YOUTH EXPLOSION IN DEVELOPING WORLD CITIES

APPROACHES TO REDUCING POVERTY
AND CONFLICT IN AN URBAN AGE

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INTRODUCTION

BY JOSEPH S. TULCHIN AND DIANA H. VARAT
WITH LISA M. HANLEY

The growth of cities at extraordinary rates together with the demographic distribution in most developing countries has contributed significantly to the present youth explosion in urban areas. It has been estimated that 60 percent of the world's population will live in cites by 2030 and that as many as 60 percent of urban dwellers will be under the age of 18. Almost all of this growth will occur in developing world cities, where already 30 percent of the population lives below official poverty lines. Cities have transformed into magnets for those seeking a promise of a better life. Yet, rapid urbanization in the 20th century left the majority on the fringes of urban society with limited access to basic services, employment, and housing. Youth are perhaps those most affected by this urban transformation: investing in urban children and youth is not only a question of human rights and social justice. It is also about potential economic benefits and increasing citizen security, as youth are encouraged to become integrated members of society instead of contributing to the soaring urban crime and poverty rates.

The Comparative Urban Studies Project at the Woodrow Wilson Center sponsored a forum on February 10, 2003, ' Youth Explosion in Developing World Cities: Approaches to Reducing Poverty and Conflict in an Urban Age, to understand more fully the relationship between urbanization, youth, poverty, and conflict. The forum convened experts and practitioners who highlighted the importance of prioritizing youth on the policy agenda, reducing the alienation that many youth feel, empowering youth through inclusive employment strategies, and taking heed of the particular needs of urban street children.

The complexities of urban living and challenges rapid urbanization pose to policymakers in developing countries should not be underestimated. Ann Van Dusen, Vice President of Save the Children, noted in her keynote address at the February 10th forum, despite the great potential for

urbanization to improve livelihoods for youth and others, cities also have been classified as a kind of Darwinian universe, where only the tough survive. History has shown that urbanization cannot be stopped, but it can be transformed into a positive process, improving life prospects for youth while fostering both democracy and economic growth. Yet, the development community has been slow to respond to the challenges of urban living. With a more inclusive framework, the urban environment has the potential to afford opportunities to previously deprived communities and vastly improve the lives of youth in developing countries. The papers in this volume focus on children in cities and challenge the traditional concepts and myths of street youth and address new approaches to development programs through examining topics like conflict and employment.

Drastic demographic changes, combined with persistent poverty and unemployment, cause conflict in less developed countries. However, economic strategies alone cannot prevent conflict, increasing employment remains vital to the welfare of urban youth. In the first section of this volume, Tarik Yousef and Marc Sommers examine the ways alienated youth can become inclusive members of urban society. In his paper Youth in the Middle East: Demography, Work, and Conflict, Tarik Yousef, Assistant Professor at Georgetown University, argues that economics alone cannot lead to violence. Dr. Yousef emphasizes that despite the challenge of truly unprecedented levels of unemployment, conflict is not inevitable. High levels of poverty and wide inequality gaps, not unemployment alone, are more likely to result in conflict, he noted, and both of these happen to be relatively absent in the Middle East. While intergenerational conflict and competition amongst excluded youth cohorts are perhaps probable, alienation among youth, conventionally thought of as the cause of conflict, might in fact portend positive outcomes. Forcing youth to demand a renegotiation of the social contract, their initial sense of isolation might in fact empower them and extend democracy in the Middle East.

Marc Sommers, Research Fellow at Boston University's African Studies Center, addresses the high sense of alienation youth feel in many African cities in his paper, Youth, War, and Urban Africa: Challenges, Misunderstandings, and Opportunities. Despite perceived and real notions of alienation, youth in African cities have not historically been the catalysts of conflict. In fact, conflicts in Africa usually begin in the

rural area, causing masses of youth to flee the countryside. Therefore, claims that urban youth cause conflict seem unfounded in the African context. Dr. Sommers emphasizes the need to address female youth, as female youth migration is increasing and is a dynamic that is less understood than male migration. The need to develop informal education in order to accommodate youth's mobile lives and irregular hours is crucial so that youth may begin to feel included in urban society.

According to the International Labor Organization, more than a billion jobs must be created to accommodate new workers and reduce unemployment, particularly in the developing world, where minimal economic growth is forecast and economies are unlikely to be able to absorb the available labor supply. The task is further complicated by the fact that today significant proportions of young persons of working age are either unemployed or underemployed. Worldwide over 70 million young people are unemployed. Eighty percent of them are in developing countries or economies in transition. In addition, young people are more than twice as likely as adults to be unemployed. Part Two of this volume confronts the issues of youth unemployment and examines a variety of programs to help include urban youth in the labor market.

On average, young people are two to three times more likely to be unemployed than adults. In an effort to fulfill the Millennium Declaration goal of finding ʻdecent and productive workˮ for young people everywhere, the United Nations has created the Youth Employment Network. Steven Miller, Secretary of the Youth Employment Network, argues in his paper ʻUnited Nations Priority: Youth Employment and Its Implications for the Youth Population Explosion in the Developing World's Cities,ˮ that the first necessary change needs to come in the form of a conceptual transformation: youth need to be considered an asset, not a problem. Mr. Miller states that youth employment programs must center around employability, equal opportunities, entrepreneurship, and employment creation. In addition, city governments could play a critical role in facilitating a favorable regulatory environment, improving youth prospects for work in the informal economy, and encouraging infrastructure investments. Thus, capacity building in municipal government becomes a key policy issue.

In the context of Latin America, high rates of unemployment persist despite considerable economic growth in recent years. Caroline Fawcett,

Assistant Professor at American University, notes in her paper ' Building a Bridge for the Road Too Far: Policy Analysis for the School-to-Work Transition in Latin America, that rates of youth unemployment are more than double the rates for adults, and school-to-work transitions have been elongated. Since the informal sector is the entry point into the labor market for almost all youth, it is vital that policymakers take heed of such realities. In an effort to devise long-term solutions, Dr. Fawcett observes the importance of targeting the poorest of the poor and fostering stronger stay-in-school incentives. She also discovers a number of intriguing disparities between different Latin American countries and concludes that young women are particularly vulnerable to the burden of youth unemployment.

Street children face a number of disadvantages, as they are usually denied access to many basic human rights, such as rights to survival, protection, service provision and participation in society, as specified by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. These disadvantages make life for street youth more difficult than for other children living in poverty. Part Three of this volume presents a number of case studies that illustrate the reality of urban youth and address the need for alternative approaches to working with street children.

Rosemary McCarney and Stephanie Sauve address the need to include street involved youth in the agenda of international agencies in their paper ' The Case for Street Youth: The Lost Decade. Although street youth are difficult to target in programming, it remains a necessary challenge to work with them and invest in them. Street youth have been historically absent on the policy agenda due to the decades of rural policy, which ignored the urban environment in general, not exclusively youth.

different approaches, to working with homeless street children and her paper, *Approaches to Reducing Poverty and Conflict in an Urban Age: The Case of Homeless Street Children,* focuses exclusively on homeless street youth. She concludes that a broad, rights-based approach is best, in which targeted initiatives are integrated, facilitated, and assessed by collaborative state–civil society partnerships as an effective option that enables homeless street children to gain access to their basic rights. She notes that street children live outside the usual norms of society, have a much lower probability of being able to access formal education and are easily exposed to street accidents, chronic skin infections, STDs, and abusive sexual relationships. Ms. Thomas de Benitez remarks that the way street children typically earn their money is *usually sporadic, always marginal, sometimes criminal and always in the informal market.*

Clementine Fujimura examines the reality of urban youth in Russia and discusses the various myths that lead abandoned children to choose life on the streets. Dr. Fujimura notes that rampant disease and dangerous environmental conditions paint a bleak picture for street children in Russia, who live according to myths about urban life and their own invincibility. Cultural taboos preventing open discussion about HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases endanger the lives of street children. Furthermore, what Dr. Fujimura perceives as an already overwhelming feeling of helplessness, ambivalence, fatalism and victimization among Russians is exaggerated among street children.

The urban environment provides a space that can promote development and improve livelihoods, but it can also aggravate despair. Current demographic trends indicate that a window of opportunity exists at the present moment for policymakers to capitalize on large cohorts of working age youth. Integrating youth into local economies is vital to the sustainability of urban areas. Yet, understanding the potential of youth will require that societies dispel the many myths about the inherent violence of youth. It is not enough that we make youth a priority on the policy agenda. We must seek to understand them, ameliorate the alienation they feel, and include them in the development process

As the articles in this volume illustrate, the situation of urban youth requires urgent attention. Creating programs to improve the livelihoods of urban youth, particularly girls, as they are vulnerable to the same risk factors as boys, presents an enormous challenge to the development commu-

nity. The need to address problems such as how youth can be assured a safe environment in which to grow and develop without the threat of physical, emotional, or psychological abuse and what can countries do to allow greater social and economic mobility opportunities for youth? Preventative programs need to be developed that address some of the disparate reasons why children become homeless. It is important to include children, but how can we ensure that youth play a participatory role in program and policy development which impact their lives? All of these challenges suggest that it is imperative to make municipal government more sensitive to the peculiar problems of youth populations and to increase the capacity of municipal governments and civil society organizations to deal with the policy challenges youth represent.

PART I

DEMOGRAPHIC SHIFTS AND CONFLICT IN AN URBAN AGE

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In the 1990s, after decades of expansion that surpassed all regions except Sub-Saharan Africa, population growth rates in Middle East and North Africa decelerated.[1]

Contrary to previous forecasts emphasizing an intensification of the population explosion witnessed in the previous three decades, evidence from recent household-level surveys confirms the arrival of the long–awaited fall in fertility rates across much of the region. Accordingly, the defining feature of the region's populations in the future will be the rapidly changing age structure, dominated by the rise in the share of the working-age group (age 15 to 64 years) and the shrinking share of the dependent group (age 0 to 14 years). These demographic shifts are creating new policy opportunities and challenges that focus less on the education and health requirements of the young and more on the need for employment and economic growth.

What about the youth population (age 15 24 years) of the Middle East and North Africa? What are the implications of recent demographic dynamics for the relative share and absolute size of these young cohorts? What economic and political challenges does the region face as a result? Like elsewhere in the world, discussions of demographic trends in the region have been politically charged. Thus, worries over the impact of population growth on urbanization, poverty, and food sufficiency have been linked to social unrest and regime stability. Similarly, assessments of the youth bulge have taken place against the backdrop of concern over domestic conflict and global economic and political security. The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, focused even more attention on the interplay between youth, socioeconomic conditions, and violence within the Middle East and North Africa as well as spillovers abroad.

This paper summarizes current knowledge of economic conditions affecting the region's youth population. It begins with an overview of demographic trends of young cohorts in recent years. This discussion sets the stage for an assessment of education and labor market outcomes. These elements are then brought together to shed light on the potential for conflict in the region.

THE

Fertility rates in the region, which began a slow decline in the 1970s,

lion a year. Between 1990 and 2010, an additional 28.2 million will have been added, or 1.4 million a year (figure 2).

Not all individual countries in the Middle East and North Africa conform to the general pattern in the region. Early leaders in the fertility transition include Tunisia and Lebanon, both of which saw large fertility declines in the 1970s and have since reached replacement rates of about 2.1. These two countries, therefore, expth o8lwsbhasin15(TD0.iA4(iton ie r)20(s1.)(or

school system with far higher levels of overall education than their parents received. The mean years of schooling in the region, for those above 15 years of age, was 0.9 years in 1960. By 1980, it had risen to 2.6 years; and by 2000, mean schooling averaged 5.3 years (figure 5). This rise in educational achievement in the region between 1980 and 2000 is the fastest of all the world's developing regions. In tandem, the gender gap in education

Source: World Bank (2002b).

Note: The data are for various years: Algeria, 1990; Bahrain, 1995; Egypt, 1998; Morocco, 1998; Tunisia, 2001, Yemen 1999.
Source: International Labor Organization (2002) and World Bank (2003).
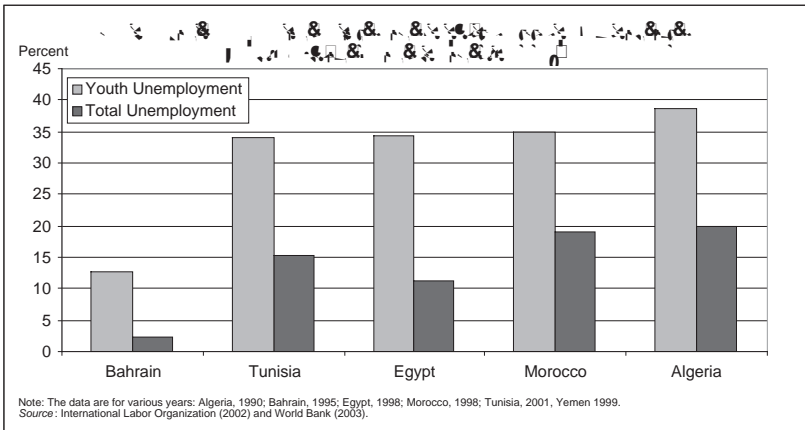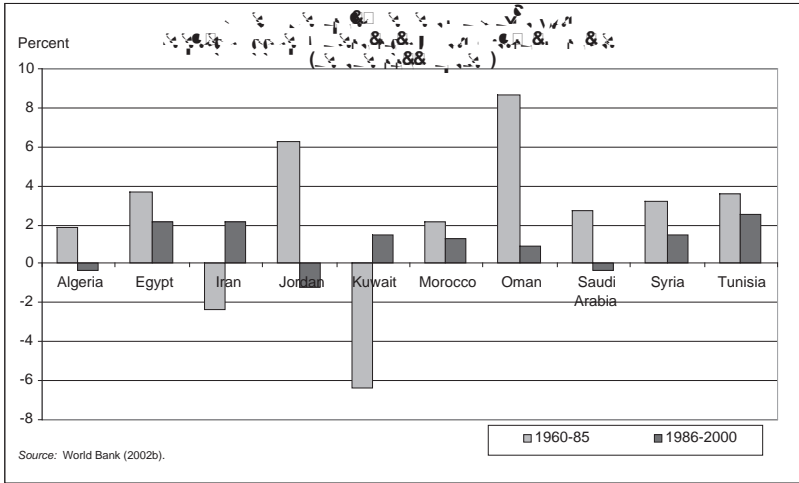
has narrowed substantially in the past two decades as female educational attainment has risen faster than that of males. At present, mean years of schooling for males and females are 6.2 and 4.5 years, respectively. The general rise in educational attainment, including tertiary schooling, has deepened the stock of human capital and given females greater access to labor markets, further reinforcing the fertility decline.

As young people stay in school for longer durations, their labor force participation rates have declined, partially abating the pressures on labor markets. In 1970, youth labor participation rates in the Middle East and

Youth participation rates are expected to rise to 46 percent in 2010,

in the civil service and public-sector enterprises. Higher wages and non-wage benefits together with job security in the public sector have implied that the majority of young entrants into the labor force would seek employment in the public sector (Assaad 1997). As part of the stabilization and reform programs in the 1990s, many of the region's governments implemented a freeze on the hiring of new workers just as the oil boom generation began to enter labor markets. However, a restructuring of public employment did not complement the freeze on hiring and wages. As a result, relatively high wages and job security, in comparison with the private sector, continued to provide strong incentives for new entrants to seek jobs in the public sector and increase the reservation wage for employment in the private sector. Extended waiting lines for increasingly scarce public-sector employment, especially among job seekers with secondary education, have affected most countries in the region.

Moreover, slow progress with economic restructuring and protracted reform programs have curtailed the emergence of dynamic private sectors that would provide a new engine for job creation and economic growth (Dasgupta, Keller, and Srinivasan 2002Spr retomic eets.ine.–27 Tw3s roce0.019 Tc0.05 Tw[(ge01 Tc0in pu(taileal ncr)20(easing1go)Etted aenth5 T0.0T♯0c

demand for expatriate labor in the oil-exporting countries in the 1970s and 1980s. But this safety valve is currently operating with much less force due to the changing composition of demand for expatriate labor in the labor-importing countries, in addition to the convergence of demographic trends across the Middle East and North Africa. The first Gulf War saw the forced return of millions of the region's workers to their home countries and their subsequent replacement by migrants from South Asia. Moreover, many of the oil-exporting economies are experiencing rapid labor growth and high unemployment in their national labor forces, further reducing the incentive to import labor from neighboring countries.

Europe was the chosen destination for North African workers. Given the significant income gap between the two regions, the rising share of young adults in the Middle East and North Africa is likely to have spurred an increase in the demand for migration to Europe (Yousef 2000). This demand is especially strong in Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia where geographic proximity and networks of friends and families provide additional incentives for labor mobility. From a labor supply side, this demand for entrance into protected European markets appears convenient in light of Europe's increasingly aging population and projected thinning of young cohorts. Indeed, the share of the working-age population in eight labor-exporting Middle Eastern and North African countries to that of the European Union countries has risen from 30 percent in 1970 to 65 percent in 2000 and will climb to 100 percent in 2015. More striking is the ratio of likely movers (ages 15 to 29) from the region to the total labor market stayers in the European Union (ages 20 to 64), which will more than double, from 12 percent in 1970 to 29 percent in 2015.

But European labor markets will remain closed, at least in the short

labor mobility is supported by the rising trend in illegal migration and the realization that trade and labor flows would complement each other in encouraging the region's more rapid economic integration with the European Union.

POVERTY, INEQUALITY, AND POLITICAL I

Although the Middle East and North Africa have faced high levels of youth and adult unemployment, these have not raised poverty rates or widened income inequality. In comparison with other regions, poverty in the region has remained quite low, and inequality is moderate (table 1). Thus far, and despite growing constraints, governments in the region have managed to stave off poverty through redistributive programs, including public employment and free public health and education services (Diwan 1995). At one extreme is Kuwait, with more than 90 percent of its nationals on the public-sector payroll. In other countries, the share of government employment in total employment ranges from about 7 percent in Morocco to 26 percent in Egypt, with the average for the region around 18 percent. Redistributive policies, together with the patriarchal structures of families in the region, have created strong networks of social protection for the unemployed, permitting youth to spend extended periods of time searching and/or waiting for public-sector jobs. It is not surprising, therefore, that there is little correlation between poverty and unemployment in the region.

YOUTH, GRIEVANCE, AND CONFLICT

Although there is little evidence of rising poverty and inequality in the Middle East and North Africa, outside observers have blamed economic conditions for the political unrest in the region   in Algeria and Egypt in the 1990s, and in Saudi Arabia and Yemen more recently. According to this conventional wisdom, trends in violence, especially when associated with the expression of political Islam, are highly correlated with the economic disenfranchisement of young generations. What appears to matter for the well-being of youth is not inequality and poverty per se but the lack of opportunities and access to resources in systems controlled by entrenched elites and interest groups (Braungart 1984). In this regard, high unemployment among educated youth serves as a better indicator of the potential for social grievances. As the young struggle to find jobs, they fail to take on the responsibilities of adulthood and to secure their desired goals of employment, marriage, and social standing. With the buildup of grievances, youth lose faith in the system of governance that has failed their aspirations.

The existence of social grievances, however, is not sufficient for the incidence of conflict, whether sporadic violence or civil wars. The com-

bination of social grievances and youth bulges may provide one basis for conflict (figures 6 and 7). The timing of political instability in the region's countries cited above certainly conforms to this prediction. However, it also matters how the systems of governance manage violence (Urdal 2002). Open, democratic systems are generally flexible enough to allow youth participation in the system and to permit young people to voice

their frustrations through peaceful means. Strong authoritarian states, in

CONCLUSIONS

The demographic transition of the Middle East and North Africa has accelerated in the past decade due to rapid declines in fertility. But the persistently high population growth rates in the past have implied that the region's age structure will exhibit an extended youth bulge. The large flows of educated young cohorts into labor markets in the past decade coincided with the weak economic conditions, leading to high unemployment. The combination of economic grievances and authoritarian governments led to the spread of instability in some countries where Islamic movements challenged the power structures. To avert further turmoil, rapid economic growth coupled with gradual political liberalization and greater regional stability is required.

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then uses these contrasting views of African cities and urban youth to suggest how the challenge of youth unemployment in war-affected African cities might be better addressed.

"BECOMING URBANIZED:" AFRICA'S URBANIZATION AND WAR'S IMPACT

Africa's rapid urbanization stands out in a world that is increasingly turn–

the impact of war on African urbanization stands out as a particularly

there (Jacobsen, Lautze, and Osman 2001, 85). In addition, ʹ Ten years of displacement to the urban areas of Khartoum have resulted in a fundamental shift in identity, particularly among young people, who consider themselves to be urbanized and have no real desire to return to their rural origins ʹ (p. 84). ʹ

The fact that ʹ young people see their future ʹ in Khartoum (Jacobsen, Lautze, and Osman 2001, 84) is a phenomenon that can be found in other African capitals as well, despite the hardships and persecutions youth may face there. Dar es Salaam was the site of a series of government campaigns to return urban migrants, most of whom were young men, to rural areas. Every effort failed (Armstrong 1987; Kerner 1988; Lugalla 1995; Sommers 2001a). As Sawers (1989, 854 55) noted, ʹ the deportations of Dar es Salaam's unemployed wasted scarce transportation resources without affecting the city's population growth. ʹ The idea that migrant youth voluntary as well as forced migrant consider themselves to be ʹ urbanized ʹ is a theme that will surface again later in this paper.

The shift of refugees into cities refugee youth in particular (Sommers 2001b) further underscores Africa's urbanization phenomenon. In 1985, for example, Rogge (1985, 128) reported that ʹ an increasing proportion of [African] refugees of rural origin, in becoming displaced, simultaneously become urbanized. ʹ Ten years later, Bascom (1995, 205) noted how African refugees ʹ go to great lengths to avoid camps and get into urban centres. ʹ Indeed, understanding why a foreigner fleeing persecution would refuse free humanitarian assistance in refugee camps and risk persecution and marginalization in cities suggests that the uses and appeal of African cities may be much greater than is generally suspected.[4]

AFRICAN YOUTH IN CITIES: POPULAR PERCEPTIONS AND REMEDIES

Large, swelling African cities are awful places. This, at least, is a perspective shared by many foreign visitors and analysts, in addition to some urban residents. Certainly one of the most renowned purveyors of this perception is Kaplan (1996: xv), whose 1994 article, ʹ The Coming Anarchy ʹ (Kaplan 1994) was, according to Richards (1996, xv), ʹ faxed to every American embassy in Africa, and has undoubtedly influenced U.S. policy.

Notwithstanding Richards' claim, it is clear that Kaplan has a knack for describing African cities with dreadful clarity. His take on urban West Africa is one of wholesale ruin. Consider, for example, his first memorable experience of West Africa   a whiff of Abidjan, which he described as an odor of sour sweat, rotting fruit, hot iron and dust, urine drying on the sun-warmed stone, feces, and fly-infested meat in an immovable field of damp heat (Kaplan 1996, 16). But West Africa's seeming disintegration was actually taking place in more pervasive ways. Having limited his interactions with ordinary Africans, Kaplan draws broad conclusions. His picture of urban West Africa is utterly without hope:

> As it decays and people pour into coastal shanty-magnets, West Africa is left with high-density concentrations of human beings who have been divested of certain stabilizing cultural models, with no strong governmental institutions or communities to compensate for the loss (Kaplan 1996, 29).

The youth who populate West African cities face the corrosive effects of cities, where African culture is being redefined as deforestation tied to overpopulation (Kaplan 1996, 34). Shoumatoff (1988, xiv) views the emergence of large African cities as the source of societal madness. Such madness is best seen in the behavior of detribalized young men in Nairobi, whom he describes as lost souls wandering in the vast space between the traditional and the modern worlds who can be heard howling in the streets of downtown Nairobi in the middle of the night. Kaplan further supports this vision with his depiction of the young men that fill West African cities as out of school, unemployed, loose molecules in an unstable social fluid that threatened to ignite (p. 16). Not even the youth's apparently good physical condition was a good sign. Instead, their robust health and good looks made their predicament sadder (p. 16).

As Linden (1996, 58) observes, war makes urban situations even worse, for it inflicts unique horrors on those trapped in cities that at the best of times have trouble taking care of the injured, the hungry, and the displaced. Worse still, Kaplan (1996, 12) contends that conflicts are inspired in Africa's urban slums. The perpetrators of future violence, he argues, will likely be urban born, with no rural experience from which to draw. To be sure, there is little current evidence to support Kaplan's pre-

diction. Although urban violence persists in many African cities, it is also true that very few, if any, African civil conflicts in recent decades including those involving Angola, Burundi, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Liberia, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and Sudan derived their origins from urban unrest. Rebel groups have tended to find their followings outside large cities, such as the current rebellion taking place in Ivory Coast.

Many observers of urban Africa contend that the reasons why rural Africans contemplate urban migration are mainly inspired by desperation and a lack of viable options. Accordingly, a popular remedy for intense urbanization is to intensify investment in rural Africa and thus draw people away from cities. This view is based on the contention that there is an urban bias in African government outlays that must be reversed. Hope (1998, 355) has argued that / the urban bias in African development policy has resulted in the rural areas lagging behind the urban areas in access to basic services and thereby reinforcing the concentration of poverty in those rural areas. As a result, he contends that shifting more development resources away from cities toward rural areas / would contain the rural population, diminish their desire to migrate to urban areas, and thereby reduce both the rate and negative consequences of urbanization (p. 356).[5]

Contrast this perspective of pronounced urban bias in development investment to Linden's argument that / even without war, the quality of life for the poor has declined to the point where observers who long believed city dwellers had the advantage now recognize that large numbers of impoverished urbanites are worse off than the rural poor (Linden 1996, 58). Furthermore, the cases of Khartoum and Dar es Salaam suggest that even persecuting urban youth cannot extinguish their resolve to remain in cities. Enticing urban youth back to rural areas through increased investment in the countryside may yield very minimal success. As Ogbu and Ikiara (1995, 54) note, / There are some instances of reverse migration [from urban to rural areas] but this has been in trickles. Most of Africa's urban youth, it appears, are very likely to remain in cities regardless of the

tified by their degree of economic development (Hope 1998, 356), then something is amiss. What is drawing millions of youth toward urban Africa? Is it simple economic desperation that attracts them?

This paper argues that the urban attractions for African youth are varied and significant. Yet this does not mean that large African cities generally resemble the sort of graceful urban areas that have made cities in many parts of the world famous as centers for culture, history, and romance. Many if not most neighborhoods in urban Africa are nothing of the kind. It is also not to say that huge African cities are neither difficult nor dangerous. They are. What is suggested here, however, are three ways that cities can provide African youth with much more than the hope for some kind of economic advancement.

Opportunities for Coexistence

In the face of Kaplan's depiction of African cities as ʹneoprimitive shanty-domains (1996, 83) and its youthful residents as prime examples of what he perceived as ʹnature unchecked (1994, 54) lies an entirely different conception of urban Africa. The case of Rwanda and Burundi in Central Africa is instructive, for though urbanization is transforming much of Sub-Saharan Africa, the continued inability for most Rwandans and Burundians to congregate in cities   the proportion of urban residents in Rwanda is the lowest in the world, whereas Burundi ranks

both sides despise them because they constitute living proof of the possibility of peaceful coexistence (Ould–Abdallah 2000: 21).

Here we have a depiction of urban Africa that directly contradicts the image of African cities as centers of social degradation and predatory violence. Cities force people to mix and become familiar with members of groups whose paths might never cross in rural areas. In this sense, cities hold the potential to expand opportunities for peaceful coexistence, at least in some cases.

Empowerment through Alienation

Across Tanzania, in even the remotest corners of the country, youth speak what has come to be known as the ʾlanguage of the ignorantʾ (in Swahili, *lugha ya wahuni*), ʾangry Swahiliʾ (Kiswahili *kali*), ʾdar languageʾ (*kidar*), ʾyoung people's languageʾ (*lugha ya vijana*), and still other names. What is called a language is actually not even a dialect. Instead, it is an ever-changing vocabulary of words that Tanzanian youth use to confer their connection to Bongoland (literally ʾBrainland,ʾ the nickname for Dar es Salaam) and their separation from elite society.

Keeping up with the latest words from ʾBongoʾ signifies an aspiration to migrate to Tanzania's capital for those youth still residing in the countryside. The proportion of youth living in rural Tanzania is, in some areas, noticeably low. As early as 1981, the Tanzanian scholar C. K. Omari was able to remark that, ʾmany rural areas nowadays are left with old people. Go the villages, and you will observe this phenomenon instantly as you set your foot thereʾ (1981, 2).

ʾLanguage of the ignorantʾ vocabulary words have many sources and meanings. They can be used to describe the difficulties of urban life, as in the greeting, ʾHow are your anxieties?ʾ (*Harbari ya mihangaiko*?). Most Tanzanian youth, though fluent in one national language, Swahili, know scarcely any English, Tanzania's second national language. English, however, can signify a person's connection to wealth, glamour, and modern, forward-looking ideas and activities. English words may be assigned new meanings in the ʾlanguage of the ignorant,ʾ and can come from a variety of sources. One phrase was taken from a plastic bag printed in Zanzibar and sold in Dar es Salaam and other mainland towns. The bag had pictures of Western-style clothes and other items signifying a ʾmodernʾ lifestyle.

Across the bag, in large letters, was the phrase "Fashion Design." Soon, "Fashion Design" became a response to greetings such as "How are you? (*Harbari yako*?)," "What's up? (*Mambo gani*?)," and "How are your anxieties?"

The "language of the ignorant" is also used to describe how many urban youth in Tanzania see themselves: as alienated outcasts. There was a compelling example of this soon after the beginning of the first Gulf War in 1991. Saddam Hussein almost instantly became a folk hero for many in Dar es Salaam and across the country. They viewed Saddam as a defiant underdog, fighting valiantly against insurmountable odds. His Scud missiles became symbols of the underdog's counterpunch. Soon after the first round of Scud missiles was launched by the Iraqi regime, the word "Scudi" could be observed across Dar es Salaam, written in graffiti and scrawled into the dirt on buses and other vehicles. In no time, "Scudi *ya* Bongo" became a catchphrase for a fearless, unsinkable urban youth.[7]

The "Scudi *ya* Bongo" example is instructive because it signifies how many youth in Tanzania's capital feel alienated and marginalized by elite society, including leading members of civil society. In a sense, the masses of alienated youth in Africa's cities call the idea of "civil society" into question. Indeed, in some African capitals, it is often unclear the extent to which "civil society members" truly represent the poor young people who throng the country's towns and cities. Relatively few may vote, and they are probably unlikely to be well represented in any census.[8] They are present in cities, in short, but their connection to civil society may be at best tenuous.

It is thus ironic to consider that many of Africa's urban youth, who are members of perhaps the dominant population segment in African cities, may feel both alienated by and marginalized from mainstream urban society: a majority feeling like a minority. Marcharia (1994, 161) highlights how Africa's urban youth are typically overlooked: "The youth in most African cities make up at least 60 percent of the urban population, yet most programs in these cities rarely address this specific problem." In this context, then, it can hardly be surprising that impoverished, unskilled, poorly educated urban youth may recast themselves as heroic underdogs. Rather than accepting their sidelined social existence, many celebrate it.

The dangers of overlooking and not accepting Africa's youth, and the nearly unbridled determination of so many youth to migrate to and

remain in cities, tend to surface during and after conflicts. The assault on Freetown by the child and youth soldiers of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in January 1999 dramatizes how youth alienation and furor can be manipulated to terrible and devastating effect. Calling its invasion Operation No Living Thing, the RUF entered Sierra Leone's capital and initiated among the most grisly military actions in modern African history: Junger, for example, noted that ′ war does not get worse than what happened in Freetown early in 1999 (2000, 116).

By the time of the 1999 Freetown invasion, however, RUF leaders had already found ways to adapt popular cultural figures to specific purposes. Richards had already described how the RUF used the first Rambo film (*Rambo: First Blood*) as a military training video, highlighting the idea of a misunderstood individual using well-honed military skills to battle against predatory forces (Richards 1996, 57 58).

In Operation No Living Thing, the RUF adapted another ′ patron saint   the deceased American ′ Gangsta Rap musician, Tupac Shakur, popularly known simply as 'Tupac.' ′ The rebels [that is, the RUF] wrote Tupac's lyrics on the side of their vehicles during the Freetown invasion, one Sierra Leonean refugee later recalled. ′ They wrote 'Death Row,' 'Missing in Action,' 'Hit them Up,' 'Only God Can Judge,' and 'All Eyez on Me' on them. Junger also notes that the rebels ′ favored Tupac T-shirts and fancy haircuts (2000, 116). Drugged and brutalized, terrorized and truly terrifying, the rebel child and youth soldiers attacked Freetown residents. Amputations, rapes, and killings took place across the city. Descriptions of the mayhem, as in other depictions of RUF military tactics during the war, border on the unbelievable:

> Teenage soldiers, out of their minds on drugs, rounded up entire neighborhoods and machine-gunned them or burned them alive in their houses. They tracked down anyone whom they deemed to be an enemy journalists, Nigerians, doctors who treated wounded civilians and tortured and killed them. They killed people who refused to give them money, or people who didn't give them enough money, or people who looked at them wrong. They raped women and killed nuns and abducted priests and drugged children to turn them into fighters. . . . They had been fighting since they were eight or nine, some of them, and sported names such as Colonel Bloodshed,

Commander Cut Hands, Superman, Mr. Die, and Captain Backblast
. . . Although the rebel assault . . . failed militarily, it had so traumatized
the civilian population that they were prepared to do almost any-
thing   including accept the rebels as part of their government   in

range from simple thieving and vandalism to outright gang violence. A particularly compelling postwar example of truly threatening urban gangs are the notorious Ninja that terrorize residents of Maputo, the capital of Mozambique (Sommers 2001b, 364 65).

Sometimes there are benefits to urban life beyond simply enduring. For many youth in Bongoland, for example, success may simply mean the ability to ʼsurvive, to stay afloat in an urban world teeming with competition and danger. Returning to a rural home from Dar es Salaam without shillings in one's pocket is practically unthinkable, because it would signal a failure to succeed in the city. Urban migration, for male youth in Tanzania and elsewhere, appears to have become a kind of rite of passage into manhood. Cities are a challenge that must be surmounted, regardless of the cost. Urban migration is a risky challenge, and Last's analysis of youth lives in Kano, Nigeria, suggests a sort of risk taking similar to what the actions of youth in Dar es Salaam demonstrated. In Kano, ʼolder youths go on to do the jobs that are seen to be the more risky ones, he observes. In addition, ʼit is youths . . . who travel to distant places to work and see the world; indeed it is expected of them (Last 1991, 10).

CONCLUSION: I

gram approaches have a chance to address the array of concerns and problems that confront the lives of urban youth (Lowicki 2000; Sommers 2001c). The lives of urban youth are often so unstable, and their needs are so great, that youth employment programming alone may yield only minimal success. The introduction of literacy and basic life skills may also be required, particularly given the severe impact of HIV/AIDS on Africa's young. Accordingly, health education modules may be needed to address the dangers of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Adapting life skills curricula also promises to reduce the vulnerability of youth to at-risk behavior. Addressing the trauma in young lives, particularly among the war-affected, also promises to be important.

It is useful to examine, learn from, and form networks with urban youth programs that have demonstrated success in reaching marginalized young people. Research on migrant and refugee youth in Dar es Salaam (Sommers 2001a, 2001b) illuminates how Pentecostal churches have been effective at reaching poor urban youth. Their program is emphatically holistic; in addition to the spiritual benefits, joining a Pentecostal congregation can give a young person a generally supportive community and opportunities for gaining access to employment training and work networks involving successful Pentecostal businesspeople.

A Pentecostal youth may be viewed through hostile eyes on the streets, but church services provide an array of opportunities to be seen as a contributor to the greater good of the community. A *saved* youth has a new identity, is accepted by fellow congregants, and is not an outcast. Following the strict Pentecostal code of behavior can be challenging, and Pentecostal leaders interviewed in Tanzania tended to depict Dar es Salaam as a place swarming with Satan's temptations. But for those who join and accept Pentecostalism, the rewards can be quite significant. For many, Pentecostalism has represented a road to urban success, which is proven when youth return to their rural homes (or refugee camps) with shillings in their pockets and gifts in their bags.[11]

Small or narrowly targeted programs hold the potential for inadvertently promoting exclusion by exacerbating already existing feelings of alienation and marginalization among youth. This can apply to programs such as those for ex-combatants and street children and youth. For example, those youth who may have resisted joining a gang, army, or militia, who have been victims of such armed groups, or who have been child

soldiers not included in ex-combatant programs (e.g., underestimating the involvement of girls and female youth in soldiering appears to be

ply be considered ⟩ young women. A related problem arises when female youth are married   are they still youth, or are they mainly young mothers? Youth programmers, accordingly, must advocate for the effective and

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practice. . . . Most academic observers share this view, as increasingly do outside advisers such as those in the aid agencies.

6. Rwanda's was reported as 6.1 percent of the total population in 1999, Bhutan's was 6.9 percent, and Burundi's was 8.7 percent (UNDP 2001, 156 57).

7. Information on migrant and refugee youth in Dar es Salaam is detailed in Sommers 2001a and 2001b.

8. An excellent example of urban residents avoiding census takers is detailed by Briggs (1993), in his analysis of the 1988 census in Dar es Salaam.

9. Taken from private interviews with Sierra Leonean refugees in the Gambia,

LINKING YOUTH TO EMPLOYMENT POSSIBILITIES

STEVEN K. MILLER
United Nations Secretary-General's
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More than 1 billion people today are between 15 and 25 years of age, and nearly 40 percent of the world's population is below the age of 20. Eighty-five percent of these young people live in developing countries, where many are especially vulnerable to extreme poverty. At the same time, the rate of urbanization is by far the highest in developing countries, and by 2015 it is expected that developing countries will account for more than 75 percent of the world's urban population.

The International Labor Office estimates that about 74 million young women and men are unemployed throughout the world, accounting for 41 percent of all the 180 million unemployed persons globally.[1] Many more young people are working long hours for low pay, struggling to eke out a living in the informal economy. There are an estimated 59 million young people between 15 and 17 years of age who are engaged in hazardous forms of work.[2] Young people actively seeking to participate in the world of work are two to three times more likely than older generations to find themselves unemployed. The U.N. Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, in his report to the Millennium Summit of the United Nations,

THE U.N. SECRETARY-GENERAL'S YOUTH EMPLOYMENT NETWORK

In September 2000, the largest gathering ever of heads of state and governments met at the United Nations in New York for the Millennium Summit. During this summit, as part of the Millennium Declaration, they resolved to develop and implement strategies that give young people everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work. [3] In preparation for this meeting, Annan issued a report titled *We the Peoples: The Role of the United Nations in the Twenty-First Century* (Annan 2000). Here, the secretary-general first proposed his Youth Employment Network:

> Together with the heads of the World Bank and the International Labor Organization, I am convening a high-level policy network on youth employment drawing on the most creative leaders in private industry, civil society and economic policy to explore imaginative approaches to this difficult challenge. I will ask this policy network to propose a set of recommendations that I can convey to world leaders within a year. The possible sources of solutions will include the Internet and the informal sector, especially the contribution that small enterprises can make to employment generation. [4]

The 12-member panel of the Youth Employment Network met for the first time in July 2001 at International Labor Organization (ILO) headquarters in Geneva chaired by Annan, together with Juan Somavia, the ILO director-general, and James Wolfensohn, the president of the World Bank. [5] At this meeting, Annan emphasized the need for both immediate action and long-term commitment to achieving the millennium goal on youth employment. He also invited the panel to continue working with him in an advisory capacity on an ongoing basis. Finally, he asked the ILO to take the lead in organizing the future work of the Youth Employment Network and to assume the responsibility for hosting a permanent secretariat.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT NETWORK

Following this first meeting, the U.N. secretary-general's High-Level Panel on Youth Employment developed a set of policy recommendations

that they transmitted to the U.N. General Assembly, which discussed them in November 2001 in the overall framework of following up on the Millennium Summit. [6]

The panel's recommendations encourage world leaders to take personal responsibility for translating the commitments taken at the Millennium Summit into action through *a specific political process.*

A U.N. Political Process on Youth Employment

In the panel's recommendations, heads of state and governments are first invited to develop national action plans on youth employment with targets for the creation of jobs and for the reduction of unemployment. Preparing these action plans should be based on critical reviews of past national policies. Furthermore, governments are invited to volunteer to be champions of this process, to take the lead in preparing their action plans and in showing the way to others.

In developing their plans, governments are encouraged to closely involve young people. It is also recommended that governments integrate their actions for youth employment into comprehensive employment policies. Employment policy is seen not as a sectoral policy among others; rather, it is the successful mobilization of all public policies.

Following up on the Youth Employment Network's work, the U.N. General Assembly has recently adopted a Resolution on Promoting Youth Employment, cosponsored by 106 U.N. member states.[7] This resolution demonstrates the strength of international consensus and commitment around the Millennium Goal of *decent and productive work for young people* and around the Secretary-General's Youth Employment Network as the means of action for meeting this commitment. This resolution, as was recommended by the high-level panel, encourages member states to prepare national reviews and action plans on youth employment and to involve youth organizations and young people. It also invites, within the context of the Youth Employment Network, the ILO, in collaboration with the U.N. Secretariat, the World Bank, and other relevant specialized agencies, to assist and support governments and to undertake a global analysis and evaluation of progress made.

It is useful here to draw out a few implications and conclusions from this political process. First, youth employment provides an entry point into broader and more complex employment policy issues. Youth

employment is an issue on which political consensus can be easily developed. Therefore, developing solid strategies for youth employment provides a first step for political leaders and policymakers in addressing tougher issues of creating employment for all groups within society where there may be difficult trade-offs to face.

Second, the political commitment of governments provides an umbrella and a space for action for a variety of nongovernmental actors, including employers, trade unions, and organizations of young people. Therefore, the political process of preparing national action plans is not an objective in itself but rather a means to encourage public private partnerships in developing concrete action for youth employment.

Youth Are An Asset, Not a Problem

The panel's policy recommendations begin by presenting youth as an asset, not as a problem. This is an important political message, particularly in view of the relationship among civil conflict and unrest, crime, HIV/AIDS, and even terrorism. Given the growing concern with the problems that confront young people and to which they are especially vulnerable, it is important to focus on unemployment and not on youth as the problem. An article that appeared in the *New York Times* Week in Review section in the months following September 11, 2001, quotes figures from the U.S. Census Bureau:

> From Casablanca to Kabul, the statistics are stunning. Well over half the populations of Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Iraq are under 25 years old. . . . In Pakistan, the number is 61 percent; in Afghanistan, 62 percent. The boom in young people coming of age in a broad swath of territory where terrorists recruit might seem to pose one of the United States' most daunting national security threats.[8]

However, rather than focusing on young people as potential terrorists or threats, the U.N. secretary-general's panel chooses to focus on the positive and creative potential of young people: Young people are an asset in building a better world today, not a problem. In the next 10 years 1.2 billion young women and men will enter into the working age population, the best educated and trained generation of young people ever, a great

potential for economic and social development.

Also, the panel presents youth as a creative force today and not only tomorrow. In other words, it avoids speaking of young people as tomorrow's leaders, but rather as today's partners: Young people are now asking that their voices be heard, that issues affecting them be addressed and that their roles be recognized. Rather than being viewed as a target group for which employment must be found, they want to be accepted as partners for development, helping to chart a common course and shaping the future for everyone.

THE FOUR "E"S

The panel's recommendations can be summarized in four principles:

> Employability: Invest in education and vocational training for young people, and improve the impact of those investments.
> Equal Opportunities: Give young women the same opportunities as young men.
> Entrepreneurship: Make it easier to start and run enterprises to provide more and better jobs for young women and men.
> Employment Creation: Place employment creation at the center of macroeconomic policy.

Although the panel was concerned with delivering a technically anchored message, first and foremost, it wanted to deliver a political message a simple, understandable message formulated to influence policy-makers.

This paper touches on each of these four principles and analyzes their implications for countries at various levels of development. First, *employability*. The panel calls for breaking the vicious circle of poor education and training, poor jobs, and poverty. All countries need to review, rethink, and reorient their education, vocational training, and labor market policies to facilitate the school-to-work transition and to give young people particularly those who are disadvantaged because of disabilities or who face discrimination because of race, religion, or ethnicity a head start in working life. Each country is invited to set objectives and targets based on best practices or best performance for investment in education

the vast majority of youth live and work. In most developing countries, which lack public and institutionalized forms of social protection, the only safety nets for the unemployed are those of the family and informal networks. Low-income young people, first, do not have access to the same educational opportunities, and second, cannot afford to forgo

employment that requires a young person to be well educated and endowed with skills relevant to the labor market. Employability is also closely linked to information and communications technologies, to making these more widely available and accessible, and to closing the digital divide.

With regard to the second principle, equal opportunities for young women and men, the panel provides two sets of arguments to underpin its recommendation. One is based on a moral imperative, and the other as a means to boost productivity. The recommendation reads: Eliminating the gender gap in educational, training, and job opportunities is not only a moral imperative, but furthermore, a means to increase productivity and quality of employment. In many countries, where boys and girls have equal access to education, girls are doing better than boys are in school. In many countries, girls are not getting the same education opportunities as boys are, with serious gender gaps in literacy as a consequence. The panel argues that all countries need to review, rethink, and reorient their policies to ensure that there are equal opportunities for young women when they enter the workforce and throughout their working lives. Each country should set objectives and targets to rectify the gender disparities in access to education, training, and labor markets, and develop and implement the necessary gender-sensitive policies in these areas.

As mentioned above, there is much concern with the social consequences of youth unemployment. The need to seriously address youth employment is taking on a new urgency in light of the deteriorating security situation throughout the world. However, worries about the destructive behavior of young people can result in a policy bias in favor of young men as opposed to young women. Young men with little to lose may adopt behavior that is destructive to society, whereas young women in a similar situation tend to instead become destructive to themselves. By focusing explicitly on the equality of opportunities, policymakers can correct such a bias.

The third principle, entrepreneurship, is not just about self-employment and helping young people start their own business. It is also not just about encouraging the private sector to create employment. Certainly, these are key pieces of the puzzle. But in calling for strengthened entrepreneurship, the panel is calling for a renewed sense of initiative for all young people, whether they are workers or employers, and whether they work in the private or public sector.

Hernando de Soto, one of the panel members, makes a strong plea to review the many cumbersome regulations that keep poor people from starting their own businesses. All countries need to review, rethink, and reorient the legal and institutional framework to make it easier to start and run a business. Governments and international organizations should make it a top priority to obtain reliable and relevant data on the informal economy and on the rules and procedures required to set up and operate a new business within a legal framework. On the basis of a better understanding of institutional obstacles, policies should be developed to allow this part of the economic system to be integrated into the mainstream economy and raise its productivity through legal facilitation. This review should be combined with respect for labor standards, which should be seen as a basic element in achieving productivity and prosperity.

Governments, on both national and local levels, need to encourage a broad and dynamic concept of entrepreneurship to stimulate both personal initiative and initiatives in a variety of organizations that include, but reach beyond, the private sector: small and large enterprises, social entrepreneurs, cooperatives, the public sector, the trade union movement, and youth organizations. Countries also need to strengthen policies and programs, so that small enterprises can flourish and create decent work within an enabling environment. Each country should set objectives and targets for a broad reform program based on best practices, a process that can offer more flexibility for enterprises and more security for workers.

With regard to the fourth principle, employment creation, a cross-country analysis of youth employment carried out by the ILO in 1997 concluded that general macroeconomic conditions have an overwhelming importance in determining the level of youth employment.[10]

Although youth are hurt more than adults by economic downturns, macroeconomic policies, which stimulate aggregate demand, also carry the potential of benefiting youth disproportionately. In fact, the fourth principle of employment creation underpins all the others, namely employability, equal opportunities, and entrepreneurship. For example, employability requires not just appropriate skills and training but also public policies that lead to new employment opportunities where these skills can be used. Investing in youth requires not just better skilled youth but also a commitment by public- and private-sector partners alike to keep job creation a central concern of their investment strategies. Equality of opportunities implies following a high road toward employment, linking rights and labor standards, leading to increased opportunities for both women and men. And entrepreneurship should be supported not only through structural measures but also through growth-oriented macroeconomic policies so that enterprises can sustain themselves.

WHAT CITIES CAN DO TO CREATE JOBS FOR YOUTH[11]

City governments are on the front line in the battle to create and protect jobs. They are the first to feel the negative impact of unemployment, but they are often inadequately prepared to develop policies and programs to create jobs. The question is how to empower the prime victim of urban unemployment to provide some solutions to the problem.

In the above context, cities have a comparative advantage in four areas in the quest to create employment. These are the regulatory environment, the informal economy, investment policies, and the ability to create local alliances.

The Regulatory Environment
The first area of comparative advantage, the regulatory environment, covers a wide range of policies and programs and includes zoning regulations, regulations governing the establishment of small- and medium-sized enterprises, regulations on public contracts and tendering procedures, and regulations linked to the application of working conditions and labor standards. All of these regulations have major implications for either encouraging or holding back the growth of the informal economy. By screening and even designing such regulations to facilitate job creation,

cities are able not to create economic growth but rather to create a propensity for economic growth to result in more and better jobs. City governments are also able to change the ways they contract out for goods and services in order to favor local employment and those using more labor-intensive methods to deliver these goods and services.

The Informal Economy

The regulatory environment is particularly important for improving employment prospects for the majority of youth working in the second area of comparative advantage, the informal economy. City governments can also work to improve quality of employment, productivity, and social protection in the urban informal economy, from both the supply and demand sides. From the supply side, and in addition to the provision of basic infrastructure as discussed above, support can be given through training and microfinance, and by helping informal-sector workers and enterprises to get organized and create their own representative associations. From the demand side, more careful analysis is required on how to stimulate demand for the goods and services produced by the informal sector.

At the ILO's 2002 International Labor Conference, the informal economy was a subject for discussion.[12] Twenty years ago, when the ILO first discussed this issue, there was a sentiment that the informal sector was a transitory phenomenon that would gradually disappear as development took place. However, at present, not only is employment in the informal economy on the rise but furthermore, through international subcontracting and outsourcing arrangements, the boundaries between the formal and informal economies are becoming increasingly blurred.

Therefore, a strategy to upgrade youth employment in the informal economy needs to be carefully designed to exploit positive linkages and to discourage negative linkages between the two economies. Increasingly, subcontracting and outsourcing are utilized as a means to sidestep fundamental labor standards. To the contrary, increasing attention should be paid to bring informal-sector enterprises under the protection of fundamental principles and rights at work. This requires a combination of strong and enabling public policies to avoid a situation in which vulnerable small enterprises, including home-based workers and other forms of self-employment, are forced into a race to the bottom to ensure their access to wider markets.

means for rapid, direct employment creation, employment-intensive investment policies can also be used to redirect already allocated resources for a stronger impact on job creation. Typically, labor-intensive construction methods are appropriate for developing countries, where wage rates for unskilled labor are low.

However, there is scope for almost all countries to create new jobs by critically examining contracting and construction methods and by adopting methods that, at the margin, are both cost-effective and labor-intensive, while at the same time providing high-quality results. Employment-intensive approaches have evolved considerably over the years away from make-work programs to focus on cost-effective, high-quality public works that are implemented by small construction enterprises in the private sector.

The tendency toward decentralization and devolution of responsibilities and resources is accompanied by new powers of municipalities to raise taxes and to use their proceeds at the local level. These resources and powers can be harnessed by mayors in favor of job creation. Furthermore, both public and private investments should be encouraged not only in employment-intensive infrastructure investments but also for investments in human capital, basic health, and education as one means of improving the productivity of the workforce. The problem of falling productivity of labor which appears as one of the constraints to sustained economic growth, as well as at the root of the disquieting and in some cases entrenched problems of urban poverty can be addressed through targeted mechanisms for investments in both infrastructure and human capital. Investments can be targeted toward poor urban neighborhoods, whether they are in decaying peripheral urban areas or in the inner cities. Therefore, employment-intensive investment policies can be harnessed to improve both productivity and living and working conditions in the urban informal sector.

Local Alliances

In their fourth area of comparative advantage, city governments have a rather unique perspective on the ability of local partnerships to create alliances in favor of job creation. One form of alliance can be that which is embodied in the ILO's own tripartite structure, between employers' and workers' organizations and governments, which all have a common interest in job creation. The notion of public private partnerships appears

most workable at the local level. Local businesses and governments have a common interest in urban renewal of decaying or insecure neighborhoods, the private and public sectors both stand to benefit from steps taken to increase the employment content and the employment impact of new investments. Trade unions can participate in community outreach

United Nations General Assembly, Document A/56/422.

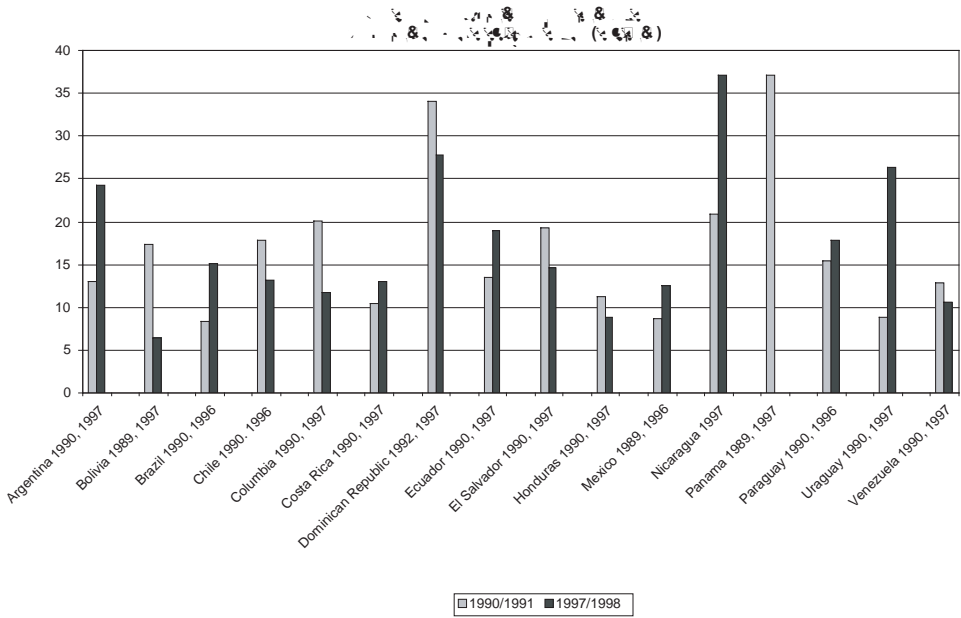United Nations General Assembly Resolution on Promoting Youth Employment, A/RES/57/165.

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NOTES

Second, there is declining labor force participation rates among youth in many countries. During the early and middle 1990s, youth were pushed into the labor market at all-time record highs, but these growth rates are now declining. Since 1995, all countries in the region, with the exception of Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay and Venezuela, have experienced a declining rate of youth labor force participation. Alongside this fact is the decline of youth as a percentage of the economically active population in many of the countries. Female youth labor market participation rates are also slowing in many countries, such as Argentina, Colombia, and Panama. Other countries are experiencing a new surge of female youth workers, such as Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, and Paraguay.

Third, the youth share of total unemployment is falling. The share of unemployed youth in total unemployment has declined, largely due to the decline of youth in the working population. The net impact of these two effects on the unemployment rate is mixed: Argentina, Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Paraguay, and Uruguay have witnessed youth unemployment rates as a smaller share of their total unemployment rates. The remaining countries — Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El

Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, and Venezuela   are finding an increasing net impact of youth unemployment in their economies.

Fourth, the rate of youth unemployment is about twice that of the total unemployed population. This ratio is high when compared with other developing

unemployment. This trend, however, is not the norm in other countries, such as Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, and Paraguay. Various reasons explain these country differences, including *maquila* employment, lower labor market participation rates, and domestic service employment (figure 2).

Seventh, there is a preponderance of youth urban employment in commerce and the service sectors—the informal sector. Approximately 60 percent of all employed youth are in commerce and services, with the country exceptions being Honduras (48 percent) and Bolivia (52 percent). Youth employment in the manufacturing sector has declined in many countries, with the exceptions being Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, and Mexico.

Eighth, the educational level of youth is rising slightly in most Latin American countries. The average number of years of schooling of youth has increased by several educational measures. The average years of schooling of the

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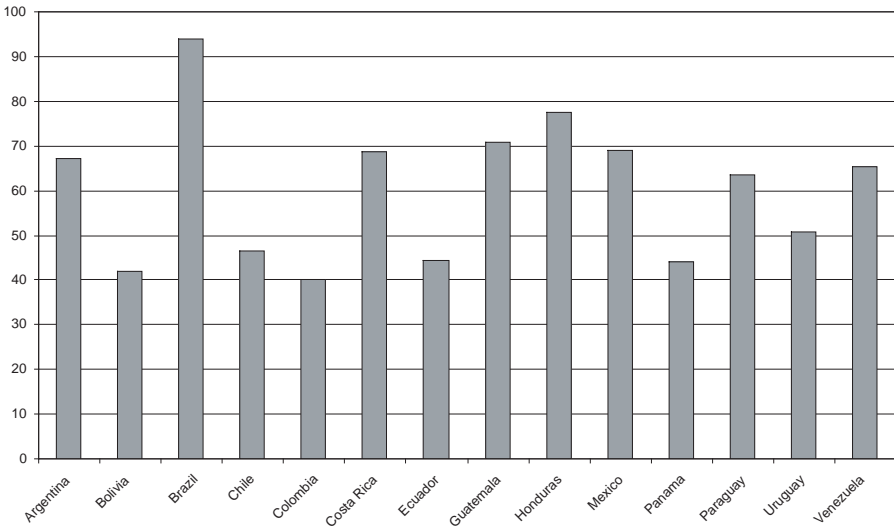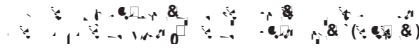
Tenth, low-income youth increasingly bear the burden of youth unemployment in Latin America. The past 10 years have witnessed a sharp increase in the unemployment rates of low-income youth in Latin America. Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, and Uruguay all have experienced growth in unemployment for low-income youth. Of the 12 countries measured, only Bolivia, Honduras, and Venezuela counter this trend. In only a couple of the countries, this trend is correlated with higher youth participation rates   Argentina, Colombia, and Ecuador.

Eleventh, the school-to-work transition stretches out from age 15 years to past age 24. It is made up of many job searches, whereby the average turnover rate of youth in a job is at little more than 1 year and is highly variable, depending on the productive sector of activity. The traditional measurement of job search suggests that the duration of job searches is reasonably short in Latin America, with the largest number of unemployed youths (35 43 percent of the total) being unemployed for a 1 6 month period. Few youth are unemployed for more than 12 months.[2] However, this measurement does not capture the larger and more complex dynamics of the school-to-work transition (box 1). Youth unemployment and school-to-work transition is made up of multiple job searches. The job turnover and multiple activities

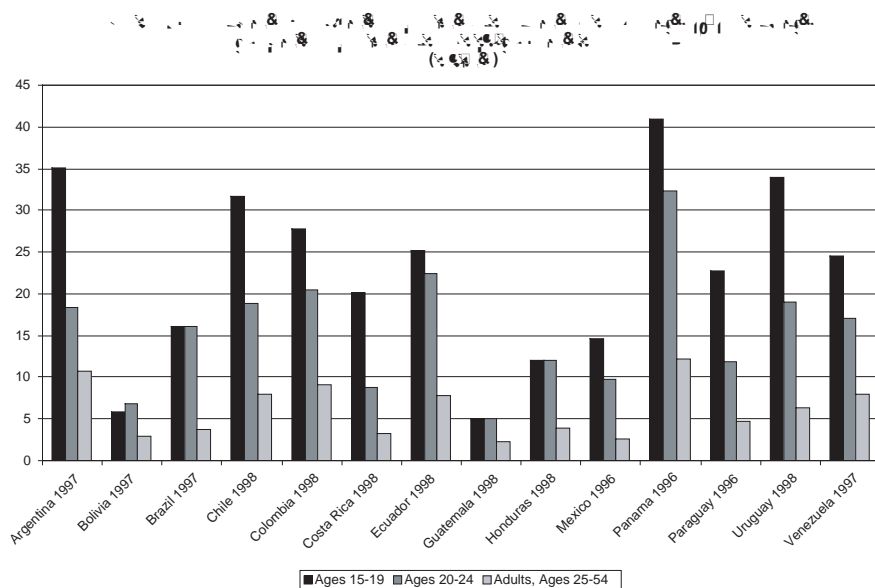**Box 1. Mapping Mexican Youth in the School-to-Work Transition**

The National Urban Employment Survey in Mexico (NUES) and the Micro Enterprises Survey (MES) are two labor market surveys measuring the work, education, age, and real wages of urban workers in Mexico. From these surveys, specific time periods can be constructed, which trace new entrants and workers through various points in time. Six panels were constructed using the NUES and MES data. These rich data sources have become a benchmark for understanding how all workers move in the labor market throughout Mexico, as well as for studying young and unemployed workers.

   The labor market path was measured as the probability that students, the unemployed, and all workers would move from an initial sector to a final sector. For those in school, the probability of remaining is school is 53 percent; yet for those who leave school, there is a wide dispersion of the final sector of labor market activity. Of those school leavers, there is a high probability of leaving school and finding formal-sector work—about 26 percent. Yet further research shows that the higher the education of the worker, the higher the probability of formal-sector employment and of staying in the formal sector. The number of workers whose initial position is outside school but who then return to school is quite surprising. Unpaid workers have a 12 percent probability of returning to school sector the final quarter.

Source: Maloney (1998).

of the work-and-school move make the single measure of job search inadequate to capture this lengthy and complex school–to-work transition. Youth have many possibilities: (1) move into a job search and actively look for a job; (2) receive an unpaid job, such as an apprenticeship or informal learning experience in a firm; (3) accept an offer for salaried employment; or (4) remain in the household, assisting a family member or taking care of children without remuneration.[3]

   Throughout Latin America, there is a lack of dynamic panel data at the country level to explain this school–to-work transition. To help us build a composite picture of the transition process, specific age cohort data can be constructed from the household income surveys of the country. Figure 4 calculates the average unemployment rates for three age cohorts: 15 19 years, 20 24, and an adult cohort of 25 54. At first glance, these comparisons seem to confirm the expected: The longer the school-to-work transition, the lower the unemployment rates. All countries saw a decrease in

45

40

35

30

25

20

15

10

5

0

Argentina 1997 · Bolivia 1997 · Brazil 1997 · Chile 1998 · Colombia 1998 · Costa Rica 1998 · Ecuador 1998 · Guatemala 1998 · Honduras 1998 · Mexico 1996 · Panama 1996 · Paraguay 1996 · Uruguay 1998 · Venezuela 1997

■ Ages 15-19 ■ Ages 20-24 □ Adults, Ages 25-54

the absolute youth unemployment rates for the age cohort group 20 24, from the high levels of youth age 15 19.[4] The older youth have lower unemployment rates than the younger group in absolute terms.

The relative comparisons between older youth and adult cohort groups bring several surprises. The older *i* youth group (*jovenes adultos*) has an extremely high rate of unemployment both in absolute and relative terms, compared with the adult working population. Eleven out of the 13 countries (all but Argentina and Venezuela) have youth unemployment rates for older youth more than double those of adult unemployment rates (see appendix table B for specific country rates by age cohort).

The pervasiveness and significance of youth unemployment well into their 20s points to a one key finding: The school–to–work transition is a long process, lasting well into adulthood for Latin American workers. Second, the lengthy school–to–work transition process is not exclusive to countries with high levels of education. Controlling for the absolute level of unemployment for the age 20 24 cohort group, the countries with high levels of older youth unemployment compared with adult rates are Mexico, Uruguay, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Panama, and Paraguay. The level of education may be a factor in lengthening the school–to–work transi-

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Box 2. Evaluating Labor Market Programs: The Youth Perspective

Youth in Latin America have been at the forefront of labor market innovations, particularly in small, foundation-sponsored youth projects. Through a series of small projects highly targeted to low-income youth, new small projects have been implemented to address youth unemployment issues. In a recent conference, youth from the Southern Cone countries met to discuss the lessons learned from these projects. Here are some of their comments:

- Create a microcontext that relates to the specific needs of youth.
- Find highly targeted local solutions.
- Beware of multiple objectives, because the project may not achieve none of them.
- Implement flexibly through monitoring.
- The world of work is the world of adults. Give youth security, protection, understanding, information, and contacts in this world.
- Youth need to be part of the policy debate.

One vehicle for including youth in the planning and execution of labor market programs is to create a specific youth policy in a country, as has been the case in Colombia.

Sources: O'Higgins (2001); CEPAL and UNESCO (2001).

Low-income youth, with their large informal-sector presence and lengthy and inefficient school-to-work process, present challenges for overall economic goals and impact. With this in mind, let us turn to the main objectives of labor market policies and programs. Four broad types of labor market policies and programs will be examined, with particular analysis of low-income youth:[5] employment-investment-growth policies and programs, government public works and social investment programs, efforts to promote employment through wage and job security policies, and the promotion of employability through skills matching and training.

Employment-Investment-Growth Policies and Programs

Generating jobs through aggregate economic demand is a traditional assumption of economic development. The 1980s presented a classic picture the growth of gross domestic product (GDP) for the Latin American region of 3 5 percent generated a decline in unemployment of about 2 3
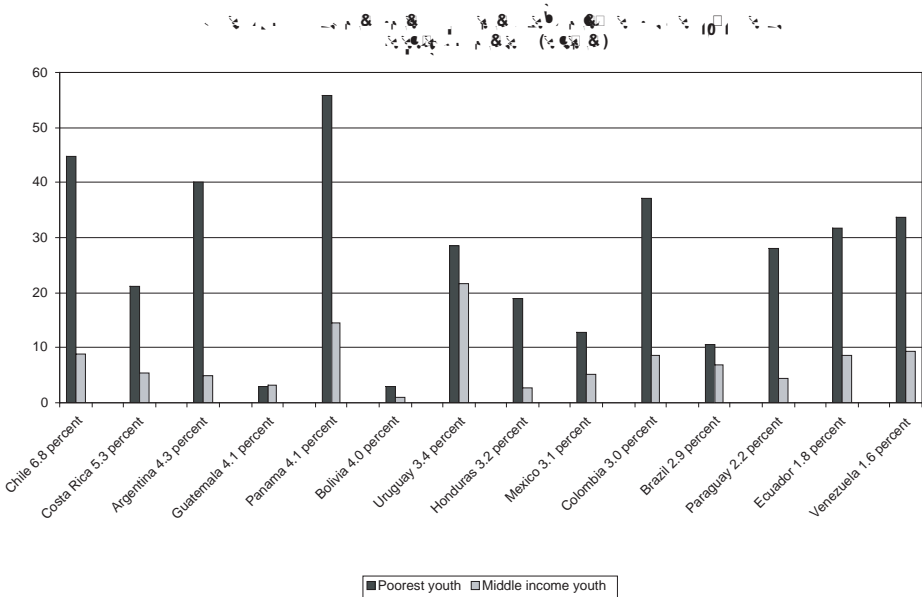
percent.[6] The 1990s introduced a new dynamic whereby GDP growth of about 4 percent for the region was accompanied by increasing levels of unemployment, particularly for some income, age, and gender groups. This disturbing trend of growth combined with higher unemployment had specific effects on the age and gender structure of unemployment.

Chile, the region's top-performing economy, finds itself in an enviable position in economic growth and investment with annual average growth of 6.8 percent during the period 1990 2000. Unfortunately, these policies have not translated into youth employment for all. About 60 percent of the poorest Chilean youth, age 15 19 years, cannot find employment; this compares with middle-class youth rates of 14.7 percent. Similarly, Costa Rica, a country that outperformed many in Latin America during the past decade with an annual average GDP growth of 5.3 percent, also experiences enormous gaps in youth unemployment for the poorest people compared with the middle class. The poorest youth, age 20 24, have unemployment rates about 300 percent higher than those of middle-income youth in the same age cohort. Figure 5 presents this dynamic of poverty and youth unemployment for the older age cohort group, youth age 20 24.

ployment gap between poor and middle-income youth increases over time in countries with a changing labor demand profile.

Second, *the longer the school-to-work transition and the higher the levels of absolute youth unemployment rates, the greater the unemployment gap between poor and middle-income youth.* With these results, it is important to remember that any policy or program to reduce overall youth unemployment in the region's countries should have an indirect impact on poor youth, for the time of school-to-work transition and age cohort crowding would decrease.

However, there is little evidence that high-growth economic strategies reduce absolute unemployment rates for low-income youth. Argentina, Chile, and Costa Rica provide little evidence that low-income youth benefit from high-growth job creation. Youth unemployment is at extremely high levels in these countries, and the school-to-work transition is extremely long due to educational and income factors. The countries with the lowest youth unemployment rates are those that focus on creating unskilled jobs through labor-intensive manufacturing, such as Bolivia, Brazil, Guatemala, and Mexico.

What do these trends suggest about growth-employment policies for youth unemployment? In short, growth-employment policies may well reduce youth unemployment for middle- to higher-income youth. Such policies may promote human capital investment, skills matching, and a whole host of objectives to achieve economic growth. Yet *economic growth policies do little to address the persistent and structural barriers of youth unemployment that must be addressed at the lower levels of income, skills, and education.* Essentially, the structure of youth unemployment in Latin America includes predominantly low-income, female, and unskilled youth. Policies and programs must target these populations to be effective. Let us now examine various policies and programs that effectively target these beneficiaries.

Government Public Works and Social Investment Programs

Employment creation programs are the most widely adopted government intervention to support cyclical unemployment throughout Latin America. There are enormous types and variations of job creation programs. Almost every country in the region has adopted some type of direct employment creation program to respond to economic downturn.

The massive employment creation program adopted by Chile in the early 1970s to the 1980 extended benefits to 4 19 percent of the labor force and represented 1.4 percent of GDP. From Mexico to Argentina, temporary direct employment program have been the most familiar and politically favored government response to cyclical and transitory unemploy-

the more recent social investment funds is a small percentage of the fund targeted to training beneficiaries, yet these projects still have little emphasis on youth unemployment. This area needs to be reexamined.

Targeting jobs and services to youth by specific age, education, and gender characteristics is the key in revising these project designs. Combining highly targeted jobs to low-income youth and gradually building a community-based program of general skills training and labor market services has been a successful model for nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in the region. Such a project focuses on fast disbursement for the jobs creation   the carrot to attract the youth   and builds on this

cost of youth during school-to-work transition has little to do with a sub-minimum wage most youth age 15 19 years receive an extremely low sub-minimum wage or nothing at all. At the older level, youth age 10 24, most training wages would be relevant for formal-sector jobs.

In short, these training wages, not targeted to the specific opportunity costs of participating youth, either completely overcompensate the youth or, as in most cases, limit the youth that participate in programs to those that are educated and skilled. Policies and programs with training wages attract older, skilled youth workers, with the unintended consequence of excluding low-income, unskilled youth. *It is recommended that specific programs targeted to low-income youth reflect the workforce and household realities of the target population. Stipends should pay for travel and miscellaneous costs that reflect the opportunity cost for youth, and a small flat fee stipend for businesses* (box 4).

Promoting Employability through Skills Matching and Training

Unemployment is often explained as the skills mismatch between the demand and supply of labor. Policies and programs only need to close the skills gap so that workers will be more productive and more employable. There is no doubt that a skills gap exists in Latin America, yet the impact of skills training to close this gap is much more difficult to assess. There are a myriad of training policies and programs to support skills acquisition informal education and training, technical education and training, self-employment, and workplace education.

Best known throughout Latin America is Chile Joven, which also has been adapted and modified in Argentina (Proyecto Joven) and Uruguay (Opcion Joven). These youth training programs offer short-term training and in-firm subsidized employment for 6 to 12 months. Through a system of contracting out training services, training is offered to more than 100,000 young people in the Southern Cone countries. Similar projects have been designed throughout Latin America. Various program interventions include training and work experience in firms, work training to become self-employed, training for young workers, and a short-term apprenticeship program. Experimental design evaluation has been conducted on these various programs, whereby control groups have been set up to evaluate outcomes.

In the cases of Chile Joven and Opcion Joven in Uruguay, statistical surveys and analyses allow for comparable results.[10] Table 1 outlines the

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Box 4. The Impact of Job Security Policy on Youth Unemployment

In the past 5 years, a large body of country research has been created on the costs of job security policy throughout Latin America. To better explain the results of this research, Heckman and Pages (2000) link the various countries to cross-panel estimates of the impact of job security on employment, including that of youth unemployment. Confirming the earlier results of Montenegro and Pages (1999), youth bear the burden of job security in the formal sector. Yet which youth are most influenced by this policy? Formal-sector employment is primarily biased toward highly educated youth, whereby skilled and educated youth have been substituted for unskilled and lower-income youth, particularly among older youth workers, those age 20–24 years.

For youth in the informal sector, the impact is not clear. Research shows that a loss of job security in the formal sector results in negative employment in the informal sector—a perverse result. Perhaps this is explained by the educational profile of the youth or adults employed in the two sectors. With the increased demand for skilled workers in the formal sector, informal-sector skilled workers move back to the formal sector—resulting in minimal or negative informal-sector employment impact.

Alongside this effect is the substitution effect, whereby unskilled labor moves to the informal sector, thus reducing the probability of employment in the informal sector for unskilled workers. Any sweeping reform of the labor codes that would accelerate this process could lead to worsening job prospects for young, low-income unskilled workers. The lessons learned from past experiences include the unintended consequences of wage and labor policy in Latin America, a labor market characterized by sector and skill gaps.

Source: Heckman and Pages (2000)

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main findings of these evaluations, in employment impact, wage impact, human capital impact, and targeting. This discussion points to the wide range of project benefits, both intended and unintended. In fact, the small project in Uruguay, Opcion Joven, controls for a variety of interventions, from training to labor market service options. The evaluations highlight the three main lessons learned, which can be summarized as follows.

First, higher employability is due to training and subsidized employment. Both projects increase the probability of employment for its beneficiaries, with the greater impact measured by the Uruguay initial test. [11] The Uruguay evaluation distinguished three service options: training with stipends, training without stipends, and technical training. The Uruguayan case

Table 1. Impact Evaluation Results for Chile Joven and Opción Joven.

Project	Employment Effects	Wage and Income

points to high impact in all three types of interventions. *The Uruguayan results demonstrate that positive results may not need to include financial incentives in the workplace, an expensive component of training programs.*

Second, highly targeted secondary education programs for youth of age 15–24 years may be only marginally successful. The Chile Joven project adequately targeted low-income youth, with 63 percent of youth at low-income levels. The Uruguay project did not evaluate this important question. The data suggest that the self-selectivity mechanism within the project that of education and region coverage was only marginally successful. The younger, less educated, and rural participants in the program had lower employability rates. New and more targeted designs are needed for this lower age, education, and income group.

Third, gender targeting led to a high rate of participation by females, yet its impact on females was 17–25 percent less than males. The targeting of project benefits to females was an integral part of the design of the projects, and projects had approximately 50 percent or more female participants. And though the projects did have a significant gender impact, it was less than males. All of the evaluations controlled for education and other variables affecting female participation.

These programs provide excellent examples of how to target resources to specific beneficiaries: contracting out services to NGO providers; specific standards for training services; the use of training vouchers to businesses (which is a form of training subsidy); and the inclusion of informal-sector firms in their outreach program. However, the weakest link in these programs is the inclusion of lowest-income beneficiaries in the pro-

Appendix A. Key Indicators of Youth Unemployment in Latin America (percent)

Country	Labor Force Participation Rate (%)		Unemployment Rate (%)		Youth to Total Unemployment Rates	Unem-ployed youth in total EAP (%)	Unemployed youth of total unemployed (%)
	Total	Youth	Total	Youth			
Argentina 1990	56	52	5.9	13.0	2.29	19.2	42.1
Argentina 1997	59	53	14.3	24.2	1.69	20.6	35

Caroline Fawcett

system. As the dynamic data suggest, many youth are in a constant cycle between school and work. Extending education to informal programs with certification and at a community center would encourage youth to go back to school, yet without the stigma of failure associated with the formal educational system.

Rethink expensive training programs. Considerable cost savings could be tapped when designing unemployment training programs. An emphasis on generic skills for younger participants would certainly reduce costs. Also, expensive training stipends may actually exclude low-income participants, as high-income youth crowd the programs. With regard to basic skills for the informal sector, for most young people in Latin America, the informal sector is the point of entry into the labor market. There is very limited understanding on how programs can tap into this experience to enhance workforce learning. Such an orientation is distinct from simple business skills. The question is how to use this experience to encourage basic skills for the future. Remedial education emphasizing basic skills should be integrated into these training curriculums.

Remember your objective. For many countries in the region, the main problem regarding youth unemployment is not its severity but rather its persistence in low-income populations. Other countries are experiencing both cyclical unemployment as well as a deepening of structural unemployment. Distinct policies and programs are needed to address these different target populations: low-income youth versus middle- and higher-income participants.

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NOTES

1. The large body of survey work has been undertaken with the U.N. Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLAC, also known by its Spanish abbreviation, CEPAL) and the International Labor Organization (ILO) Regional/Lima. See *Panorama Laboral* (ILO 2000b) for annual statistics. The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and other multilateral institutions have worked in concert with CEPAL and ILO on these surveys and analyses.

2. The source for these data is ECLAC, on the basis of special tabulations of data from 1990 97 household surveys conducted in Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador, Honduras, and Uruguay.

3. Maloney (1998).

4. Only Bolivia and Guatemala do not show a robust difference, which might best be explained by statistical sampling limitations.

5. For a more comprehensive analysis, see Fawcett (2002).

6. In estimating the responsiveness of unemployment to changes in GDP, the IDB Research Department found the following: Where a 1 percent change of aggregate demand leads to a change in the adult unemployment rate 0.25 percent, a GDP increase of 4 percent would generate a reduction of unemployment of about 1 percent; see Marquez and Pages (1998).

7. Absolute levels of unemployment rates decline for both poor and middle-income youth 20 24 years of age (see figure 3), yet the unemployment gap between the two income groups widens for this older youth group.

8. See Blanchflower and Freeman (2001) for a more detailed analysis of age cohort crowding.

9. Marquez and Pages (1998).

10. This review of the impact evaluations draws from: Bravo and Contreras (2000) and Bucheli and Gonzalez Rozada (1997).

11. It must be emphasized that there were stringent empirical tests   for this analysis isolates other factors   e.g., education, age, and other variables that influence the search process. These test results are very impressive, given the stringency of the tests.

RESPONSES OF THE POOR
AND URBAN MIGRANTS

these investments are put at risk as we *I* drop kids for the next decade of their transition from childhood to adulthood, until 10 years later, when they become mothers or adult heads of households in need of training and employment.

They have also been missed because the early decades of development have had a distinctly rural focus. The expertise and experience have not been developed for working in the cities, and street-involved youth are distinctly urban phenomena. In the cities, the traditional pillars upon which development programs have been anchored   extended families, intact and relatively immobile populations, homogeneous communities, adult-headed households, and land, however meager, as an asset base, are gone. Our public policies presume a stability of fixed addresses, civil identities, birth records, and traditional family units that may not exist in urban areas. To successfully serve this particular population in the world's cities, international agencies need a whole new set of skills and investments.

STREET KIDS INTERNATIONAL

Street Kids International has been consistent and for many years unique in its focus on working with street-involved youth. At Street Kids International, we believe that the ones who are difficult to access are not the youth but ourselves, our programs, and our institutions. We believe we need a paradigm shift in adult adolescent relationships, away from experts with lists of do's and don'ts and dire warnings, and away from rescuers of children from situations that do not fit our model of what childhood should be. Despite their chronological age, street youth have been placed in adult roles and need adult forms of engagement that acknowledge their situations, coping skills, innate strengthes, and resilience. Success at working with street kids requires active, interactive, and nonjudgmental engagement.

Street Kids International was born in Sudan in 1985, when the organization's future founder encountered the street youth of Khartoum, who had fled alone from the armies and militias in the countryside during the early days of that civil war and found themselves in Khartoum with no resources and no adults left in their lives. Having been struck by their stories and resilience and frustrated by the unwillingness of major donors to

take on this population, the founder shaped the early principles and practices of Street Kids International.

During the past 15 years, the organization has worked globally with street-involved youth, youth workers, and local frontline organizations that share our commitment to working creatively with these kids with a

WHY STREET KIDS ARE NOT YET ON THE AGENDA

We at Street Kids International believe that though a combination of factors have prevented strategic interventions on behalf of street kids to be made by the major international players, two in particular are the most significant constraints: (1) the urban nature of the problem; and (2) the myths, stigmas, and stereotypes of adb

political and economic structures leaves youth age 10 to 20 years facing acute social upheaval during a life stage when personal support, social stability, and guidance from family and community are crucial.

Second, while witnessing social aberration and related risk behaviors among these youth, the institutions that serve them (both government and nongovernment) are themselves experiencing significant instability and uncertainty. Though a chronic lack of stable funding remains a constant concern, there is also a growing recognition that, in terms of government policy, professional development, and institutional capacity, the majority of youth-serving agencies lack the public policy frameworks, service-delivery models, and practical tools required to meet the needs and expectations of this new generation of young people. Little coherent vision exists on how to harness this immense demographic asset and offer meaningful and positive policy alternatives that acknowledge the energy and resilience of these young people.

Street Kids International takes the approach that adolescence is a process of building human assets. The behaviors of young people should be ranged on a normative scale that may not fit an adult view of ideal childhood and adolescence but is nevertheless within a perfectly normative frame for adolescence.

Shifting the adult child paradigm is essential to successfully supporting this demographic age group. This requires not seeing adults as experts, whose role is to transfer knowledge down to adolescents. It means rethinking notions of an idealized childhood that is beyond the reaches of most of the youth of the world. And it requires us to stop thinking of youth as adults in waiting.

STREET "CHOICES"

We have taken these principles and began by addressing some of the most obvious challenges faced by street kids in their reproductive health and, most important, the impact of HIV/AIDS on their lives. This was in the middle to late 1980s, long before there was any attention and little understanding of this virus. Early successes with our approaches led to being asked and supported to create a street-based approach to substance abuse directed at street youth. We captured this early work under the description of Street Health.

In more recent years, we have closed the loop between the health risks and the economic needs of street kids by creating a business learning process specifically designed for youth who are at risk. We drew on the years of learning and best practices in microenterprise and microcredit directed at marginalized populations such as women, and we created a set of enterprise training materials reflective of the cognitive, literacy, and numeric skills of street-based working youth. It builds on the innate skills that come from street survival. We describe this area of programming as 'Street Work.

Over the years, the rights of street youth ('Street Rights') have emerged as the overlying challenge to life on the street. Though we acknowledge the significance and importance of human rights treaties and legislation, in our street-based practice, we believe that the denial of the positive rights of street youth their right to work, their right to access available health care without adult consent, their right to be free from criminal sanctions due to lack of a birth registration or other civil identity often caused by reason of being parentless from a young age requires more attention. Working with police, local governments, and in particular municipal governments, health clinicians and youth court workers whose attitudes, biases, and perceptions can affect the day-to-day lives and rights of youth who live and or work on the streets of our cities is an important part of programming interventions on behalf of street youth.

This programmatic or content side of our work is captured descrip-

about the sensitive issues of street life. This section explores Street Kids International's working paradigm and its use of narrative as a cross-cultural tool for building collaborative relationships with street youth, the organizations that serve them, and the public that needs to hear their stories.

Changing the Paradigm

Street Kids International has always been anchored in a practice-based approach to its own organizational learning. We believe that street youth need support and opportunities to make safe and healthy life choices. They do not need prescriptive directions or dire warnings about unsafe sex, drugs, or diseases by adult experts. Most of what we know and have learned comes from listening to street kids in nearly every country of the world.

Our pedagogical approach to working with street youth is to deliberately shift the paradigm of traditional adult child relationships. In our work, this means neither approaching youth as an adult expert with information, knowledge, and experience to transfer, nor coming as an adult wanting to save the remnants of a childhood long gone or to recreate an adult sense of an idealized childhood. We do not start from the premise that street youth are children to be protected, liabilities to be controlled, or threats to be

ferent geographies and settings with them, so that it mirrors the situations, conflicts, and challenges of growing up on the street.

We have learned that unlike adults, youth are less likely to divide the world by cultures and geographies when the subject is their lives. They are quick to see the common features of youth culture and street life that for them transcend differences in national culture. Materials created in Bolivia are translated by Tajiks for use with youth there. Practices had trial use in Africa are documented by Thais for use in South East Asia. The animations and materials we have produced have been translated and adapted in languages and countries all over the world without our knowledge or input or the need for our consent. At last count, *Karate Kids* had been translated into 31 languages and was being used in most countries of the world.

Stories and Education

If we give street-involved youth a voice, it only creates power where that voice is welcomed and heard. Often this does not extend beyond the street or a community center where they are able to meet with youth workers who respect them.

Street-involved youth are among today's 1.04 billion youth age 15 to

quality of life. We know that a street kid with a little money can find a family. An extended family member who may not have been able to take in a child without risking putting other dependents at risk will willingly take in another member able to contribute to household income. A street youth with savings or the potential for disposable income will make choices about going to school full or part time. A street kid with a microenterprise becomes a member of a community that may have seen him as shiftless, threatening, or simply transient and not worth investing in.

How can we support these youth in building safer and more profitable ways of earning money? Street Kids International has confronted this question through the development and implementation of several microcredit and business-training programs for street-involved youth. The lessons learned from each of these regional programs culminated in the launch of our Street Business Toolkit: a global business-training program for youth workers to use with the street youth in their regions.

In all of our microcredit and business-training experiences, youth from this resilient population repeatedly demonstrated that they could adapt their street smarts and rapidly learn new business skills and use them for immediate and positive gains in their lives and livelihoods. To fully draw on this potential, we challenged ourselves, in developing the Street Business Toolkit, to identify the most effective way to advance street youth's business knowledge and understanding, despite their low literacy and numeric skills.

We knew from our time spent with street-based working children that they already had a pricing model in their heads. They knew when they charged too much to sell enough or too little to pay their expenses. They already had a customer attraction and retention model how to win new customers and how to have repeat customers. What they lacked was a conceptual framework that fit their experiences and reflected their situations. We quickly realized that instead of starting with definitions and calculations, new business skills were most accessible to street-involved youth when introduced through a story. Much like the oral storytelling tradition, lessons stayed in their memory and prompted new ideas and questions when first introduced through anecdotes about other street youth.

Thus was born *Speed's Choice*, an animated video about five street youth encountering the challenges and adventures of running their own

small businesses. The experiences of each character have been further developed into case studies used within an extensive curriculum of interactive activities and worksheets to guide street youth in writing a basic business plan. Each new business concept is related to a character and their story, and each story enables street youth to relate the new business concepts to their own experiences. The stories of youth livelihood need to be continuously captured and told and used to educate investors, such as international development agencies, youth workers, and other street-based working youth.

We believe that working with street kids in their economic capacity and providing access to credit to enable them to leverage what they already do is an entry point for other interventions such as community participation, political action, and where possible re-engagement with adults on a new footing. Building an economic base of any size invests these kids in their communities and stretches out their planning cycles and life skills beyond uninvested day-to-day survival.

Stories and Partner Collaborations

The opportunities for youth to acquire new business skills, make healthier life choices, and participate in microcredit extends only so far as the network of institutions and frontline workers prepare to push the frontiers of youth work from crisis intervention and rescue to human development. In many cases, the frontline workers reaching out to street-involved youth, though many experienced street life themselves, seem to have forgotten the type of support and mutuality they sought from adults when they were young. In their professional roles, they use the authoritarian approach they experienced from their teachers and parents; they become adults who judge, warn, and forget to listen in their well-intentioned attempt to transmit information about the risks of street life.

One of Street Kids International's primary objectives is to advance methods for empowering street-involved youth through collaborations with frontline institutions and staff. We have participated in diverse dialogues, training, and consultations with frontline staff from around the world. In all of these interchanges, it ultimately becomes clear that frontline youth workers are a product of the training they receive in schools of social work around the world. Street Kids International is attempting to change the nature and content of social work that ignores or stereotypes

street youth. The agenda of youth work still overwhelmingly tends to revolve around the themes of youth and crime, youth and drugs, and youth and sex.

In t

appear more professional to their customers. They prefer to depict street youth who combine their daily earnings to buy drugs instead of the street youth who befriend each other to replace the family support they lack.

While it is easier to communicate a one-dimensional view of the reality we have witnessed, we underestimate the public's ability to appreciate the complexity of the true story. By portraying street youth as helpless victims instead of as valuable members of society, we continue to stigma-

First and foremost, we need to work toward a major shift in the attitudes and prejudices that limit potential and impoverish the vision of adolescents as strong, capable, resilient risk takers. This will require close cooperation with judges, police, court workers, health care workers, and all those others who have the most direct impact on the youth service sector.

Good data collection, both quantitative and qualitative, as well as case studies and well-documented pilot projects that are able to break boundaries and take risks need to be supported.

We need to focus on institutional capacity building at the municipal government level. Though it is important to work at the micro or street level to be grounded in best practices and it is important to stay connected at the national or macro level, where treaties and large investment decisions are made, the meso level, where municipalities operate, is the axis where practitioners and policymakers can leverage influence and where major change can occur.

We need to focus on the professional development of youth-serving agencies and youth workers. The sector needs to be professionalized by strengthening schools of social work, some of which need to build institutional experience and their reputations by centering on street youth.

We need to use the laws of human and civil rights as a framework and press for the positive citizenship rights of street kids: their right to work, to earn a living, and to get health care.

The effort outlined in the preceding steps will require programmatic interventions that will probably divide the decade into two halves. From children 10 to 15 years of age, the focus needs to be on their reproductive health, but it also needs to be recognized that even by this age, many of the children are working full time on the streets supporting themselves, their siblings, and their parents. Often the child pushed to the street to work is not the eldest but rather the one seen by the parents as likely to survive and succeed by reason of character and personality. For youth from 15 to 20 years of age, the focus needs to shift to strengthening capabilities around economic livelihood. At these ages, many youth are already sole income earners and heads of household. Where they are not supporting existing family members, they are beginning to form their own family units, taking on partners and becoming parents.

This effort will require an acknowledgement that the youth service sector has many participants and is in itself a formal sector that comprises social workers, court workers, health clinicians, educators, and the police and municipal government officials, whose policies, regulatory decisions, and attitudes directly affect street kids. They need to be included in the planning and execution of programmatic initiatives in this area if we want systemic change.

This effort will not require new microcredit institutions that only target street kids. But it will require that we influence those already experienced in the microcredit and microfinance sector to embrace this target population as viable credit recipients.

This effort will require that we draw on the many lessons learned and the diversity of credit and entrepreneurship models that have been successful with women.

This effort will require that we set realistic goals, standards, and benchmarks. Street kids are truly the poorest of the poor, and in many cases there are no adult figures in their lives and no financial support. It is important that we do not set up youth or ourselves for failure. We need to think of youth work as a blended model of enterprise creation and capacity building and not insist on perfect economic efficiency in the beginning years of programming initiatives. We need patient capital. We need to think out of the box about where youth are found. For example, we need to think of refugee camps as unique urban environments that for many will be the streetscape where youth move from childhood into adulthood. We need to ensure that programming for youth takes place in all these settings, with a presumption of the street as both a physical and metaphorical place that is a permanent and formative part of their adolescence.

We believe we are on the threshold of significant learning. There are few projects in place, but there are small, creative pilots being initiated under the radar screen. We believe there is great upside potential in economic programming for street kids that is more significant than the risks, which will be there anyway. To do nothing because we are risk averse in our program-
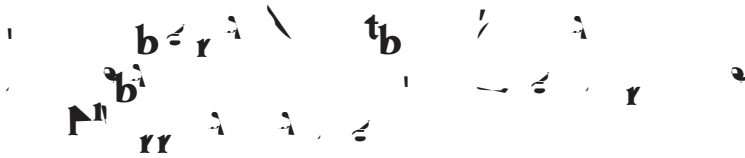
SARAH THOMAS DE BENITEZ
International Children's Trust

Homeless street children are an extremely disadvantaged sector of urban youth. Their particular circumstances and characteristics leave them without access to many of their human rights and excluded from mainstream society. Policies that affect these children range from broadly based to targeted initiatives and each type of initiative carries advantages and disadvantages for them. Three basic approaches can be distinguished that cut across these typologies and determine the way in which street children are viewed and treated, and which can be summarized as reactive, protective, and rights based. Each approach has distinguishable effects on the lives of homeless children, who live in the streets of towns and cities across the developing world.

This paper sets out the main implications of the various initiative and approach choices for street-living children. A broad, rights–based approach is recommended, into which targeted initiatives are integrated, facil9. inA79(Th y b argetedtr)1culPd initiatF2collaboJT(e in the stnd teach0c(e in il118(.)

living children   on the grounds that a narrower focus allows for clearer

from country to country, city to city, and child to child, there are six barriers that interact to a greater or lesser degree to keep homeless street children in extreme poverty and excluded from mainstream society.

First, homeless street children, share the common condition of being 'out of place' in street environments, spending their lives largely outside the spheres typically considered appropriate for children, such as home, school and recreational settings (Raffaelli and Larson 1999, 1). This out of place condition sets street-living children outside the usual rules and protective norms of society.

Second, street children are, particularly vulnerable to abuses in juvenile justice systems: they are more likely to come into (actual or perceived) conflict with the law, and they are less able to defend themselves from abuse once within the system (Consortium for Street Children 2002, 1).

Third, although street children are often found in cities where education, is already close to universal primary schooling (Boyden and Holden 1991, 101) and teaching is generally of higher quality than in the rural areas (Watkins 2000, 73), they have lower probabilities than most children of being able to access formal education not least because of their mobility, lack of a birth certificate, no home address, and no adult to enroll them in school.

Fourth, homeless street children are particularly exposed to certain health risks, yet they have less access than most urban poor children to health services. Although there is little statistical evidence to show that street children are at greater risk than other poor urban children of malnutrition or poor mental health (Panter-Brick 2002, 161), in terms of engaging in drug-taking, survival sex and HIV-risk behaviour, studies overwhelmingly put street youth in the at-risk category (Scanlon et al 1998). Street children also risk death from violent trauma, accidents, suicide, and murder, although few survival statistics have been published (Raffaelli 1999, 18).

Fifth, homeless street children need to earn money or find food to survive. Their work is usually sporadic and marginal, sometimes criminal, and always in the informal market. Their marginal activities put them outside the scope of any protection service geared to ensuring that child labor is not exploitative or hazardous.

Sixth, as sporadic workers and nonadults, street children are usually unable to rent housing and are excluded from assisted housing schemes.

These circumstances often work together to form multifactor barriers that compound the difficulties homeless street children face in attempts to overcome social exclusion, vulnerability, and extreme poverty. Their marginalization by society is exacerbated by the development or deepening of behavioral patterns that help them meet their immediate survival needs but are often a source of further alienation from society; strengthened feelings of independence, lack of attention to hygiene, and aggressive behavior are just a few such patterns that can prevent children from being able to become successfully integrated into school, regular work, or family life later on. This decline toward long-term exclusion carries implications both for the children themselves and for the wider society.

POLICIES: BROADLY BASED AND TARGETED I

aimed at improving the lives of poor children; improved access to health clinics, drives to improve primary school enrollment, and legislation to protect children from exploitative labor are just three common areas of policy reform. Local authority initiatives often work in tandem with these, equipping schools in poor urban communities, staffing health centers, and providing vocational training schemes.

These are vital services for the urban poor, which will no doubt improve many children's living conditions and future prospects. And it is possible that such broadly based policy initiatives give homeless street children at least intermittent access to new services, such as immunization campaigns, if they are blanket campaigns aimed at covering all children. Effective campaigns to reduce the incidence of sexually transmitted diseases or slow the spread of HIV/AIDS will affect street children directly or as part of a domino effect reducing the overall probability of infection.

Broadly based initiatives can address and reform whole social networks, and can therefore allow more scope for preventive action. For instance, effective programs to reduce domestic violence may prevent some children from taking to the streets, whereas vocational training opportunities in areas of high youth unemployment may keep other children out of street gangs and thereby prevent some of them from taking to street life.

However, broadly based initiatives run the very real risk of including street children at the levels of planning and discourse but excluding them in practice. This, in essence, is because services for urban poor children (or children in extreme poverty) are, like most services, limited by explicit resource constraints and performance targets. A typical localized exam-

place, they are likely to face more obstacles by staying in the program such as living in an unfavorable street environment, having to make more changes to behavioral patterns, and being subject to stigmatization than do other children.

A broadly based initiative, designed to address a specific problem faced by large numbers of poor children, will be, all other things being equal, most successful for those children who have the most support and the fewest problems in other areas. Such initiatives seem likely to be least successful for homeless street children who have very few sources of support and are engaged in a precarious day-to-day struggle for survival with a range of interacting barriers affecting different areas of their lives.

Sometimes, several areas of national social policies are cited as including street children such as vocational training (employment), community health centers (health), and orphanages and shelter homes (justice and welfare). But within these, even in high-income countries such as Belgium, no particular attention is given to street children nor are specific methods applied to them (Council of Europe Steering Committee on Social Policy 1994, 46). In practice, therefore, homeless children are more likely to be excluded from broadly based initiatives for children, independent of the type of underlying approach.

Targeted Initiatives

The largest and most important targeted international initiative for street children so far has undoubtedly been UNICEF's regional program in Latin America and the Caribbean, launched in 1988 for children in especially difficult circumstances, in which street children were given priority (Boyden and Holden 1991, 75). A few UNICEF offices still run targeted programs, often together with NGOs (e.g., UNICEF in Albania and in Vietnam).

UNESCO and the World Bank have also targeted street children through different policy initiatives. Through its Global Basic Education for All Program, UNESCO funded several NGO initiatives for street children and disseminated examples of good practices during the 1990s (UNESCO 1995). The World Bank has also funded projects for street children through local authorities and NGOs (e.g., a pilot program in Ceara, Brazil; World Bank 1994), launched its Street Children Initiative in 1998, hosted an international conference on street children in 2000,

and published a report on approaches and practices for street children in 2002 (Volpi 2002).

Although the global presence and wide-ranging responsibilities of international agencies and international NGOs provide them with a platform for advocating policies and disseminating good practices, they do not have the comparative advantages of specialization, innovation, and personalization needed to implement and sustain policies targeting particular groups of disadvantaged children (Thomas de Benitez 2003, 34). It is more often local authorities and sometimes national governments that develop targeted policies, often in conjunction with NGOs, and usually in reaction to growing numbers or persistent populations of working or homeless children visible on their cities' streets. Mexico and Kenya, for example, are currently implementing targeted initiatives for street children in their major cities. And local authorities in many cities across the world have started their own initiatives in response to local concerns and anxieties about homeless children on their city streets.

Targeted initiatives recognize homeless street children as a particular group of disadvantaged children who survive in particularly precarious but often highly visible conditions. Targeted initiatives can work to help homeless street children gain access to services that address specific, identified needs in health, welfare, housing, or employment. Drop-in centers, medical and dental treatment, psychological and family counseling, and access to schooling and job opportunities can all be directed at meeting the needs of homeless street children. Initiatives targeted at homeless street children can help to plug gaps in the social networks through which children, and street children in particular, can fall (Council of Europe Steering Committee on Social Policy 1994, 47).

Several hundred small, often local NGOs around the world help plug these gaps, either in collaboration or conflict with local authorities. However, targeted initiatives are essentially reactions to perceived existing problems, and are limited in their capacity to prevent those situations from arising. Also, although a targeted initiative is more likely to have an immediate impact on homeless street children than is a broadly based initiative, this does not mean that this impact is necessarily positive or lasting for the child's integration into society.

APPROACHES TO HOMELESS STREET CHILDREN

Perspectives on street children have undergone a sea change at the turn of the 21st century (Panter-Brick 2002, 148). A driving force behind this sea change has been the almost universal ratification of the 1989 U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, the most widely and rapidly accepted human rights treaty in history. Children are moving from the margins of discussions about poverty toward center stage, as UNICEF's publication *Poverty Reduction Begins with Children* suggests (UNICEF 2000). And at the same time, concern for street children and other youth in difficult circumstances is ʹno longer a matter of humanitarian and charitable concern, but a legal responsibility at local, national and international levels (Panter-Brick 2002, 8).

Although only one approach, the rights-based approach, responds adequately to the legal responsibilities toward street children assumed by all governments on their ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, two other approaches are evident in practice in many countries. These can be summarized as the ʹreactive and ʹprotective approaches.

A Reactive Approach to Homeless Street Children
A reactive approach sees homeless street children primarily as a threat or potential threat to public order and safety. A key policy manifestation is the use of the juvenile justice system as a way to clear the streets and punish offenders against the common good. A ʹcentral characteristic of the Law and Order approach is that the phenomenon is individualized and is viewed only in terms of its possible consequences for public order (Council of Europe Steering Committee on Social Policy 1994, 17).

Children in some countries, like the Philippines, can be arrested sim-

the periphery of cities, in an attempt to get children off the streets (Satterthwaite 1999, 217).

Sentencing policies can range from those that place children in custodial institutions to alternatives such as community service. Custodial options are still in place for children in many low- and middle-income countries, such as Ecuador, Namibia, and Pakistan. Street children can be particularly vulnerable because they rarely count on family support in their journey through the court system. Where a children's rights agenda is not yet in place, or where it is only nominally in place, policies can be highly repressive toward children at any stage of the legal process.

Policies of rounding up children to frighten them away from the streets and of imprisoning ⁄ vagrants may be symptoms of ⁄ authoritarian populism in countries living through political chaos or economic decline, when governments draw on particular prejudices and discontents to attract support and legitimacy (Hall 1982). Underpinning such treatment is the concept of street children as delinquents. ⁄ The problem of street children is therefore often perceived solely as a criminal problem (Council of Europe Steering Committee on Social Policy 1994, 48).

Under a reactive approach, authorities are likely to give homeless street children welfare and educational provisions available in custodial institutions under punitive policies. Because a policy goal is to remove delinquents from the streets, there may be attempts at rehabilitation or at instilling fear, so that on release, children do not return to the streets. However, there is considerable evidence that after custodial sentences, homeless children return to the streets, because the problems that led to their homelessness have not been addressed (Consortium for Street Children 2002, 1).

Although unstable and authoritarian regimes are most likely to be condemned for brutal policies toward street children, it can be argued that policies harmful to street children are not limited to environments of civil war or authoritarian regimes policies can also be implemented, in more subtle ways, within environments created by democratic conservative, corporatist, or liberal governments. Such environments may not be openly repressive in the same way as those created under authoritarian regimes, but nevertheless they can have extremely negative effects on the development of street children by keeping the barriers in place that exclude them from mainstream participation.

A broadly based initiative for children under a reactive approach is likely to help those children regarded by the authorities as ʹdeserving and ʹneedy, rather than ʹdelinquent. So homeless street children are unlikely to be affected directly. A targeted initiative under a reactive approach is likely to be repressive. Its effects may include the presence of street children in custodial institutions, unchecked abuses of children's rights, homeless children being periodically less visible as they avoid the police, and homeless children becoming increasingly alienated from society.

conceptualized as a residual welfare measure, often, although not neces-

Under a rights-based approach, homeless children in breach of the law should have their special circumstances taken into account. For example, some Brazilian cities have set up screening and referral centers offering alternative options to juvenile prisons, whereas some high-income countries have schemes to mediate settlements between offenders and victims (Satterthwaite 1999, 230). In some countries, state social workers or NGOs accompany homeless children all the way through the legal process, in recognition of their particular lack of other support systems.

In juvenile justice, the human rights perspective is currently driving most reform throughout the world. One of the most important aspects of the Convention on the Rights of the Child is the guidance it gives for youth justice systems; to make these systems compatible with this Convention usually means that significant changes are needed in laws, procedures and the make-up and attitude of authorities and institutions with responsibility for managing children in conflict with the law (Satterthwaite 2002, 6).

Sustained access to basic health services, education, and housing is recognized as an entitlement of homeless children within a rights-based approach. Certain governments and some local authorities have made low-cost lodgings, vouchers for hostel accommodation and advice on housing available to young people (Boyden and Holden 1991, 71). The Convention on the Rights of the Child requires that all state actions reflect the best interests of the child, couched within a framework that entitles children to participate, express their opinions, and have these opinions taken into account in policies, programs, and decisions that affect them. In this context, children may have the right to work under certain circumstances; choose whether to return to the family home or to take alternative shelter options; participate in formal or nonformal schooling; and receive health care at preventive and curative levels, according to their own perceptions of their needs.

A broadly based initiative within a human rights approach is likely to include children at planning, piloting, implementation, and feedback stages. Homeless street children will not be consulted as a particular group, but children with particularly weak access to their rights are likely to participate. Broadly based initiatives are likely to include structural reforms in educational, health, or welfare service provision with homeless street children along with other children being encouraged to partic-

ipate in order to identify processes appropriate to achieving desirable outcomes for all.

However, because such initiatives require fundamental changes in the way state services are resourced and delivered, change will take time, and homeless street children may perceive the impact more as participants in planning than as receivers of services, at least in the short term. Participatory methods have been developed from the empirically derived participatory rural appraisal (Chambers 1997) to help empower marginal populations such as street children. But if resources are constrained and the numbers of children in need are large, even widespread use of participatory techniques are unlikely to enable homeless street children to access their rights to protection and service provisions.

A targeted initiative for street-living children under a rights-based approach is similarly likely to involve homeless street children, primarily as participants in finding ways to gain access to their human rights. The main emphasis is likely to be on empowerment outcomes, using participatory strategies. Rather than aiming to reinsert children into mainstream society, a rights-based approach may seek to change the way society operates for children. NGOs may work in this context to foster social movements and forums to enable street children to voice their concerns and needs (as in Brazil, India, and Peru). The effects are likely to include the high-profile presence of street children in public events covered by the media; an increased variety of options for street children to access state services through telephone help-lines for children, temporary hostels, and wide-ranging referral systems; and public campaigns to change perceptions of homeless children from delinquents or victims to individuals in difficult circumstances in need of empowerment.

Social democratic governments, with their underlying ideological tenets of inclusion and equality, seem most likely to produce this approach, under which governments may encourage civil society organizations to contribute to policymaking, use participatory methods, and share their innovations in service delivery. Governments and NGOs are likely to collaborate in these spheres. Governments are also likely to contribute significantly to NGO service delivery costs for homeless street children. However, this approach is as yet rarely practiced, even in high-income countries, where numbers of homeless children are relatively small and social services, education, and health care are significantly bet-

ter resourced in financial and human terms than they are in low- and middle-income countries. In addition, the inconsistencies inherent in participatory methods (Kapoor 2002) mean that the quality of support received by homeless street children in empowering themselves can be very uneven and may be very superficial.

Because a children's rights perspective is being actively pursued by leading intergovernmental organizations such as UNICEF (UNICEF 2002) and by key donor governments and intergovernmental bodies, including the United Kingdom and the European Commission (DfID 2002; European Union 2000), national and local governments are finding support from the international community. And this joint action is accelerating the introduction of human rights focused provisions for children around the world.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A rights-based approach has been widely accepted by the international community and national governments, as well as by many organizations within civil society, as the most appropriate legal framework for healthy child development. The sections above concur with this assessment, pointing to the incompatibility of a reactive approach with reducing poverty or with enabling homeless street-living children to engage with wider society; and to the partial nature of a protective approach that is unable to adequately address the complexity of homeless children's situations. But though a rights-based approach is a more complete and appropriate conceptual framework, it has not yet been adequately operationalized to support homeless street children. This section recommends five key features of broadly based initiatives and targeted initiatives, and it suggests how they might be integrated effectively.

First, broadly based initiatives are needed as preventive strategies to help stem the flow of children onto the streets by addressing poverty and social exclusion at its roots: in early childhood. Probably the single most important aspect of effective poverty prevention and social inclusion is guaranteeing basic education and employment opportunities for girls, so that they are better abled as mothers to make their own choices, gain access to social services, and provide for a supportive family environment. In addition, Townsend and Gordon (2002) recommend as, the single

most important step to reduce child poverty, that the legal right to state welfare payments should be introduced for families raising children   per Articles 25 and 27 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (p. 425). Improved housing for inhabitants of slum areas may also be a helpful con-tribution in preventing children from leaving home for t be ful con-

Targeted initiatives can enable homeless street children to resolve basic welfare concerns and to develop some emotional and cognitive competencies, so that they are empowered to access wider services and opportunities for which they are eligible in mainstream society. Targeted initiatives may also prove effective in prevention: Lane (1998, 18) describes how working with siblings of street children can be successful as part of a preventive approach, and how making the distinction between, those who

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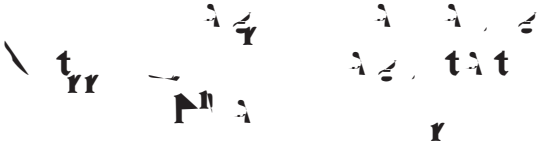
CLEMENTINE FUJIMURA
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In the world of poverty-stricken children, there exists an overarching myth: that life in the big city is a step up from rural life; that in the

ease, and from a cultural perspective, discrimination and stigmatization. In short, though on the one hand the city offers hope for the destitute, it also threatens their slow demise in sundry ways.

To date, street children and their urban environments are still rarely

This paper seeks to illuminate various myths that guide abandoned children throughout the world, particularly in Russia, to choose life on the city streets. Their decision to do so immediately makes them victims of invisible yet real threats, such as pollution and disease, to their health and well-being. A lack of adult aid for these children is only partly the result of poor economic and political systems. It is also the result of cultural issues, including a lack of understanding of the children's perspectives. This, in turn, is the result of historical cultural taboos against street children, which blind the adult world to the true potential and reality of each individual abandoned child. Next, I propose four main ingredients for a successful urban youth aid program. These ingredients are often assumed to be included in programs coordinated by nongovernmental organizations and donor agencies, but in fact are only infrequently present abroad.

THE MYTH OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

Children in developing rural areas often complain of the harshness of their environment: extreme temperatures, lack of plumbing and electricity, poor access to food and other material disparities real or imagined compared with city life. Cities promise if not less severe climates (e.g., with high-rise buildings screening some of the harsher winds in the winter or emitting warmth), at least plumbing, electricity, and access to jobs. However, from an environmental perspective, the urban environment is fraught with air, water, and land pollution. In a number of Russian cities, industry persists. Households also contribute to air pollution, with environmentally unfriendly means of heating and automobile usage. Landfills

by drinking it for an audience. Long-term effects remain uncertain. Children are less aware of these health hazards, and in effect are even more likely to be exposed to them (Blanc 1994, 21).

Statistics indicate that in developing urban environments, children are more likely to become ill from pollution:

> Infants and children in developing countries are several hundred times more likely to die from diarrhea, pneumonia and measles than are children in Europe or North America. . . . When they do not die, children living in such extremely polluted environments may grow up stunted and handicapped. . . . A definite increase in the incidence of cancer and allergy symptoms has also been detected in urban areas of industrialized countries, due to air pollution from industrial emissions, vehicle exhausts, tobacco smoke and chemicals from building materials combined with poor ventilation. These factors have been connected with the increase in cases of asthma in large cities (Blanc 1994, 21 22).

Pollution causes 20 percent of Russian children to be born with deformities or defects (DiMarco et al. 2000). Studies have shown an increase in respiratory and gastrointestinal illnesses as being linked in part to environmental pollution. Interfax reported in March of 2001 that 70 percent of Russian young people aged 10 to 15 years old now suffer from chronic diseases.

The M

Children are known to live below the platforms of railway stations in Moscow and Saint Petersburg. Besides dirt, general physical discomfort, and other obvious problems with such shelter, these children face roundups by police with teargas attacks. Other shelters of choice include pipes, parked buses, and commuter trains. Few of the children live in one of the two official shelters in Moscow. By the age of 16 or 17, many die due to sickness and malnutrition, and many simply freeze. Nonetheless, few children want to be helped by shelters. They feel they are better off without the aid of an adult. In a letter to Russian President Vladimir Putin, homeless children wrote:

> If you want to help us, give us money. We will dress well and go to McDonald's. At the moment they throw us out, telling us we are dirty. . . . We won't go to orphanages willingly, because there they will want to educate us and we can survive on our own, without grown-ups (Ferreira-Marques, 2002: 4).

With nowhere to turn for help, street children have lost faith in adults, and their newly found child society feels more like home, providing more security and warmth than the *ı* home they left.

The Myth of Disease

Most children entering life on the streets are convinced that they will not be affected by the many diseases plaguing the country. To some extent, they may feel invincible. On another level, they do not imagine that they will take on jobs or lifestyles that would expose them to such viruses as HIV/AIDS or tuberculosis. Moreover, they have heard that hospitals are everywhere in the city, unlike in the countryside. Surely, help is always just a few blocks away.

However, urban environments in developing countries offer little help to underpaid, underfed, uneducated children, who fall victim to its allure and who are also lacking a sense of values and tradition. As rigid social control in many developing countries including Russia fluctuates, old values and norms are tested and new ones remain undeveloped. Children living on city streets have little direction, no sense of the future, and thus little to strive for besides daily needs being met. Prostitutes on the streets of

urban Russia, for example, are fully aware of the threat of HIV/AIDS and means to protect themselves, but they will, for extra pay, work without protection.

by such scholars as the UNAIDS director, Peter Piot (Zouev 1999, 28). According to the *2002 UNAIDS Fact Sheet*, approximately 1 million people in Eastern Europe and Central Asia are living with HIV/AIDS twice the number as at the end of 1999. Of the Eastern European countries, Russia is leading the surge in HIV/AIDS cases. New cases are doubling annually. Statistics show that

> the vast majority of HIV infections are among young people chiefly those who inject drugs. It is estimated that up to 1 percent of the population of countries in the Commonwealth of Independent States is injecting drugs, placing these people and their sexual partners at high risk of infection (UNAIDS 2002).

The data on drug use, however, does not underscore the significant rise in sexually transmitted HIV cases. More women are contracting HIV through sexual transmission and more pregnant women are testing positive for HIV suggesting a shift of the epidemic into the wider population (UNAIDS 2002). Young people, especially those living outside the home, are becoming active sexually at earlier ages.

A rise in cases of sexually transmitted diseases in general has been overwhelming health services already noted for their inefficiency and chaotic states. In 1995, Russia had the highest number of reported syphilis cases seen this century (Zouev 1999, 29). The explosion has been superficially fueled by an increase in drug abuse and a lack of blood screening and prevention programs. Underlying the epidemic, however, is the unwillingness of Eastern European society to acknowledge and confront the problem.

The explosion has left no one safe. Everyone is at risk. Unsterilized needles are still common, so anyone needing a shot is vulnerable. In Romania, for example,

> in 1995 more than 90 percent of the cases were among children, most of whom, it was suspected, were infected by contaminated needles and syringes. At that time, the country had more than half of Europe's juvenile cases of HIV infection and AIDS. . . . In the Russian Federation, 277 children were registered as HIV-positive in 1995; 94

in children were registered for that year, a number many health officials say reflects underreporting. In general, infection rates are underreported and reliable figures are hard to obtain (Zouev 1999, 28).

According to the majority of the reports analyzed for this discussion, the estimated number of people now living with HIV in the Russian Federation is considered four times higher than the claimed numbers (UNAIDS 2002). What is important in the data is not only the figures but also the phenomenon of underreporting; for it, as with so many factors leading to the health crisis in Eastern Europe, represents the tendency to ignore or even deny, much less act upon, social issues that in some way clash with cultural norms.

And it is not just AIDS that is considered a social taboo. Simple preventative measures are themselves seen as an embarrassment, including condom use and sex education courses. Other problems that remain unaddressed include incest, rape, prostitution, and sexually transmitted diseases. Marginalized groups, such as homosexuals, find little basis for self-expression and inclusion in society, and they are left to their own devices when combating the stigmatized infection. Only the Czech Republic and Georgia have included these topics in school curricula (Zouev 1999, 29).

Besides the HIV/AIDS crisis, tuberculosis exists as an invisible threat to Russian street children. Once again, even with underreporting of incidences, the numbers are staggering. According to one report, the country is averaging 150,000 new cases annually (Meier 2000). The most extreme outbreaks occur in prisons, where medicine is distributed randomly and incompletely, creating drug-resistant strains of tuberculosis.
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them off as yet another problem beyond their realm of influence. From the street child to the educated adult, the belief is that if you are not directly in power and rich, your voice gets lost. Children interviewed expressed a feeling of helplessness and a mother and editor explains: ⎧ I take care of my own, that is all I can do (Olga, interview, January 2000).

This feeling of helplessness is part of a larger Russian cultural sentiment of ambivalence, fatalism, and even victimization. At a gathering, in response to American businesspeople complaining that Russians simply do not seem to care about helping their society develop economically, Elena F., an actress from Saint Petersburg, replied: ⎧ It's not that we don't care, but when it comes to making a difference, Russians are ambivalent or fatalistic. Our approach to life is guided by the maxim of *avos'*. When asked to define the term ⎧ *avos'*, Elena said that she could only describe it by way of an example: ⎧ Russians don't worry about whether or not a certain number of people will fit into an elevator, they simply step in and wait to find out. Not just Elena, but scholars of Russia since the nineteenth century have commented on this notion of *avos'*.

Scholars have gone further to link *avos'* to a Russian sense of lacking cultural identity and have faulted Russians for taking on other nations' identities in search of their own. *Avos'* is linked to a feeling of victimization or even victimhood, as an inevitable experience of Russian life that entails the experience of *terpenie* (patience) and *stradanie* (suffering), hindering Russian social progress and development on the one hand, yet on the other, evoking a sense of community and, in effect, liberating the individual in times of economic and political turmoil.

Beyond the feeling of powerlessness is the aftermath of Soviet control: fear that getting involved could hurt the individual and their family. If you speak up, you get noticed, and people will try to stop you by whatever means they have. In Russia, that means the mafia may be after you, or so those interviewed insinuate.

DISPELLING THE MYTHS

In general, targeting populations through education programs before an epidemic such as HIV/AIDS takes place could be one way to prevent social and biological diseases, if the education is sensitive to its population. A few successful programs have been documented in both Brazil and

Russia. Brazil's widely praised efforts to provide universal treatment and care, in addition to its well–planned prevention programs, are estimated to have avoided 234,000 hospitalizations in 1996 2000 (UNAIDS 2002). Such education programs are often designed by individual communities because little help is given from the outside on which to model their programs.

absence of a father is extremely common and is seen by many children interviewed as normal.

Second, a successful program must offer continuity in support and indispensable services (Blanc 1994, xv). Mentorship programs and medical facilities need to persist after rehabilitation. Often, the mere presence of these programs beyond individual rehabilitation serves as a security blanket and motivates survivors to persist.

Third, a successful program needs to target not only the street children themselves but also the culture and community surrounding such youth for, as Blanc confirms,

> It is obvious that the existence of the child and the conditions of existence are totally dependent on what the child means to us. If a child is regarded as expendable even if an asset care will be inadequate. This will be reflected not only in high infant mortality rates, but also in other health, education and social indicators, such as the high incidence among children of preventable disease, high dropout rates and high institutionalization rates for juvenile offenders (Blanc 1994, xvi).

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2:30 pm   **Coffee Break**

2:45 pm   **Panel III: The Case of Street Children**
Rosemary McCarney, Street Kids International
Clementine Fujimura, U.S. Naval Academy
Sarah Thomas de Benitez, International Children's
    Trust