be assigned to a centralized body e.g. Poverty Monitoring Steering Committee with broad stakeholder membership, a National Development Planning Commission, etc.
Monitoring and Evaluation	Monitoring involves tracking the implementation of the public policy and using feedback to revise the strategy and to enhance its on-going effectiveness; Evaluation is a retrospective exercise used to derive lessons for subsequent versions of the PRSP or other policy.	Special monitoring unit within government. Participatory monitoring of implementation, public service performance and budgeting can contribute to efficiency and empowerment of the poor.

Source: Derived from UNDP's Human Development Report Toolkit for national and regional HDR Teams (<http://hdr.undp.org/nhdr/toolkit/>)

Beginning early 1998, the International Food Policy Research Institute was contracted to evaluate the impact of *Oportunidades* based on an experimental design. The programme was rolled out by randomly assigning 320 villages to a treatment group that received benefits beginning in May 1998, and 186 villages to a control group that did not receive benefits until 20 months later.¹⁷⁰ This made it easier to evaluate *Oportunidades'* impact. Some 24,000 households from the villages were surveyed at various times throughout the programme.

The evaluation results showed that the programme increased children's progression to secondary school by nearly 20 percent. Child labour also decreased by about 15 per cent as school enrolment increased. The pro-

gramme was also found to have a net positive impact on participants' health, for both young children and adults. The educational benefits of the programme in terms of future earning power have been estimated to exceed programme costs by 40 to 110 per cent.¹⁷¹ The positive programme effects on health and nutrition raise the benefits over costs even further. Evidence of net programme impacts on education and health outcomes based on robust evaluation methodologies has been crucial element in gaining wider acceptance of this new approach to addressing poverty based on conditional cash transfers. *Oportunidades* has served as a model for similar programmes in Honduras, Nicaragua, and Argentina.

BOX 13 Highlighting the Central Role of Girls and Young Women In Achieving International Development Goals

In recent years, the international community has become increasingly aware of the need to invest in girls and young women, with results that extend well beyond achieving gender equality to other areas of internationally-agreed development goals. In July 2010, the UN General Assembly voted unanimously to create a new entity called UNWomen that will work to accelerate progress in meeting the needs of women and girls worldwide. UNWomen will focus on addressing the ongoing concern that girls do not yet receive sufficient attention in programme development and in resource allocation, nor do they have sufficient access to services and information, including on sexual and reproductive health.⁶⁸

Several compelling communication efforts highlight the urgent need to address the challenges faced by girls and young women. As described below, each is fact-based, making effective use of available data and information, as well as persuasive in crafting their messages to a variety of key audiences.

The Coalition for Adolescent Girls

Founded by the United Nations Foundation and the Nike Foundation in 2005, the Coalition is a public-private partnership that works to bring diverse resources and concrete solutions to the challenges facing adolescent girls in developing countries. The effort promotes the message that when girls are educated, healthy and financially literate, they play a key role in ending generations of poverty (also highlighted in the Girl Effect campaign, see below). The Coalition has developed a ten-action agenda based on counting girls (collecting data to assess whether programmes are reaching adolescent girls), investing appropriately (identifying the girl-specific actions and investments that will ignite change) and advocating support (mobilizing communities, families, men and boys and adolescent girls themselves). It also produces Girls Count, a global action and investment agenda that underscores the need for critical research focused on adolescent girls in the developing world. It recommends strategic, concrete action items for policymakers, donors, development professionals, and the private sector to effectively implement change. See: <http://www.coalitionforadolescentgirls.org>

The Girl Effect:

This campaign exists to prove that adolescents girls are unique agents of change and capable of raising the standard of living

in developing countries. It is driven by a number of partners around the world, including the Nike Foundation and the Novo Foundation and is associated with the Coalition for Adolescent Girls. Although the campaign recognizes that there is a lack of data, which it points out reveals how pervasively girls have been overlooked, it uses existing research to demonstrate a “ripple effect” to drive home the impact that young women can have on development. It has compiled a convincing fact sheet that sources research findings and uses social media, such as web-based video material and Facebook, to influence people. See: <http://www.manupcampaign.org/>

Man Up Campaign

Man Up is a global campaign to activate youth to stop violence against girls and women. The campaign taps into the core elements of grassroots organizing, including education, capacity development and community building in order to advance long-term programmes led by youth around the world. It “meets youth where they are”, such as at the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa, and utilizes relevant points of engagement in order to create blueprints for change to stop violence against women. It works directly with UNIFEM, international and grassroots NGOs and key stakeholders from the sport and entertainment communities to engage and support youth, who are considered to be at the helm of the movements that bring about positive change in their countries. See: <http://www.manupcampaign.org/>

The UN Adolescent Girls Task Force

The UN Adolescent Girls Task Force supports governments and partners to highlight that investing in programmes that reach adolescent girls is a critical development strategy for countries and the world, especially to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). At the country level, it supports collaboration with government ministries, NGOs, and women’s and girls’ networks to identify marginalized adolescent girls and to implement programmes that end their marginalization. It focuses on five key actions: (1) educate adolescent girls; (2) improve adolescent girls’ health; (3) keep adolescent girls free from violence; (4) promote adolescent girl leaders; and (5) count adolescent girls in data efforts. It is co-chaired by UNFPA and UNICEF, and includes UNESCO, UNIFEM, WHO and ILO.

Programmes should be grounded in concrete evidence and targeted accordingly to specific subgroups of young people, as described throughout this publication. In the case of adolescent girls, programming assumptions or approaches derived from other interventions may not be applicable or effective. Evidence-based programming

will help in up-scaling interventions, identifying funding opportunities and improving programming approaches. An efficient link between research and policy should thus be promoted in order to ensure the development of evidence-based programmes that place the needs of young people within the broader country context.



Acknowledging data limitations in making a strong case

One of the difficulties in presenting a convincing case for investing in youth as part of poverty reduction strategy is the shortage of solid evaluations that have established the impact of such policies on youth outcomes. Only relatively few programmes for young people have been evaluated using rigorous criteria. Therefore, the use of cost benefit comparisons of programmes may be too restrictive a base from which to make public policy or private investment decisions. This form of analysis is highly demanding in terms of the type and quality of the data it requires. Rigorous programme evaluation results can be difficult to interpret or extrapolate from if the operating parameters of a programme vary over time or by different locations. Moreover, spillovers from one youth transition to others make impact evaluation difficult. For example, investing in an additional year of schooling for adolescent girls needs to take into account better potential future earnings, but also effects of better reproductive health choices, the future benefits to children, and other carry-over effects. Fully accounting for these spillover effects is important for understanding the

full benefits of investing in youth.¹⁷² Under demanding cost benefit analysis criteria, programmes that may be effective, but for which only partial or incomplete information is available, may not be considered as candidates for expansion.

Meeting the challenge to develop evidence-based arguments is improving over time, as it is critical to properly investing in programmes that deliver youth outcomes. Donor assistance is advancing the evaluation of policies and several campaigns are centred on gaining a better understanding of impact analysis, especially as it concerns girls and young women (See Box 11).

Use of vulnerability profiles

The use of vulnerability profiles for young people in relation to outcomes linked to poverty reduction offers a valuable way to use objective data to influence decisions about policy priority setting. Carefully targeted investments based on social vulnerability profiles of a country's population offer the prospect of substantial gains in reducing poverty for only modest expenditures.

Specific social vulnerability profiles of the poor can be developed by using available data in relation to a

BOX 14 TACKLING POVERTY TOGETHER: WORKING DIRECTLY WITH YOUNG PEOPLE ON PRSP PROCESSES

The Tackling Poverty Together (TPT) project is a hands-on initiative that exists to strengthen the role of young people in the development, implementation and monitoring of poverty reduction strategies. Over time, the project has built a network of over 80 youth organisations in Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe working towards full engagement in their country's PRSP or equivalent process. Each country has formed a "TPT Country Team" that consist of representatives from a variety of youth organizations working on various aspects of poverty reduction. The project provides overarching support to help build capacity for the TPT Country Teams to implement a youth-guided action plan aimed at increasing youth inclusion in poverty reduction efforts.

Some of the components of the TPT project include:

- **Regional workshops, list-serves and blog** - The TPT project promotes youth-to-youth communication and the exchange of information through regional workshops, as well a series of country-specific list-serves. Most recently a blog has been created, particularly to share information about the project's next steps. The blog is accessible at: <http://www.tacklingpovertytogether.blogspot.com/>
- **Seed funding** - The TPT project has been able to provide each country team with an amount of seed funding to kick-start their initial action plans, further expand their networks, and attract additional local and national resources.
- **Youth and PRSP e-Course** - In early 2009, representatives of the TPT country teams participated in an Internet-based e-course called "Youth and PRSPs". The course was developed by UNFPA and delivered in collaboration with the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) over three months. The e-course involved over 140 youth representatives, as well as mentors who supported the participants' learning and interaction. Throughout six learning modules, participants acquired a shared understanding of PRSP processes through topics such as poverty assessments, defining priority interventions, and establishing methods to monitor budgets and evaluate implementation. In the last module, participants laid the groundwork to develop small but

concrete activities to apply the knowledge acquired throughout the e-course.

Each country team has charted its work based on the poverty reduction processes currently at work in their country. For example, in Tanzania, a series of workshops were organized in which young people reviewed MKUKUTA and MKUZA (the PRSPs for Tanzania's Mainland and Zanzibar). At the workshops, youth were introduced to the contents of the PRSPs and identified strategic entry points for influencing the review, drafting and planning the process leading to the next phase of these frameworks. These efforts have been linked to the larger civil society MKUKUTA engagement process.

The TPT Liberia Country team has worked closely with the Ministry of Youth to create and distribute a youth-friendly version of the national PRSP. It has also established mentoring relationships with UN personnel and government civil servants. In Ghana, the TPT team has created a nationwide network of 26 youth and youth-serving organizations and published a guide to mobilize efforts around the creation of a national youth development policy. In Zambia, the team has implemented a series of outreach activities in schools throughout five districts: Lusaka, Choma, Ndola, Chipata, and Solwezi, each focused on sensitizing young people. TPT Uganda has targeted the three districts of Mpigi, Lyantonde, and Gulu to map out youth participation in local governance to increase youth-focused poverty reduction efforts in these areas.

In Kenya, the TPT team has organized youth dialogue circles to discuss Kenya's Vision 2030, the MDGs, and other poverty reduction initiatives. This led to a joint commitment among youth organizations to undertake civic education to ensure that as many young people as possible learn and understand the provisions of Kenya's new constitution. In Malawi, the team has secured an agreement with a national broadcasting radio station to air youth-related programmes that explore poverty reduction efforts.

The TPT has been funded by the Swedish International Development Agency and has evolved from a partnership between the UNDESA and the National Council of Swedish Youth Organisations (LSU). It is presently overseen by a Steering Committee of representatives from each of the TPT Country Teams, with a rotating chair. In terms of its next steps, the project's key priorities are ongoing capacity development, the expansion of the country teams and their current action plans, and securing national-level support.

particular outcome related to the reduction of poverty. Some of the attributes that need to be taken into account in social vulnerability profiles are: age, gender, household income in relation to other households, ethnicity/race and location. The outcomes related to poverty reduction, borrowing from the MDG indicator, may be factors

such as: income earned, basic literacy, level of education attainment, access to wage employment, maternal mortality, HIV prevalence and AIDS death rate, malaria and tuberculosis prevalence and death rates.

UNFPA and the Population Council have developed a series of Adolescent Data Guides, which draws

principally on data from the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), to provide decision makers at all levels with specific data on the situation of adolescent girls and boys and young women.¹⁷³ The guides summarize key data for adolescents aged 10-24 into figures, graphs, and maps organized around broad themes in relation to adolescents transitions (e.g. around sexual activity, pregnancy, and childbearing). The reports highlight differences by age, gender, living arrangements, schooling, marital status, and current residence (urban vs. rural). The goal of the guides is to identify large and potentially vulnerable subgroups of adolescents and young people requiring special attention. Poverty Reduction Strategies and youth policies alike are meant to provide social safety nets and second chances to those who are disadvantaged. Such disadvantages can be the result of social situations (for example, being married as a child or living apart from both parents), lack of skills (for example, having less schooling), or poor access to material resources. The guides are excellent tools for determining a country's pockets of vulnerable adolescents requiring specific interventions within broader poverty reduction strategies.

The benefits of working directly with young people

One valuable way to ensure that poverty reduction strategies meet the needs of young people is to involve them directly in designing, implementing and evaluating the related interventions. Particularly in the absence of data, working directly with poor adolescents draws on their intimate knowledge and experience of their own situations. However, it also reinforces young people's sense of agency and taps into an appropriate support base advocating for change. At the 5th World Youth Congress held in August 2010 in Istanbul, Turkey, young development activists reviewed the main arguments presented in this publication. The discussion that

ensued with UNFPA and World Bank staff was insightful. For one, young people highlighted the need for intergenerational equity, stemming from the need to expand choices for young people in how public investment is used. Most importantly, young people spoke of the need to empower young people to take control of their future, and thus combat what the young delegates saw as the greatest enemy of youth-led development: apathy. Active young people know they may be a minority among the wider youth population, but as long as adult decision makers reinforce their feelings of impotence, the majority of young people are not going to get involved – are not going to be the risk-takers, are not going to drive development through innovation and, in most cases, are not going to put themselves out to be peer educators. It is to combat this fatal syndrome of indolence, disempowerment, and sense that 'there's nothing I can do' that is perhaps the best reason for putting youth at the heart of reaching international development goals.

Increasing the participation of adolescents and youth in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of PRSPs provide entry points for youth-adult partnership that can improve the sustainability and reach of poverty programmes. However, it also requires building the skills of young people so that so that they might participate effectively in the programme design process. With proper preparation, marginalized boys and girls can be effective in providing insights to the development of programmes and even participate in the research process themselves—for example, mapping safety in the community, access to participation in different youth structures, safe and unsafe spaces, seasonal stresses which create risks for all (e.g. when school fees are due, during the rainy season, when pressures for migration arise).¹⁷⁴ Box 14 describes a long-term approach to working with youth organizations towards constructive engagement in PRSP process.



5. Conclusion

This paper started with the premise that a comprehensive strategy to reduce poverty must include a major focus on young people. Existing commitments and the large proportion of young people in the population of most developing countries are initial arguments that make this point. The large number of young people in a population offers a country an opportunity to deepen their human capital. This demographic bonus however, depends on strategic investments in education, employment opportunities, and access to quality health care.

Further, the wide gap between the Millennium Development Goal targets and the current prevalence of poverty among young people justifies substantial investment in young people. The poverty gaps for the 10 to 24 age group are particularly noticeable in relation to the key indicators concerning income and hunger, lack of access to employment and education, lack of gender equality, poor maternal health, and high levels of exposure to HIV/AIDS.

The paper has also emphasised how a national poverty strategy needs to be based on a dynamic concept of poverty and appropriate statistics that accurately reflect the situation facing young people, as a group that can be described as “the capable poor”. The capacity of adolescents and youth to make a successful transition to adulthood is strongly shaped by their society, and within that context, by their gender, socio-economic background, location, family support, ethnicity, or complex combinations of these factors. It is a practical question for each country to identify what vulnerabili-

ties exist within subgroups of young people as they face this transitional period of their lives.

From a social vulnerability perspective, girls and young women from the ages 10 to mid-twenties in most poor countries are particularly prone to adverse outcomes.¹⁷⁵ Gender discrimination combined with greater biological factors make young women more vulnerable to disease and early death than young men due to their greater exposure to coerced sexual relations and to HIV/AIDS compared with males of the same age. Data at a country level can be used to show for girls and young women their level of education attainment, child marriage rates, early childbirth rates and age-specific maternal mortality rates.

Carefully chosen investments which are targeted at the most socially vulnerable among young people are likely to have a multiplier effect beyond the immediate expected benefit. The empirical presented in the paper shows that programmes for young people could have multiple beneficial effects, thus producing spillover effects on reducing poverty.

Simply winning the argument about the need to allocate more resources to this age group does not answer the question of about the most effective ways to do this. Reliable information about programme costs and benefits is needed but difficult to come by. In the absence of this information, it is proposed that social vulnerability profiles and direct youth participation be used more widely to justify and craft carefully targeted investments in young people.

Overview Analysis of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and Young People

Attachment 1 reports the results of an overview analysis of some of the key features of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) in relation to young people. Specifically, this includes four elements of the PRSPs: the inclusion of young people in the consultation process, the identification of youth as a major group experiencing poverty, the incorporation of programmes for youth in the PRSP's action plan, and finally, the allocation of funding for youth programmes in the PRSP's budget.

The analysis was undertaken on the 66 PRSPs completed up to August 2010 and made available on the International Monetary Fund's website.

YOUTH INCLUSION IN PRSP PROCESSES

The 66 PRSPs made available through the IMF's website is more than double the number that were in existence when UNFPA undertook its initial Youth and PRSPs analysis in 2003. The 2003 analysis found that roughly half (55 per cent) appeared to have consulted youth in the development of the strategy. This situation has not improved over time. Table A1 reports that only a third of the PRSPs available in 2010 have consulted youth in their process.

It is important to note that some of the 44 PRSPs that do not mention consulting youth may have indicated general involvement of various social groups.

Table A1 Number and Proportion of PRSPs that mention youth as a group consulted in the process

	Yes	No	Total
Number	22	44	66
Per cent	33.3	66.7	100.0

Source: Author's own research using PRSPs retrieved on July 10, 2010 from <http://www.imf.org/external/np/prsp/prsp.asp>

However, it is difficult to confirm if these processes enabled young people's contribution to be incorporated into the PRSP process. As noted in the Serbian PRSP "Not even the somewhat more open civil sector in Serbia deals sufficiently with youth issues nor provides adequate opportunities for young people to be involved in the creation of programs, activities and decision making processes... only 5.6 per cent of non-governmental institutions in Serbia include young people in their programmes and activities."¹⁷⁶

Identifying youth as a group in poverty

In terms of according youth a major focus as a group experiencing poverty, only a quarter (16 in number) of the PRSPs do so. Fewer PRSPs (20 per cent) identify youth as a group in poverty in a minor way, and another quarter (17 in number) list youth as one of several groups experiencing poverty (see Table A2)

For many countries, the sheer numbers and proportion of young people as part of the population necessitate youth-focused poverty interventions. In Cambodia "60 per cent of the population is now below 25 years of age, and 36.5 per cent in the 10-24 year age

Table A2 The extent to which youth are identified as a group in poverty in PRSPs, number and per cent of total

	Major focus	Minor focus	One of several groups	No Mention	Total
Number	6	13	17	20	66
Per cent	24.2	19.7	25.8	30.3	100.0

Source: Author's own research using PRSPs retrieved on July 10, 2010 from <http://www.imf.org/external/np/prsp/prsp.asp>

group. Youth issues therefore constitute a key concern and challenge, particularly as youth unemployment and migration are rising and there are signs of increasing youth risk behaviour, including drug abuse".¹⁷⁷ Cameroon's PRSP notes "The Cameroonian population, like that of many other African countries, is relatively youthful, with an average age of 22 years; nearly 42 per cent of Cameroonians are under 14 and more than two-thirds are under 30. As is the case everywhere, this population tends to concentrate in urban areas, resulting in increased pressure on social services, infrastructures, and labour markets. This is a situation that calls for heightened and sustained attention by all".¹⁷⁸

Identifying youth in action plans and budgets

Under a third of PRSPs (29 per cent) give specific attention to youth in their action matrices, which spell out the key features of each country's poverty reduction strategy, (see Table A3). In the case of 27 PRSPs (41 per cent), young people are a minor focus in the action plans. A full 30 per cent of PRSPs (20 in number) do not have any mention of youth in their action plans.

This is problematic because despite the issues discussed in the main body of the PRSP, it is usually the content of the action plan that guides implementation efforts and is linked to indicators, targets, budget allocations and other monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. For example, Azerbaijan's PRSP observes that 16 to 29 year olds have a 50 per cent poverty incidence. It also recognizes the particular vulnerability of adolescent girls in that "fertility rates have been declining apart from the 15-19 age group, with worrying implications for the education and health of teenage girls".¹⁷⁹ However, there are few matching interventions to be found in action elements of the document.

It can also be noted that despite coverage in the action plan, only a few PRSPs link suggested programmes focused on youth to specific targets and

budget outlays. In fact, the majority of PRSPs, close to 70 per cent, do not include specific budget allocations for youth-related priorities (see Table A4).

Generally PRSP budgets are presented at the macro-economic level, allocating resources within broad, sector categories such as education, health, energy, agriculture, and infrastructure. Models are often used to forecast national economic growth and each sector must prioritize initiatives based on available resources, demographics, delivery systems, and cost parameters. However increasingly PRSP processes are complementing their use of aggregate data and sector-based expenditures with micro-level approaches.¹⁸⁰ One of the recommendations from a 2003 Independent Evaluation of PRSPs is that development partners do more to help countries understand which actions will give them the greatest poverty pay-off in their particular circumstances.¹⁸¹ This is good news for young people, as it means that increasing support is available to assist countries in applying a bottom-up approach to resource allocation, one that better accounts for populations in need of services and the coverage of related interventions.¹⁸²

Table A4 The proportion of PRSPs with a special focus on Youth in their action plan, number and per cent

	Includes youth budgetary allocation	Does not include youth budgetary allocation	Total
Number	21	45	66
Per cent	31.8	68.2	100.0

Source: Author's own research using PRSPs retrieved on July 10, 2010 from <http://www.imf.org/external/np/prsp/prsp.asp>

Table A3 The proportion of PRSPs with a special focus on Youth in their action plan, number and percent

	Major focus in a key goal	Minor focus in a key goal	No mention at all	Total
Number	19	27	20	66
Per cent	28.8	40.9	30.3	100.0

Source: Author's own research using PRSPs retrieved on July 10, 2010 from <http://www.imf.org/external/np/prsp/prsp.asp>

Content Analysis of PRSPs with an emphasis on population and health issues related to young people

Attachment 2 presents the findings from a content analysis of PRSPs in relation to young people, with a particular emphasis on population and health issues. Specifically this includes education, employment, sexual and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, gender issues and human rights.

Issues linked to young people in PRSPs

PRSPs are multi-sectoral plans designed to foster economic growth and reduce poverty. Thankfully all PRSPs regard poverty as a complex and multidimensional phenomenon that extends beyond any specific level of income. Given that youth are a large proportion of the population of many countries and prone to experiencing disproportionate levels of poverty (particularly sub-groups such as adolescent girls), it should be expected that the strategies contained in a PRSP should contribute to enhancing young people's lives.

Table A5 presents the result of the content analysis undertaken on 66 PRSPs. The majority of PRSPs (over 90

per cent) mention young people in relation to education and employment. Next is HIV/AIDS (68 per cent), followed by sexual and reproductive health (48 per cent). Far less is comprehensive coverage of young people's gender issues (38 per cent) and fulfillment of basic human rights (39 per cent). Less than 17 per cent cover youth issues in a cross-cutting manner.

As wide ranging plans, PRSPs cannot (and should not attempt to) replace comprehensive national policies on population, health and youth. In some cases, where a national youth policy or national reproductive health strategy exists, the PRSP process offers an opportunity to strengthen its implementation by linking it to national development priorities. The Armenian PRSP states "In the framework of PRSP, the national youth policy envisages coordinated actions aimed to ensure that the challenges facing the youth are properly addressed in education, healthcare, spiritual, culture, sports, legal and social protection and employment fields".¹⁸³ Some of the other PRSPs that incorporate a national youth policy

Table A5 Number and proportion of PRSPs that mention specific issues in relation to youth poverty and well-being

	Education	Employment	Sexual and Reproductive Health	HIV/AIDS	Gender/Needs of girls	Human rights	Cross-Cutting
Number	60	62	32	45	25	26	11
Per cent	90.9	94.0	48.5	68.2	37.9	39.4	16.7

Source: Author's own research using PRSPs retrieved on July 10, 2010 from <http://www.imf.org/external/np/prsp/prsp.asp>

include Afghanistan, the Republic of Congo, Ghana (in terms of a National Youth employment Programme), Liberia, Sierra Leone, Togo and Zambia.

Reproductive Health and HIV/AIDS related PRSP initiatives for young people

As shown in Table A5, more PRSPs have HIV/AIDS-related initiatives targeted at young people than those with more comprehensive sexual and reproductive health (SRH) strategies. Just under 50 per cent of PRSPs have strategies in place to support reproductive health initiatives for youth. 34 PRSPs do not. Gender is covered in a major way in many PRSPs generally, but only 25 (or 38 per cent) explicitly relate it to the situation of girls and young women.

In terms of adolescents and human rights references, similar spotty coverage is observed in most PRSPs. Some PRSPs, like Bangladesh and Liberia, note the Convention on the Rights of the Child, particularly with regard to the right to health care, including family planning education and services.

The constraint of this analysis is that it cannot determine if the strategies for young people presented in the PRSPs reflect country ownership, are the most relevant and realistic in the particular context, are reasonable in their coverage, or are likely to be implemented. Nevertheless, the discussion generated by the review provides UNFPA, and others working with young people, a point from which to further engage with PRSP processes at the country level.

Integrating a human rights-based approach into PRSPs to benefit young people

Over time, human rights have become central to development. Growing recognition of the crucial links between human rights violations, poverty, exclusion, vulnerability and conflict has led many countries and development partners to integrate human rights more thoroughly into their work.¹⁸⁴ Human rights are also central to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the set of international targets that aim to reduce poverty and inequality, increase

access to education, health services, and employment, and improve environmental sustainability.

Human rights are internationally agreed standards that apply to all human beings. They encompass the social, cultural, economic, and political rights set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.¹⁸⁵ Building upon these core rights, other international conventions have focused on various social groups. Young people have rights that are further protected by

BOX A1 THE UN'S COMMON UNDERSTANDING TOWARDS A HUMAN RIGHTS BASED APPROACH DEVELOPMENT¹⁸⁶

Human rights principles guide all programming in all phases of the programming process, including assessment and analysis, programme planning and design (including setting of goals, objectives and strategies); implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Among these human rights principles are: universality and inalienability; indivisibility; inter-dependence and inter-relatedness; non-discrimination and equality; participation and inclusion; accountability and the rule of law. These principles are explained below.

Universality and inalienability: Human rights are universal and inalienable. All people in the world are entitled to them. The human person in whom they inhere cannot voluntarily give them up. Nor can others take them away from him or her. As stated in Article 1 of the UDHR, "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights".

Indivisibility: Human rights are indivisible. Whether of a civil, cultural, economic, political or social nature, they are all inherent to the dignity of every human person. Consequently, they all have equal status as rights, and cannot be ranked, a priori, in a hierarchical order.

Inter-dependence and Inter-relatedness: The realization of one right often depends, wholly or in part, upon the realization of others. For instance, realization of the right to health may depend, in certain circumstances, on realization of the right to education or of the right to information.

Equality and Non-discrimination: All individuals are equal as human beings and by virtue of the inherent dignity of each human person. All human beings are entitled to their human rights without discrimination of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, ethnicity, age, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, disability, property, birth or other status as explained by the human rights treaty bodies.

Participation and Inclusion: Every person and all peoples are entitled to active, free and meaningful participation in, contribution to, and enjoyment of civil, economic, social, cultural and political development in which human rights and fundamental freedoms can be realized.

Accountability and Rule of law: States and other duty-bearers are answerable for the observance of human rights. In this regard, they have to comply with the legal norms and standards enshrined in human rights instruments. Where they fail to do so, rights-holders are entitled to institute proceedings for appropriate redress before a competent court or other adjudicator in accordance with the rules and procedures provided by law.

Source: United Nations Development Group (UNDG), 2003. The Human Rights Based Approach to Development Cooperation Towards a Common Understanding among UN. Retrieved from <http://www.undg.org/index.cfm?P=221>

BOX A2 THE LINKS BETWEEN HUMAN RIGHTS AND PRSP PRINCIPLES IN RELATION TO YOUTH

There are many similarities between the concepts embedded in human rights and the key principles that guide PRSP process. The IMF Factsheet on PRSPs (2010) provides five core principles that underlie the PRSP approach. Poverty reduction strategies should be 1) country-driven through broad-based participation; 2) result-oriented and focused on outcomes to benefit the poor; 3) comprehensive in recognizing poverty's multi-dimensional nature 4) partnership-oriented among stakeholders; and 5) based on a long-term perspective.

A rights-based approach to developing a poverty strategy or similar policy can help to strengthen the core elements of a PRSP and serve as a guide to engaging youth in the PRSP process. Here are some of the ways that the complementarity of human rights and PRSP principles promote the inclusion of young people:

a) Young people are recognized as key actors in their own development. As rights-holders, with both entitlements and obligations, they are not passive recipients of services.

b) Participation is perceived as both a means and an end. Young people are included in all aspects of the PRSP process, including stakeholder identification, poverty diagnostics, policy formulation

and prioritization, and monitoring and evaluation. This makes it necessary to provide adequate information and to facilitate the capacity of young people to understand and take part in these processes.

c) Both processes and outcomes are monitored throughout the PRSP or similar policy process to ensure that each is empowering and locally-owned, not disempowering and externally imposed.

d) Programmes focus on marginalized, disadvantaged, and excluded sub-sectors of the youth population. This implies improving the availability and use of age- and sex-disaggregated data so that interventions target youth who experience disproportionate levels of poverty and insecurity.

e) Strategic partnerships with young people are developed and sustained over time. Mechanisms that encourage accountability, between youth and other stakeholders, as well as among youth themselves, are encouraged.

Source: Based on Larsen, J., (forthcoming) A high standard for participation: Grounding social inclusion in the principles of human rights.

instruments such as: The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1981); The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990); The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (1990); and most recently, The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2008). The Cairo Consensus (1994) forged at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) is also grounded in human rights and puts population, reproductive health and gender

equality in a human rights framework for sustained development. Box A1 summarizes the key principles of human rights.

Human rights highlight the inequality, exclusion and accountability failures that lie at the root of poverty and deprivation. This makes them central to the design and implementation of national strategies that fight poverty. Box A2 outlines some of the ways in which human rights principles align directly with the principles that guide PRSP processes and underpin the importance of youth inclusion.

ATTACHMENT 4:

Countries ranked in order of their population's share of young people (defined as 10 to 24 years of age)

Country	Total Population (10 and over) thousands of people 2010	Young People (10 to 24) as a proportion of all adults (10+) per cent young adults in adult population 2010	Country	Total Population (10 and over) thousands of people 2010	Young People (10 to 24) as a proportion of all adults (10+) per cent young adults in adult population 2010	Country	Total Population (10 and over) thousands of people 2010	Young People (10 to 24) as a proportion of all adults (10+) per cent young adults in adult population 2010
Uganda	21,974	52.1	Cameroon	14,246	45.5	Egypt	66,302	38.5
Zimbabwe	9,369	51.4	Congo	2,713	45.1	Grenada	87	38.2
Swaziland	893	50.7	Equatorial Guinea	497	45.1	Bangladesh	131,688	38.2
Yemen	16,992	50.2	Iraq	22,804	45.1	Turkmenistan	4,192	38.1
Democratic Republic of the Congo	45,434	49.8	Central African Republic	3,261	45.0	Kyrgyzstan	4,531	37.3
Zambia	8,917	49.5	Eritrea	3,664	44.9	South Africa	40,463	37.2
Malawi	10,672	49.4	Cape Verde	396	44.8	Fiji	685	37.0
Timor-Leste	811	49.3	Togo	4,944	44.7	Saudi Arabia	20,658	37.0
Afghanistan	19,621	49.2	Gambia	1,233	44.5	India	971,696	36.8
Niger	9,986	49.0	Côte d'Ivoire	15,518	44.4	Mongolia	2,263	36.5
Mali	9,132	48.7	Namibia	1,676	43.9	Dominican Republic	8,204	36.0
Angola	12,956	48.6	Sudan	31,934	43.9	Ecuador	11,188	35.8
Burkina Faso	10,757	48.4	Cambodia	11,901	43.9	Peru	23,922	35.8
Senegal	8,929	48.3	Mauritania	2,447	43.8	Jamaica	2,276	35.4
Chad	7,752	48.2	Guinea-Bissau	1,150	43.7	Morocco	26,592	35.4
Lesotho	1,562	48.1	Honduras	5,789	43.7	Algeria	29,095	35.2
Occupied Palestinian Territory	3,056	48.0	Vanuatu	182	43.6	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	23,553	34.8
Ethiopia	59,465	47.7	Solomon Islands	395	43.5	Malaysia	22,651	34.8
Rwanda	7,146	47.5	Papua New Guinea	5,029	43.5	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	63,108	34.4
United Republic of Tanzania	30,579	47.2	Djibouti	670	43.4	Colombia	37,890	34.0
Kenya	28,393	47.0	Ghana	17,981	43.1	Western Sahara	427	34.0
Mozambique	16,143	46.6	Nepal	22,895	42.9	Saint Lucia	147	33.9
Madagascar	14,247	46.6	Haiti	7,768	42.9	Guyana	631	33.8
Burundi	6,303	46.3	Pakistan	139,059	42.8	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	92	33.4
Sao Tome and Principe	120	46.2	Gabon	1,153	42.6	Viet Nam	75,626	33.1
Tajikistan	5,397	46.1	Nicaragua	4,540	42.2	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	5,207	33.1
Nigeria	111,007	45.9	Botswana	1,550	41.9	Mexico	91,750	33.0
Liberia	2,880	45.9	Belize	244	41.5	Azerbaijan	7,583	32.8
Micronesia (Fed. States of)	85	45.8	Comoros	506	41.2	Costa Rica	3,943	32.8
Guinea	7,214	45.7	Maldives	262	41.2	Panama	2,868	32.7
Lao People's Democratic Republic	4,919	45.7	Bolivia	7,650	41.0	Suriname	431	32.6
Benin	6,419	45.6	Syrian Arab Republic	17,081	40.5	French Polynesia	228	32.5
Somalia	6,336	45.6	Jordan	5,014	40.4	Myanmar	41,918	32.1
Guatemala	10,328	45.6	Paraguay	5,062	39.7	Brunei Darussalam	337	32.1
Sierra Leone	4,008	45.6	Philippines	72,878	39.5	Turkey	63,224	31.9
			Uzbekistan	22,882	39.4	Albania	2,784	31.9
			Bhutan	572	39.3	Indonesia	192,716	31.9
			El Salvador	5,076	39.3			
			Oman	2,324	38.9			

Source: Author's own calculation using data obtained from the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, World Population Prospects: The 2008 Revision, Retrieved from <http://esa.un.org/unpp>.

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