

Donors can help governments undertake policies to broaden opportunities, enhance capabilities, and provide second chances to young people. Key actions for donors: applying the youth lenses of opportunities, capability, and second chances to their own policies, and funding the evaluation of the promising but unproven policies identified in this report.

Determining the extent to which donors are involved in supporting youth outcomes in developing countries is a Herculean task—one that almost defeated the writers of this report! As with national governments, very few donors track program and project activity systematically by age range. The suggestions here are based on information and feedback from a limited number of donors—a comprehensive review is left for others.

Donors through the youth lenses

How do donor policies and programs fare when seen through the “youth lenses” that this Report has used to evaluate country policies? There appear to be large gaps, with considerable scope for greater donor involvement to expand opportunities, enhance agency, and extend second chances.

Broadening opportunities to develop human capital

Much international investment in human capital is focused on improving opportunities for children in education and health in developing countries. This is consistent with the focus on preventive approaches and investment at early ages—a theme emphasized by this report. However, the focus on children and basic services means that youth issues are sometimes neglected. Although those over age 12 form around 30 percent of those in the age range 0–18 in developing countries as a whole, there is little consistent focus on this group.

Given the global size of this youth cohort and the changing nature of the risks and opportunities they confront (chapter 1), complementary programs are needed that build on the earlier investments and address the needs of older children and youth. What more can be done?

An important task is a comprehensive assessment of how present country assistance strategies serve young people. The youth-content of World Bank loans, for example, has grown over the past few years with the focus of youth-oriented lending

evolving from mainly formal education in the late 1990s to areas such as promotion of healthy behavior, livelihoods and employment, nonformal education, and family and community support—which now account for around 40 percent of lending for youth initiatives. Such an assessment can be used to address key questions at the country level. Are there gaps? Are there overlaps? Are interventions sufficiently prioritized?

Answering these questions would require considering synergies across the interventions arising from the multisector nature of youth outcomes—a difficult task for most agencies. For example, many interventions encouraging young people to adopt healthier lifestyles need to occur outside the health sector (chapter 5). Vocational education needs to provide a broader set of skills than those required for immediate employment in an identified sector or industry (chapters 3 and 4).

Much of this work needs to take place in the groups within donor agencies and other organizations that determine country pro-

grams. But it would also be useful to have an overarching strategy to ensure prioritization and to harvest lessons across countries. Donor agencies do this relatively well for well-established sectors such as education and health, but are only beginning to do so for youth (see the box).

Developing the capability of young people as decision-making agents

One of the key issues discussed in this Report is whether young people are recognized as agents who have voice and who make decisions that shape their human capital. There are two activities donors can undertake to promote voice and enhance the decision-making capabilities of young people. One is to do more as global advocates for youth, particularly the most disadvantaged. The other is to involve young people more directly in policy and program development.

As global advocates, donors can further promote the adoption of international conventions, such as the United Nations

Organizing bilateral and multilateral youth programs

In 1997, the German federal ministry for economic cooperation and development (BMZ) became one of the first international donors to make children and youth a major thematic area for development assistance. Over the past decade, BMZ has supported a wide range of projects intended to benefit young people. One of its implementation agencies, German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), uses several mechanisms to promote the integration of youth development into its overall strategy, test new youth-oriented projects, and enable coordination across sectors:

- The organizational structure includes health, education, and youth as sectors under the same division. Regional meetings of managers in these three areas are frequently held.
- Heavy investment in knowledge management allows better access to the experiences

of different projects and greater sharing of knowledge across sectors affecting youth.

- New approaches have been tested, including attempts to integrate different fields (education and conflict transformation, information and communication technologies to support vocational training, and peer-to-peer education to prevent HIV/AIDS).

Some multilaterals have also begun to take action. The Inter-American Development Bank was the first development finance agency to establish a youth strategy, and it has become a major funder of youth employment ventures. In 2003, the World Bank appointed a Children and Youth adviser to develop a more youth-focused approach and facilitate coordination across the Bank.

Source: Author's discussions with officials at BMZ and the Inter-American Development Bank.



conventions on trafficking and child labor, which have increased international attention on these issues.¹ By coming together under the Youth Employment Network, donors have played an important role in raising awareness and building commitment to addressing youth unemployment.

However, advocacy needs to be complemented with specific policies and programs to be more effective. For instance, donors (BMZ, Sida), NGOs (Oxfam, Coalition against Trafficking in Women), and international organizations (ILO, International Organization for Migration, and UNICEF) have all supported programs to reduce human trafficking and assist the victims. However, there is very little knowledge sharing, and few of these programs have been evaluated for their effectiveness, making it hard to know what works well. Donors can invest more in pooling knowledge and supporting more rigorous evaluations of their programs.

There has also been action on child labor. The Understanding Children’s Work joint research program of the ILO, UNICEF, and the World Bank, initiated under the Oslo Agenda for Action, has advanced the global agenda on children’s work. In addition to improving understanding of children’s work, it has resulted in greater coordination of the efforts of different government departments and agencies involved in addressing child labor in countries such as the Republic of Yemen. Similar joint efforts could be developed to address the gap in data on youth in general, and the shortage of rigorously evaluated interventions (discussed in chapter 9).

Donors could also draw upon young people more directly in policy and program development. This could be through financial and technical support to young people or their organizations to give them greater means for getting involved in international, national, and local development processes. Inviting youth delegates to the General Assembly of the United Nations is one such initiative. Another is the training provided by the German government to young professionals and future leaders. Youth voice

could also be supported through holding regular consultations with youth as a part of preparing youth-focused reports or projects. In the “Youth as Partners” work of the World Bank, a representative group of youth from different sectors of Brazilian society is regularly convened to provide feedback on the country program. Young people were also directly involved in the preparation of the youth development projects in the Dominican Republic and FYR Macedonia.

Supporting second-chance programs

Many young people need second chances, illustrated most starkly by countries that have “lost generations” due to conflict or political and economic calamities (see spotlight on Sierra Leone following chapter 7). Youth literacy is often low in poor countries, but it is much lower in poor countries recovering from years of conflict, as illustrated by Afghanistan and Sierra Leone in the figure below. While donors have responded strongly by rebuilding schooling infrastructure, often much more is needed to take into account the very different needs

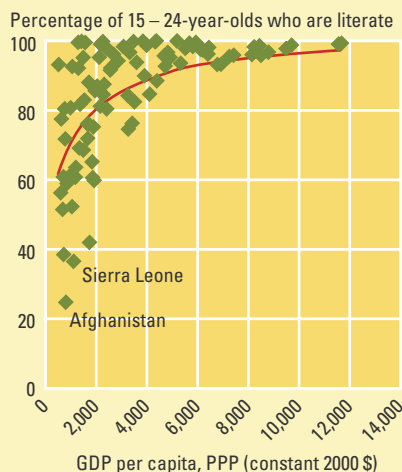
of older learners.² Other second-chance programs that could benefit youth include retraining programs well linked to the labor market and cost-effective restorative justice and rehabilitation programs.

**Moving forward:
Funding evaluation of promising
but unproven programs, and
sharing lessons across countries**

Many programs highlighted in this Report are promising rather than proven, and most need to be adapted to the particular circumstances of individual countries and their youth. Donors can promote adaptation and innovation in program areas that may be too new or too risky for governments; they can also support evaluation. *World Development Report 2004: Making Services Work for Poor People*, highlighted the fact that many donors, including the World Bank, often have resources for evaluation that go unused. A good use of resources would be to evaluate the promising programs identified in this report, such as the following:

- Life-skills education (chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6)
- Provision of information on the returns to education to increase retention in schools (chapter 3)
- Programs that enhance youth citizenship such as school student councils, national service and other service learning programs, student parliaments, and youth leadership development programs (chapters 3 and 7)
- Programs that build skills among poor youth through public works or wage subsidies to firms to hire young new workers (chapter 4)
- Restorative justice programs for young offenders and mobile court systems that deal with young offenders (chapter 7)
- Use of the Internet and SMS to provide job listings, as in Kenya, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka (chapter 4 and chapter 8)

Youth literacy is low in many countries, especially those emerging from conflict



Source: Authors’ calculations based on Fares, Montenegro, and Orazem (2006a) and World Bank (2006h).
Note: Data shown are for 92 country-year observations from 64 countries. The line shown is the fitted line from a two-tailed tobit regression of literacy on log GDP per capita.