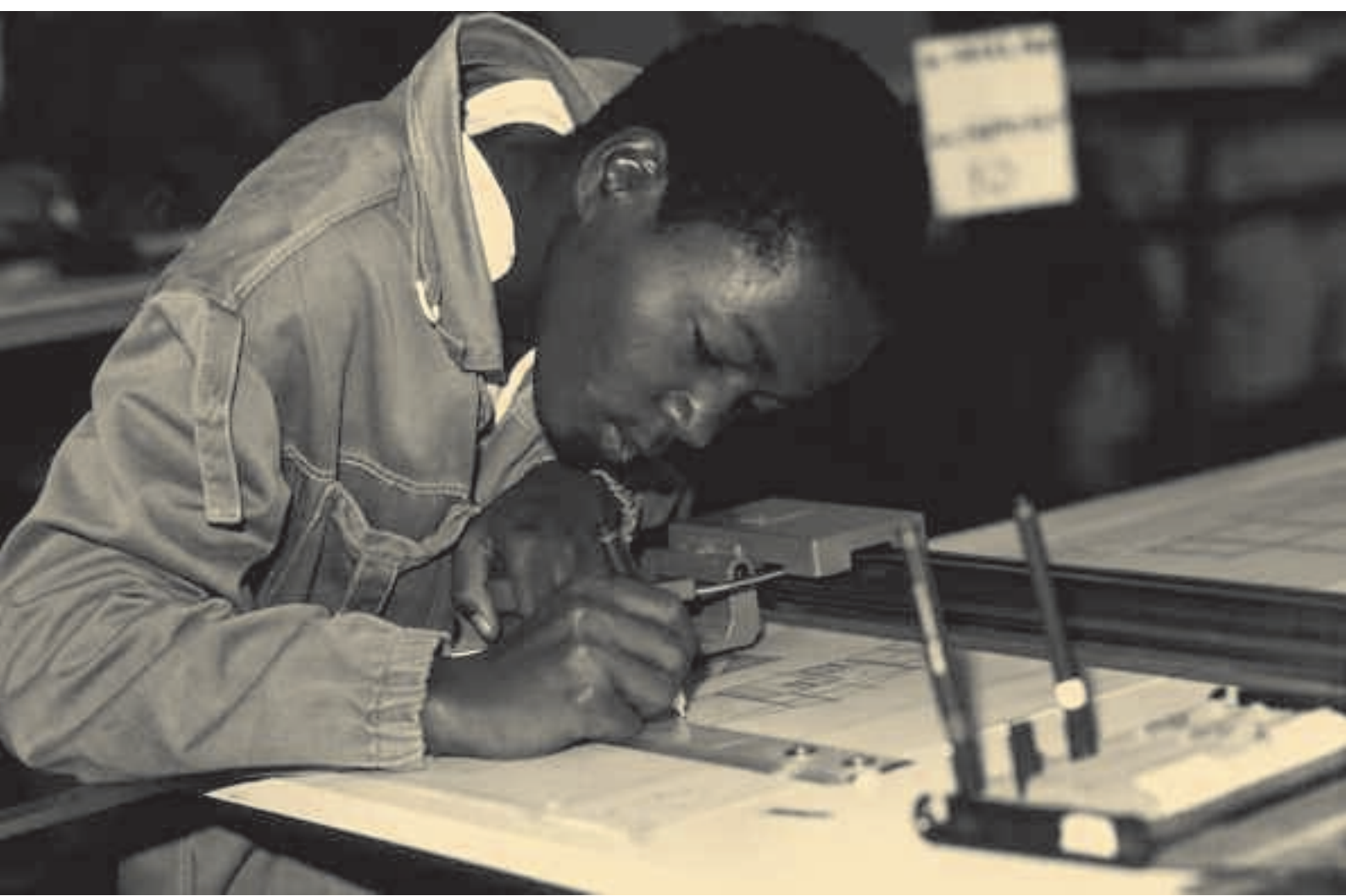




# Youth and Violent Conflict

**Society and Development  
in Crisis?**



**United Nations Development Programme**



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UNDP is the UN's global development network, advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life.

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**Today, young people face many obstacles in their transition from childhood to adulthood. In many parts of the world, lack of access to education, unemployment and the scourge of HIV/AIDS exacerbate these difficulties.** For boys and girls growing up in conflict situations, the challenges are even greater, as violent conflict impacts negatively on all dimensions of their lives. At the same time, feelings of exclusion can contribute to the emergence or continuation of violence.

These challenges cannot be ignored. Young people are growing in numbers across the world and, in many developing countries, they make up the majority of the population. Our effectiveness as development actors depends on our capacity to understand the complexity of youth in the broader context of their societies. Too often, young people are seen as a source of problems, yet their multiple roles in society and their potential to act as agents of change towards peace and development are vitally important.

As the focal point for conflict prevention and post-conflict recovery in UNDP, the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery has embarked on an effort to understand better the intersection between youth and violent conflict. The report *Youth and Violent Conflict: Society and Development in Crisis?* represents a first step in this direction. It is our hope that this initiative will inform UNDP thinking and help define a programmatic approach on this crucial issue.



**Kathleen Cravero**

Assistant Administrator and Director  
Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery



## **Contributors**

The review was authored by Michi Ebata, Valeria Izzi, Alexandra Lenton, Eno Ngjela and Peter Sampson. Jane Lowicki-Zucca provided writing contributions. Jennifer MacNaughtan provided research assistance on Chapter 5.

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## Acronyms

ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BCPR	Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (UNDP)
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CCA	Common Country Assessment
CDC	Community Development Committee
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CO	Country Office (UNDP)
COPS	Country Operations Plans (UNHCR)
CPR	Crisis Prevention and Recovery
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
C&Y	Children and Youth (World Bank)
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration
DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs (United Nations)
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECDPM	European Centre for Development Policy Management
ECHO	European Community Humanitarian Office
ECOWAS	Economic Community Of West African States
EDF	European Development Fund
EIYE	Equator Initiative Youth Exchange
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GNP	Gross National Product
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
HDR	Human Development Report
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICNYP	International Council on National Youth Policy
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IFRC	International Federation of the Red Cross
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INEE	Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies
IO	International Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
INEE	Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies
IRC	International Rescue Committee

IRIN	Integrated Regional Information Network
KFOR	Kosovo Force (NATO)
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MRU	Mano River Union
MSEE	Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies
MYFF	Multi-Year Funding Framework
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NHDR	National Human Development Report
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (United Nations)
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PCIA	Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment
PISG	Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (Kosovo)
PPP	Peak Performance Programme
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RAWOO	Netherlands Development Assistance Research Council
RBA	Regional Bureau for Africa (UNDP)
RET	Refugee Education Trust
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SFCG	Search for Common Ground
SPDI	Support to Peace and Development Initiatives
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
UN	United Nations
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
V4P	Volunteers for Peace
WHO	World Health Organization
YEN	Youth Employment Network
YPCPP	Youth Post-Conflict Participation Project
YRTEP	Youth Reintegration Training and Education for Peace



# 1

## Introduction

---

*There is such a high percentage of young people who see the future as something totally black.... If you open even a small window for them to see the sky, it will be a tremendous force for change. But they have to be able to see the sky.* — Mahmoud Abaza, Egyptian Wafd Party<sup>1</sup>

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The UN High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change refers to youth as a potential threat to security and asserts that a “surging youth population” – combined with unemployment, urbanization and other factors – can lead to violence. As young people are growing in number and are faced with fewer education opportunities, unemployment, the HIV/AIDS crisis, war and other forms of violence, there is increasing concern, even alarm, about ‘youth’ and the conditions that may encourage their participation in perpetuating violence and preventing the consolidation of peace and development.

Most analyses of conflict in different parts of the world are starting to identify a ‘youth factor’ as a key element in the generation or perpetuation of violence. This tendency often leads to overlooking the positive contribution of young people to society, including their potential role in sustaining the social fabric and promoting peace.

Understanding the involvement of youth in violent conflict requires a framework that reflects the complexities of the transition to adulthood in societies under pressure. The issue of ‘youth and violent conflict’ concerns more than youth: it is a reflection – and at the same time a further aggravation – of a broader societal crisis. Trying to understand the intersection between youth and violent conflict is a way of re-examining societies and development processes.

### 1.1 Aim and scope of the review

This review explores the intersection between youth and violent conflict, with a view to enhancing policy and offering programming guidance. To this aim, the review

- identifies key issues, questions and dilemmas related to youth and violent conflict;

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Neil MacFarquhar (2005).

- explores how the issue of youth and violent conflict is currently addressed in key policy frameworks;
- offers an overview of current programmes put in place by UNDP and other key international actors.

The review presents a collection of varied examples, as an illustration of different approaches and areas of activity. It only considers responses put in place by international governmental actors, leaving aside governments and non-governmental organizations. This is primarily a desk review of specialized literature, policy frameworks and programme documents, complemented by a period of field research in West Africa (Senegal, Liberia and Sierra Leone), undertaken in February 2005.<sup>2</sup>

The review is neither an exhaustive catalogue of programmes nor a compendium of best practices, and it does not attempt to evaluate the impact of programmes. Instead, it tries to draw attention to some key questions and issues, as a first step towards developing policy and programming guidelines.

## 1.2 Framing the issue

Defining **youth** is problematic.<sup>3</sup> Definitions are often based on age in order to provide a degree of objectivity. The UN General Assembly defines youth as individuals aged between 15 and 24.<sup>4</sup> According to this definition, youth comprises 18 percent of the world population, or more than one billion people, 85 percent of which live in developing countries.<sup>5</sup>

However, to a large extent, youth is socially constructed, and it has less to do with age than with status and behaviour. The concept of youth is intrinsically linked with the idea of transition from childhood to adulthood – from a phase of life in which the individual needs protection, sheltering and guidance to one of self-determination, maturity, independence, responsibility and accountability for decision-making. The state, the economy, civil society and the community are all predicated on notions of adulthood; they all require the participation of adults in order to function.

Frequently, the concept of youth is approached as an all-encompassing category, as a coherent group where differences related to gender, class, ethnicity, etc. are secondary to a common identification of youth-hood. This review questions this assumption by underlining that youth is, in fact, a very ambiguous term. What is meant by youth, and who comprises this category, is often unclear. Does it make sense to speak of youth as a unified category? Do young people identify themselves as belonging to this social group? Are there common experiences felt by all young people around the world? Who creates the construct of youth, and whose realities does it reflect?

The review also attempts to unpack the notion of **youth crisis**. There seems to be a shared understanding that young people are somehow 'in crisis'; but this concept is often used inconsistently, as an a priori assumption, and seldom defined. This review seeks to analyse this concept, by identifying two different (and potentially contradictory) meanings of the expression: (i) a crisis of society impacting on youth; and (ii) a crisis originating from youth and impacting on society at large. In the contemporary discourse on youth, these two meanings are often confused or used interchangeably, and 'youth crisis' is often seen as leading to violence of various sorts – including the participation of young people in violent conflict, gang warfare, criminality and other kinds of violent behaviour. Once again, this relationship deserves closer attention as the linkage between youth and violence is far from being pre-determined or automatic. Which factors can explain what makes young people resort to violence or refrain from it?

<sup>2</sup> The filed research included numerous interviews with representatives of UNDP and other UN agencies, international donors and NGOs. See Annex 2 for a list of people and institutions consulted.

<sup>3</sup> Throughout this review, the expressions 'youth' and 'young people' are used as synonyms.

<sup>4</sup> See UN General Assembly, *World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond*, A/50/81 (1999).

<sup>5</sup> Up to 48 percent of the world's population is under the age of 24, and many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and in other developing regions have predominantly young populations. Statistical information provided by UN Programme on Youth, DESA.

The focus of this review is on **violent conflict**, as distinct from other forms of violence. For the purpose of this review, violent conflict is defined as a situation in which at least two organized parties resort to the use of force against each other.<sup>6</sup> Violent conflict is hence characterized by its collective dimension (i.e. violence perpetrated by organized groups, as opposed to forms of violence put in place by single individuals), and its sustained nature (i.e. violence that is protracted in time, as opposed to forms of violence that take the form of occasional outbursts).

It should be noted from the outset that this review does not take in consideration other forms of violence that are significant with regard to youth involvement – in particular, gang violence and terrorism. However, the lines of demarcation between different kinds of violence are much more blurred than a rigid categorization might suggest, and various typologies often coexist at the same time.

Finally, this review has a special attention on **West Africa**. The reasons for this special focus are to be found in the very high proportion of youth relative to the global population in the region, as well as in the high incidence of violent conflict (according to the above definition). In spite of this regional focus, the review presents cases from all parts of the world, and offers initial recommendations that are not specific to any particular region.

### 1.3 Outline of the review

The review is divided into five chapters.

**Chapter 2 (Review of the literature)** explores the youth factor in violent conflict, on the basis of academic and other specialized literature. The chapter starts by deconstructing the notion of youth, with particular attention to its gender dimension. It continues by exploring the main theories with regard to youth and violent conflict, concentrating in particular on theories that identify an underlying ‘youth crisis’ as an explanation for violent youth behaviour. Next, it seeks to unpack the concept of youth crisis, its meaning and underlying assumptions. The chapter makes the point that youth responses to crisis are not necessarily violent and analyses two such non-violent responses, namely migration and involvement in religious movements.

**Chapter 3 (Review of policy frameworks)** provides an overview of current policy frameworks relevant to this theme. In particular, it examines three supposedly separate ‘agendas’: the conflict prevention agenda, the youth agenda and the development agenda. The chapter highlights the absence, to date, of a specific policy framework for youth and violent conflict that explains the intersection between the two.

**Chapter 4 (Review of UNDP youth programming)** provides a preliminary mapping of youth programmes and projects implemented by UNDP at the country and regional level. In so doing, it provides ample evidence that UNDP country offices are already implementing a wide range of activities to enhance young people’s role in development processes. It concludes by outlining some key questions for further analysis.

**Chapter 5 (Review of youth programmes of UN agencies and other organizations)** provides an initial review of youth programmes implemented by a variety of actors, both within and outside the UN system. The chapter outlines the rationales behind, approaches to and outcomes of this work, highlighting specific programming examples. A focus on efforts in West Africa offers a regional perspective as informed by field visits with agencies operating in Senegal, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Some lessons to be learned are also shared, as derived from desk and field research.

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<sup>6</sup> Miall/Ramsbotham/Woodhouse (1999). The term is used here in a broad sense, including both inter-state and intra-state wars, as well as genocide and mass murders.

**Chapter 6 (Conclusions and recommendations on the way forward)** pulls together the main findings of the research presented in the preceding chapters. After discussing tentative conclusions and their implications for policies and programmes, it proposes some ideas for creating a new framework to address the challenges posed by youth and violent conflict and offers specific recommendations for agenda setting and programming.



# 2

## Review of the literature

---

*They are the worst people in the world, and they are our children.*

— Liberian Chief, speaking of young Liberian fighters<sup>7</sup>

*If youth can be such a powerful force that can destroy a whole nation, why do people overlook our resources when working for peace?*

— Rwandan Youth Movement Leader<sup>8</sup>

---

The chapter offers a desk review of research literature on youth and violent conflict globally, and in West Africa in particular. Resources taken into consideration include academic literature produced by scholars, research institutes and think tanks, as well as studies and reports by UN agencies, NGOs and bilateral donors.

The chapter starts by deconstructing the notion of youth, with particular attention to the different meanings that the concept of youth assumes in relation to gender. It continues by exploring the main theories emerging from the literature with regard to youth and violent conflict, concentrating in particular on theories that identify an underlying ‘youth crisis’ as an explanation for violent youth behaviour. Next, it tackles the concept of youth crisis, its meaning and underlying assumptions. The chapter makes the point that youth responses to crisis are not necessarily violent and analyses two such non-violent responses, namely migration (both South-North migration and in-country migration towards big cities) and involvement in religious movements. The last section attempts to draw some tentative conclusions.

### 2.1 What is youth?

The meaning of youth, and the way society regards youth, vary across time and space, as well as within societies. In particular, youth has an important gender dimension: boys and girls might experience being young in a considerably different way.

Hence, in addition to being defined chronologically (as a period of age between certain ages), youth is also defined functionally (involving a process of transition from childhood to adulthood, marked by rituals or physical changes), as well as culturally (pertaining to the role that individuals play in a given social context).

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<sup>7</sup> Quoted in Ellis (1999:123).

<sup>8</sup> Interview by Peter Sampson.



### 2.1.1 Youth as an age group

Youth is defined by the United Nations as the age between 15 and 24. This definition is provided by the UN General Assembly, and is not legally binding.<sup>9</sup>

Individuals aged 15 to 18 are also included in the legal definition of children, according to international treaties. In particular, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) defines a 'child' as everyone under the age of 18 "unless, under the law applicable to the child, maturity is attained earlier."<sup>10</sup> Similarly, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) defines a 'child' as every human being under the age of 18.<sup>11</sup>

The underpinning rationale of this body of international legal norms is that children constitute a vulnerable category in need of special protection because of their physical and psychological immaturity.<sup>12</sup>

As an age category, youth positions itself across the boundaries of childhood and adulthood. The age cohort between 15 and 18 is sometimes also referred to as 'adolescents'. However, this age categorization is not universally accepted. UN agencies, such as the World Health Organization (WHO),<sup>13</sup> the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)<sup>14</sup> and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)<sup>15</sup> define adolescents as boys and girls between the ages of 10 and 19.

### 2.1.2 Youth as a social construct

Many authors remark that the idea of a single, gender-equal age of maturity is a Western product. In many non-Western societies, this chronological cut-off point is hardly applicable.

In pre-colonial African societies, adulthood was reserved for men with relative wealth and social status, and a very small number of older women. Everybody else retained the status of minors, however old they were. With colonialism and mission education, the idea of an automatic transition based on age was introduced, although – according to some scholars – never fully accepted.<sup>16</sup> In the words of Alex De Waal:

*The concept of youth is a Western concept and a political construct. ... Youth is a problematic, intermediary and ambivalent category, chiefly defined by what it is not: youth are not dependent children, nor are they independent, socially responsible adults.<sup>17</sup>*

To a large extent, youth is a sort of transition territory between the more established social categories of childhood and adulthood. There is considerable cross-cultural variation as to when an individual becomes an adult. As a transition concept, youth is intrinsically linked with rites of passage of some kind. In most traditional societies, there are well-defined rituals that mark this transition. In the case of West Africa, for example, Stephen Ellis has described the important role played by 'secret societies' in the initiation of young boys and girls.<sup>18</sup> In contemporary societies, a number of symbolic steps can be identified, such as acquiring the rights to vote, getting married, obtaining a driving licence or buying alcohol.

<sup>9</sup> United Nations General Assembly, The World Programme of Action for Youth in the Year 2000 and Beyond, A/RES/50/81 (1995).

<sup>10</sup> Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989:Article 1).

<sup>11</sup> African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990:Article 2). The ACRWC entered into force in November 1999, and is the first regional treaty on children's rights.

<sup>12</sup> This is spelt out in the preamble of the CRC "Bearing in mind that ... the child, by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguard and care, including appropriate legal protection."

<sup>13</sup> See [www.who.int/child-adolescent-health/OVERVIEW/AHD/adh\\_over.htm](http://www.who.int/child-adolescent-health/OVERVIEW/AHD/adh_over.htm).

<sup>14</sup> See [www.unicef.org/adolescence](http://www.unicef.org/adolescence).

<sup>15</sup> See [www.unfpa.org/adolescents/about.htm](http://www.unfpa.org/adolescents/about.htm). UNFPA distinguishes between early adolescence (10-14) and late adolescence (15-19). Other working definitions adopted by UNFPA are: youth (15-24) and young people (10-24).

<sup>16</sup> De Waal (2002); Bayart (1993).

<sup>17</sup> De Waal (2002). The same applies to adolescence.

<sup>18</sup> Ellis argues that the extreme violence of these ritualized acts is not incompatible with modernity – on the contrary, modern communication technology serves to strengthen and amplify the symbolic language. What happens in war is that ritualized violence slips out of control – in that it goes from the hands of the elders to the youth. Ellis (1999, 1995).

Richard Curtain, one of the main theorists of the idea of youth as a transition phase, suggests that in most societies, the defining dimension of the transition to adulthood coincides with demonstrating the capacity to contribute to the economic welfare of the family. Youth is considered as a complex interplay of personal, institutional and macroeconomic changes that most young people have to negotiate.<sup>19</sup>

### 2.1.3 The gender dimension

The transition from childhood to adulthood has a crucial gender dimension. During this stage, societal expectations and personal aspirations of young men and young women begin to diverge. Youth is often the time when “the world expands for boys and contracts for girls.”<sup>20</sup> Girls begin to experience new restrictions and the attitudes, behaviour, conduct and, in particular, the sexuality of young women begin to be more closely watched, even ‘policed’.<sup>21</sup> Cultural norms dictate that females are sheltered at the stage of puberty, for reasons such as purity and marriageability, stigma or family reputation.

In many societies, young women end up with few ‘safe spaces’ and narrow social networks. Few places exist where they can meet peers or form alliances and friendships because of their relegation to the private, domestic sphere.<sup>22</sup> Adolescent girls’ enrolment in school often declines sharply due to the need of their help at home or the fact that their education is considered less important than the education of their brothers or male peers. Finally, girls’ lack of power or status can often lead to a limited ability to prevent unwanted sex or to negotiate safe sex practices.

There seems to be a perception that youth, as a status, is more relevant for boys than for girls. It is comparatively easier for girls to establish themselves as adult women when they become wives or mothers. A transition from boyhood to adulthood has different defining markers: often boys are left to ‘prove their manhood’. In many societies, it is also socially and culturally acceptable for the stage of youth to be longer for young males than for young females, and for young males to be visible. During this time, young males are likely to gain much more autonomy and mobility than their female counterparts.

This difference in visibility is reflected widely in the literature. Although the necessity of incorporating a gender dimension is recognized in theory, many studies on youth and violence still implicitly or explicitly refer to young males. Generally speaking, while there is a vast literature on the violence perpetrated against women and girls, young women tend to disappear when it comes to theories on youth and violence, most likely because they are perceived as less of a threat. As a result, the way in which young women negotiate the trials of youth, and their capacities and rationale for violence (and for peace) are under-studied.

## 2.2 Youth and violent conflict

The literature that touches on youth and violent conflict focuses on analysing the reasons why young people engage in fighting. It is often remarked that war would not be possible without youth – as combatants of any war, in any part of the world, are made up primarily by young people. Why is this the case? Do young people, by the mere fact of being young and energetic, tend towards violence? Therefore, is a large proportion of young people in society *per se* a warning sign for trouble? Do young people fight for their own causes, or are they mobilized into war by others? Do young people fight to change the circumstances of their particular grievances – and if so, what are these grievances?

This section will look into these questions based on the main trends in the literature. However, it is worth pointing out from the very beginning that the single most glaring gap in the research is the lack

<sup>19</sup> United Nations World Youth Report (2003:16).

<sup>20</sup> UNFPA/UNICEF/WHO (2003:2).

<sup>21</sup> United Nations World Youth Report (2003).

<sup>22</sup> See Population Council, [www.popcouncil.org/ta/critic.html](http://www.popcouncil.org/ta/critic.html).

of attention to, and thorough documentation of, the positive contributions of young people in society. This translates into an increasing 'securitization' of the issue of youth.<sup>23</sup> While it is often pointed out that youth should not be regarded as merely a negative force, this comment frequently appears to be an add-on, or an a priori disclaimer.

Most of the analyses on youth and violent conflict are produced by working backwards – i.e. by analysing the motivations of young people that are, or have been, fighting, and generalizing these motivations as if they were applicable to the whole 'youth cohort' in a particular context. But what about the majority of young people who do not fight? As Nicholas Argenti puts it, with specific reference to Africa, "the remarkable thing is not why some of Africa's youth have embraced violence, but why so few of them have."<sup>24</sup> This is not meant to suggest that we should not try to reach a better understanding of the motivations of young combatants. However, we should also keep in mind that combatants are only a microcosm of the heterogeneous and multifaceted universe that, much for the sake of convenience, we call youth.

### 2.2.1 Demography

A first strand of research concentrates on demography. This thesis – of which Samuel Huntington<sup>25</sup> is one of the main proponents – argues that 'youth bulges' (i.e. an unusually high proportion of young people in the total population) lead to increasing insecurity and make such countries especially prone to conflict. It has been argued, for example, that the French Revolution and the rise of Nazism can be linked, among other factors, to a percentage of young population above a certain critical level.<sup>26</sup>

This argument became particularly strong after September 11, 2001: youth bulges are now a popular explanation for the recruitment of young people into terrorist networks. Fareed Zakaria argues:

*Youth bulges combined with small economic and social change provided the fundament for Islamic resurgence in the Arab world.*<sup>27</sup>

The literature on youth bulges considers migration to be a safety valve for youth discontent. Some authors go as far as saying that the possibility for Europe's youth in the 19th century to emigrate to the United States contributed significantly to limiting youth-generated violence in Europe in this period. Hence, Henrik Urdal argues that if migration opportunities are substantially restricted, this results in a higher risk of violent conflict.

One of the most extreme expressions of the demographic approach – and surely the most contested one – is the thesis put forward by Robert Kaplan in 1994, as an integral part of his vision of a 'coming anarchy'. Kaplan identifies an imminent security threat, directly connected to the presence of a large, unemployed and disaffected mass of youth. West Africa is selected by Kaplan to exemplify his apocalyptic vision, combining population explosion, resource depletion and social decay:

*In cities in West African countries I saw ... young men everywhere – hordes of them. They were like loose molecules in a very unstable social fluid, a fluid that was clearly on the verge of igniting.*<sup>28</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Rodgers (1999:1). This securitization of the issue of youth is not limited to the participation of youth in violent conflict. It is also very evident in the discourse on youth gangs. The author stresses the negative perception by society as key in the understanding of the phenomenon of youth gangs. Youth gangs are seen as violent and criminal by nature.

<sup>24</sup> Argenti (2002).

<sup>25</sup> Huntington (1996).

<sup>26</sup> For a comprehensive review of the youth bulges thesis, see Urdal (2004). Urdal's own conclusion is that there is no evidence of the claim made by Huntington that youth bulges above a certain critical level automatically make countries especially prone to conflict, but the combination of youth bulges and poor economic performance may be explosive.

<sup>27</sup> Zakaria (2001), quoted in Urdal (2004). The World Bank's work on the economics of conflict initially sustained the 'youth bulge' argument. In its first version, the Collier-Hoeffler model found that large proportions of young males in a country increased the risk of conflict. Subsequent versions of the model, however, did not note a significant correlation.

<sup>28</sup> Kaplan (1994). For a critique of Kaplan's thesis, see Clapham (2003).

Kaplan sees youth in West Africa as a sign of retreat from modernity into a Hobbesian state of nature.<sup>29</sup>

### 2.2.2 Coercion

In the demographic approach, young people fight because, quite simply, they are too many. Other explanations focus on coercion. According to this thesis, young people fight because they are forced to – either by physical abduction, or because of a lack of other alternatives for survival. The corollary of this is that young people are not really responsible for their choice to fight, and should be treated as victims rather than as perpetrators of violence.

This perspective is found especially in the burgeoning literature on child soldiers, produced largely by aid agencies and NGOs, and based, to a large extent, on witness accounts of former child soldiers.<sup>30</sup> These reports are relevant for this chapter, because, although focusing on under-age combatants, they also consider young people that are over 15 (usually in the age range 15 to 18).<sup>31</sup>

The attention paid to child soldiers has translated into a powerful advocacy effort, leading to a number of concrete outcomes. These include the entry into force of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which raises from 15 to 18 the minimum legal age for the involvement of children in combat,<sup>32</sup> the adoption by the United Nations Security Council of a number of resolutions on the protection of children's rights,<sup>33</sup> and the inclusion of special provisions for child protection in the mandate of recently established peacekeeping missions.<sup>34</sup>

Focusing on young people as victims, however, can also have the effect of diverting attention from other dimensions of the problem. It can promote the idea of youth in conflict as a 'soft' humanitarian concern, detached from economic, social and political considerations and realities. As Angela McIntyre puts it:

*Horror stories of rape, abduction and systemic violence from the mouths of the children did serve their purpose – to mobilize and galvanize sentiments about the use of children as soldiers. But delivered by bewildered child-victims, far from home, to groups of policy makers and activists, they became irrational emotional appeals, stripped of their political meaning and ultimately alienating an important issue from broader discussions on human security.*<sup>35</sup>

In fact, new research reveals that there is an important element of volunteerism that should be more closely considered when looking at young combatants. Rachel Brett has observed that large numbers of young people volunteer for the armed forces, rather than being forced or coerced. She states:

*While children rarely go looking for a war to fight . . . for adolescents, war is also an opportunity: for employment, to escape from an oppressive family situation or humiliation at school, for adventure, or to serve a cause.*<sup>36</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Olawale (2004:4).

<sup>30</sup> See, for example, Human Rights Watch reports on Burma, Colombia, Angola, Uganda and Liberia (Human Rights Watch 2002; 2003a; 2003b; 2003c; 2004).

<sup>31</sup> Although the CRC considers a 'child' as anyone under the age of 18, it bans the recruitment and use of child soldiers until the age of 15.

<sup>32</sup> The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict entered into force on 12 February 2002, on that date becoming a binding instrument for States having ratified it. See Chapter 3 for more on the Convention and Optional Protocol.

<sup>33</sup> See Chapter 3.

<sup>34</sup> Child Protection Advisers were appointed in the peacekeeping operations in Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

<sup>35</sup> McIntyre (2004:4).

<sup>36</sup> Brett (2003:2).

In interviews conducted by Peters and Richards to understand why young people joined militias, many (under-18) respondents perceived themselves as adults by saying that they had for many years fended for themselves and had made adult decisions.<sup>37</sup>

However, the question remains: "How voluntary is voluntary?"<sup>38</sup> Can we really speak about a 'rational choice' in the absence of other concrete alternatives? Aren't young people often, in a way, forced into violence?

Whether or not young people (especially minors) can be rational actors, or have the rational maturity to understand the implications and underlying causes of their decisions, is a highly contested question. Indeed, such questions are extensively debated in the juvenile justice arena – the debate on the death penalty for under-age offenders in the United States provides a significant example. In the literature produced by United Nations agencies, NGOs and organizations that advocate for the protection of children, there is a reluctance to see young fighters as rational decision makers. As a study conducted by the Netherlands Development Assistance Research Council (RAWOO) points out:

*Donors tend to be impressed by the victimhood of child soldiers ... while the thinking of people directly affected by the war tends – understandably – to be dominated by thoughts of punishing the young fighters who have caused widespread suffering in society.*<sup>39</sup>

Determining the degree to which young people can be held accountable for their actions during war has important repercussions in the post-conflict phase. While there have been concerted efforts to mainstream children's rights into UN peacekeeping missions recently, for instance by specifically addressing child soldiers in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes, the needs of youth are less well understood. Part of this stems from a failure to recognize and address the variety of reasons for which young people fight.

### 2.2.3 Youth crisis

A third area of research concentrates on youth grievances. It criticizes the demographic approach for concentrating primarily on quantitative aspects (ratio youth/total population) and not providing sufficient analysis of the motives behind youth violence.

In response, this strand of research attempts to analyse the reasons behind the involvement of youth in violent conflict by focusing on an underlying 'youth crisis'.<sup>40</sup> Paul Richards's analysis of the conflict in Sierra Leone is emblematic of this line of thought. In direct response to Kaplan's vision, Richards argues that conflicts in West Africa are but the violent manifestations of a rational expression of a youth crisis. The bulk of Richards's argument is that, although the manifestation of violence appears irrational, its reasons are fully rational. The appalling, and apparently senseless, terror that accompanied the war in Sierra Leone has to be interpreted as a calculated, rational stratagem, employed by youth fighters in order to unsettle the victim.<sup>41</sup>

With regard to the cause of youth discontent, and hence youth violence, Richards argues that young people in Sierra Leone reacted to exclusionary neo-patrimonial practices and state decay in the form of armed rebellion. Far from being mindless or random, youth violence resulted from the alienation of young people because of failures in the educational system and a dearth of employment opportunities – it was "a plea for attention from those who felt they have been forgotten."<sup>42</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Peters/Richards/Vlassenroot (2003).

<sup>38</sup> Brett (2003).

<sup>39</sup> Peters/Richards/Vlassenroot (2003).

<sup>40</sup> Peters/Richards (1998).

<sup>41</sup> Richards (1996).

<sup>42</sup> Keen (2003).

Richards analyses how the products of American youth culture (mainly action movies and rap music) were re-interpreted in local terms as symbolizing and legitimizing resistance against a repressive official structure. A case in point is the instrumental use of the Rambo movie 'First Blood' by rebel commanders to socialize children and teenagers into violence. According to Richards, the movie mirrored a crisis of social exclusion experienced by Sierra Leonean youth.

Authors like Ibrahim Abdullah and Yusuf Bandura put a different spin on this issue in their analysis of the role of youth in the conflict in Sierra Leone. Their argument is based on the centrality of a subaltern 'lumpen' youth culture that is anti-social and anti-establishment in orientation – a youth "in search of a radical alternative."<sup>43</sup> The authors define 'lumpens' as:

*largely unemployed and unemployable youth, mostly male, who live by their wits [and] have one foot in what is generally referred to as the informal or the underground economy. They are prone to criminal behaviour, petty theft, drugs, drunkenness, and gross indiscipline.*<sup>44</sup>

To sum up, a 'youth crisis' has often been used as an explanation for youth violence and the involvement of young people in violent conflict. Compared to approaches that focus solely on demography (young people fight because there are too many of them) or coercion (young people fight because they are forced to), this strand of research brings in a more complex and multifaceted dimension. However, as will be explored in the next section, the concept of 'youth crisis' is in itself problematic. Youth is in itself an awkward age, where identity is questioned and refined. Where do we draw the line between 'physiological' teenage angst and 'youth crisis' potentially leading to violence?

## 2.3 Why is youth in crisis?

A cursory look at sociological studies on youth (however defined) carried out in different parts of the world reveal a bulk of surprisingly similar considerations. Young people as a category seem to be highly unsatisfied with their lives. They feel deprived of adequate education and employment opportunities. They barely identify, if at all, with the political thinking and behaviour of their parents.<sup>45</sup> They feel let down and marginalized by society. In short, they are in crisis. Or are they? Are they all in the same crisis? And if they are, does this crisis necessarily lead to violence? If young people who fight do so because they are in crisis (as Richards argues), what about those who do not fight? Are they not in crisis – or do they deal with crisis in a different way?

It is striking that the concept of 'youth crisis' is often used but rarely explained. In very general terms, two different meanings of the expression 'youth crisis' can be identified: (i) a societal crisis impacting on youth, resulting in a feeling of 'uneasiness' in the face of societal changes and constraints; or (ii) a crisis originating from youth and impacting on society at large. In fact, these two meanings are often confused or used interchangeably.

Sub-Saharan Africa offers a telling example of youth increasingly seen as a cause of societal crisis. In the immediate post-independence period, African youths were seen in extremely positive terms, as the hope of the continent. The youth enjoyed cultural prestige as agents of transformation of African societies, and this translated into massive investments, especially in education – in the pursuit of the dream of education for all.<sup>46</sup> Ismail Olawale points out:

<sup>43</sup> Abdullah (1998:204).

<sup>44</sup> Abdullah (1998); Bandura (1997).

<sup>45</sup> See, for example, Martin Munoz (2000:23) on the Arab World: "Arabism, Socialism and Anti-Imperialism were the values of the generation of heroic nationalist fighters, but they are not necessarily shared by the generation born after independence." See also International Crisis Group (2003c:14) on Central Asia.

<sup>46</sup> Olawale (2004:3). See also Diouf (2003:3).



*Young people incarnated the future and represented the promises of restored identities, as opposed to colonial alienation and postcolonial forms of domination and subordination. As bearers of the twofold project of modernity and the return to the sources of African cultures, they were called upon to promote and respect the political and moral obligations of citizenship and of political, social and cultural responsibility, with a view to constructing African democracies.<sup>47</sup>*

While maintaining the frontier between elders and juniors, the post-independence nationalist project in Africa put youth at the centre of its plans for economic development and national liberation.

Young people were the greatest casualty of the economic crisis of the 1970s and 1980s, and of the consequent adoption of structural adjustment reforms sponsored by the International Financial Institutions. Economic reforms required drastic cuts in public expenditures. Under pressure to reduce deficits and downsize the public sector, African states – and similarly, though to a lesser extent, states in other regions in the world<sup>48</sup> – were unable to keep the promises that had been made to their youth. Mamadou Diouf observes:

*Not only are young people losing the prestigious status that nationalism gave them in its ascending phase, but they no longer represent the national priority. This loss in status is reflected in the collapse of the institution of education. ... Excluded from the arenas of power, work, education, and leisure, young Africans construct places of socialisation and new sociabilities whose function is to show their difference, either on the margins of society or at its heart, simultaneously as victims and active agents, and circulating in a geography that escapes the limits of national territories.<sup>49</sup>*

No longer seen as a sign of hope, the youth turned into a source of despair and became a threat – a “lost generation” according to the definition of Donald Cruise O’Brien. It is important to remark that this change of perspective was largely exogenous to youth – having to do with the capacity of the State to respond to youth demands, rather than with a fundamental change in such demands. Interestingly enough, while there is ample documentation of the social effects of structural adjustment, the specific effects on youth remain largely unexplored.<sup>51</sup>

Yet, there is room for the argument that the economic crisis and the subsequent reforms not only had negative effects on young people’s ability to fulfil their ambitions and to live up to the expectations placed upon them, but also impaired their capacity to master the transition ‘out of youth’ and into adulthood. Nantang Jua cites Cameroon as a case in point:

*Throughout most of Cameroon’s post-colonial history, the social integration of youths into the society was unproblematic. Biological and social development from childhood, through youth, to the achievement of adult status proceeded step by step. Though usually it is considered that the school-to-work transition is one of the prominent features of growing up, this transition is blurred in developing countries, where the early entry of the youth into the workforce engenders “adulthood” early into their lives. This situation changed after 1987, however, when the economic meltdown meant a shrinking of job opportunities for everyone. The problems were only exacerbated by Cameroon’s structural adjustment program (SAP) agreement with the World Bank in 1988. Intrinsic to this program was a commitment to*

<sup>47</sup> Olawale (2004:3).

<sup>48</sup> For the Arab region, for example, see Munoz (2000).

<sup>49</sup> Diouf (2003:4).

<sup>50</sup> Cruise O’ Brien (1996).

<sup>51</sup> Analysing youth crime and delinquency in Latin America, Benvenuti (2003) argues: “Inequality and impoverishment, further reinforced by neo-liberal macroeconomics policies adopted by many countries in the region, together with the incapacity of national states to address poverty and exclusion in the distribution of economic, political and social resources, account for the main reason for the proliferation of juvenile delinquency.” However, the author also notes the scarcity of specific literature linking youth delinquency and inequality.

*reducing deficit spending and downsizing the state. Practically, this meant the freezing of employment opportunities in an economy where the State was the main employer. The SAP has ... marginalized youth or reduced their chances for sustainable livelihoods.*<sup>52</sup>

If the notion of youth can be seen, to a large extent, as corresponding to a transition from childhood to adulthood, then it can be argued that a youth crisis is a situation where this transition is blocked, and the perspectives for transition to full adult status are seen as shrinking. Youth becomes 'stretched out' if the economic and social statuses required for adulthood are unattainable for young adults. There is increasing evidence from different parts of the world that full adulthood is more and more difficult to achieve, due to social and economic constraints. With particular reference to Africa, Charlotte Spinks remarks:

*For many young Africans, 'youth' is not serving as a transitional phase to a more established social status, but is an enduring limbo. This is a source of tremendous frustration. Instead of leaving youth behind and entering adulthood by marrying and establishing independent households, an increasing proportion of this "lost generation" ... are unable to attain any social status.*<sup>53</sup>

This underpins young people's sense of exclusion and marginalization from society. Two major factors of this impaired transition are the lack of education and the lack of employment opportunities. Going to school and finding a job are often cited as key priorities by young people in the developing world. At the same time, a lack of education and unemployment (for both the educated and the uneducated) appear at the top of the list of youth grievances, and are singled out by most scholars focusing on youth crisis. These two elements therefore deserve particular attention.

### **2.3.1 Education**

As seen above, the decade of the 1980s meant, in Africa and elsewhere, the death of the dream of education for all. Since then, education in most parts of the world has become a highly valued, scarce commodity – and its unequal distribution has emerged as a source of friction among groups.<sup>54</sup>

This scarcity of opportunities affects youth at all levels of education. Emphasis, by governments and international actors alike, is normally placed on primary education (for example, in the campaign for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals) – and indeed, a lack of basic literacy and numeracy skills prevents young people from entering the labour market (and therefore from establishing themselves as fully independent adults), as well as from developing the capacity to resist political manipulation. However, the emphasis on primary education should not diminish the focus on higher education opportunities (or lack thereof) when discussing youth. In particular, admission to university can be a factor of violent competition, as shown, for example, in the case of Sri Lanka. An element that has embittered Sinhalese-Tamil relations relates to the procedure of selecting students for university admission (known as standardization). It has been claimed that discrimination in this area provided the main impulse for the emergence of militant movements among the Tamil youth in the North of the country during the 1970s.

At the same time, while the question of availability of education is crucial, this should not lead us to overlook other dimensions that are equally important – namely: what kind of education is provided? Does education propose an egalitarian model or simply replicate the inequalities of society? What are the contents of education, its curricula and methods? How does it socialize (or de-socialize) youth? As shown in many cases around the world, school segregation on racial, religious, linguistic or other grounds can be a factor in furthering group isolation and exacerbating tensions in society.<sup>55</sup> School curricula and textbooks are

<sup>52</sup> Jua (2003).

<sup>53</sup> Spinks (2002:193).

<sup>54</sup> There are numerous examples of education being used to advance the interest of one social group at the expense of others, as happened when the Serbian authorities reduced the number of places in secondary schools reserved for Albanians in Kosovo. See Bush/Santarelli (2000:9).

<sup>55</sup> In South Africa, the practice of segregating education was both a reflection of, and a contribution to, the repressive apartheid system. For more on the South African case, see Graham-Brown (1991); Bush/Santarelli (2000:13); Ntshoe (1999); Brecht/Specht (2004:16).



powerful means of mobilization and indoctrination.<sup>56</sup> Schools provide fertile ground for mobilization and recruitment, as they combine the hierarchical teacher/student relationship with peer-group pressure.<sup>57</sup>

Another key set of questions is related to the relevance of education. How does the school system connect to society? How does it prepare young people for employment and self-sufficiency? Does it raise expectations that cannot be met?

Again, there is disturbing evidence from most parts of the developing world that the formal school system is not providing relevant education.<sup>58</sup> The African education system has been accused of being a perpetual waste of human resources, without providing students with relevant skills and knowledge, and instead promoting a *“désapprentissage de la vie.”*<sup>59</sup> In particular, the university system appears to many as being disconnected from the real world, perpetuating a detachment to what is needed. Its pedagogical methods do not lead to critical thinking, as they are mainly based on ‘memorizing’, with little or no active contribution from the student in the learning process.

In short, education in most of the developing world is a scarce commodity, and competition for it – along with discriminatory practices and biased curricula within it – can foster tensions in society.<sup>60</sup> In addition, public education – even when it is available – is not necessarily connected to reality and does not always prepare young people to better deal with the challenges of the ‘real world’.

### 2.3.2 Employment

Closely connected to the issue of education is another major concern in young people’s lives: getting a job with a living wage. As education is largely failing to provide students with an avenue towards a better future, young people increasingly regard education as irrelevant or useless. This feeling is poignantly summarized in the words of a young combatant from Congo Brazzaville:

*Education does not lead to employment, so why bother? The State no longer recruits – you have a Ph.D. and you are a taxi man!*<sup>61</sup>

The problem is not only linked to the availability, quality and relevance of education, but also more broadly to the economic and social constraints in which most developing countries find themselves. In many parts of the world, insufficient opportunities exist for young people to earn a living. According to estimates of the International Labour Organization (ILO), 66 million young people are unemployed, and a much higher number are under-employed. Worldwide, the unemployment rate for young people (aged 15 to 24) is up to three times higher than for adults.<sup>62</sup> A growing number of young people – from university graduates to illiterate youths – seem to be excluded from being able to gain access to paid employment, and hence to the full status of adults. Once again, Cameroon is a telling example:

<sup>56</sup> In Sri Lanka, for instance, Sinhalese textbooks used in segregated schools in the 1970s and 1980s depicted Sri Lankan Tamils as the historical enemies of the Sinhalese and glorified Sinhalese Buddhists as the only true Sri Lankans. In many parts of the world, historic textbooks are acquiring an increasing militaristic nature, with a relative neglect of the gains made by civilization in peacetime. See Bush/Santarelli (2000).

<sup>57</sup> Brett/Spocht (2004:126).

<sup>58</sup> Following the attacks of September 11, 2001, more attention began to be paid to the danger of using school curricula for passing Islamic fundamentalist messages. Pakistan’s education system came under increasing scrutiny after 9/11, particularly with reference to the *madrassas*. In response, President Musharraf initiated a reform of the education system in order to make it more ‘secular’. However, this reform has not addressed the key root cause of the *madrassas* boom – i.e. the failure of the formal school system to provide relevant education. In addition to financial constraints, the public school system offers outdated and irrelevant syllabi and is heavily corrupted. See International Crisis Group (2004e).

<sup>59</sup> Mbembe (1985).

<sup>60</sup> As noted by Benvenuti (2003) in her study of youth gangs in Latin America: “Education, which should represent the best instrument for providing low-income youth with better opportunities, is now in danger of reinforcing existing inequalities. At the dawn of the 21st century, access to quality education in the Latin American region still seems to be the privilege of the more wealthy classes.”

<sup>61</sup> Quoted in Brett/Spocht (2004:21).

<sup>62</sup> See [www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/strat/yen/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/strat/yen/index.htm). This trend is not limited to developing countries. In analysing the upsurge of youth delinquency in the United States, Freeman (1996) argues that the collapse of the job market has strongly contributed to young men’s participation in criminal activities.

*For the youth, unemployment signalled a confirmation of their status as the lost generation, despite the rhetorical flourish in official discourse that refers to them as the 'leaders of tomorrow'. Relegating them to this status deprives them of any alternatives in the present, prompting them to defer all their aspirations at this transitional phase in their lives to the period where they will attain maturity.<sup>63</sup>*

In Sri Lanka, for example, the rate of unemployment is higher among young people, and increases with the level of education. Educated young people have been increasingly vulnerable to failing to obtain the type of employment considered commensurate to their qualifications, and there has been intensifying competition among aspirants for such employment. This has led to a trend of increasing favouritism based upon criteria such as ethnicity, social class and personal links. Political patronage has emerged as the main determinant of selection of new appointees, and educated rural youths from the lower economic strata, regardless of ethnicity, are invariably the main victims of deprivation. It is from this segment of society that both the Tamil Tigers and the Sinhalese People's Liberation Front draw their cadres.<sup>64</sup>

### **2.3.3 Participation and decision-making**

In most parts of the world, political participation is not providing a channel for young people to express their needs, aspirations and grievances. Young people are often key figures in political movements – for example, revolutionary politics throughout Latin America relied on student activity, and student movements in Europe and the United States in the 1960s transformed the character of civil rights and societal structures. However, youth leadership rarely translates itself into the adult sphere of legislative or executive decision-making.

Over the last decade, the declining level of political engagement of youth has been a matter of concern for decision-makers worldwide. As a result, the idea of promoting 'youth participation' has become popular in the discourse of Western governments and international organizations. The causes of the scarce youth involvement are generally traced back to a lack of interest on the part of young people. As a consequence, political institutions are often called upon to be more 'youth friendly', less bureaucratic and to 'speak the language of the youth'.<sup>65</sup>

However, it is highly questionable that this approach addresses the main barrier to youth participation in decision-making. Instead, it can be argued that the formal political system is increasingly regarded by young people not so much as 'boring' but rather as irrelevant, inaccessible or both things at the same time. Several authors criticize the current wave of enthusiasm for youth participation as failing to recognize the significant obstacles that young people currently experience when trying to participate socially, economically and politically.<sup>66</sup>

In recent years, a favoured response by national and international agencies alike has been support to the creation or development of youth councils and youth forums. Taking many forms, they usually describe groups of young people who come together in committees to discuss issues relating to their communities. However, there is increasing evidence that youth forums are often an inappropriate way of engaging many young people. As pointed out by Hugh Matthews, adults establish many youth forums largely because they are perceived to provide tangible opportunities deemed to enable ongoing participation rather than because of demand from young people themselves. Based on the experience in Great Britain, the author suggests that many youth forums are flawed participatory devices, often obfuscating the voices of many young people in decision-making.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Jua (2003).

<sup>64</sup> Peiris (2001:21).

<sup>65</sup> On the lack of youth participation in formal politics and decision-making in Britain, see Kimberlee (2002) and O'Toole (2003). O'Toole argues that our understanding of the decline in youth participation is limited because much of the research on youth politics is based on a narrow conception of 'the political', where little attempt is made to explore how young people themselves define politics.

<sup>66</sup> See, for example, Bessant (2004) who makes this argument with regard to Australia.

<sup>67</sup> Matthews/Limb (2003); Matthews (2001a; 2001b).

Youth forums are not necessarily representative. They can be exploited for purposes that have little or nothing to do with youth needs and aspirations.<sup>68</sup> Such forums can also be gender-biased, especially because girls might feel more 'represented' by women's organizations. Often, youth forums are not connected to decision-making in any significant way, so that they can result in frustrating 'talk shows' with little concrete results. Many participants of youth forums around the world have already an age (mid- to late-twenties, or even early thirties) that would allow them to participate in formal structures. Focusing on promoting youth forums can shift the attention away from the real barriers that impede formal political participation.

More fundamentally, there are conceptual problems with the idea of a youth forum. Proponents of this form of participation assume, either explicitly or implicitly, the existence of a youth agenda – i.e. an agenda promoting the views, interests, aspirations and grievances of youth as a category. Youth forums, in this perspective, assume a twofold function – they serve to negotiate such a common agenda, and they are a lobbying platform to present such an agenda to 'real' decision makers. This reflects the notion of youth as a homogenous category, which – as was explored in the first section of this chapter – is largely an ideal rather than a reality.

The emphasis of the international community on youth participation has been particularly strong in post-conflict settings. Peace processes appear as a window of opportunity for promoting a higher degree of youth participation. A first and fundamental reason for this is that young people acquire a status through conflict, and if they are defrauded of this status when peace returns, they can turn into 'spoilers'. In South Africa, for example, the young generation was central to the anti-apartheid struggle (as recognized by the lowering of the voting age from 18 to 14 in the 1994 elections), but once the armed struggle subsided and peace talks began, they were instructed to stand-down and return to pursuits deemed more appropriate for their age group, and the political negotiations were taken over by older leaders, returning from prison and exile. While this practice reflected in part a sensible recognition of the special needs of youth (particularly education), young people felt cheated. In the long run, this marginalization of youth during the peace process has arguably translated into the development of criminal gangs and other violent youth behaviour.<sup>69</sup>

The need to avoid turning young people into spoilers is not the only reason to involve them in political processes. Young people can play the role of bridge-builders and a youth capacity for peace during post-conflict situations does exist, as is evidenced in Kosovo, Palestine, Northern Ireland and South Africa. However, little documentation exists, and little attention is accorded to this area of study in the literature.<sup>70</sup>

#### **2.3.4 HIV/AIDS**

The HIV/AIDS pandemic, in Africa and in other parts of the developing world, is likely to have a major effect on the dynamics of the 'crisis' outlined above, as well as on youth in general.

HIV/AIDS affects young people directly, as they are the most sexually active group in society, and therefore most likely to get infected. Young girls are especially vulnerable, both for biological and social reasons. In Africa, the HIV/AIDS pandemic continues to be surrounded by mystery, superstition and misconception, all factors that greatly increase the chances of young people to contract the disease. In addition, means of protection are often unavailable or too expensive, and the stigma connected with buying condoms is still very strong in many societies.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>68</sup> This is pointed out, for example, by the International Crisis Group in the case of Central Asia: "The youth organizations that have grown up, such as Kamolot in Uzbekistan, are dominated by older officials with little understanding of the real needs or aspirations of youth. Teaching young people to 'behave' or 'conform' is seen as much more important than supporting their aspirations and addressing their problems. Youth organizations are also plagued with corruption. Abusing their authority, officials manipulate funds for private interests." International Crisis Group (2003c:14).

<sup>69</sup> McEvoy-Levy (2001).

<sup>70</sup> McEvoy-Levy (2001).

<sup>71</sup> De Waal (2002:176): "Most sexual activity and most HIV infections arise from adolescents exploring their sexuality. . . . Changing the high-risk sexual behaviour and practices of young people – both girls and boys – is perhaps the most important challenge in overcoming the HIV/AIDS pandemic." See also [www.unicef.org/media/media\\_22232.htm](http://www.unicef.org/media/media_22232.htm).

Equally important (and far less addressed) is the indirect effect that HIV/AIDS is going to have on young people, particularly in Africa, in the coming decades. If the present trend for HIV/AIDS continues, the effects on inter-generational relations will be enormous. As the caretaker generation is affected, families and communities break apart, and surviving young people face an uncertain future. In many countries in Africa, a new generation of HIV/AIDS orphans is already emerging – children who will grow up without family support networks, and who risk becoming marginalized and violent youths. HIV/AIDS induces a crisis in the educational system and a disruption of governance and societal networks, by which young people are going to be particularly affected. Decreased adult life expectancy also has important adverse effects upon capital accumulation, skills acquisition, institutional functioning and memory. HIV/AIDS is much more than a public health issue – it is a social and security issue as well.<sup>72</sup>

With the exception of the work conducted by Alex De Waal, there has been a notable lack of systematic attention to the implication of HIV/AIDS for youth. According to De Waal, the ‘irresponsive behaviour’ of young Africans towards the disease has to do with the profound uncertainty of their life prospects:

*They simply have no life plans, and little expectations that they will be able to achieve the goals of a good education, a well-paid job, a stable family, etc. If many of Africa's youth see themselves as excluded, undervalued and doomed, what incentives do they have to avoid risky sexual activities?*<sup>73</sup>

The lack of education opportunities and unemployment decreases the chance of establishing safe sex practices and preventing the further spread of HIV/AIDS among young people. At the same time, education and employment are negatively affected by the spread of HIV/AIDS. Breaking this vicious circle should lie at the heart of strategies and programmes on youth in Africa.

## 2.4 Non-violent responses to crisis?

Many young people around the world have the feeling that their future prospects are shrinking, and experience a delay in their transition to adulthood. Lack of education and unemployment are the major symptoms, and at the same time reinforcing causes, of this crisis. The alienation from the formal decision-making system – which is increasingly perceived as inaccessible and irrelevant – prevents these grievances to be channelled through mainstream political avenues. This is further compounded, in many parts of the world, by the spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

How do young people respond to this crisis? Authors like Paul Richards, Ibrahim Abdullah, Yusuf Bandura or Stephen Ellis argue, in different ways, that youth are involved in violent conflict as a result of a youth crisis. This should not, however, lead us to argue that involvement in violent conflict is the only – or even the main – response to a youth crisis. Responses to such a youth crisis are not necessarily violent.

In the following paragraphs, we concentrate on analysing some of the non-violent (or not necessarily violent per se) responses to a youth crisis – namely, urbanization, South-North migration and involvement in religious movements.

### 2.4.1 Urbanization and migration

Young people today experience an unprecedented exposure to the world. The forces of globalization and economic, social and political changes affect the way in which youth is experienced and perceived, and in turn affect the capacity of young people to negotiate shifting identities in their transition to adulthood. While many young people around the world perceive globalization as an opportunity, many others feel marginalized and alienated.

<sup>72</sup> International Crisis Group (2001; 2004b). The UN Security Council recognized HIV/AIDS as a threat to security in its unprecedented Resolution 1308 (2000).

<sup>73</sup> De Waal (2002:183).

The communication age puts young people in non-Western countries in unprecedented contact with Western culture. Television, tourists and returning migrants bring powerful images of another world. Whether such images are distorted or accurate, they can lead young people to rethink their own culture in light of this new information. This can lead to the questioning of one's identity, or the reaffirmation of one's separateness from 'the other' – or, as it is often the case, some kind of combination of the two.<sup>74</sup> Youth cultures are becoming more and more global, but, at the same time, they assume very different forms depending on the local context. In this process of 'domestication', external cultures and foreign models are re-interpreted according to the specific local concerns of youth.<sup>75</sup>

These identity shifts and the 'search for the other' are part of, and influence, two processes that are rapidly shaping the demography of the 21st century – namely, South-North migration and urbanization. 15 to 29 year-olds appear as the group most likely to migrate for employment purposes (legally or illegally), and they comprise the bulk of the urbanization trend.<sup>76</sup> However, the prospects in the cities or countries of destination are often grimmer than what might have been anticipated, or glimpsed on TV. In addition, transitions are difficult in themselves, and the difficulty of finding employment in already over-stretched cities or as yet another member of growing immigrant communities can lead to alienation and discontent. Increasingly restrictive immigration policies in Western Europe and North America have led to frustration. For a significant portion of young people in the developing world, the West is a metaphor for liberation,<sup>77</sup> as well as a window of opportunity for the 'entrance into adulthood' that would otherwise be precluded by economic and social constraints. As Nantang Jua points out with regard to the case of Cameroon:

*In the wake of the economic crisis in Cameroon and the disappearance of transitional pathways for youth that accompanied it, political and economic uncertainty turned into a new kind of social certainty for youth ... they opted for migration to the West, seen as a 'final port of call'.<sup>78</sup>*

For the rural youth, urbanization serves a similar purpose. Young people migrate to the city from rural areas for a myriad of reasons – including the search for economic opportunity, boredom with traditional rural life or the escape from community disruption due to violent conflict. Once in the cities, however, they find little outlet for their talents and energy.

It is estimated that 60 percent of the world population will live in cities by 2030, and that as many as 60 percent of urban residents will be under 18.<sup>79</sup> Nowhere is this phenomenon more evident than in Africa. Even in a world that is increasingly urbanizing, the rise of Africa's cities is dazzling. Young men predominate among urban migrants in Africa, although the number of female youths in cities is also increasing. In addition to voluntary migrants from rural areas, young internally displaced persons (IDPs) or refugees often flee to the cities instead of being confined to camps, and are often unaccounted for in formal statistics.

Urban youth migration in Africa is widely regarded as overwhelmingly negative, leading to crime, unrest and the spread of HIV/AIDS. Urban Africa is regularly depicted as dangerous and veering out of control, as a kind of Darwinian universe where only the fittest survive. Urban youths in Africa feel marginalized and alienated from mainstream society – which is ironic, considering that they are numerically dominant in a predominantly young and rapidly urbanizing continent. They are a majority feeling like a minority. The positive contributions of urban youth are not appreciated – a glaring gap since "the wealth of youthful residents constitutes a largely untapped resource for ingenuity, stability and economic growth."<sup>80</sup>

<sup>74</sup> On youth in Morocco, see Bennani-Chraïbi (2000).

<sup>75</sup> On this combination of global and local influences (often referred to as glocalization), with particular reference to youth cultures, see Comaroff (2000).

<sup>76</sup> Blair Ruble et al. (2003).

<sup>77</sup> In a UNDP survey on youth in the Arab World, almost half of the interviewed youths expressed the desire to emigrate, resulting from concerns over job opportunities and education. See UNDP (2002), quoted in Urdal (2004:17).

<sup>78</sup> Jua (2003).

<sup>79</sup> Ruble et al. (2003).

<sup>80</sup> Sommers (2003a).



As Marc Sommers argues in his study of urban youth in Africa, policy makers would be wise to focus on this group, both because it could pose a security risk, and for their potential as peace-builders.<sup>81</sup> Supporting the integration of young people is a challenge necessary for the well-being of societies, not only as a preventive measure against crime and violence, but also because channelling the vitality of young people in positive directions can lead to outcomes that are beneficial to the whole of society.

### 2.4.2 Religious movements

Participation of young people in religious movements appears as an increasingly prominent phenomenon in different parts of the world. Worldwide, two powerful forces of youth mobilization have emerged in recent years – Islam and Christian Pentecostalism. In spite of their outward differences, they perform similar functions in societies, providing youth with security, moral guidance as well as education, employment contacts, friendship and alliance networks – in essence, offering survival strategies for increasing numbers of young people as they move away from their families and communities.

It is particularly interesting to notice that some tendencies in Islam (for example, the Hizb ut-Tahrir movement in Central Asia) propose programmes targeting exactly the kind of youth grievances that we have discussed so far – in particular education and employment. Utopian as they might seem, these programmes address issues that are at the core of youth struggles – and thus appeal to young people.<sup>82</sup>

New Christian groups are equally successful in attracting young people. The founders of most African Pentecostal movements tend to be women and young men, who have fewer stakes in the social order and are thus willing to challenge social and cultural structures. The success of Pentecostalism among African youth derives from a combination of ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors. It is a dual response to the perceived irrelevance and disinterest of the state in meeting youth needs. But the Pentecostal rejection of the status quo can also appeal to youth aspirations. In societies traditionally dominated by elders, Pentecostalism offers young people power and responsibility. It provides a network of support for young people at a time where extended family support has been fractured by mobility and change. It offers a ‘social space’ where members find psychological security and solidarity. To a large extent, religion seems to be a youth response to a deepening gap between their expectations and the opportunities open to them.

Explanations offered by the literature on the participation of young people in religious movements resonate closely with those identified for the involvement of youth in violence of various forms.<sup>83</sup> However, little or no work exists that jointly analyses these two phenomena and the role of religious participation as an alternative to violence.

## 2.5 Conclusions

This chapter has tried to deconstruct and question the ‘youth crisis leads to violence’ paradigm. It has argued that the concept of ‘youth crisis’ should be treated with caution. Youth in itself is a problematic category, one that does not automatically hold together; it is more a convenient label on a multifaceted reality. Therefore, applying a unifying notion of ‘youth crisis’ is misleading.

The objective of this review is not to offer an all-encompassing explanation of youth crisis, but rather to warn against the simplistic use of this term. Some authors stress how a general economic and social crisis in many parts of the world is affecting young people in a particularly severe way, by impairing their capacity to negotiate their transition into adulthood. If, as many say, youth is pre-eminently a transition

<sup>81</sup> Sommers (2001; 2003a; 2003b).

<sup>82</sup> Spinks (2002:197).

<sup>83</sup> On youth gangs, Benvenuti (2003:22) remarks: “Gangs represent an attempt by young people to reconstruct their identities, and to rebel against institutions (such as the family, school and even the labour market) that have been damaged by chronic inequality and exclusion. . . . They present alternative sources of income, and a means of reconstructing that sense of security, belonging, recognition, and participation that society seems so categorically to deny them.”

phase, what happens when this transition is 'blocked' by economic and social constraints? Is the so-called 'crisis of youth' in fact the impossibility of 'getting out' of youth and into adulthood? Are young people 'stuck' in youth, and if so, what does this mean for their society?

Young people in most of the developing world are increasingly deprived of education and employment opportunities – and hence of the possibility of establishing themselves as adults and caretakers in an increasingly competitive world. They are not involved in decision-making and see mainstream political channels as inaccessible or irrelevant. If the present trends persist, the HIV/AIDS epidemic is bound to make things worse by eroding human resources and already weak social infrastructures. While their prospects get bleaker, young people are exposed in an unprecedented way to the glamour of 'the other' – the big cities, the Western world.

Responses to this are specific to each person and have psychological as well as social dimensions. In very broad terms, we can say that responses can be violent or non-violent. Violent responses are clearly not limited to involvement in violent conflict but encompass a wide range of forms – including terrorism, gangs, criminality, random violence, vandalism, self-destructive violence, and domestic violence. Among non-violent responses, this chapter focused on urbanization, migration and religious participation – all of which can be responses to a lack of status and can constitute ways to renegotiate the youth passage to adulthood by searching for 'the other' in a physical or spiritual sense.



# 3

## Review of policy frameworks

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*Addressing the needs and aspirations of adolescence is ... an important aspect of long-term prevention strategy. In addition, youth can also be an important resource for peace and conflict prevention.*

— Secretary-General's Report on the Prevention of Armed Conflict

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This chapter examines existing UN policy frameworks that touch upon the issue of youth and violent conflict. While a number of policy instruments directly or indirectly provide guidance on youth and violent conflict, a coherent or agreed framework for analysing and responding to youth and violent conflict does not exist. The chapter focuses on three distinct policy frameworks: the conflict prevention agenda, the youth agenda and the development agenda.

Policies devised as part of the conflict prevention agenda randomly refer to youth in analyses of the causes, conditions and dynamics of conflict. In contrast, the youth agenda focuses on youth as a discrete group navigating their environment, with violent conflict or a post-conflict situation providing one such environment. While the former fails to unpack the concept of youth, the latter fails to explain the context of violent conflict. Finally, the development agenda, currently driven by the MDGs, is also limited because it focuses mainly on one particular aspect of the issue (employment as a solution for a perceived youth crisis). Individually, neither framework is sufficient, but the way in which they are converging also offers little help in terms of defining the scope or parameters of the problem, identifying priority areas or defining objectives.

The ways in which such policy frameworks touch on the relationship between youth and violent conflict, as well as the ways they omit or ignore it, are indicative of the problems of framing this issue. A holistic, comprehensive and systematic framework that captures the complexity of the youth situation in relation to violent conflict has not yet emerged.

### 3.1 The conflict prevention agenda

#### 3.1.1 How youth is addressed within the conflict prevention agenda

Outlining the broad framework for collective security and the UN's role in the 21st century, the Report by the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change points to youth as a threat to



security.<sup>84</sup> In the only personal anecdote throughout the report, one woman during a consultation in Africa, asked “how have we let what should be our greatest asset, youth, become a threat to our security.”<sup>85</sup>

The report identifies youth unemployment as both a cause of violence and a consequence of failed post-conflict peace-building potentially leading to further violence. It also notes that women and young people are disproportionately poor.

The report reiterates and reinforces what is already found in Security Council resolutions and statements on West Africa linking youth and conflict, which point to youth unemployment as a prime condition for and cause of violence.<sup>86</sup> During the Security Council mission to West Africa in June/July 2003:

*in every country visited, the mission heard about the problem of unemployment, especially among young people, and how this was a perennial source of instability in West Africa.*<sup>87</sup>

In the second Security Council mission to the region in June 2004, Council members heard about “the importance of tackling the major socio-economic problems, which, if left unresolved, could present a risk to the country’s security.”<sup>88</sup> All actors consulted agreed, “creating jobs and economic growth, particularly for young people, was crucial.”<sup>89</sup>

The Security Council also recommended that devising a practical and concerted regional approach to youth unemployment should be an important area of work of the UN Office for West Africa.<sup>90</sup>

This depiction of unemployed young people as a condition and cause of conflict is not restricted to strategies for West Africa, it is also evident in the overarching agenda for conflict prevention contained in the Secretary-General’s Report on the Prevention of Armed Conflict. In his report, the Secretary-General notes:

*Young people with limited education and few employment opportunities often provide fertile recruiting ground for parties to a conflict. Their lack of hope for the future can fuel disaffection with society and make them susceptible to the blandishments of those who advocate armed conflict. This problem can be especially acute in countries that have a ‘youth bulge’, a population comprised of a large number of youth compared to other age groups. . . . Addressing the needs and aspirations of adolescence is therefore an important aspect of long-term prevention strategy. In addition, youth can also be an important resource for peace and conflict prevention.*<sup>91</sup>

The High-level Panel Report, Security Council resolutions related to West Africa and the Secretary-General’s Report on the Prevention of Armed Conflict are concerned with violent conflict, conflict prevention and peace-building in the widest sense, rather than with youth and violent conflict specifically. Nevertheless, they contain assumptions associating youth with violence. They suggest that without employment or productive alternatives, young people are prone to engage in violence, that they possess their own culture of violence, that they are a threat to society and that they are disaffected and marginalized. These assumptions are not examined; they implicitly refer to young men only. Moreover, they juxtapose employed youths against violent youths without allowing for any other identity or the possibility that young people with jobs can still engage in violence.

<sup>84</sup> United Nations, A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility, Report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (2004).

<sup>85</sup> United Nations, A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility, Report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (2004).

<sup>86</sup> UN Security Council, Report of the Security Council Mission to West Africa, S/2004/525, 2004; UN Secretary-General, Report of the Secretary-General on Ways to Combat Sub-regional and Cross-border Problems in West Africa, S/2004/200 (2004).

<sup>87</sup> UN Security Council, Report of the Security Council Mission to West Africa, S/2003/68 (2003).

<sup>88</sup> UN Security Council, Report of the Security Council Mission to West Africa, S/2004/525 (2004).

<sup>89</sup> UN Security Council, Report of the Security Council Mission to West Africa, S/2004/525 (2004).

<sup>90</sup> UN Security Council, Report of the Security Council Mission to West Africa, S/2003/688 (2003).

<sup>91</sup> UN Secretary-General, Report of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Armed Conflict, A/55/985- S/2001/574 (2001).

While young people are seen as agents of violence, they are not necessarily identified as full actors in peace settings, and they are not recognized as having an active role as civil society actors, political constituents or participants in measures to redress violence. Young people are sometimes urged to be peacemakers, but they are seldom mentioned in responses to conflict through governance and political measures. For example, while the Report on the Prevention of Armed Conflict establishes that the responsibility for conflict prevention rests with Member States and will only be successful in so far as there is national ownership, it does not identify where that ownership lies, who bears that responsibility for holding leaders accountable and from where in society change is supposed to emanate. Such recommendations do not reflect a changing context, with the West African context largely defined by very young populations.

### **3.1.2 Youth and the agenda on children and armed conflict**

In addition to general conflict-related agendas, there are other policy and legal instruments that establish a strong linkage between violent conflict and young people. In particular, the issue of youth is partially addressed in what can be called the agenda on children and armed conflict.

#### **Convention on the Rights of the Child and Optional Protocol**

The agenda on children and armed conflict is legally grounded in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) adopted in 1989, and entered into force in 1990.<sup>92</sup> The CRC provides protection to every individual under the age of 18 (unless the applicable national law states majority is attained earlier). It is the most universally accepted human rights instrument, having been ratified by all countries in the world, except the United States and Somalia.

The CRC legally binds states to its provisions and unequivocally sets forth the rights of children and standards to ensure their well-being in every part of the world, particularly where children are affected by armed conflict, inadequate social conditions, hunger and illiteracy. Four general principles underpin the Convention: non-discrimination (Article 2), best interest of the child (Article 3), right to life, survival and development (Article 6), and the right for children to have their views heard and given due weight in decision affecting them (Article 12). The CRC calls on governments to do everything they can to protect and care for children affected by war, and establishes that children under the age of 15 should not be forced or recruited to take part in a war or join the armed forces (Article 38). This is the only provision of the CRC that does not apply to all children under the age of 18.

The CRC was reinforced by the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, adopted by the General Assembly in 2000, and entered into force in 2002.<sup>93</sup> The Optional Protocol states that individuals under the age of 18 should not be forcibly recruited into national armed forces (Article 2). Voluntary involvement is allowed, but “States Parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure that members of their armed forces who have not attained the age of 18 years do not take a direct part in hostilities” (Article 1), in consideration of the fact that “persons under the age of 18 years are entitled to special protection” (Article 3). States should also put in place the appropriate safeguards to ensure that this recruitment is genuinely voluntary and that proof of age is sought and verified. The Optional Protocol explicitly prohibits non-state armed groups from both recruiting and using persons under 18, and calls on state parties to criminalize such activities.

The CRC and the Optional Protocol established a precedent of strong legal norms for the protection of children, helped to establish standards and expectations about protection and created practices within the international community and within states to fulfil the commitments in the CRC. They also established a legal framework of human rights consisting of civil, political, social, economic

<sup>92</sup> Convention on the Rights of the Child, A/RES/44/25 (1989).

<sup>93</sup> Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, A/RES/54/263 (2000).

and cultural rights accorded to every child as indivisible, interrelated and non-hierarchical. The CRC established children as subjects of their own rights, as individuals and as members of the family and the community.

## **Machel Report on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children**

The Report on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children (also known as the Graça Machel Report) builds on the principles established by the Convention on the Rights of the Child.<sup>94</sup> The report documents the impacts of armed conflict on children and proposes the elements of a comprehensive agenda for action to improve the protection and care of children in conflict situations. It demonstrates the centrality of these issues to the international human rights, peace and security and development agendas.<sup>95</sup> The report also draws attention to youth, particularly as human capital in conflict-affected societies, advocating that “young people should be seen... as survivors and active participants in creating solutions, not just as victims or problems.”<sup>96</sup> More than other agenda frameworks, this report highlights the unique pressures on young people in situations of armed conflict:

*All cultures recognize adolescence as a highly significant period in which young people learn future roles and incorporate the values and norms of their societies. The extreme and often prolonged circumstances of armed conflict interfere with identity development. ... Moreover, sudden changes in family circumstances, such as the death or disappearance of parents, can leave youth without guidance, role models or sustenance. During conflicts, some adolescents become responsible for the care of younger siblings. ... Despite all of this, adolescents, during or after wars, seldom receive any special attention or assistance. This is a matter of urgent concern.*<sup>97</sup>

If the values and norms of society are not transmitted to youth and by extension to future generations because of conflict, then that society must recover from more than just violent conflict.

## **Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict**

On the recommendation of the Graça Machel Report, the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict was established in 1997 to draw attention and respond to the plight of children affected by armed conflict.<sup>98</sup> In its role as advocate, catalyst and convenor, the Special Representative considers key issues affecting children in conflict situations, including child soldiers, girls in war, HIV/AIDS, education, displaced children, sexual violence and so forth.

## **Security Council resolutions on children and armed conflict**

Since 1999, the Security Council has adopted six resolutions on children and armed conflict. Security Council Resolution 1261 was adopted in 1999 and formally affirmed that the protection and security of children affected by armed conflict is an international peace and security issue, hence falling within the remit of the Security Council. The following year, Resolution 1314 stated that situations of flagrant and widespread violations of International Humanitarian and Human Rights Law, including that relating to children in situations of armed conflict, may constitute a threat to international peace and security. Resolution 1379, adopted in 2001, addressed additional areas of concern, including the linkage between HIV/AIDS and armed conflict. Other resolutions were adopted in 2003 (1460), 2004 (1539) and 2005

<sup>94</sup> UN General Assembly, Impact of Armed Conflict on Children, A/51/306 (1996).

<sup>95</sup> See Note by the Secretary-General introducing the Machel Report.

<sup>96</sup> UN General Assembly, Impact of Armed Conflict on Children, A/51/306 (1996).

<sup>97</sup> UN General Assembly, Impact of Armed Conflict on Children, A/51/306 (1996).

<sup>98</sup> UN General Assembly, The rights of the child, A/RES/51/77 (1997).

(1612), focusing on the need for implementation of international norms and standards on children and armed conflict.<sup>99</sup>

## 3.2 The youth agenda

Distinct from the agenda to protect children, there is also a well-developed UN youth agenda, which focuses on the global situation of youth. Identified as Empowering Youth for Development and Peace, it is led by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), which houses the UN focal point on youth.<sup>100</sup> Throughout the evolution of this agenda, three basic themes are advocated: participation, development and peace. Whereas young people are considered to be a problem in most other policy frameworks, in this framework youths are elevated to the position of solution to the world's most fundamental problems. The focus of the approach is primarily on youth as the future of humanity, as an invaluable resource, as a positive force for change and as activists:

*Young people represent agents, beneficiaries and victims of major societal changes and are generally confronted by a paradox: to seek to be integrated into an existing order or to serve as a force to transform that order.<sup>101</sup>*

As the key advocacy tool for youth, the youth agenda also serves to draw international attention to the precarious situation of youth, whose needs and aspirations are still largely unmet. This denial of one's potential is contributing "to the increased marginalization of young people from the larger society, which is dependent on youth for its continual renewal."<sup>102</sup> The youth agenda starts from the premise that today's young people are living at a time of unprecedented and profound economic, political, social, cultural and environmental change, where "young people are particularly affected, because it means that their transition to adulthood is made more difficult."<sup>103</sup>

### 3.2.1 World Programme of Action for Youth

In 1985, the UN General Assembly called for the observance of the International Youth Year to draw attention to the important role of young people and their potential contribution to development and the goals of the UN Charter.<sup>104</sup> On the 10th anniversary of the International Youth Year, the UN adopted an international strategy to more effectively address the problems of young people, to increase their participation in society and to make governments more responsive to their aspirations.

The World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, adopted in 1995, is a blueprint for action revolving around ten priority areas: education, employment, hunger and poverty, health, environment, drug abuse, juvenile delinquency, leisure-time activities, girls and young women as well as youth participation.<sup>105</sup> It provides a policy framework as well as practical guidelines for national action and international support to improve the situation of youth. It focuses, in particular, on measures to strengthen national capacities in the field of youth and to increase the quality and quantity of opportunities available to young people for full, effective and constructive participation in society.<sup>106</sup> It also underlines the need to scale up investments in youth, to create verifiable indicators for the priority areas

<sup>99</sup> For an overview, see Harvey (2003).

<sup>100</sup> For youth at the United Nations, see [www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin).

<sup>101</sup> UN General Assembly, World Programme of Action for Youth for the Year 2000 and Beyond, A/50/81 (1995).

<sup>102</sup> UN General Assembly, World Programme of Action for Youth for the Year 2000 and Beyond, A/50/81 (1995).

<sup>103</sup> UN General Assembly, Implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, Report of the Secretary-General, A/54/59 (1999).

<sup>104</sup> UN General Assembly, International Youth Year, A/40/14 (1985). This took place 20 years after the 1965 Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples.

<sup>105</sup> UN General Assembly, World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, A/RES/50/81 (1996).

<sup>106</sup> UN General Assembly, World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, A/RES/50/81 (1996:Annex: Statement of Purpose).

and to ensure vulnerable or disadvantaged young people receive special attention. In 2001, five new areas were added: globalization, information and communications technology, HIV/AIDS, conflict prevention and intergenerational issues.

In 2003, the Programme launched a wide-ranging report that provides an overview of the global situation of young people by exploring the ten priority action areas and five areas of concern. The World Youth Report advocates:

*Adolescents and young adults are an important target group for all social development efforts, since they are often disproportionately affected by poverty, unemployment and social exclusion and since the impact of such conditions during young age will most likely influence the entire lifespan. At the same time, young people can also be a major resource in the social mobilization needed to combat these very problems.<sup>107</sup>*

Although this agenda differentiates young people according to region, gender and social background, it embodies a global approach encapsulating all youths in the world aged between 15 and 24. While the fact that the majority of young people live in developing countries ensures that development challenges are highlighted, this is accompanied by a more comprehensive cross-sectoral and multidisciplinary agenda, based on the assumption that young people have similar aspirations. Thus the youth agenda exhibits a global approach, creating global standards to meet the needs of young people, to ensure youth participation at the global level and even to create a global youth policy.

Nevertheless, the youth agenda acknowledges that the responsibility for the implementation of the programme rests with national governments, which are expected to produce national youth policies and action plans based on processes that consult with young people. However, it does not have a conception of success other than a better world in which young people can live. Proposals for action urging governments to create jobs are admirable, but not instructive for overcoming the real obstacles that prevent job creation. Moreover, in calling for greater participation in decision-making as well as in society more generally, the youth agenda offers little explanation as to the added impact of a particular focus on youth, nor does it say how to overcome the impediments that deny most citizens participation in their society. In some ways, the advocacy for the youth agenda undermines itself because it assumes the invaluable role of young people as peacemakers and future decision-makers is self-evident and under-emphasizes the challenges that prevent youths from taking on these roles.

### **3.2.2 How conflict is addressed within the youth agenda**

Initially, the relationship between youth and violence was only considered in the context of the problem of juvenile delinquency and the need to prevent violence and crime in society. In 1996, the World Programme began to note the “increasing difficulty for young people returning from armed conflict and confrontation in integrating into the community and gaining access to education and employment.”<sup>108</sup>

In 2001, conflict was identified as an additional area of concern for the situation of youth. This special focus emerged in recognition of the fact that young people are disproportionately affected by violent conflict, both as victims and as active participants.

The World Programme outlines the impact of conflict on youth and highlights the role youth should play in peace-building, conflict prevention and conflict resolution. It emphasizes, in particular, the role of youth and youth organizations in promoting peace and non-violence as well as in mobilizing youth for post-conflict reconstruction. In this understanding of the relationship between youth and violent conflict, young people are treated as a special target group whose perspectives should be included in processes to prevent or end conflict.

<sup>107</sup> United Nations, World Youth Report (2003).

<sup>108</sup> UN General Assembly, World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, A/50/81 (2005:Annex 6).



### 3.3 The development agenda: youth, unemployment and the MDGs

In addition to a general agenda for youth, the single most prominent issue to emerge as a concern in the international community is youth unemployment. Young people constitute nearly half of the world's unemployed, but:

*while the youth population grew by 10.5 percent over the last 10 years to more than 1 billion in 2003, youth employment grew by only 0.2 percent suggesting that the growth in the number of young people is rapidly outstripping the ability of economies to provide them with jobs.<sup>109</sup>*

This is particularly problematic in developing countries where young people make up a larger portion of the workforce. Not surprisingly, “the regions with the largest shares of youth within the working-age population (South Asia, MENA and Sub-Saharan Africa) fare worst in terms of youth unemployment.”<sup>110</sup> If youth is a formative stage where one gains needed experience, then the lack of employment creates one more obstacle to the attainment of full adulthood with potentially harmful consequences for the economy and society. As stated by the International Labour Organization:

*The link between youth unemployment and social exclusion has been clearly established; an inability to find a job creates a sense of vulnerability, uselessness and idleness among young people and can heighten the attraction of engaging in illegal activities. For many young people today, being without work means being without the chance to work themselves out of poverty.<sup>111</sup>*

By including youth unemployment in the MDGs, the Millennium Declaration had an important and catalytic impact on drawing international attention to the problem of unemployed young people. Under target 16 in Goal 8, the resolution “to develop and implement strategies that give young people everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work” is the only explicit reference to youth in the MDGs. While some of the MDGs have elements that target youth, in particular, achieving universal primary education using the literacy rate of 15 to 24 year-olds as one indicator, promoting gender equality at all levels of education, improving maternal health and combating HIV/AIDS and other diseases, most of the MDGs are only implicitly relevant to the needs of youth. However, it is interesting to note that the MDG campaign is targeting young people as important advocates and partners for the MDGs. Young people are key actors for the achievement of the goals, but through their participation in the MDGs, youth can also be empowered and hence benefit from the attention on MDGs. As discussed below in Chapter 4, UNDP has identified youth as a key partner in the Millennium Campaign and is seeking to mobilize youth activism by holding 2015 summits in all regions, such as the Pan-African 2015 Summit held in Dakar in 2004.

#### 3.3.1 Youth Employment Network (YEN)

Under the auspices of the Millennium Declaration, the Youth Employment Network, a consortium of the ILO, the World Bank and the UN was established to address the global challenge of youth unemployment. At the Millennium Summit, heads of states “resolved to develop and implement strategies that give young people everywhere a chance to find decent and productive work.”<sup>112</sup> YEN emerged from a high-level policy network that set forth five principles, or global priority policy areas: employability, employment creation, equity, entrepreneurship and environmental sustainability.

<sup>109</sup> International Labour Organization (2004).

<sup>110</sup> International Labour Organization (2004).

<sup>111</sup> International Labour Organization (2004).

<sup>112</sup> Also found in UN General Assembly, Promoting Youth Employment, A/57/165 (2003).

The YEN approach recognizes that traditional international initiatives may have expressed a commitment to engaging youth groups as equal partners in the policy-making process but often failed to do so. Consultation was often limited and the development of policy was based on a “perceived notion of what is best for young people.”<sup>113</sup> The YEN seeks to change this by viewing young people as partners in devising solutions to a common problem and ensuring that its policy recommendations support the aspirations of young people, rather than impose perceived needs upon them. The YEN seeks to ensure that young people play an active role rather than just “being viewed as a target group for which employment must be found.”<sup>114</sup>

The Youth Employment Network is seen as an instrument for the attainment of one of the targets under the MDGs, but also as a contribution to the attainment of the MDGs as a whole. The YEN advocates for the integration of a youth dimension into all comprehensive employment strategies, strong institutional support for youth employment policies, investment in education, training and life-long learning and youth access to employment services and support. The YEN campaign also calls for an integrated, UN System-wide approach, stressing the fact that it is not a programme but a network representing all sectors – multilateral, bilateral, corporate/private – as well as international NGOs. Youth employment is treated as an entry point to the broader employment agenda. In addition to policy development and advocacy, research and pooling experiences and knowledge, the YEN has sought to become more operational with activities in countries on the ground, but this has had limited success so far. Nevertheless, the YEN keeps youth unemployment on the international agenda.

### **3.3.2 What did the MDGs miss?**

The MDGs and the Millennium Declaration<sup>115</sup> are driving the development agenda for the 21st century by determining development priorities, shaping development funding and framing development policy. The ways in which the MDGs omit, include or refer to youth, seek to use youth, and how youth groups attempt to influence the MDG agenda, also reveal underlying assumptions about youth. While some argue that young people are absent from the MDG agenda, others contend that the MDGs implicitly target youth. They are either “directly related to children, the youth of the next generation, or to issues of greater concern to young people, such as maternal health and HIV/AIDS.”<sup>116</sup>

While there seems to be an assumption that young people are useful as agents or representatives of the MDG campaign, there is little to suggest that there has been a serious process of engagement or consultation with youths on how they view the MDGs. There also appears to be some confusion about whether the MDGs should target youth to meet the challenges for youth or to advance development in general.

With respect to youth and violent conflict, the MDG framework promulgates an assumption that links youth unemployment and violent conflict, and points to the risk that the lack of productive work makes young people vulnerable to recruitment for violent or illegal activities. The 2005 Millennium Project Report identifies the nexus between poverty and conflict: “Without productive alternatives, youths, especially, may turn to violence out of frustration or for material gain.”<sup>117</sup> The report also refers to the ‘exploding’ youth population and recognizes greater conflict risks associated with demographic profiles of high child-to-adult ratios. Thus, like many other policy frameworks, the MDGs treat youth as a single identity group, and target unemployment as a key factor in relation to violent conflict as well as juxtaposing employment against involvement in conflict.

<sup>113</sup> UN General Assembly, Promoting Youth Employment, A/57/165 (2003).

<sup>114</sup> See [www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org).

<sup>115</sup> UN General Assembly, Millennium Declaration, A/RES/55/2 (2000).

<sup>116</sup> United Nations, World Youth Report (2005).

<sup>117</sup> UN Millennium Project, Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals (Millennium Report) (2005).

### 3.4 Conclusions

To date, the UN lacks a specific policy framework for youth and violent conflict that explains the intersection between the two, or offers realistic and implementable recommendations rather than ambitious wish lists. The policy frameworks in the conflict prevention, youth and development agendas that refer to the issue offer limited guidance. Policies on youth only superficially consider the dimensions of violent conflict, the conflict prevention agenda has relatively little to say about youth, and the development agenda suffers somewhat from a limited focus on employment. A better-informed framework is urgently needed.

This framework should necessarily be holistic and crosscutting. The magnitude of the problem demands real investment in young people and their societies. It requires a shift in thinking from merely consulting youth to putting young people – in all their diversity – at the centre of the process for developing policy, advocacy, programmes and so forth, by creating space for their participation. It means acknowledging and assuming that youth is multi-faceted, that young people are simultaneously individuals and part of society, that they are in transition from childhood to adulthood but retain a unique identity as youths and that they possess personal, social and public identities. Finally, it requires a stronger, more nuanced understanding of the context of societies in development, and a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the intersection between youth and violent conflict in such societies.







# 4

## Review of UNDP youth programming

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*Many countries are confronted with a huge youth unemployment problem, and beyond that, a youth participation problem. Economic systems are just not producing growth or jobs at a rate to absorb them into the labour market. Combine that with political systems that are not genuinely participatory and representative, and we are stoking up a crisis.* — Mark Malloch Brown, Former Administrator, UNDP<sup>118</sup>

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This chapter analyses the extent to which UNDP and its country offices have tackled youth issues, with a special focus on conflict and post-conflict situations. It focuses on UNDP's youth programmes and projects during the past 5 years and tries to map the range of interventions and approaches and their impact, with the intention to assess how challenges were addressed and to highlight the existing gaps.

The chapter provides a short overview of different approaches, as well as the main issue areas, of UNDP work on youth. The findings are illustrated by means of short case studies. Only a snapshot of UNDP's work in this area can be presented in this chapter. A wider selection of UNDP youth programming is presented in Annex 1.

The primary methodology was a desk review of project documentation, available literature and, where possible, interviews with relevant project staff in UNDP regional bureaux as well as UNDP country offices.

### 4.1 How UNDP works with youth

Various UNDP programmes and projects around the world deal with youth issues focusing on different dimensions. There is currently very little consolidated information about how UNDP has addressed youth issues. Three broad categories can be identified:

- Fully-fledged youth programmes, which address different dimensions that are relevant to youth in a given context;
- Programmes targeting youth in the context of specific areas of activity (e.g. employment creation; juvenile justice; prevention of HIV/AIDS; DDR etc.);
- Special focus on youth in the context of mainstream development programmes.

<sup>118</sup> Malloch Brown (2003).

This section sets out to illustrate the various different ways in which UNDP has addressed youth by means of presenting short case studies.

#### 4.1.1 Fully-fledged youth programmes

In several countries UNDP developed comprehensive youth programmes, encompassing a diverse range of activities. A case in point is the programme that was started in Kosovo immediately after the end of the conflict in 1999 (see box). Another example is the SHAREK project in Palestine (see Annex 1).

Kosovo	Youth Post-Conflict Participation Project (YPCPP) and Volunteers for Peace Project (V4P)
<b>Objective:</b>	To mobilize young people to research, prioritize and initiate development sub-projects at the regional level.
<b>Target beneficiaries:</b>	Young people
<b>Duration:</b>	Information not available
<b>Budget:</b>	300,000 USD/700,000 USD
<b>Description:</b>	<p>Kosovo has one of the youngest populations in Europe, with approximately half of the population under the age of 25. After the war, UNDP initiated the <b>Youth Post-Conflict Participation Project (YPCPP)</b> (300, 000 USD) that was executed by the International Rescue Committee in partnership with the Department of Youth in UNMIK. The project sought to mobilize young people to research, prioritize and initiate development sub-projects at the regional level. It also aimed to leave in place a network of youth-led Regional Working Groups and a Representative Youth Body that, with support from community and government structures, will continue to address matters of interest to young people. The project benefited 5,000 young people directly as well as another 20,000 indirectly.</p> <p>In implementing the project, the YPCPP worked in partnership with Kosovo NGOs and associations, such as the Kosovo Youth Council, the Scouting Movement, Youth of Prizren, Post-pessimists, youth forums as well as with schools and youth organizations. Youth representatives organized and attended a consultative Kosovo Youth Congress in the spring of 2001 and subsequently established a representative youth body to advise and advocate on behalf of youth priorities and youth-led regional working groups.</p> <p>Following the wide-scale mobilization of youth under the YPCPP, UNDP Kosovo in cooperation with UNV launched the community initiative <b>Volunteers for Peace (V4P)</b> (700,000 USD). The project is open to young people from all ethnic groups, and aims to be of direct benefit to local communities, the general public, the PISG, the Kosovo Police Service, development actors, UN agencies and KFOR. Although limited in scale (1000 volunteers), V4P introduced volunteerism as an approach to engage young people in activities such as: supporting community-based activities; providing assistance in emergency situations; promoting peace-building and human rights; transferring technical skills; increasing ethnic and community interaction through the tackling of common problems; improving gender awareness etc. Upon completion of its three phases, the management of the V4P programme is to be handed over to the Kosovo Youth Network.</p>

### 4.1.2 Programmes targeting youth in the context of specific areas of activity

Alongside fully-fledged youth programmes, UNDP also implements programmes with focus on youth in specific areas of activity. An example of this is the support to the reform of the juvenile justice system in Bulgaria, to address the needs of young offenders (see box). Additional case studies from Macedonia, Kenya, Mozambique, Zambia, Lesotho and Latvia are provided in Annex 1.

Bulgaria	Improved Juvenile Justice
<b>Objective:</b>	To support the launching of an improved juvenile justice model through establishing pilot youth probation centres in two Bulgarian municipalities – Blagoevgrad and Burgas.
<b>Target beneficiaries:</b>	Young offenders
<b>Duration:</b>	2002-2004
<b>Budget:</b>	96,417 USD
<b>Description:</b>	<p>The project provided support to the launching of an improved juvenile justice model through establishing pilot youth probation centres in two Bulgarian municipalities: Blagoevgrad and Burgas. The Project's main objective is to facilitate improvement of the now effective juvenile justice system through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved interaction between judicial and extra-judicial juvenile justice systems;</li> <li>• Ensuring greater effectiveness of community measures and punishment;</li> <li>• Child protection and guaranteeing the child's best interest.</li> </ul> <p>Youth probation centres seek to help achieve these objectives by implementing concrete probation measures and programmes, facilitating coordination between bodies charged with juvenile justice and helping improve methodologies to work with juvenile delinquents. The project's expected results and benefits included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction of probation as alternative to imprisonment in juvenile justice;</li> <li>• Popularization of international standards and probation models in juvenile justice among professionals in the field and the public;</li> <li>• Popularization of the humanitarian approach of working with juvenile delinquents and the community-based on penal and/or reformatory measures;</li> <li>• Two municipalities with operational youth probation centres at the time when the new Probation Act is passed and takes effect.</li> </ul>

### 4.1.3 Youth activities within mainstream development programmes

Youth concerns have been addressed in the context of broader UNDP programmes that are not focused exclusively on youth but that consider youth as a group that warrants particular attention. The Post-Conflict Socio-Economic Rehabilitation Programme for Southern Lebanon, for instance, recognized the crucial role of youth in the wider effort of a comprehensive rehabilitation strategy for the country at large (see box). Another example of this approach is the Rapid Employment Programme in South Serbia (see Annex 1).

Lebanon	Post-Conflict Socio-Economic Rehabilitation Programme for Southern Lebanon
<b>Objective:</b>	To mobilize youths in Southern Lebanon to contribute to post-conflict peace-building.
<b>Target beneficiaries:</b>	Young people
<b>Duration:</b>	2001-2002
<b>Budget:</b>	300,000 USD
<b>Description:</b>	<p>The programme had a specific component on youth and was financed by the Netherlands. Its general objective was to mobilize youth in Southern Lebanon to contribute to post-conflict peace-building in order to avoid conflicts and tensions among communities with different political, social and religious groups.</p> <p>Its main aim was to facilitate the interaction of youths from different villages, confessions and cultural affiliations in order to foster a feeling of common belonging and to develop a common strategy for young people's contribution towards the development of their region. The UNDP country office in Lebanon provided technical, administrative and financial support for the execution of the project. Activities were implemented in cooperation with the Community Development Centres (CDCs) of the Ministry of Social Affairs in South Lebanon, community-based organizations as well as municipalities.</p> <p>The outputs of the project included the identification of existing structures that can facilitate youth mobilization, the training of community workers from CDCs, the organization of discussion groups and strategic planning workshops with selected youths from different villages, the establishment of youth groups at the CDCs, the conduction of training of trainers, the organization of youth camps linked to community volunteer projects as well as the facilitation of community activities organized on a voluntary basis by young people.</p> <p>The project had an intensive focus on community mobilization and grassroots work based on the concept of youth groups. The youths themselves worked on the identification of issues of concern through questionnaires, and in cooperation with the CDCs, municipalities and NGOs implemented 17 different community-based projects. The project also emphasized training to develop communication and leadership skills of CDC workers to enhance their capacity in facilitating youth groups. The activities ranged from the restoration of sports facilities and public gardens to computer centres, movie clubs and other infrastructure projects. A cultural component</p>

**Description continued:** taking youth to sites of historical importance in the country also induced young people to appreciate their country as a whole.

All of these activities were formulated and implemented with attention being paid to inter-village and inter-group approaches. The end result was that the implementation of these activities served also as a mechanism for bringing together young people from different backgrounds to foster consensus building, peace-building and a sense of belonging.

The project transformed the issue of participation into fruitful actions leading to joint project formulation and implementation. These community-based interventions provide a strong incentive for young people to interact and work with each other, particularly when these activities are directly related to their well-being.

## 4.2 What UNDP youth-related approaches entail

A look at the Multi-Year Funding Framework (MYFF) reporting for 2004 shows that 32 country offices in all five UNDP regions mentioned youth.<sup>119</sup> Youth-related programmes are reported under four of the five goals – i.e. poverty reduction and the achievement of MDGs, responding to HIV/AIDS, conflict prevention and peace-building, and democratic governance.

The plurality and diversity of UNDP youth-related projects and programmes make it difficult to categorize UNDP work on youth according to rigidly defined issue areas. Many youth activities either cover several issue areas at once, or else are adapted to the particularities of the respective country in question to such an extent that they defy easy classification, but rather constitute categories of their own.

Nevertheless, after a preliminary analysis it appears that UNDP work on youth is mainly concentrated in the following six issue areas:

- HIV/AIDS and reproductive health;
- Skills development and employment generation;
- Training for leadership roles;
- Training for conflict resolution/reconciliation;
- Support to youth forums;
- Production of National Human Development Reports (NHDRs).

In the following sections, each of these issue areas will be briefly introduced by an illustrative case study. Additional case studies are presented in Annex 1.

### 4.2.1 HIV/AIDS and reproductive health

In recognition of the fact that young people are particularly vulnerable to HIV/AIDS and other STDs, UNDP has dedicated a number of projects to improving HIV/AIDS awareness and reproductive health. These programmes seek to increase awareness and counteract stigmatization of victims, for instance by putting an emphasis on peer-to-peer education. The following case study exemplifies UNDP's work in this regard.

<sup>119</sup> Of the 32 countries, 9 are in Africa, followed by Europe and the CIS (7), Asia and the Pacific (7), the Arab States (5) and Latin America and the Caribbean (4). 5 COs (Bahrain, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Zimbabwe, Nigeria and Swaziland) referred to youth more than once in their MYFF reporting.

Russia	HIV/AIDS prevention and care programme of the Russian Orthodox Church
<b>Objective:</b>	To decrease the HIV/AIDS incidence in the Russian Federation and mitigate the impact of the epidemic on those infected and affected.
<b>Target beneficiaries:</b>	School children aged 6 to 18
<b>Duration:</b>	2003-2005
<b>Budget:</b>	Information not available
<b>Description:</b>	<p>The project aimed at supporting the Russian Orthodox Church in its mission to promote social responsibility and spiritual growth of the individual and to develop a national programme on the prevention of HIV/AIDS. Awareness raising and further support of the Church were intended to change people's behaviour so as to decrease the risk of HIV infections and the further spread of the virus. The project worked with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children, teenagers and youth as the social group most vulnerable to HIV/AIDS;</li> <li>• HIV-infected people and their relatives and friends;</li> <li>• Public education workers, teachers of higher education institutions, specialists working with youth, including educators and psychologists as those who can promote the dissemination of objective information on the problem, and thus help prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS;</li> <li>• Clergy and theological students as those who can help change people's attitude towards the problem, both on church-wide and parish levels and in society as a whole, and influence the public opinion;</li> <li>• Members of parish communities as part of society participating in the formation of public opinion;</li> <li>• Drug-dependants as a risk group.</li> </ul> <p>The expected outputs of the project consisted of prevention, support of HIV-affected, increased public awareness of HIV-related problems as well as counteracting stigmatization and discrimination of people living with HIV/AIDS.</p>

#### 4.2.2 Skills development and employment generation

The lack of employment opportunities represents one of the most pressing problems for young people. The most common answer to this has been to make young people more 'employable' by increasing their skills and capacities to find and retain work. On the other hand, UNDP has also been working to increase the opportunities offered to young people by generating employment opportunities, for instance by providing microcredit. Training and skills development is the most frequent approach of UNDP youth interventions, either as stand-alone project or as adjacent component to a job creation or employment generation programme.



Papua New Guinea	Bougainville rehabilitation, reconstruction and development
<b>Objective:</b>	To support the reconciliation and peace process in Bougainville through rehabilitation, reconstruction and development activities.
<b>Target beneficiaries:</b>	Young people, particularly ex-combatants
<b>Duration:</b>	1998-2002
<b>Budget:</b>	2,349,663 USD
<b>Description:</b>	<p>The project aimed at the restoration of basic conditions for sustainable human development and the re-vitalization of an economy and infrastructure severely damaged by conflict in Bougainville. The project sought to facilitate the return of normal social and economic life to Bougainville through the integrated rehabilitation of young ex-combatants.</p> <p>Further aims were to provide material and technical support to assist displaced populations to resettle in their original villages, to strengthen the capacity of women to participate in the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Bougainville and to restore small-holder agriculture in the target areas, including the rehabilitation of cocoa cultivation.</p> <p>The project played a key role in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Bougainville by generating the following results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 17,000 out of a targeted 24,000 households returned to cocoa production.</li> <li>• Ex-combatants from different factions graduated after their participation in an eight-months training course in metal fabrication and welding at the South Bougainville Research and Training Centre in Tonu. In addition, a two-week course that focused on saw milling, environment protection and land management took place. A training course on conflict resolution, restorative justice and community development was also delivered. In preparation for an official handover of the centre to the Board of Directors, the workshop was registered and then incorporated as an on-profit organization in the Investment Promotion Authority of Papua New Guinea.</li> <li>• The Arawa Women's Vocational Training Centre was established. The centre ran a 26-week course with a curriculum covering 14 subjects, ranging from guesthouse management to gender awareness and empowerment skills for women. The training centre includes a guesthouse where the students are able to apply the skills they have gained through the courses offered.</li> <li>• Arawa Research and Training Centre offered training courses in metal fabrication to young people, including ex-combatants from different factions of Bougainville.</li> <li>• Sports and cultural events identified by the district councils were actively supported so as to enhance communication among different population groups.</li> <li>• A Bougainville Youth Officer Congress was organized in order to bring all District Youth Coordinators together to exchange experiences in their work and to engage in joint programme planning. The congress significantly contributed to the promotion of inter-district cooperation, and helped to transmit the idea of 'one Bougainville youth'.</li> </ul>

Sierra Leone	Youth Engagement and Job Opportunity Project
<b>Objective:</b>	To engage young people in training and community development.
<b>Target beneficiaries:</b>	Young people
<b>Duration:</b>	Information not available
<b>Budget:</b>	780,000 USD
<b>Description:</b>	<p>The project included support for a nation-wide youth gender-sensitive network, workshops, development of training modules, training of trainers, competitive group income-generating activities, organizational skills development, sensitization campaigns, financial management training, civic education, HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns and other activities.</p> <p>The youth project cooperated with the Ministries of Youth, Finance, Development as well as Education, the University, youth and women organizations as well as other NGOs and CBOs. Additional support came from the World Bank, DFID, UNAMSIL as well as other UN agencies.</p> <p>With a budget of 300,000 USD, the job creation component funded 200 income-generating projects, with an emphasis on micro-credit. The project illustrates the importance for any activities on youth support to be linked or incorporated with the country's PRSP. Project documents give the impression that there are many institutions and strategies in place, backed up by many donor organizations assisting the country's post-conflict recovery efforts. As the need for concerted efforts in the field of youth is imperative, the PRSP offers an appropriate umbrella for coordinated efforts and interventions.</p>

#### 4.2.3 Training for leadership roles

Another issue area that UNDP has been very active in is the provision of training for 'young leaders' – i.e. young people with particular talent and ambition for leadership, whose training can have a positive trickle-down effect in influencing others. The training of potential leaders is frequently combined with the organization of youth forums and councils on the international, national or regional level. The following case study of Africa 2015 is no exception in this regard.

Africa 2015	Pan-African Youth Leadership Summit
<b>Objective:</b>	To help the next generation of African leaders to deal with the development challenges facing the continent.
<b>Target beneficiaries:</b>	Young people with leadership potential
<b>Duration:</b>	June 2004

<b>Budget:</b>	Information not available
<b>Description:</b>	<p>UNDP's Africa 2015 is an advocacy campaign designed to complement and advance the efforts of all UN agencies, civil society groups and government agencies already working to achieve the MDGs on the continent.</p> <p>It aims to create sustained awareness and engage multiple audiences and constituencies in fighting poverty and the spread of HIV/AIDS. Africa 2015 uses multiple and simultaneous vehicles of communication as agents for change that can resonate with many different types of audiences, particularly young people.</p> <p>In June 2004, a Pan-African Youth Leadership Summit was held in Senegal as part of the Africa 2015 initiative that intended to help the next generation of Africa's leaders to exchange ideas and experiences in order to deal with the tremendous development challenges facing the continent. The summit was organized by an innovative collaboration between UNDP and a non-governmental organization, the Global Peace Initiative of Women, with support of the private sector.</p> <p>The goal was to help young leaders develop programmes that address development issues and to provide a global platform for the voices of talented young African professionals. The summit intended to establish a permanent network of young African leaders who could work across the continent to monitor the progress of their projects and to form a unified global voice on key issues pertaining to Africa.</p>

#### 4.2.4 Training for conflict resolution/reconciliation

Specifically in the area of crisis prevention and recovery (CPR), UNDP has been sponsoring several projects that explicitly seek to address and improve youth capacity to resolve and manage conflict by non-violent means. CPR training can be carried out in a variety of ways, including youth conferences, sports activities and radio peace programmes. The case study of Nepal below combines a variety of such confidence building measures.

Nepal	Support to Peace and Development Initiatives (SPDI) Programme <sup>120</sup>
<b>Objective:</b>	To support peace initiatives of local NGOs.
<b>Target beneficiaries:</b>	Nepali civil society, including youth
<b>Duration:</b>	Since 2002
<b>Budget:</b>	3,000,000 USD
<b>Description:</b>	The overall objective of the programme is to achieve sustainable peace-building in Nepal by promoting social justice and respect for human rights. It was started to

<sup>120</sup> The description of the project has been adapted from the SPDI website [www.spdi.org.np](http://www.spdi.org.np).

The following countries and agencies have contributed to the Peace and Development Trust Fund: Canada: Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA); Denmark: Royal Danish Embassy; Finland: Embassy of Finland; Germany: German Technical Cooperation (GTZ); Norway: Royal Norwegian Embassy; Switzerland: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC); United Kingdom: Department for International Development (DFID).

**Description  
continued:**

enable the Nepali civil society to participate in the process of peace-building through the support of community-based organizations, NGOs as well as associations and networks working in the field of peace and human rights.

The initiative has a separate component on the mobilization of youth, in recognition of the fact that the violent conflict has adversely affected youth, compelling many young people either to join the insurgency or to flee from their communities. SPDI supports youth mobilization for peace-building, particularly through projects that create opportunities for youth participation. The programme places particular emphasis on initiatives which focus on activities outside of the Kathmandu valley and which address local needs in conflict prevention.

SPDI is composed of a total of 88 projects related to conflict transformation/peace-building and rehabilitation activities that are implemented by 48 partner NGOs. Some of the project approaches related to youth include:

- Peace radio programmes prepared by local youths, focusing on youth issues, with particular reference to the current conflict, human rights and social affairs;
- Human rights education in schools – 6-month human rights and child rights awareness classes aimed at enabling children to discuss their basic rights with rebels;
- Sport programmes that brought young people from highly conflict-affected Village Development Committees to the district headquarters where they could interact among themselves and with youths less affected by the conflict in volleyball competitions and athletics events;
- Empowerment of internally displaced young women through informal training on women's rights, literacy, leadership and entrepreneurship as well as skills such as handicrafts and driving;
- Youth peace conferences to bring together a cross-section of rural Nepali young people to identify a common agenda and strategies for the peace-building process in Nepal.

A series of problems have had an impact upon the smooth implementation of the programme. Young people in Nepal – as elsewhere in conflict situations – are trapped between the conflicting parties. Rebels lure them to join the militia while the army always suspects young people as rebels. It frequently proved risky to assemble young people in groups because of security reasons. In addition, a large number of youths are fleeing away from villages for safety and employment opportunities, making the target group focus problematic.

#### **4.2.5 Support to youth forums**

The support of youth forums and councils has long been a preferred way of UNDP youth programming – often based on the recognition that young people are not sufficiently participating in mainstream avenues of decision-making, as the disproportionately low representation of young people in local and national governing bodies demonstrates. In recent years, a number of countries have been developing specific strategies for dealing with and involving youth, so as to improve youth participation. In many countries, UNDP has been an active partner in supporting these efforts, working together with partner institutions in the national government. Among the many UNDP activities focusing on youth affairs in Africa, global or regional conferences and initiatives on youth have become fixtures. A few of them are mentioned below.

**Objective:** To enhance youth participation in reconciliation, stabilization and peace-building in the Mano River Union countries (Liberia, Guinea, Sierra Leone) and Cote d'Ivoire.

**Target**

**beneficiaries:** Young people

**Duration:** 3 days (January 2005)

**Location:** Conakry (Guinea)

**Description:** The Mano River Union Youth, Peace and Development Forum was part of the larger Mano River Union Peace Initiative run by ECOWAS and supported by UNDP and USAID.

A select number of youth leaders from all Mano River Union countries were invited to the forum to discuss their concerns, needs and priorities as a basis for identifying cross-border pilot projects to be financed in an effort to kick-start a process of involving youth in peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction in the region.

The forum brought together 48 youth representatives from Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. The youths were drawn from rural and border areas, national youth umbrella organizations, youth ex-combatants and female-youths of the sub-region. The objectives of the meeting were to:

- Develop a framework for the formulation of comprehensive sub-regional programmes to enhance youth participation in reconciliation, reconstruction and stabilization efforts in the sub-region;
- Facilitate the identification and drafting of four sub-regional projects emphasizing cross-border linkages;
- Provide the youths with a platform to articulate their views and concerns and the role they could play to promote stability, peace and reconciliation;
- Enhance the capacities and opportunities for the youths to play a more pro-active role in peace and development in the sub-region.

Besides providing the youths with an opportunity to participate in the peace and reconstruction dialogue, the following projects were developed by the participants:

- Job creation, training in entrepreneurship and vocational skills, including agriculture;
- Rebuilding of houses in border areas;
- Training and programmes in conflict management, reconciliation and peace-building.

At the forum, the youths themselves pointed out the need to be active participants of any post-conflict rebuilding programme or conflict prevention agenda. Previously, all the moves towards reconstruction, peace-building, and conflict prevention had excluded them. This exclusion contributed to the restive conditions amongst youths in the MRU region. Indeed, some young ex-combatants were known to move to areas of the MRU in search of new conflict merchants to whom they could sell their 'skills'.

<sup>121</sup> The description of the project has been adapted from the USAID website [www.usaid.gov/missions/warp/mission/focus/index.htm](http://www.usaid.gov/missions/warp/mission/focus/index.htm).

## Equator Initiative Youth Exchange (EIYE)<sup>122</sup>

**Objective:** To facilitate learning and information exchange among African youths.

### Target

**beneficiaries:** Young people

**Duration:** 7 months (2003-2004)

**Location:** Kenya, Tanzania, Canada

**Description:** The Equator Initiative is a partnership that brings together the United Nations, civil society, business, governments and communities to help build the capacity and raise the profile of grassroots efforts to reduce poverty through the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

The Equator Initiative Youth Exchange was developed by UNDP's Equator Initiative in partnership with Canada World Youth. Over seven months beginning in September 2003, EIYE brought together youths from Equator Prize-winning communities in Kenya and Tanzania as well as youths from across Canada.

One of the central aims of EIYE was to facilitate learning and information exchange by creatively linking biodiversity conservation with income generation through educational and work experience opportunities within the three countries. The exchange programme also aimed at promoting skills development and inter-cultural dialogue.

Participating youths worked on various projects within communities in Canada, Tanzania and Kenya. In addition to these projects, EIYE included an educational component as well as a set of ongoing projects determined at the beginning of the exchange programme. The intention was to create a long-term network among the youths and their host communities committed to achieving sustainable local development and conserving biodiversity, important for their – and everyone's – survival.

## ICNYP/UNDP Sub-Regional Training Seminar on National Youth Policy<sup>123</sup>

**Objective:** To strengthen the capacities of governments and leaders of youth organizations.

### Target

**beneficiaries:** Young people

**Duration:** 3 days (September 2003)

**Location:** Addis Ababa (Ethiopia)

**Description:** The Training Seminar on National Youth Policy was organized by the International

<sup>122</sup> The description of the project has been adapted from the UNDP website [www.undp.org/equatorinitiative/secondary/EIYE/intro.htm](http://www.undp.org/equatorinitiative/secondary/EIYE/intro.htm). See also [www.equatorinitiative.org](http://www.equatorinitiative.org).

**Description continued:**

Council on National Youth Policy (ICNYP) in collaboration with UNDP's Central and East African Sub-Regional Resource Facility, with support of a range of partner organizations.

Approximately 100 participants from 10 countries of Central and Eastern Africa, as well as South Africa attended the seminar. The seminar aimed to strengthen the capacities of both governments (e.g. ministries responsible for youth) and leaders of national youth organizations, and to provide a knowledge-network for the sharing of good practices through dialogue and exchange of experiences.

One major issue to emerge from the discussions was the need for a 'Youth In Development' strategy to shift more development resources to support comprehensive and cross-sectoral national youth policies and programmes. Many participants stressed the importance of a partnership between governments and youth organizations to formulate, adopt, implement, evaluate and re-direct national youth policies and programmes.

There was a consensus that the concept of a national youth policy should be based on the needs and aspirations of young women and young men. It should clearly define the place and roles of young people in society and stress the importance of the participation of young people in all processes for a national youth policy. Participants indicated that a national youth policy should emphasize the potentials of young people and not just the problems of young people.

Several participants noted that there were at least two basic concepts concerning the purposes and objectives of a national youth policy. One was to set forth an inspirational vision and an advocacy plan for a national youth policy. The other concept was to do that and more: adding an operational action plan to implement the vision, policy and programme at local and provincial levels for, by and with young people.

Among the biggest challenges cited were:

- political will of Governments to recognize the importance of youth;
- resources for youth policies and programmes;
- support from regional intergovernmental organizations and bilateral development agencies;
- dialogue between governments and youth organizations;
- need for a holistic approach;
- key role of youth participation and empowerment (e.g. representation of youth NGOs in decision-making bodies which affect their lives, and involvement of youth in voluntary service programmes to communities).

<sup>123</sup> The description of the project has been adapted from the ICNYP final report of the forum [www.icnyp.net/www/files/report\\_addis.pdf](http://www.icnyp.net/www/files/report_addis.pdf).



#### 4.2.6 National Human Development Reports (NHDRs)

Since the publication of the first Global Human Report in 1990, Human Development Reports (HDRs) have become an increasingly important tool of policy analysis in all developing countries. These reports are usually accompanied by policy recommendations for all relevant development stakeholders, making them reference documents for development challenges.

A brief search on the UNDP Human Development Reports website shows that out of a total of 525 reports published until now, only 9 appear to have some focus on youth.<sup>124</sup> Lebanon (1998), Bosnia (2000), Jordan (2000), Trinidad and Tobago (2000), Lithuania (2001) and Croatia (2004) have dedicated a full NHDR to the topic. Bhutan and the Maldives are currently in the process of finalizing their NHDRs on youth.

In this context, it is worth reviewing some of these reports, particularly those related to conflict, to see the themes elaborated, the lessons learned, the recommendations offered and the extent to which the voice of the youth was represented in these reports.

##### Bosnia and Herzegovina (2000): Youth

###### Reasons for choosing youth as a focus of the NHDR

The report builds on the findings of a survey that reveals that 62 percent of young people in Bosnia and Herzegovina would leave the country if given the opportunity.<sup>125</sup> This shows that several years of post-war peace-building efforts still have not brought enough opportunities and hope for young people to stay and build their lives in their own country.<sup>126</sup>

###### Youth involvement in the drafting of the NHDR

The report was prepared by a group that included young people and people working on youth-related issues from the government as well as non-governmental organizations.

###### Main findings of the NHDR

The report focuses on three sectors from the perspective of youth: education, health and employment. It offers a description of the youth situation in the country based on survey data that are well disaggregated along ethnic lines.

The report reflects a sense of post-war hopelessness and dissatisfaction among young people. It points out that after a lengthy period of communism followed by the outbreak of war, young people in Bosnia need a proper education system that is not based on a curriculum divided along ethnic lines. Young people also need training on how to enter the market economy and how to channel their small moneymaking ideas into proper sources of income. In other words, as the authors put it, they know they can play a significant role in reshaping the country but desperately need more resources, proper training and guidance.<sup>127</sup> Recommendations in the report emphasize increased employment opportunities through various interventions such as support for self-employment through micro-credit systems, introduction of innovative employment generation schemes such as tax exemption or reduced hours as well as vocational training programmes for post-secondary school graduates. It is also pointed out that improving the youth situation is only possible through the full participation of young people, recognition of their problems and the involvement of youth in finding solutions.

<sup>124</sup> See <http://hdr.undp.org>.

<sup>125</sup> UNDP (2000:11).

<sup>126</sup> UNDP (2000:13).

<sup>127</sup> UNDP (2000:32).

## Croatia (2004): The Position of Youth in Croatian Society and Relations

### Reasons for choosing youth as a focus of the NHDR

The Croatian NHDR selected youth as a focus after judging that young people and their status in the country are a key factor for the further development of Croatian society.

### Youth involvement in the drafting of the NHDR

The report was prepared in an interactive and consultative process with youth throughout Croatia. It was written by young people, who controlled the process and content of the exercise, and aimed at inducing youth to become more proactive and to be part of the implementation of the report's recommendations.

### Main findings of the NHDR

The report exemplifies the overall goal of NHDRs to serve as not only public awareness raising and reference documents but as policy-making tools directed to the relevant stakeholders.

It follows the same approach as the Bosnian report but is enriched with other elements such as an overview of the institutional frameworks for young people and the role of the state in dealing with youth issues. Croatia has a National Programme of Action for Youth, adopted in 2003, which contains a national youth policy and strategy for its implementation including the participation of youth. The report elaborates on the most problematic issues of youth in Croatia starting with the difficulty of finding appropriate employment and dependency issues. Apart from the economy, the report also deals with participation and marginalization issues, and devotes a chapter to conflict, violence and discrimination, which portrays a society still coping with xenophobia, racism, prejudice and racism. The report, however, provides positive examples of how to deal with these issues leading to useful policy recommendations that build on current experiences.

## Lebanon (1998): Youth and Development

### Reasons for choosing youth as a focus of the NHDR

The civil war that tormented the country from 1975 to 1990 resulted in massive international and internal migration and the report observes that the phenomenon is more widespread among young people than the other age groups.<sup>128</sup>

### Youth involvement in the drafting of the NHDR

The report is the result of a process of interaction and consultation with young people all over Lebanon. Young people themselves who decided upon the decisive issues concerning their status and future wrote it. The report thus represents views on human development from the perspective of young people.

<sup>128</sup> UNDP (1998:30).

## Main findings of the NHDR

The NHDR for Lebanon follows the same sectoral approach as the Croatian and Bosnian reports by focusing on youth and employment, education and health with a view on public participation. The report emphasizes that policies dealing with international migration should concentrate on the reduction of the outflow of young people with higher education by taking measures to reduce unemployment and by attracting expatriates through established programmes such as TOKTEN.<sup>129</sup> Increasing employment opportunities and encouraging entrepreneurship among young persons through special programmes and through a manpower plan reconciling education with labour demand, is also highlighted in the report. However, there is also a need to induce the economy to improve the number of employment opportunities overall, as well as providing better quality education.

Traditionally, young people have played an active part in Lebanon's civil and political life. The chapter on public participation points to young people as the beneficiaries of development activities, but also as potential contributors to development. However, there is still a need to create mechanisms for youth participation at all levels, as well as developing integrated youth policies. The report draws attention to rising differences along lines of religious confession as one of the most negative consequences of the war.<sup>130</sup> Many areas in the country are dominated by a single confession and this has important repercussions in the social upbringing of young people who generally socialize and go to school together with people of a similar social or religious background. The report recommends that, where possible, schools should be multi-confessional, helping to re-establish inter-confessional harmony and facilitating the return of displaced persons.<sup>131</sup>

## 4.3 Conclusions

A first conclusion emerging from this review is that UNDP works extensively with youth. This signals an important recognition of the crucial role of youth for development and peace. A significant number of UNDP country offices have youth-related programmes as part of their development portfolio.

In light of the analysis undertaken in Chapter 2, UNDP involvement with youth raises a number of questions that deserve closer attention. These issues are briefly outlined below, as a guide for further analysis.

- **Defining youth.** Youth is a problematic and ambivalent term. While age is the most straightforward criterion for defining youth, it is not necessarily the most significant one. Social and cultural considerations play an important role in defining the meaning of youth. It would therefore be important to analyse the criteria used in UNDP programmes to identify target beneficiaries, with a view to identifying issues, challenges and emerging trends.
- **Understanding the complexity of youth.** In any given context, youth is not a homogenous group. Depending on the context, 'being young' might be less relevant in shaping individual identities than, for example, religion, ethnicity or class. Programmes that target youth as a monolithic group, without taking into account these internal differences, can unintentionally reinforce identity-based tensions. It would be important to understand not only how many youths are reached by a certain programme, but also who these young people are, and how they perceive themselves (and are perceived by others) in the broader societal context.
- **Gender dimension.** Girls and boys experience their coming of age in different ways, with different

<sup>129</sup> TOKTEN stands for Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals. It is a UNDP initiative in cooperation with UNV and IOM that aims to attract qualified expatriate professionals from developing countries to return to their countries of origin for short periods to share the skills they have gained during their residence in developed countries.

<sup>130</sup> UNDP (1998:104).

<sup>131</sup> UNDP (1998:104).

opportunities and constraints. Often, young men are more visible and easier to reach, and therefore might be given more attention in programmatic responses. It would be important to reflect on how UNDP programmes, in their understanding of youth, allow for gender differences, and how the gender dimension of youth is incorporated in programme design and implementation.

- **Youth participation.** Absence of meaningful participation is a major source of frustration for youth in many parts of the world. In the context of youth programmes, it would be important to analyse (i) the mechanisms put in place to ensure effective participation of youth, both males and females; (ii) to what extent youths are consulted, and at which stage of the process; and (iii) how consultation is translated into programme decision-making.
- **Linkages with mainstream programmes and strategies.** The fact of singling out youth as a target group creates important opportunities for increasing the impact and effectiveness of development, but it also carries significant risks – notably the risk of isolating youths from their context, and seeing them as yet another ‘sector of intervention’. As argued elsewhere in this paper, ‘youth crisis’ is often the most visible sign of problems that affect all sectors of society. Therefore, youth-related challenges are not tackled adequately by interventions that are *ad hoc* in nature, and limited in scope and duration. This calls for a closer examination of how youth programmes relate to mainstream development programmes, as well as to national strategies and UN planning processes (e.g. CCA/UNDAF).





# 5

## Review of youth programming of UN agencies and other organizations

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*We face the daunting challenge of creating opportunities and a brighter future for these young people. If they do not have work or opportunities, then naturally they will become disillusioned and frustrated, nurturing a growing sense of exclusion. Their immediate instinct is not to resort to violence. But without hope they are easily influenced and manipulated. Excluded and disillusioned youths become the raw recruits of the next wars.*

— Ian Bannon, Manager, Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction Unit, World Bank<sup>132</sup>

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This chapter provides an initial mapping of some efforts put in place by UN agencies, International Financial Institutions and bilateral donors with regard to youth. It outlines the rationales behind, approaches to and outcomes of this work, highlighting specific programming examples. The agencies profiled below are a sample of the many international actors working with youth in a variety of sectors in conflict-affected areas. Reference to some of the work undertaken by other organizations can be found in the accompanying bibliography.

A focus on efforts in West Africa offers a regional perspective, as informed by field visits with agencies operating in Senegal, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Although this review does not involve an evaluation of programmes, some lessons learned are also shared. These lessons are based on interviews with relevant actors in West Africa, as well as on emerging practice.<sup>133</sup>

### 5.1 United Nations Agencies

#### 5.1.1 United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

UNICEF's conceptual framework for the development of policy and programmes for adolescents is the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The CRC identifies the special abilities and rights of children in this age group and urges continued and strengthened efforts for their protection so that they

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<sup>132</sup> Bannon (2004:8).

<sup>133</sup> See, for example, Lowicki (2002b); Lowicki (2004).

may develop to their full potential.<sup>134</sup> In line with this and other relevant international legal and ethical standards, UNICEF's programmatic framework for working with adolescents aims at meeting the targets and objectives articulated in the Millennium Development Goals as well as UNICEF's strategic plan A World Fit for Children.

In order to give special attention to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of adolescents' rights, in 2002 UNICEF established the Adolescent Development and Participation Unit at headquarters. One of the main goals of the Unit is to provide leadership, guidance and direction to UNICEF Country Programmes that are working with partners to create cross-sectoral approaches to adolescent development and participation.

UNICEF's overall adolescent agenda focuses on initiatives to empower adolescents to fulfil their potential and participate in their societies. UNICEF has adopted a human rights-based approach to programming for adolescents that identifies the protective factors for reducing risk-taking behaviours of adolescents and finds new ways to harness their resilience, strength and positive energy in programming efforts. This approach is a deliberate shift from traditional programming, which focused only on the problems of adolescents.

The Unit's strategies for adolescent programming include:

- Internal and external advocacy to ensure adolescent development and participation;
- Capacity building of UNICEF staff, government counterparts and partners to enable them to promote a positive vision of adolescents and promote/implement a rights-based framework for programming;
- Collection and implementation of best practices and learning materials within and outside UNICEF;
- Creation and implementation of monitoring and evaluation indicators;
- Achievement of meaningful, gender-sensitive participation of adolescents in order to scale-up activities at the country level.

Since its inception, UNICEF's mandate has involved the rapid response to humanitarian crises – a commitment that is reflected in UNICEF's Core Commitments to Children in Emergencies. UNICEF provides assistance before, during and after a conflict to protect and support children, families, communities and governments.

In unstable situations, particularly conflict, adolescents and young people face multiple risks and may be targeted for violence, abuse and exploitation. Girls are particularly vulnerable. Yet, humanitarian assistance has typically focused on meeting the survival needs of young children, neglecting those of the adolescent population. Only recently have adolescent issues been brought to the forefront of programming – due in part to the framework created by the rights-based approach.

The report *Adolescent Programming in Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations* published in 2004 represents a breakthrough in programming with and for adolescents, as it examines case studies of adolescent programming in conflict and post-conflict situations around the world. The publication provides valuable insights into innovative strategies to engage adolescents during humanitarian crises in a range of programme activities, including in community development and peace-building.

In nearly all conflict-affected countries, UNICEF plays a strong role in the collection, processing and reporting of information used in advocacy efforts related to adolescents. This information is also used to inform programming.

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<sup>134</sup> For more on the CRC, see Chapter 3.



## Programming examples: UNICEF in West Africa

**In Sierra Leone**, UNICEF worked together with the government and other partners to protect adolescents' participation in the country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission as well as in producing a child-friendly version of the Truth and Reconciliation Report.

**In Liberia**, UNICEF supported a youth parliament to ensure the active involvement of young people in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of decisions that affect them. Young people, both in and out of school, selected the parliament. The parliament organized a one-day Child Rights Symposium, bringing together about 75 young people from Monrovia and surrounding areas. In preparation for the 2005 elections, UNICEF used the parliament to advance youth participation in political dialogue to ensure the active participation of youth and children in national and community development efforts.

**In Cote D'Ivoire**, UNICEF has been supporting the training of peer educators for the prevention of HIV/AIDS and STIs among youths between 15 to 24 years of age.

**In the West-Africa sub-region** (Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, Guinea, Mali, Burkina Faso and Ghana), UNICEF has launched a two-year project entitled Leadership for Human Security: Peace Building Project. The project seeks to promote and strengthen social and institutional leadership capacities to address and manage conflict through non-violence. Advocacy and communications activities include a high-impact mass media campaign run by children and youths that aims at targeting their peers with information and spurring dialogue on conflict management and peace-building.

### 5.1.2 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

UNHCR is mandated to lead and coordinate international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide. Its role is to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees. Children under the age of 18 make up approximately half of the world's refugee population, and they face serious risks. They often arrive in asylum countries alone without the vital protection of their family or other caretakers. They are particularly vulnerable to physical attack, sexual and economic exploitation, forced military recruitment and human trafficking. Young people may be forced to spend long periods in refugee camps during formative years with little to do. Idleness increases their vulnerability to a wide range of abuses and undermines their current and future prospects for development and community participation.<sup>135</sup>

In collaboration with a range of implementing partners, UNHCR supports both short-term and longer-term activities, for instance by addressing the specific needs of youth through education, health, family tracing and protection programmes.

Like UNICEF, UNHCR focuses its attention on adolescents under the age of 18. In many policy documents, the terms 'youth' and 'children' are used interchangeably. However, UNHCR is increasingly acknowledging the need to address the distinct circumstances of older youths, or young adults. One UNHCR publication on young refugees notes that the particular needs of youth risk being overlooked since they overlap with those of adults.<sup>136</sup>

UNHCR seeks to mainstream adolescent issues into its overall protection and assistance activities.<sup>137</sup> UNHCR's global strategy includes the needs of adolescents among its priority issues for prevention and response.

<sup>135</sup> For further information, see UNHCR (2002).

<sup>136</sup> See [www.unrefugees.org/usaforunhcr/uploadedfiles/Intro.pdf](http://www.unrefugees.org/usaforunhcr/uploadedfiles/Intro.pdf).

<sup>137</sup> Most UNHCR documents and officials refer to 'adolescents' rather than 'youth'. Information obtained from [www.unhcr.ch](http://www.unhcr.ch).

These priority issues include: separation, sexual exploitation, abuse and violence, military recruitment, education, specific needs of adolescents and specific issues requiring particular attention in a given region.

UNHCR supports a range of education opportunities for refugee children and youth. Traditionally, the provision of primary education is prioritized. However, UNHCR participated in a Global Education Survey revealing enormous gaps in education opportunities for adolescents and youths, especially females.<sup>138</sup> Most young refugees have not completed primary school, and those that do find few opportunities to go on to secondary or tertiary education. At times, secondary and tertiary education, vocational skills training and apprenticeships are available to young people, but they do not meet the vast need.

To help address this gap, the former High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata, worked to establish an independent fund for refugee and post-primary education. In 2000, the Refugee Education Trust (RET) was launched. RET is currently funding post-primary education projects in Pakistan, Tanzania, Guinea, Sierra Leone and Uganda. UNHCR was also involved in the establishment of the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE). Through a highly consultative process, INEE developed and recently launched the first-ever Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies (MSEE). The MSEE support the goals of Education for All and contain guidance notes for their application with regard to youth.

UNHCR also developed a Peace Education Programme supporting formal and non-formal education, with a specific component for out-of-school youth. The programme has been extended to secondary schools in Kenya and Liberia, and through non-formal education initiatives in Guinea, Liberia, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia and Eritrea.

### Programming examples: UNHCR in Sierra Leone

**In Sierra Leone**, UNHCR has worked with a range of NGOs to promote healthy behaviours by focusing on sport and psychosocial well-being. UNHCR works with the international NGO Right to Play in the Bo, Kenema and Kailahun regions to provide regular sports and play activities for refugees, IDPs and their communities. Right to Play organizes sports programmes with young people to “[provide them with] a release from the horrors of the past; keep young people occupied; and give them confidence to re-start their lives.”<sup>139</sup> Sports programmes in UNHCR camps are also used to promote school attendance, to communicate health messages and to promote healthy behaviours, especially with regard to HIV/AIDS prevention. They reportedly show strong results as an effective method of communication among young refugees, and as a means of increasing self-confidence among them.<sup>140</sup>

### 5.1.3 International Labour Organization (ILO)

The International Labour Organization (ILO) works to strengthen the capacity of governments and social partners to address youth employment problems globally, including in areas affected by armed conflict. According to the ILO:

*political, economic and socio-cultural transformations of recent times have affected young people, further exposing the vulnerability that is inherent in the transition from childhood to adulthood.*<sup>141</sup>

<sup>138</sup> See Bethke (2004).

<sup>139</sup> Peter Sampson, interviews with Right to Play, Sierra Leone, February 2005.

<sup>140</sup> Peter Sampson, interviews with UNESCO, Right To Play and UNHCR, Sierra Leone, February 2005. It should also be noted that 2005 has been declared as the year of Sports for Development for UN agencies. According to a report from the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace, “Sports programmes serve as an effective tool for social mobilization, supporting health activities such as HIV/AIDS education and immunization campaigns, [as well as] a significant economic force, providing employment and contributing to local development.” See United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport and Peace (2003), Towards Achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

<sup>141</sup> See [www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org).

The ILO hosts the Youth Employment Network (see Chapter 3) and is attempting to operationalize activities in the field. The ILO also conducts policy-oriented research on ways to more effectively integrate youth into education and work. This involves:

- documenting successful programmes for reducing the number of school dropouts and helping them to return to school;
- identifying innovative pathways from school to work, including better linkages between initial education, training and work experience and building bridges between schools and employers;
- evaluating and drawing lessons from labour market programmes for unemployed young women and men;
- providing policy advice and technical support to governments on how to develop 'second-chance' schemes for young school dropouts;
- raising awareness of successful strategies to combat youth marginalization and unemployment;
- setting up demonstration projects/pilot activities that combine training institutions and enterprises to provide apprenticeships, mentoring or work experience for young persons.<sup>142</sup>

#### 5.1.4 World Health Organization (WHO)

WHO's objective, as set out in its constitution, is the attainment by all peoples of the highest possible level of health.<sup>143</sup>

Along with its partners UNICEF and UNFPA, WHO advocates the promotion of health and development of young people in the second decade of life. The Common Agenda outlines the action needed to provide adolescents worldwide with the support and opportunities to acquire accurate information about their health needs; build the life skills needed to avoid risk-taking behaviour; obtain counselling, especially during crisis situations; have access to health services, including reproductive health services; live in a safe and supportive environment. Central to this approach is the recognition that the underlying causes of young people's health and development problems are closely related, and that the solutions to these problems are also inter-related.

The WHO has a dedicated Adolescent Health and Development Team, which operates within the Department of Child and Adolescent Health and Development. The team works in the following areas:

- Prevention and Care of Illness in Adolescents
- Nutrition in Adolescents
- Development in Adolescents
- Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health
- Adolescent-Friendly Health Services

#### Programming examples: WHO in Sierra Leone and Liberia

**In Sierra Leone**, the WHO worked with the Ministry of Health to gather comprehensive data on the mental health of the youth population. Results from surveys completed throughout Sierra Leone in 2002 indicate that more than 90 percent of young people have had a significant traumatic exposure, 50 to 75 percent of the sample have moderate symptoms, while 15 to 25 percent of them score for more severe symptoms. It is estimated that about 5 to 10 percent of young people might need men-

<sup>142</sup> See [www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/skills/youth/progr.htm](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/skills/youth/progr.htm).

<sup>143</sup> WHO defines health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

tal health interventions or at least a qualified evaluation to explore their needs. Many young people with war-related stress reactions may not need specific individual treatment, but may benefit from social recovery interventions, which focus on community and family support, collective rituals and religious support.

**In Liberia**, the WHO worked with the Ministry of Health to develop a general emergency strategy for mental health. An initial assessment of the current state of treatment for young people found similar findings to Sierra Leone (see above). Before the arrival of a WHO psychiatrist, there had been only one trained psychiatrist in the whole of Liberia. In September 2004, there was one facility in Liberia, called the Holy Ghost Mental Home, which was said to be caring for traumatized youths. When visited by investigators, young patients were found with no clothes, little food and some were chained to a wall.<sup>144</sup> Following the Sierra Leone model, a Community-Oriented Mental Health approach was used, based on an initial analysis of the overall mental health situation. Interventions focused primarily on youth and are always undertaken in coordination with the larger community, involving religious and community leaders as well as traditional healers.

## 5.2 World Bank

The World Bank states a commitment to improving the lives of children and young people by working in an integrated way to meet the challenges of youth in developing countries. This means not only working in the area of health and education, but also in areas like agriculture, business development and the reform of the justice system to make sure that the views of young people are included in decision-making processes.<sup>145</sup>

Addressing young people at a World Bank youth conference, the former president of the World Bank, James Wolfensohn, stated:

*There are six billion people in the world today; 2.8 billion are under the age of 24, and 1.8 billion under the age of 14. You cannot ignore the fact that half the world is under 24; and that ... roughly 100 million people are born every year, so that in the next 25 or 30 years, we will have 2.5 billion more young people. ... It is essential that we utilise and work with and get the views of and partner with young people. It's not an option for us. Even if you were to reject us today, we have to keep trying because there's no alternative. It also is the most effective way that we can work, to work with young people, to understand young people, and to advance programmes and to design them with you.*<sup>146</sup>

The Bank's Children and Youth (C&Y) Unit, located within the Bank's Human Development Division, plays a central role in ensuring youth engagement in the Bank's programming. The unit tends to focus more on targeting rather youth directly than their broader social context, although concern is paid to their enabling environment. By contrast, the Bank's Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction Unit addresses youth more through a social development lens, where attention to youth is treated in part as a peace and security issue.

The Bank supports youth participation in a variety of ways. It supported the creation of the Youth Employment Network, as well as the Youth Employment Summit Campaign (2002-2012), aimed at influencing national and regional policies to better tackle youth unemployment. Some short-term pro-

<sup>144</sup> Peter Sampson, interview with Dr. Soeren Buus Jensen, MD, PhD, Senior Mental Health Advisor, WHO Mental Health Program, Monrovia (Liberia), February 2005.

<sup>145</sup> See <http://youthink.worldbank.org>.

<sup>146</sup> Wolfensohn (2004).

grammes that the Bank supports specifically serve youth, such as Youth to Youth Community, Nuevas Voces, Youth for Good Governance and Youthink!

## Youth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs)

The C&Y Unit and various World Bank country offices work to ensure that the needs of young people are central to the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers.<sup>147</sup> In many countries, the Bank has introduced programmes encouraging young people to participate in the mid-term review process of the PRSPs through NGOs and special forums. The World Youth Report 2005 states:

*Seventeen of the 31 PRSPs completed between May 2002 and September 2003 give major attention to youth in their action plans. The focus in these plans is mostly on education and employment. Despite this positive trend, only six PRSPs have specifically identified youth as a group in poverty, and only 16 percent of PRSPs view young people as a focus for integrated interventions.*<sup>148</sup>

A content analysis of 31 PRSPs carried out by UN-Habitat and the YEN in Kenya shows that, while an increasing number of PRSPs in the last two years are taking into account specific needs of youth, these initiatives are often piecemeal, rarely state specific targets, budgets or benchmarks and are therefore limited in their scale and potential impact.<sup>149</sup>

The way in which young people are incorporated in PRSP frameworks is illustrated by the boxed text below, taken from the Cameroon PRSP document (2003).

### Youth in the Cameroon PRSP strategy<sup>150</sup>

360. Rapid urbanization brings the major challenge of accommodating an increasingly young population. The Cameroonian population, like that of many other African countries, is relatively youthful, with an average age of 22 years; nearly 42 percent 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 labor markets. This is a situation that calls for heightened and sustained attention by all.

361. The Government of Cameroon is well aware of the extent of the problems and is in the process of drawing an integrated urban development policy. Its objectives are to (1) improve the living conditions of urban dwellers, a majority of whom live under precarious conditions; and (2) reinforce the economic role of towns by strengthening urban infrastructures (extension, rehabilitation, and maintenance). This will not only improve living conditions, but it will also help to integrate youths, women and other groups into economic channels.

## 5.3 International donors

Several international donors have paid increasing attention to youth-related issues in the context of their policies and programmes. This review focuses specifically on two of them, namely the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ).

<sup>147</sup> The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), designed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, was conceived as a new approach to the development of low-income countries focused on sustained economic growth and poverty eradication. PRSPs are an extremely important framework for development programming, as they form the basis for assistance provided by International Financial Institutions.

<sup>148</sup> United Nations, World Youth Report (2005).

<sup>149</sup> Peter Sampson, interview with UN-Habitat, Nairobi (Kenya), November 2004.

<sup>150</sup> International Monetary Fund (2003:30-95).

### 5.3.1 United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

USAID's Youth and Conflict: A Toolkit for Prevention states:

*When young people are uprooted, jobless, intolerant, alienated and with few opportunities for positive engagement [in their respective societies], they represent a ready pool of recruits for groups seeking to mobilize violence.<sup>151</sup>*

The Toolkit defines youth as the stage in life where people are physically capable of assuming adult roles but would generally not be expected to make decisions or provide support for others. The age range that the agency uses in identifying youth is 15 to 24, although it acknowledges that this age range may vary for different societies.

The Toolkit also identifies many of the reasons why young people engage in violence in developing societies. These include: economic incentives (economic gains for young people who participate in violence); limited opportunities for constructive social and political change; inadequate public services (i.e. education); unemployment; and the breakdown of traditional family and social networks (via urbanization, forced migration and refugee crises). The framework underscores the need to understand and analyse the root causes of youth violence before attempting to propose solutions.

USAID's programmes for youth emphasize social integration and meeting the needs of all young people in many aspects of their lives, with particular regard to conflict prevention.

#### Programming examples: USAID in Sierra Leone

**In Sierra Leone**, USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives conceived of and funded the Youth Reintegration Training and Education for Peace (YRTEP) programme, which was further developed and implemented by World Vision Sierra Leone with Management Systems International. The programme targeted youth in order to reverse years of marginalization and exploitation and to support young people's empowerment. It was a two-year nationwide, non-formal education initiative for ex-combatant and non-combatant youths, aged 15 to 35, including resettled refugees and those displaced by the war. YRTEP focused simultaneously on the reintegration of war-torn communities and remedial education for young people bypassed by schooling for nearly 10 years. Young people were trained in reintegration orientation and counselling, life skills, vocational counselling, agricultural skills development, civic education and functional literacy. These young people then trained other youths in what they had learned.

About 50,000 young people and former soldiers in over 2,000 sites participated in YRTEP. The programme also included a second track called Education for Nation-building, a nationwide non-formal education initiative for public and private sector leaders. The programme's success in bringing together divided communities led to its extension and expansion to other areas.

Youths involved in the programme reported that it developed real reconciliation and leadership skills but that more help was needed to put the skills to use for livelihood development. Responding to the criticism, USAID funded the Skills Training and Employment Promotion Programme, also implemented by World Vision Sierra Leone.<sup>152</sup> This two-year programme focused on further skills development, employment, cooperation, dialogue and psychosocial support for young people.

<sup>151</sup> USAID (2004).

<sup>152</sup> Lowicki/Anderson Pillsbury (2002:95). Although the programme focused on 15-35 year-olds, older people were also allowed to participate.



As a follow-up to YRTEP, USAID funded Christian Children's Fund to implement the Skills Training and Employment Generation Programme, increasing the social reintegration of ex-combatants and other war-affected young people through community-based strategies of skills development, employment and psychosocial support. All activities are implemented in a way that is designed to stimulate cooperation between youths, ex-combatants and community members.<sup>153</sup>

### 5.3.2 Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ)

Since 1997, GTZ has implemented programmes on youth employment, young people's health, high-risk behaviour in youth, education and training, peace education for youth and crisis prevention training for young people.<sup>154</sup>

GTZ recognizes that poverty, migration, civil wars, HIV/AIDS and the breakdown of family and social systems affect young people. Hence, activities for youth are incorporated into programmes pertaining to trauma healing, health promotion, violence prevention, poverty alleviation, rural exodus and more.

According to a GTZ representative in Sierra Leone:

*The aim of youth promotion in development cooperation is to improve on a sustainable basis the living conditions of young boys and girls in developing countries. Young people are encouraged to actively contribute to changing their situation and asserting their rights. Great emphasis is placed on developing young people's potential for self-help, self-organization – in short, participation and empowerment.<sup>155</sup>*

#### Programming examples: GTZ in Sierra Leone

Since the official end of the DDR programme in 2004, GTZ has adopted an integrated and multi-sectoral strategy in relation to young people and their communities and is operating with less than two-thirds of resources available during the DDR phase. GTZ is focusing primarily on young people and their integration into the labour market and/or back into their communities. Youth-focused programmes include capacity-building, skills training, income-generating activities, peace-building and community empowerment:

- **Capacity-building** is directed at local self-help groups, farmers and community technicians, as well as Community Development Committees (CDCs) and local NGOs. GTZ interventions are all done in collaboration with local partners with the objective of handing them over to the implementing partner.
- **Skills training** aims to maximize absorption of trainees into the job market and participation in rehabilitation activities. Trainees are supported in setting up their own community-based micro-enterprises and income-generating ventures upon graduation.
- **Income-generating activities** encourage the establishment of small-scale enterprises to promote economic self-reliance. Self-help groups present their own requests to the project with a detailed business and maintenance plan before micro-projects are approved.
- **Peace-building and community empowerment** are backed by animation supervisors based in the communities. Self-help groups gradually take over responsibility for planning their own interventions in order to ensure the sustainability of activities after the end of the project.<sup>156</sup>

<sup>153</sup> Lowicki/Anderson Pillsbury (2002:95-96; 98).

<sup>154</sup> See Schell-Faucon (2002), available at [www.gtz.de](http://www.gtz.de).

<sup>155</sup> Schell-Faucon (2002) and Peter Sampson, interviews with GTZ-Sierra Leone, Sierra Leone, February 2005. During a brief visit by the author to GTZ training programmes in Waterloo, youths were actively involved in the design and implementation of skills programmes and in negotiations on resource allocation and project management. This suggested that the GTZ youth policy was being translated into practice with regard to this particular project.

<sup>156</sup> Peter Sampson, interview with GTZ-Sierra Leone, Sierra Leone, February 2005.



## 5.4 Emerging lessons learned

Representatives from UN and international agencies in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Senegal all argued for the importance of working more effectively to engage youth both as a vulnerable and resourceful community that is of key demographic and socio-political importance for peace and development. As shown above, many international agencies have recognized the importance of working with young people in conflict and post-conflict situations. However, a comprehensive framework for action is yet to emerge.

The last part of this chapter outlines a number of preliminary lessons learned emerging from desk and field research. Three specific areas are singled out for their crucial relevance to the issue of youth and violent conflict – namely education, employment and DDR.

### 5.4.1 Education

Education is a priority for young people, both to prepare them for participation within the workforce, and to instil values of citizenship, responsibility and cooperation. In various surveys, research and consultations, young people from all backgrounds had one thing in common: the desire for education.

However, many young people involved in or affected by violent conflict are receiving insufficient education services. This is due in part to the higher prioritization of education for primary school-aged children, but also to the fact that education funding is conceived as a tool for long-term development, with less attention being directed towards emergency settings.

In addition, education services that are available to adolescents and youth are not necessarily age-appropriate for their needs and may not take into account other responsibilities or interests adolescents may have, particularly the need to generate a livelihood.

Throughout the countries covered in the field research, the national curriculum was non-existent or so outdated that it amounted to the same thing. In rural areas in countries with recent conflict, teachers may have fled the country or have been killed, schools may be destroyed and materials may be scarce or entirely unavailable. Even where there are no school fees, potential students miss out on educational opportunities since they lack transportation, clothes etc.

The following key lessons learned can be highlighted:

- Education programming for youth should be linked to programming in other sectors. The critical role of education in health promotion and preparation for livelihood generation needs to be taken into account. Educational programming for adolescents should be designed to enhance the effectiveness of all programming interventions on their behalf.<sup>157</sup>
- Programming for basic education of youth should involve flexible schedules to take into account other responsibilities that young people have. They should also involve participatory methods and curricula that reflect their lives and interests and those of their communities.<sup>158</sup> Where necessary, specially adapted curricula (such as 'catch-up programmes') may be needed for young people who missed several years of school because of violent conflict.<sup>159</sup>

<sup>157</sup> Youths have said education offers both short-term and long-term alternatives to soldiering and sexual exploitation, and can provide life-saving information, for example with regard to reproductive health, gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS prevention. In addition, well-trained peer educators have been especially effective at reaching out-of-school youths with life-saving information. Peter Sampson, interviews with youth group, Dakar (Senegal), and with UNICEF Sierra Leone and Liberia, Freetown (Sierra Leone) and Monrovia (Liberia), February 2005.

<sup>158</sup> It was found that many youths do not feel comfortable attending classes with younger children; school schedules did not accommodate their responsibilities for livelihood and family and costs were prohibitive. Educational activities that maintained flexible schedules and provided childcare increased accessibility to girls and adolescent heads of household. See Lowicki/Anderson Pillsbury (2002); Lowicki (2004).

<sup>159</sup> To provide adolescents with alternatives to violence and a path to self-sufficiency, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) developed a Youth Pack program for 14 to 18 year-olds, who had little to no schooling. NRC cooperated with the Forum for African Women Educationalists, ActionAid and young people to adapt the Youth Pack program to the Sierra Leonean context. Youth Pack is one of the few adolescent- and youth-specific education-in-emergencies programmes focused on accelerated learning that is being developed and tested. See also Lowicki (2004).

### 5.4.2 Employment

Representatives from UN and international agencies in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Senegal all stated the danger of the growing number of disenfranchised young people, with little opportunities to earn their livelihoods, as a threat to stability in the entire sub-region. Youth unemployment (in itself linked to education, health and DDR in post-conflict countries) is largely seen as a security issue.

Training of various kinds appears to be the most common approach to employment-related youth programming. However, despite the reported numbers of trained youths it is difficult to measure the impact of this training. Skills training programmes have often been too short-term. While young people who opted to go back to school tended to stay in school, those who received vocational training were frequently unable to develop transferable skills within the limited programme period.<sup>160</sup>

In addition, much of this training is aimed at moving young people into the formal economy or providing them with the skills to do so. This misses an important obstacle, however: few young people are actually involved within the formal economic sector, and lack of training and education for young people is only part of the problem. Even with sufficient training programmes for a large portion of young people, the employment market in countries such as Sierra Leone could only absorb another 5 percent of these young people in addition to the 10 percent currently in formal employment.

International actors should refocus their efforts on the demand side in the economy's capacity to create jobs and not only on the supply side relating to young people and their skills as labour in the workforce. If youth employment is to be seriously addressed, training must be accompanied by entrepreneurial opportunities, governmental regulations and incentives favourable to the employment of young people, an increase in international investment and an improved macroeconomic environment.

Some of the key lessons to be learned regarding youth employment are:

- Small loans, start-up capital and tools often help young people start businesses. This needs to be accompanied by basic business skills, such as accounting, drafting business plans and knowledge of the value of saving and reinvesting.
- Market surveys are needed to determine both short-term and long-term labour and skill needs for youth. When these are undertaken in participation with young people, more viable livelihood opportunities can be created.<sup>161</sup>
- Productive skills can make young people financially independent and/or enable them to contribute to the family income, both of which will facilitate their social acceptance.
- In rural economies, income generation for young people and programme sustainability can be facilitated by the production of agricultural tools by local blacksmiths because the tools can then be maintained and repaired locally.<sup>162</sup>

### 5.4.3 Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR)

The reintegration of ex-combatants is a key priority in consolidating peace. While there are a number of serious obstacles to successful reintegration programming, an important lesson learned is that the focus has to be wider than just the ex-combatants themselves. Programmes providing services to former combatants only can cause resentment from the rest of the community and be regarded as a reward to those who took up arms.

<sup>160</sup> As one person interviewed commented, "Is it realistic to learn to become a carpenter in 6 months?" Peter Sampson, interviews with SCF-UK, Freetown (Sierra Leone), February 2005.

<sup>161</sup> See Lowicki/Anderson Pillsbury (2002); Lowicki (2004).

<sup>162</sup> Peter Sampson, interview with FAO Country Director, Freetown (Sierra Leone), February 2005. According to the FAO Country Director, "In addition to ensuring sustainability, ex-combatants are performing well as apprentices to blacksmiths. The relatively small programme aimed at the production of farm tools and apprenticeships seem to have been more successful than many of the large scale DDR programmes."

In Liberia, for example, insufficient community sensitization as well as a lack of essential services undermined attempts to encourage communities to accept youths who wished to return to their home villages.<sup>163</sup> Consequently, a considerable number of young people have remained in the capital, while former soldiers have returned to their units, or migrated to neighbouring countries.<sup>164</sup>

Often, young people were not able to find employment opportunities after finishing programmes. Upon completion of training, without entrepreneurial skills or investment capital, many young people turned to illicit activities, while former combatants continued to rely on commanders for economic support.

Most demobilization and reintegration programmes tend to almost exclusively focus on young boys and men, neglecting young girls who may have been combatants, slaves or camp followers.

Key lessons to be learned include:

- Programmes should take into account both the young ex-combatants and the wider communities. A dual approach of benefits and sensitization for the communities into which young ex-combatants are being reinserted, as well as for the ex-combatants themselves, helps to reduce tensions. Beyond the question of services provided, it has been learned that community sensitization and consultation prior to reintegration is key if communities are to accept youths who wish to return to their homes.
- Follow-up activities are crucial for long-term success.
- The special needs of young women, particularly those with children fathered by combatants and therefore frequently rejected by their communities, require concerted attention and funding.

## 5.5 Conclusions

International activism and support for youth falls under many headings, reflecting a wide range of institutional mandates, interests and funding streams, as well as the immense diversity of experiences that 'youth' represents. Support for youth programming per se is not the norm. Youth may qualify for support as children, women, former child soldiers, AIDS orphans, refugees, unaccompanied minors, heads of household, young mothers and other groups. Intended impacts range from conflict prevention to health, psychosocial recovery and economic development. Youth programming takes many forms, ranging from civic participation initiatives and peace-building to vocational and life skills training, to peer-to-peer outreach for HIV/AIDS prevention.

Desk and field research with a number of international organizations working in conflict, post-conflict and/or transition and development settings reveals significant action on behalf of and with young people affected by violent conflict. However, motivations and mandates guiding this action vary greatly, and there is no clear consensus on why it is important and urgent to work with youth or how best to do it. International cooperation to expand promising practices is highly limited, and humanitarian and development action with young people in and after violent conflict remains highly under-supported and inconsistent.

Key findings reveal that effective work with young people affected by violent conflict is essential and achievable and must be youth-driven and youth-informed. A diverse set of programme results shows

<sup>163</sup> As one Liberian civil society leader said: "Even if the community was ready to accept these young people, what do they do back in the village? There might be a school, but if they are lucky enough to have the building, it is doubtful that the teachers are still there. And how will they earn their living? And where will they live? While the situation in the capital and many of these interim centres is sub-standard, it is paradise compared to what waits for them up-country."

When asked if it was possible to reintegrate these youths into their communities, he responded, "In the medium term, if we help to create minimum living standards, including schools, housing, and jobs then we can reintegrate many of these young people into their communities. But for the former militia members, those with blood on their hands, they may never be able to go back. And there are few international programmes that address their needs on a long-term basis. So, they will continue to fight, maybe not today, but tomorrow, maybe not here, but next door." Peter Sampson, interview, Monrovia (Liberia), February 2005.

<sup>164</sup> Peter Sampson, interviews with Oxfam, GTZ and Don Bosco Homes, Liberia, February 2005.

progress in many areas, which should be expanded. Both mainstreamed and targeted approaches to supporting youth that account for age, gender and other differences are needed. They should be informed by a comprehensive framework for action that accounts for the diverse circumstances of youth and ensures all sectors of response are integrated across phases of conflict and recovery. Many challenges remain in order to bridge gaps in policy and practice, improve coordination between humanitarian and development actors and increase funding for work with youth. These and other barriers continue to undermine youth survival, capacities and roles, and thereby the short-term and long-term well-being of their entire societies.

Key themes emerged that require further discussion and action, including the need for improved understanding of the range of rationales for working with young people affected by armed conflict and the development of a comprehensive framework for action with youth that guides effective, coordinated responses. Rationales for work with young people go beyond the need to prevent their involvement in armed conflict or to support their roles as peace builders. They include the need to support a diverse range of other roles young people play in their societies. Additional cooperation is needed between humanitarian and development actors to ensure holistic attention to youth across all sectors of programming.





# 6

## Conclusions and recommendations on the way forward

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*What does civil society mean if the majority of its members feel that they don't belong to it?*

— Mark Sommers<sup>165</sup>

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This chapter pulls together the main findings of the research presented in the preceding chapters. After discussing tentative conclusions and their implications for policies and programmes, it proposes some ideas for creating a new framework to address the challenges posed by youth and violent conflict, and then offers specific recommendations for policy and programming.

### 6.1 Towards a comprehensive framework for youth and violent conflict

The review sets out to better understand the relationship between youth and violent conflict and to array the types of strategies and programmes put in place by UNDP, UN agencies and others. What clearly emerges is that the 'problem' of youth and violent conflict is a serious concern to many international actors, and this has led to a myriad of different responses.

However, as outlined in Chapter 3, there is an absence of a working framework for youth and violent conflict, reflecting a lack of consensus on how to understand the issue. The assumptions that are found in existing policy frameworks and programmes are often deterministic (particularly the idea that conflict is driven by a small number of factors such as youth unemployment and a demographic 'youth bulge'). The dynamics that generate violent conflict are more complex and less automatic.

UNDP and other actors in the UN system, along with donors, have been trying to address some of the challenges of the situation of youth. Activities have ranged from traditional and special education measures, volunteering and peace training to youth employment schemes and reintegration of ex-combatants. For the most part, these efforts have been small-scale, time-limited and under-resourced.

A more comprehensive framework is needed with urgency. Above all, such a framework for youth and violent conflict should stress the importance of 'doing no harm'. This requires an accurate definition and characterization of young people and their relationship to violent conflict. Agencies should also be

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<sup>165</sup> Sommers (2003: 12).

realistic and avoid generating false expectations that the situation of youth is going to be vastly improved by means of development programmes alone.

In place of *ad hoc* and small level interventions with grand ambitions, a framework is needed that is holistic and crosscutting, that reflects the importance of taking into account the necessity of working at multiple levels of society (individual, households, communities) and that links programmes that directly target youth with those that benefit youth indirectly.

Furthermore, a new framework must place more emphasis on the social and economic challenges that youth face, rather than assuming that young people are themselves the problem. The widely accepted emphasis on training is important, as is employment generation through the public or private sector and developing entrepreneurship among young people who are outside school or the formal economy. However, the youth employment challenge is larger than just creating jobs; it concerns the fundamental and challenging problem of how to establish functioning economies, to promote and redistribute growth and to generate government revenue. If youth employment is to be seriously addressed, training must be accompanied by governmental regulations and incentives favourable to the employment of young people, an increase in international investment and an improved macroeconomic environment.

Finally, a new framework must take into account the necessity for programme design and implementation to be context-specific. While programmes can always benefit from the lessons learned in other parts of the world, there are no approaches or methodologies that are universally applicable to the challenges facing youth. The critical measure of success for any youth programme is how the programme addresses the specific reality of youth within any given country. In the preparatory stages, needs assessments should be situation-based, age-specific and participatory, and should investigate the resourcefulness of young people. They should account for and build upon the coping mechanisms young people develop during emergencies and in the periods following conflict.

A better-informed focus on youth and its relationship to violent conflict provides a different way of thinking about development. It reminds us that the transition from childhood, through the experience of adolescence to becoming an adult, is critical for the family, community and political structures that underpin society. This means re-conceptualizing development and societal transformation through the processes whereby children become youths, youths attain adulthood and adulthood is fully realized. Developing a framework for youth and violent conflict is useful for conflict prevention, but its significance is greater in its potential contribution to building a durable peace and for development itself.

Below, the key challenges for youth policy and programmes are outlined, as emerging from this review.

### **6.1.1 Defining youth**

Both policy and the programming it informs often treat youth as a homogenous category that isolates this particular age group from the rest of society. Youth is a complex reality – not a generic label. Approaches based on conceptions of youth as a self-defining, cohesive group are informed by a stereotyped vision and therefore are bound to lead to flawed responses. Age-based definitions must be complemented by an understanding of youth as a transition from childhood to adulthood. Youth strategies and programmes should take into consideration the inherent complexity of the notion of youth as a social and functional construct.

### **6.1.2 Defining the problem to be addressed**

One significant obstacle to designing and implementing relevant programmes for young people in conflict situations is the perception that the adolescent males and young men involved are personally threatening to those seeking to help them. This perception underlies programming which treats this group as essentially a security threat to be disarmed, distracted and kept occupied.



It is important not to treat youth as merely a security issue, particularly because the majority of young people do not get drawn into violence. National and international agencies dealing with youth should recognize that youth violence (and the participation of youth in violent conflict as a specific manifestation of it) is a complicated phenomenon, which should be addressed at multiple levels of society.<sup>166</sup> Working with young people is necessary not only because they can resort to violence if ignored, but because allowing young people to channel their vitality in positive directions can lead to outcomes that are beneficial to the whole of society.

The causes of the youth crisis are largely exogenous to youth – they have much to do with the shrinking of economic, social and political prospects that young people are confronted with. To a large degree, the ‘youth crisis’ is to be understood as a crisis of the transition from youth to adulthood. Young people in most developing countries have few education and employment opportunities, and thus decreasing chances of establishing themselves as adults in an increasingly competitive world. Excluded from decision-making, they may see the mainstream political channels as irrelevant. Their responses can be violent or non-violent, but their actions often reflect a lack of status, and are taken in an attempt to renegotiate the youth passage to adulthood. The problem, therefore, is to increase both the concrete opportunities available to young people and their sense of inclusion in society.

Responses need to take a comprehensive approach that deals with economic, social and political challenges, rather than working from the assumption that young people are inherently a problem.

### **6.1.3 Promoting a gender-sensitive approach**

In analytical and policy frameworks, programmes and activities, girls and young women are often mentioned *en passant* and then they disappear from the picture. On the ground, “youth programmes tend to attract far more adolescent boys and young men than adolescent girls and young women.”<sup>167</sup> This tendency to overlook girls and young women emerges primarily because the relationship between girls and violent conflict is not well understood.

As a result, youth strategies and programmes tend to adopt a gender-biased approach that focuses on male youths as actual and potential generators of violence, and female youths as actual and potential victims. Stereotypes need to be broken with regard to gender issues and how to deal with them.

Policies and programmes should be based on the awareness that the priorities of males and females are different, that boys are likely to be much more visible and vocal and that their roles in society and their own expectations are different. Responding to the needs of girls and young women is not merely a question of ‘involving girls more’ in the implementation stage. Similarly, responses aimed at boys must not see them primarily as potential perpetrators of violence. It is therefore crucial that a gender-sensitive approach be adopted when planning, implementing and evaluating policies and programmes.

### **6.1.4 Promoting meaningful participation**

While young people constitute a majority of the population in some countries, their majority status is not reflected in the distribution of recognition, access to education/employment or their economic/political position in relation to other groups in society. For example, although young people constitute a majority of voting-age citizens in Africa, very few elected officials are under 30. Often, youth wings of political parties are used merely as tools to amass political power. Moreover, cultural norms that value the leadership of elders in the community and in politics might create a generational conflict between a youth majority and older generations. The mass disenfranchisement of youth constitutes one of the key stumbling blocks in the development process, the transition from war to peace and the prevention of violent conflict. Young people have neither been recognized as legitimate agents of change, nor have they been empowered or capacitated to fulfil this responsibility.

<sup>166</sup> See conclusions by Benvenuti (2003:36): “Without these structural interventions, the problem of youth violence may possibly be contained, but it is unlikely to be eradicated.”

<sup>167</sup> Sommers (2001:16).

Whilst donors and international aid agencies have recognized the need for greater participation of youth in projects, the gap between intention and practice can be quite large. Many adolescents are forced prematurely into adult roles and responsibility through war, social upheaval and increasingly the HIV/AIDS crisis. In this context, Jane Lowicki notes:

*participatory methodologies involving young people without their having a significant level of control over inputs and outcomes are absurd and belittling... While participatory processes can empower young people, they can also further manipulate them, depending on the level to which adolescents are consulted and able to make choices – full participation goes beyond consultation to opportunities for leadership.*<sup>168</sup>

For maximum effectiveness, youth participation should go beyond consultation to real, meaningful involvement where young people are viewed not only as beneficiaries or targets of assistance but as decision-makers. At the same time, parents, teachers and community leaders should be involved in projects to ensure sustainability.

In trying to increase youth participation, UN organizations appear to have placed considerable emphasis on youth organizations, youth NGOs and leaders. Though an attractive option in terms of accessibility, in practice there are several problems with this approach. First, youth movements might replicate existing societal patterns, and be dominated by the most articulate and socially engaged young people. Engaging with them does little or nothing for the vast majority of young people – often the most marginalized ones – who do not belong to youth organizations.

Secondly, more attention should be paid to how the large number of round tables, forums and workshops, as well as the resulting declarations, are translated into actual decision-making. So far, the youth leadership forums and summits that have emerged in various parts of the world were mostly consultative exercises: young people were free to say what they wanted and the power structures were free to ignore what they said.

It is essential that mechanisms be created that make youth participation part of decision-making structures on an ongoing, sustainable basis. Both decision-makers and programming specialists must learn to see their role as working **with** youth to design programmes rather than designing programmes **for** them. This requires a shift in thinking from consulting youth to putting young people, in all their diversity, at the centre of the process for developing policy and programmes.

However, while more meaningful participation of youth is necessary, it is also insufficient to produce a noticeable improvement in young people's lives without greater investment in development.

### **6.1.5 Recognizing the importance of working with youth**

Comprehensive programming, based on a more complete view of youth's potential, can be both costly and lengthy. This is a serious issue given the short-term nature of crisis funding, and the limited funding available. Such funding for young people as is available often needs to be divided between children and young adults, each of which may require very different programming approaches. Programming for young adults may be harder to 'sell' compared to programming for children, particularly if they are seen as supporting people who should take care of themselves.

Undertaking a reliable assessment of the youth situation in a given time or place throws up its own methodological difficulties. These include the mobility of youth (relative to other age groups), cultural attitudes that prevent young people, and especially girls, from speaking their mind. If the programming approach is one based on involving youth partners, there may be problems in identifying individuals who can speak for their peers and who are acceptable to them.

<sup>168</sup> Lowicki (2002:33-35).

In some post-conflict situations, youth needs fall into the gap between humanitarian and development assistance. While literacy training can be important for employment and thus security, it is not life-saving and therefore not classified as humanitarian; in contrast, skills training projects within demobilization programmes are considered to be humanitarian but they are not sustained long enough to have any real benefit. This gap is compounded by funding shortfalls in post-conflict situations, with fewer resources available once the humanitarian crisis is considered to be over. The international community should recognize the building and protection of livelihood strategies for adolescents and adults in emergencies as a crucial component of a humanitarian response and should act to intervene earlier. An earlier response may help prevent adolescents' conscription into military forces, prostitution and exploitative labour practices.

## **6.2 Recommendations on the way forward**

### **6.2.1 Policy**

1. Leading UN agencies, such as UNDP and UNICEF, the World Bank, donors and NGOs should institute a consultative process to determine how the international community can help governments and populations respond to the challenge of youth and violent conflict.
2. The conflict prevention agenda should adopt a more sophisticated understanding of youth, both as a factor in violent conflict and as agents of peaceful change in societies. If governments and societies bear the primary responsibility for conflict prevention and peace-building, young people should have an important role in these efforts.

### **6.2.2 Programming**

The following recommendations suggest a best practices approach to any type of programming, whether specifically targeting youth or integrating a youth dimension into traditional programming.

1. Adopt a working definition of youth that accounts for their diversity and does not treat them as one homogenous group. Programmes and activities need to specify who they mean by youth and which youth they are trying to reach.
2. Understand that youth is a fluid category marking the transition from childhood to adulthood, where identities multiply and shift, and contradictions are intrinsic to the process. Programmes need to be context-specific, and they should be continually evaluated to ensure they remain pertinent to the evolving needs of young people, the challenges they face and the mechanisms they adopt to cope with their environment.
3. Place youth at the centre of the process, from the assessment of the problem, through programme design and implementation to monitoring and evaluation. Youth participation needs to move beyond the focus on youth activists and youth organizations towards involving the most marginalized young people.
4. Do not treat youth as an isolated category. Targeting programmes to young people does not mean identifying them as something disconnected from their societies. Holistic and crosscutting approaches offer the most useful framework.
5. Ensure that girls and young women do not 'disappear' by recognizing that youth includes young men and young women, boys and girls. In some contexts, girls and young women may be harder to reach, but this obstacle should not be an excuse for overlooking them. The crisis of society concerns young women as much as young men, with gender-specific consequences. A gender-sensitive approach

involves more than just inviting more girls to participate, it requires a better understanding of the gender dimension of youth.

6. Above all, ensure a 'do no harm' approach that does not create false expectations among young people with promises of projects and funding that will suddenly and visibly improve their lives. The challenge is immense; success will be limited and partial. Programming to improve the situation of young people will not be easy and there are many risks of failure. Programmes should adopt realistic objectives: ambitious wish lists of activities that are unlikely to materialize suggest naivety and are misleading to young people.
7. Beyond youth-specific programmes, ensure that mainstream development programmes and strategies are conflict-sensitive and do not contribute to the conditions and motivations that encourage young people to engage in violence and to withdraw from society. Anything that increases or aggravates feelings of distrust, resentment or loss of status is likely to affect youth more than other age groups. International actors must consider how their efforts are perceived by youth in addition to the intended outcomes and impacts.
8. Collaboration amongst international agencies is a prerequisite. The issue of youth and violent conflict is not the purview of any single agency or organization. The issue cuts across mandates and agendas, and the magnitude of the problem requires the contributions of all actors.

Albania Support to Security Sector Reform (SSSR) Programme	
<b>Objective:</b>	To increase awareness of dangers related to small arms and light weapons (SALW) and other human security issues among school children.
<b>Target beneficiaries:</b>	Children aged 6 to 18
<b>Duration:</b>	4 months (2002)
<b>Budget:</b>	Information not available
<b>Description:</b>	<p>Many of the dangers that children face in Albania are connected to the prevalence of small arms and light weapons. Although weapons collection activities have been largely successful, and basic mechanisms for eventual national control are now in place, it is estimated that 200,000 SALW are still in the hands of the civilian population. These weapons can turn simple arguments into deadly conflicts, facilitate criminal activities or be misfired and kill their handlers. Oftentimes, children are the unfortunate victims of SALW misuse. Security challenges that are tied to the proliferation of SALW in Albania are human trafficking, prostitution, drugs and blood feuds.</p> <p>In 2002, UNDP launched the Small Arms and Light Weapons Control project to undertake SALW collection and control activities in Albania. The SSSR programme was created not only to address the tools of violence, but also to develop the components of civil society necessary for sustainable security.</p> <p>In order to address these twin issues, the SSSR programme was divided into two components: (i) Community Safety and Security; and (ii) Police Transparency and Accountability.</p> <p>The SSSR programme implemented awareness education in 21 schools in 5 regions and reached 18,000 students between April and July 2004. By bringing police and other experts into schools to discuss pressing security issues, the SSSR programme aimed at making Albania a safer place for children. Additional outcomes were an improvement of the image of the police and the development of sustainable relationships between important institutions of civil society.</p>

**Objective:** To promote, support and complement efforts towards the empowerment of young people in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH).

**Target beneficiaries:** Young people

**Duration:** 1999-present

**Budget:** Information not available

**Description:** The IYP is intended to contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

IYP involves four major components:

- Institution building at municipal and state level;
- Confidence and capacity building for young individuals and youth organizations;
- Local economic development and promotion of youth entrepreneurship;
- Establishment of a youth volunteer centre.

The programme started in the late 1990s focusing on community level reconciliation. A major overall objective of the IYP is to assist the development of a national youth policy in BiH and the associated institutional arrangements. To this end, the programme took the bold step of establishing thematic working groups involving youth branches of all political parties in BiH, as well as civil society youth organizations focusing on specific youth issues and able to provide specific recommendations. In 2002, a second phase added policy and institutional components while retaining a grassroots component.

Building on its extensive experience in working with youth leaders on different capacity building and advocacy issues, the programme is currently in the process of spearheading a new initiative: The Model of Council of Ministers consisting of a range of capacity building and empowerment activities that are aimed at young people coming from political parties and youth NGOs. It has the following objectives:

- Enhance the sense of ownership among youths towards political decisions of the Council of Ministers;
- Incorporate youth views in Council of Ministers decisions;
- Build capacities of young people to actively participate in the decision-making processes in BiH.

The aim is to foster increased and direct cooperation and dialogue between the youth branches of all the political parties in an operational manner, thus strengthening reconciliation among the younger generations while encouraging more active interest in the political system.

Colombia	Reconciliation and Development Programme (REDES)
<b>Objective:</b>	To link development with conflict prevention and recovery by tackling poverty and strengthening local governance and local institutions.
<b>Target beneficiaries:</b>	Children and youth (youth component)
<b>Duration:</b>	Since 2003
<b>Budget:</b>	280,000 USD (youth component)
<b>Description:</b>	<p>UNDP Colombia aims to integrate conflict prevention and peace-building into its own programming as well as into public policy. It has developed the comprehensive conflict prevention programme REDES, which is supported by BCPR and the Swedish International Development Agency.</p> <p>REDES started in 3 regions of Colombia (Oriente Antioqueño, Meta and Montes de María) and may be expanded to other parts of the country. Starting at a local level permitted region-specific analysis of the conflict. Building alliances between civil society, the government and the private sector from the community level up, helped to promote active citizen participation in government and community-based organizations.</p> <p>Among its components, REDES has an ongoing youth project in the Montes de María region set to promote children's and youth rights. The project is being executed by an NGO called Fundación Antonio Restrepo Barco and is supported by the national government as well as by UN agencies such as UNDP and IOM.</p> <p>In the first phase of the project, a mapping of risk/vulnerabilities affecting children and youth rights was undertaken. Target groups and beneficiaries were also identified with an emphasis on municipalities with the greatest percentage of conflict-affected children and young people, the quality of education infrastructure and drop out rates and young people with no access to rural economic opportunities.</p> <p>The current phase aims to create incentives to prevent the recruitment of children and youths into the armed conflict. Activities such as providing access to financial and technical assistance, business support and the provision of access to knowledge and information have been accompanied by the promotion of open dialogue on children's and youth rights. The third stage of the project will feature an inclusive and participatory process for formulating public policy on children and youth rights, with the particular aim of preventing the forced recruitment of young people into armed groups.</p> <p>The final phase focuses on identifying best practices and lessons learnt for the possible replication of the project in other areas of the country.</p> <p>All four phases emphasize support to initiatives oriented towards increasing democratic security, competitiveness and development, and the strengthening of social equity.</p>



FYR of Macedonia	Youth Employment Support (YES) Programme
<b>Objective:</b>	To assist in responding to the high rates of unemployment and the social exclusion of large segments of the population.
<b>Target beneficiaries:</b>	Unemployed young people aged 18 to 30
<b>Duration:</b>	2001-2003
<b>Budget:</b>	2,468,421 USD
<b>Description:</b>	<p>The YES Programme intended to support the efforts of the Government of the FYR Macedonia to alleviate the prevailing economic insecurity and social exclusion, concentrated largely among the youth population. This objective was strongly linked to the goal of building capacity for governance at the local level, strengthening civil society and improving the living standard of the target population. The YES Programme was funded by UNDP, USAID and the Government of Norway.<sup>169</sup></p> <p>The programme covered all local government units (124) of the FYR Macedonia and reached a total of 2,043 workers. It focused on locally initiated projects for small, labour intensive public works, which generate employment opportunities for unemployed youths between the ages of 18 through 30 who comprise 50 percent of the unemployed nationally.</p> <p>The public works and activities were selected according to locally identified priority needs. Local communities identified and planned for activities responding to perceived citizens needs. Municipal authorities were responsible for organizing community involvement in identifying priority needs, recruiting the youths for employment in the activities identified and supervising the implementation of their respective activities.</p> <p>While emphasis was given to socially vulnerable groups, unemployed young people with higher levels of education and skills were also eligible for inclusion in the employment programme for positions requiring professional expertise. Equitable inclusion of women and of minorities was promoted throughout the project.</p> <p>The programme included the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small, labour intensive public works, which generate employment opportunities for unemployed youths;</li> <li>• National and local public awareness campaigns;</li> <li>• Provision of vocational training;</li> <li>• Funding to match contributions mobilized from the private sector towards funding municipality activities and/or other inputs into the programme.</li> </ul> <p>Vocational training was an integral part of the activities to develop the capacities of participants and provide them with marketable skills to facilitate their entry into</p>

<sup>169</sup> UNDP (300,000 USD), USAID (2,000,000 USD), Government of Norway (168,000 USD).

- Description continued:** the labour force and the future attainment of sustainable employment. Also notable was a Matching Funds component that aimed at
- creating temporary employment in municipalities with a low level of social development and high unemployment;
  - testing mechanisms for creating employment through innovative initiatives of local organizations.

Although the component attracted a considerable amount of local municipal funds, the private sector contributed only 1 percent of the total allocated funds. Despite the weak state of the private sector in Macedonia, the evaluation report (March 2003) considered this the only area where additional efforts would have produced more results, and suggested that a greater role of the private sector and public-private partnerships has considerable potential for youth employment generation schemes.

Kenya	Linking Vocational Training to Industry to Enhance Youth Employment Project
<b>Objective:</b>	To generate employment opportunities for youths by strengthening the linkages between the informal and formal work sector.
<b>Target beneficiaries:</b>	Young people
<b>Duration:</b>	2004-2008
<b>Budget:</b>	Information not available
<b>Description:</b>	<p>The precursor to the current project, the Youth Linkage programme (1999-2003) aimed to link technical training to industry needs. As implementing agency of this project, the Federation of Kenya Employers sensitized its members to accept students from selected national polytechnics and universities for field placements, and allow their tutors to work closely with the firms to help bridge the gap between training and prevailing industrial requirements. This led to the placement of over 3000 students in industry, and at the end of five years over 60 percent of them were absorbed in those industries as employees.</p> <p>Current efforts linking training with employment are being carried out in the context of the Linking Vocational Training to Industry to Enhance Youth Employment Project. Due to the economic slowdown in Kenya in the last decade, the majority of jobs for youths and women are being created in the informal sector.</p> <p>This project therefore aims to strengthen the linkages between the formal and informal sector to unlock the potential of the informal sector for generating youth employment. In order to achieve this, the project aims to bridge the skill gap between the informal and formal sectors, enhance job placements and develop and implement sub-contracting instruments and arrangements between the formal and informal sectors.</p>

Latvia	Co-ordinated Support to Young People's Health and Development <sup>170</sup>
<b>Objective:</b>	To limit the spread of HIV among people under the age of 25 in Latvia.
<b>Target beneficiaries:</b>	School children aged 6 to 18
<b>Duration:</b>	2001-2003
<b>Budget:</b>	426,340 USD
<b>Description:</b>	<p>The statistics on youth health show that young people in Latvia have alarming rates of HIV and other STDs, and face problems related to drug abuse as well as increasing rates of suicide.</p> <p>The project develops unified training programmes on peer education with nation-wide and regional involvement of NGOs as well as government institutions. The aim is to promote the integration of life-skills education into school curricula with emphasis on HIV prevention and reproductive health issues. The project also expands the audiences for peer education training on reproductive health issues and HIV/AIDS to vulnerable young people in out-of-school settings.</p> <p>The project will equip young people with the necessary tools to protect themselves from HIV infection and to address their health concerns. The project has five sub-goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the knowledge of young people on sexual and reproductive health issues, including HIV/AIDS, through the provision of peer education to young people. This includes the development of informative and training materials on peer education, increasing the capacity of NGOs working with youth in Latvia (training in peer education) and assisting them in implementing peer education projects locally.</li> <li>• Strengthen the work of NGOs working with particularly vulnerable young people through specially designed and adjusted peer education programmes on HIV/AIDS and reproductive health. This includes collaboration among four NGO's, the development of pilot training materials and the implementation of peer education training projects.</li> <li>• Strengthen youth-friendly approaches to health services delivery and linking these services to NGOs working on youth health and development. This component includes developing a Youth Friendly Health Services Delivery training material package for professionals and information material for policy makers, young people and the general public. Training courses for health care providers will be conducted in several regions.</li> </ul>

<sup>170</sup> For additional information resources, refer to [www.aidsnet.lv](http://www.aidsnet.lv).

**Description continued:**

- Integrate a life-skills education approach on reproductive health and HIV/AIDS into school curricula. This component includes the development of a life-skills education training package on HIV/AIDS and reproductive health for schoolteachers.
- Develop a regional network for youth health and development in the Baltic States. The leading implementing agencies will receive training and information so they can serve as regional resource centres.

Lesotho	Establishment of the National Environment Youth Corps
<b>Objective:</b>	To provide employment opportunities for youth and to address the serious problem of land degradation.
<b>Target beneficiaries:</b>	Unemployed youths
<b>Duration:</b>	Information not available
<b>Budget:</b>	Information not available
<b>Description:</b>	<p>Poverty in Lesotho is closely related to environmental degradation, especially in rural areas. The project assisted the government to set up a mechanism for employing young people to work in projects and activities that address environmental concerns and promote environmental awareness, and at the same time contribute significantly to youth employment and self-employment.</p> <p>The project addressed two specific problem areas which are priority concerns for the government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• creation of employment opportunities for young people and continued income generation after project completion;</li> <li>• rehabilitation of degraded land, maintenance of reclaimed areas and general protection of the environment.</li> </ul> <p>The project targeted unemployed school leavers to promote an environmentally aware and sensitive youth. The programme educated youth with regard to the environment and how to protect it. Young people were taught how to prevent land degradation as well as how to rehabilitate and reclaim already degraded soil. The project also addressed poverty alleviation by engaging youth in income generating activities such as the production and sale of tree seedlings, recycling and off-farm activities.</p>

**Description continued:** The project activities directly benefited farmers with protected and rehabilitated lands, city dwellers with a cleaner environment as well as road users and indirectly the government, NGOs, village councils and the private sector.

The establishment of the National Environment Youth Corps for 1500 to 3000 young people aimed at the following end results:

- Sustainable productivity restored to previously degraded areas;
- Greater environmental awareness both amongst policy makers and local people;
- Programme of environmental education and public awareness promoted and established through the ministries, NGOs and the private sector;
- Network of environmental activities established throughout the country supported by the publication of a newsletter;
- On the job training for youths in natural resource management.

**Mozambique**

## **National Integrated Programme for Social Action, Employment and Youth**

**Objective:** To increase the social and economic assets of people living in absolute poverty.

### **Target**

**beneficiaries:** Youths as part of poverty stricken communities

**Duration:** 2001-2006

**Budget:** 2,180,000 USD

**Description:** The project supports the strengthening of the government's capacity to coordinate the planning, formulation, budgeting and implementation of programmes outlined in the Action Plan for the Reduction of Absolute Poverty to ensure a direct impact on local communities, particularly the most vulnerable groups, as well as the development of feedback mechanisms to improve pro-poor policy-making.

The beneficiaries are people living in absolute poverty, with special attention paid to the most vulnerable groups, such as women, young people, children, the elderly, the disabled and people and households affected by HIV/AIDS.

The immediate objective is to increase and improve the capacity of the communities to access resources – training and capital – for the development of their full productive potential, thus improving their livelihoods.

**Description continued:**

The project employs a twofold strategic approach:

- creation of an enabling environment for pro-poor rural development;
- support to the organization, capacity building and empowerment of the poor themselves to address poverty with the resources at their grasp.

Activities include:

- capacity development within the government at central and local level to plan and implement poverty reduction initiatives;
- social mobilization at the grassroots level;
- support for the formation of community associations and provision of seed capital;
- technical assistance and training for the initiation of income generation activities.

Palestinian Territories	Community-Based Youth Participation and Development Programme (SHAREK) <sup>171</sup>
<b>Objective:</b>	To involve Palestinian youth as active, dynamic and responsible participants in community development.
<b>Target beneficiaries:</b>	Youths aged 14 to 20
<b>Duration:</b>	Since 1996
<b>Budget:</b>	Information not available
<b>Description:</b>	<p>The UNDP Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People (PAPP) and the Government of Switzerland launched Sharek in 1996 in order to empower young people to fully participate and contribute to the development of Palestinian society. Due to its continuous successful work, Sharek Youth Forum became an independent organization in 2003, pursuing the same objectives in a wider framework.</p> <p>Sharek designs and carries out youth development projects, which support and build up capacities of young people by addressing education, employment opportunities, sports as well as information and communication technology. Sharek chooses its projects based on actual needs and ideas expressed by youths and aims at enhancing expertise of young people in order to encourage and enhance their active participation in the process of youth development.</p>

<sup>171</sup> Sharek means 'participation' in Arabic. For a detailed list of initiatives, see [www.sharek.org](http://www.sharek.org). The project description has been adapted from the Sharek website.

**Description continued:**

The project has the following key objectives:

- To strive for encouraging volunteerism among young people and induce the participants to take an active part in the design and implementation process of educational, social and cultural projects;
- To develop political, economic, social and cultural capabilities and capacities for Palestinian youth;
- To contribute to the reduction of the high unemployment rate among youth in Palestine;
- To strengthen and develop the capacities, leadership and institutional structure of regional organizations, especially youth organizations.

The programme rests on the assumption that young people understand more than any other party about their problems, needs, rehabilitation requirements and development priorities and therefore should participate in identifying and addressing those needs and priorities. Between 1997 and 2003, the Sharek programme funded over 200 youth clubs and voluntary agencies with a youth focus. Sharek has provided a model of youth engagement where young people are not beneficiaries but agents of change capable of realizing their creative energies and with the capacity to mobilize and plan together. One of the innovative ideas was a tutoring programme of university students with younger high school students to improve education as well as building trust and confidence. Other activities included a youth-run legal counselling centre and a youth and media network.

The long-term approach and successes of the project have caught the attention of other donor organizations, attracting support and resources from the Government of Japan (200,000 USD grant for summer camps), a municipality in Belgium (117,000 EUR for employment generation activities for young women in the Bethlehem district), the Near East Foundation, USAID (450,000 USD for job creation) and the United Nations Volunteers. The Ministry of Youth and Sports showed its regard for the project when it called upon it to lead the process of consultations on as well as the drafting of a new and improved youth law.

Although UNDP retains an important advisory role in Sharek's development, the project has also been an important learning exercise that highlighted obstacles to the participation of girls (such as parental resistance, security questions), capacity gaps in youth organizations as well as a lack of understanding of youth needs by the community.



Serbia and Montenegro	Rapid Employment Programme (REP) in South Serbia
<b>Objective:</b>	To create immediate job opportunities for unemployed people, especially youths, in infrastructure restoration projects so as to contribute to the peace and stabilization process and the recovery of the local economy.
<b>Target beneficiaries:</b>	6,000 workers to be employed on short-term, high impact sub-projects
<b>Duration:</b>	12 months (2001)
<b>Budget:</b>	4,000,000 EUR
<b>Description:</b>	<p>The REP was designed to contribute to the efforts of national authorities towards ethnic reconciliation and social and economic stabilization in South Serbia. This employment creation/income generation programme targeted mainly unskilled labour in rural areas and vulnerable groups of the urban population. The immediate objectives of the project were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To identify small infrastructure projects such as repairing roads, houses and public buildings, cleaning water beds, repairing electric power and water supply lines as well as cleaning the environment and engaging in reforestation projects with active participation of villagers and municipalities;</li> <li>• To locally recruit a significant number of unemployed people. Due to the diverse ethnic balance in each one of the four municipalities, the recruitment process was closely monitored in order to ensure that vulnerable groups, ethnic minorities and young people would be the principal beneficiaries;</li> <li>• To enhance the organizational capacities of villagers and improve communications and relations between villagers and in the municipality, through a common engagement in the infrastructure improvement projects and through networking channels created by the REP between the communities and the municipal representatives;</li> <li>• To improve skills of workers as well as of local and municipal representatives, while highlighting women's participation and decision-making.</li> </ul>

South East Europe	Regional Integration through Volunteers Exchanges for Reconciliation of South Eastern Europe (RIVER SEE) <sup>172</sup>
<b>Objective:</b>	To develop regional confidence and facilitate valuable linkages between the populations and governments in the Balkan region.
<b>Target beneficiaries:</b>	Volunteer youths aged 18 and above
<b>Duration:</b>	2004-2006
<b>Budget:</b>	1,043,995 USD
<b>Description:</b>	<p>The UNV/UNDP RIVER SEE Programme seeks to develop regional confidence and facilitate valuable linkages between the populations and governments in the Balkan region. Its overall objective is to contribute to regional integration, social cohesion and poverty reduction in the Balkans by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• strengthening networks through East-to-East volunteers exchanges;</li> <li>• promoting volunteerism and proactive citizenship;</li> <li>• building the capacity of civil society to deal with local development and governance processes;</li> <li>• establishing regional cooperation between civil initiatives.</li> </ul> <p>Legislative frameworks on volunteerism in the region will be promoted in order to secure a supportive environment and thereby engage local, regional and national governments/institutions towards a vibrant volunteer sector.</p> <p>The programme represents a unique UNV/UNDP regional collaboration that will be co-implemented by development NGOs that will provide leadership, technical and financial support, as well as by 14 implementing partner organizations from seven countries/areas in the Balkans.</p> <p>The RIVER SEE Programme aims at setting up a new regional scheme to execute the exchange of the first 100 volunteer placements within civil society/voluntary involving organizations that deal with Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and those more particularly engaged in community development, good governance and the promotion of youth. To that end, they will be encouraged to participate in, and contribute to economic development projects that aim at eradicating extreme poverty, hunger and promote sustainable approaches. This approach represents an investment in the stability of local communities and nations in the Balkans. The implementing partner organizations will be supported – through technical assistance and capacity building – in their management of East-to-East volunteer exchanges and promotion of volunteer-enabling policies and environment.</p>

<sup>172</sup> The project description has been adapted from the RIVER SEE website [www.riversee.org](http://www.riversee.org).

**Description continued:**

This strategy is based on the principle that countries of the sub-region can accelerate their development and benefit from positive cross-border relationships to restore confidence between these nations. Volunteers' participation will generate social capital and economic productivity. Additionally, it will be instrumental in regional reconciliation efforts, civil society building and environmental protection efforts.

By building the development capacity of local civil society/voluntary involving organizations with MDGs-related agendas, UNV/UNDP will establish solid and sustainable local ownership of development initiatives. RIVER SEE 'Vs' will participate in cross-border exchange programmes with the view of cultivating partnerships and resources connected with MDGs, civil society building, sustainability and transfer of knowledge.

The programme's best practices will be collected in a publication to inform interested parties locally and internationally, and to further promote volunteerism.

UNDP/ UNESCO	Foundations for Africa's Future Leadership (FAFL)
<b>Objective:</b>	To promote African youths' leadership capacity building and to contribute to the empowerment of new African leaders.
<b>Target beneficiaries:</b>	Youths with leadership potential
<b>Duration:</b>	2004-2005
<b>Budget:</b>	385,000 USD
<b>Description:</b>	<p>The project lays the foundation for sustainable leadership development in Africa by exposing future African leaders to current development challenges and offers practical internship placement opportunities for African students within African institutions. FAFL aims to pilot activities in leadership training, including peace and conflict management as well as conflict prevention.</p> <p>FAFL is based on the assumption that one of the most serious challenges that Africa faces is the lack of human capacity to support economic and public sector reform. This lack of capacity was aggravated during the 1980s and 1990s by economic crisis, shrinking resources, public sector inefficiency and poor operational and institutional facilities as well as the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.</p>

**Description continued:**

Activities of the first phase of the project completed in 2005 included the preparation of curricula and modules on leadership, followed by leadership training workshops and internship placements. Leadership training does not only cover the political leadership but extends to all sectors of society. Beneficiaries of the project include:

- university students and young professionals at universities both in Africa and overseas;
- new entrants in the labour market, local government officials, civil society representatives and teachers selected through other ongoing initiatives in the continent.

The project covers the following countries: Senegal, Mali, Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Cameroon, DRC, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Swaziland and Uganda.

FAFL is being implemented in joint cooperation of UNDP and the UNESCO office in Dakar (Senegal) and enjoys participation and support from a variety of partners such as the University of Peace (Switzerland), the University of Bradford (UK), the Africa University (Zimbabwe), the Institute of Management and Public Administration (Ghana), UNHCR, UNV, IOM and others.

Zambia	<b>Kasama Youth Training Centre based on the Model of the Songhai Centre (Benin)</b>
<b>Objective:</b>	To train unemployed youths in exploring ways of utilizing Zambia's biological and other natural resources with minimal wastage.
<b>Target beneficiaries:</b>	Unemployed youths
<b>Duration:</b>	2001-2003
<b>Budget:</b>	Information not available
<b>Description:</b>	<p>Zambia has a very high proportion of young people, currently estimated at 68 percent (0 to 24 years). This population imbalance poses a number of challenges and difficulties for the country in so far as youth (15 to 25 years) is concerned. These include limited training facilities, unemployment, vulnerability to HIV/AIDS as well as lack of empowerment and self-confidence.</p> <p>In addressing these youth challenges, the Ministry of Sport, Youth and Child Development requested UNDP to assist its efforts to empower youth. From April 2001 to December 2003, UNDP supported a pilot project to establish a youth training centre in Kasama based on the model of the Songhai Centre (Benin) for processing agricultural products and other local-resources.</p>

**Description continued:**

The Songhai Centre model is based on the concept of 'zero emission'. This concept rests on the premise that a lot of resources that are currently regarded as having no economic value, such as the water hyacinth (Kafue weed) can be utilized to produce energy, fertilizer, stock-feed or be used as substrate for growing mushrooms.

The project was implemented in several phases. The first phase focused on the establishment of the centre, the development of the appropriate curriculum and the testing of its suitability, while the second phase focuses on the enhancement of entrepreneurial skills and supporting graduates to establish their own businesses. The centre has hosted various community training workshops on HIV/AIDS, gender and organic farming. Most graduates are self-employed and are running fairly successful enterprises. UNHCR has now associated with the centre and is sending refugees to trainings on a regular basis.

An evaluation of the project indicated that the model was successful and needed to be scaled up so that it could further contribute to youth empowerment and poverty reduction.

Zambia	Peak Performance Programme (PPP)
<b>Objective:</b>	To promote the exchange of experiences, technology, services, expertise and good practices among countries in Asia and Africa.
<b>Target beneficiaries:</b>	Young leaders as well as senior officials
<b>Duration:</b>	Information not available
<b>Budget:</b>	Information not available
<b>Description:</b>	<p>PPP is a leadership and personal development training initiative, implemented under the UNDP Programme for Innovative Co-operation Among the South. It complements the Jobs for Africa programme launched as a joint initiative of ILO/UNDP in 1997 as a follow-up to the World Social Summit.</p> <p>Based on leadership training programmes in South East Asia, PPP is a training methodology, motivational and empowerment tool that emphasizes leadership skills and the awakening of leadership and personal potentials. PPP initially focused on young leaders and economic players of tomorrow, whose thinking and perception has to be radically and positively oriented.</p> <p>The initial focus of the PPP on youth was expanded to other target groups, including senior government officials, government employees, members of parliament, NGO representatives, business managers, local government councillors, special groups such as women and religious organizations as well as rural leaders.</p>

**Description continued:**

The programme conducted more than 60 workshops and trained more than 2000 people, including people working in government youth centres and national management institutions in the country.

There is also a very close relationship between the PPP and the leadership development training promoted by UNDP's Learning Resource Centre through its Virtual Development Academy.

The success of the programme led to the mainstreaming of leadership skills training and development based on the PPP methodology in all UNDP programmes in the next cycle. On a regional level, the Office of the President of Ghana has requested UNDP-Ghana to help incorporate PPP as part of its training initiative for staff in various ministries, as well as at senior levels of the legislature. The new UNDP Country Cooperation Framework (2002-2006) of Swaziland includes PPP as part of UNDP's support for democratic governance.

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## United Nations

### United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)

Charlotte Van Hess, Associate Expert in Youth Policies and Programmes, Division for Social Policy and Development (USA)

Birgit Matten, Consultant, Programme on Youth, Division for Social Policy and Development (USA)

Joop Theunissen, Focal Point on Youth, Division for Social Policy and Development (USA)

### Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Mohammed Farah, Country Representative (Sierra Leone)

### Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

Jeanine Cooper, Humanitarian Affairs Officer, OCHA Regional Support Office for Central and Eastern Africa (Kenya)

Kazimero Jocondo, Head, OCHA Office (Cote d'Ivoire)

Valerie Julliand, Head, OCHA Regional Support Office for Central and East Africa (Kenya)

### Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict

Tonderai Chikuhwa, Programme Officer (USA)

### United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL)

Alain Hagoss, Political Officer (Sierra Leone)

Peter Tingwa, Public Affairs Officer (Sierra Leone)

### United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Victor Angelo, UNDP Resident Representative/ UN Resident Coordinator/Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (Sierra Leone)

Nancy Asang, Country Director (Sierra Leone)

Graham Chipande, Senior Economist (Sierra Leone)

Alberic Kacou, Resident Representative (Senegal)

Mary-Beth McKeever, Programme Officer (Liberia)

Elizabeth Oduor-Noah, Deputy Resident Representative (Liberia)

Waheb Shaw, Youth Focal Point (Sierra Leone)

Kay Schwendinger, Partnership and Resource Mobilization Specialist (Liberia)

Cheikh Tidiane Mbengue, Programme Officer (Senegal)

Cleophas Torori, Youth Focal Point (Liberia)

Goder Yohannes, Senior Policy Advisor (Liberia)

Steven Ursino, Country Director (Liberia)

Abbioseh Nelson William, Assistant Deputy Resident Representative (Sierra Leone)

### United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

Andrew Mbgori, Reintegration Officer (Liberia)

Moses Okello, Resident Representative (Liberia)

### United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

Fatouma Hamadali, Protection Team Coordination (Liberia)

Sabine Himbine, Regional Protection Officer (Liberia-Sierra Leone)



Paul Hulshoff, Senior Programme Officer (USA)

Heimo Laakoneen, Country Director (Kenya)

Theophane Nikyema, Deputy Regional Director,  
Regional Office in West and Central Africa  
(Senegal)

Mima Perisic, Project Officer, Adolescent  
Participation Unit (USA)

Saudamini Siegrist, Project Officer, Innocenti  
Research Centre (Italy)

Hazel de Wet, Project Officer, Humanitarian Policy  
and Advocacy, Office of Emergency Programmes  
(USA)

### **United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM)**

Maha Muna, Programme Manager, Governance,  
Peace and Security Unit (USA)

### **United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)**

Dennis Johnson, Head, Humanitarian Coordination  
Section (Liberia)

Evariste Karambizi, DDR Programme Officer  
(Liberia)

Ibrahim Lewis, Head of Reintegration Programme  
(Liberia)

Sherrod Lewis, Legal Officer (Liberia)

### **United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA)**

Andrew Gilmour, Political Advisor of the UN  
Special Representative of the UN Secretary-  
General in West Africa (Senegal)

Florence Poli, Consultant (Senegal)

### **World Health Organization (WHO)**

Soeren Buus Jensen, Senior Mental Health Advisor  
(Liberia)

### **World Bank**

Ian Bannon, Manager, Conflict Prevention and  
Reconstruction Unit (USA)

Viviana Mangiaterra, Children & Youth Advisor,  
Children & Youth Unit (USA)

James Sackey, Representative (Sierra Leone)

Luigi Giovine, Representative (Liberia)

## **International Organizations and Bilateral Donors**

### **British Embassy**

Ian Stewart, Political Officer (Sierra Leone)

### **European Commission**

Jeffrey Bright (Liberia)

Jeremy Tunacliff, Head of Delegation (Sierra Leone)

### **European Council**

Christian Manahl, Specialist, General Secretariat,  
Policy Planning and Early Warning Unit (Belgium)

### **Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ)**

Fabio Germano, Reintegration Coordinator (Liberia)

Melanie Seegräb, Programme Assistant (Germany)

### **United States Agency for International Development (USAID)**

Jack Myer, Regional Advisor (Senegal)

Zachary Rothschild, Programme Analyst, Office of  
Transition Initiatives (USA)

## **Governments**

Dennis Bright, Minister of Youth and Sports  
(Sierra Leone)

Francis Cisse, Ministry of Development Cooperation  
(Sierra Leone)

Felicia Coleman, Supreme Court Justice (Liberia)

## **Non-governmental Organizations**

### **ActionAid**

Tennyson Williams, Country Director (Sierra Leone)

### **Africare**

Patrick Mwangi, Country Representative (Sierra Leone)

### **American Refugee Committee**

Barbara Whitmore (Sierra Leone)

### **Atlantic Philanthropies**

Nicole Gallant, Disadvantaged Children & Youth (USA)

### **CARE**

Rachel Goldwyn, Conflict Programme and Policy Advisor (UK)

Nick Weber, Country Director (Sierra Leone)

Keith Smith, Country Director (Liberia)

### **Caritas**

Fr. Joseph Nyanti, National Director (Liberia)

### **Center for Victims of Torture**

Beatrice Adams, Country Director (Sierra Leone)

### **Christian Children's Fund**

Wayne Bleier, Country Director (Liberia)

Jonah Daidson, Country Director (Sierra Leone)

### **Conflict Prevention and Peace Forum**

Stephen Jackson, Associate Director (USA)

### **Danish Refugee Council**

Gilbert Bouic, Country Director (Liberia)

### **Don Bosco Homes**

Allen Lincoln, Director (Liberia)

### **Finnish Refugee Council**

Outi Perahouti, Country Director (Sierra Leone)

Markku Vesikko, Country Director (Liberia)

### **International Rescue Committee**

Jane Lowicki, Advisor (USA)

Nicky Smith, Country Director (Liberia)

### **Médecins sans Frontières - Holland**

Katrien Coppens, Head of Mission (Sierra Leone)

Colleen Cowhick, Head of Mission (Liberia)

### **National Democratic Institute (NDI)**

Vandetta Sawyer, Country Director (Sierra Leone)

### **Norwegian Refugee Council**

Ellen Dahl, Resident Representative (Sierra Leone)

Trond Jensen, Field Coordinator (Sierra Leone)

Ellin Gjære, Country Representative (Liberia)

Hakan Ohlson, Reintegration Programme Manager (Liberia)

Johanssen Gunner, Education Programme (Liberia)

### **Oxfam**

Miriam Deme, Regional Director (Senegal)

Jonathan Napier, Country Programme Manager (Sierra Leone)

Willy Kalanga, Programme Officer (Liberia)

Hiroute Selasie, Regional Peace-building Advisor (Senegal)

### **Right To Play**

Martin Van Der Wagt, Country Director (Sierra Leone)

### **Save the Children**

Christine Knudsen, Child Protection Specialist  
(USA)

Dieneke van der Wijk, Country Director (Liberia)

### **Search for Common Ground**

Michael Shipler, Director, Children & Youth  
Programs (USA)

### **War Child**

Meghan McBain, Head of Mission (Sierra Leone)

### **West Africa Network for Peace-Building (WANEP)**

Samuel Doe, Regional Director (Ghana)

Sampson Tornolah Varpilah, National Coordinator  
(Liberia)

### **Women in Peacebuilding Network (Wipnet)**

Leymah Gbowee, Country Director (Liberia)

### **World Vision International**

Janette Robinson (Sierra Leone)

## **Academic Institutions**

### **Cuttington University**

Henri Tokpa, President (Liberia)

### **Tufts University**

Dyan Mazurana, Senior Research Fellow, Feinstein  
Famine Center (USA)

Angela Raven-Roberts, Director of Research and  
Programs, Feinstein Famine Center (USA)

Marc Sommers, Associate Research Professor of  
Humanitarian Studies, Fletcher School (USA)

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United Nations Development Programme  
One United Nations Plaza  
New York, New York  
10017 USA

[www.undp.org](http://www.undp.org)