

The World Bank Group

Addressing Youth Issues in South Asia

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Executive Summary

Youth in South Asia face many challenges during their transition into adulthood. They have to cope with high youth unemployment and youth illiteracy rates. Malnutrition is rampant and health care completely inadequate. Only 45% of births are attended by skilled health personnel, fewer than in Sub-Saharan Africa. South Asia is also the region with the highest gender inequality in the world. Harmful traditional practices, including child marriage and honor killings, are prevalent, as are high levels of domestic abuse and societal acceptance of violence against women. 44 million children under 15 (12%) are engaged in child labor, which prevents them from attending school and has long-term negative effects on their health. Trafficking, bonded labor, and domestic servitude are widespread and participation of youth in decision making is low.

The region is subject to both human-made emergencies and natural disasters, leading to the breakdown of health, education, and protection systems. Young men have been identified in conflict analyses across the region as key stakeholders in ongoing conflicts. Rapid social change, urbanization, and increased global and regional mobility are eroding traditional support networks and risk excluding large groups of youth from reaping the benefits of economic growth.

Paradoxically, the World Bank's Country Assistance Strategies in the region pay little attention to youth. Programs relating to primary and secondary education, vocational training, employment strategies, and temporary cash transfers touch on youth as beneficiaries. However, they seem to either focus on institutional strengthening and strategic planning or are often emergency operations with short term objectives.

Preliminary suggestions for a possible future youth strategy in South Asia include (i) improved inclusion of youth-at-risk in education and employment strategies; (ii) greater participation of youth in decision-making; (iii) increased attention to youth development issues in country and sector strategies; and (iv) increased attention to violence, crime, and conflict prevention. This document also contains an overview of concrete interventions from various sources, including around youth participation; changing norms, behaviors, and attitudes; gender sensitive development; preventing violent behavior; and child sensitive protection. The development of a regional youth strategy could build on a selection of these interventions and would also require extensive consultations with World Bank staff at the regional and global level; representatives from International Organizations and NGO partners; and with donors.

1. Introduction

Youth are the cornerstone and the future of societies. Giving them the tools they need to improve their own lives and engaging them in efforts to improve their communities are investments in the strength of societies. As the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon puts it: “Youth deserve our full commitment – full access to education, adequate healthcare, employment opportunities, financial services and full participation in public life.”¹ The recent demonstrations and regime changes in North Africa and the Middle East are a reminder of the importance to focus on the development needs of youth and to include them more prominently in development strategies.

It is of critical importance to adopt a life-cycle approach to child and youth development with a greater focus on the care, empowerment and protection of girls and young women. Evidence shows that educated girls are less likely to marry early, less likely to get pregnant as teenagers, more likely to have correct and comprehensive knowledge of HIV and AIDS, and more likely to have healthy children.² Expenditure on children and youth is a public investment that generates returns to society through higher economic growth, reduced social costs, and increased quality of life for all. Under-investments are difficult to reverse later in life and the price for society is high. Allocating sufficient public resources to child and youth development, even – or rather in particular – in times of economic stress and budgetary constraints, is essential for a country’s development and competitiveness.³

Investment for youth development in the Bank has fluctuated over the years and varies across regions. South Asia has lagged behind other regions: in the period 1995 – 2007, the Bank invested \$1.4 billion in South Asia for youth development, compared to \$3.3 billion in Latin America and the Caribbean, \$2.4 billion in Sub-Saharan Africa, \$2.0 billion in East Asia and the Pacific, \$1.0 billion in the Middle East and North Africa, and \$0.9 billion in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.⁴ However, the lending trend for South Asia has been encouraging with the sharpest growth in lending for youth development since 2001.⁵

¹ In 1985, the UN celebrated the first International Year of Youth. On its 10th anniversary, the General Assembly adopted the World Programme of Action for Youth, setting a policy framework and guidelines for national action and international support to improve the situation of young people. The International Year of Youth is being celebrated from 12 August 2010 to 11 August 2011.

² UNICEF (2011). *State of the World’s Children: Adolescence, An Age of Opportunity*. New York 2011

³ World Bank (2010). *Children and Youth*. Volume IV, Number 1. Washington August 2010

⁴ World Bank (2009). *Child and Youth Development, Youth Investments in the World Bank Portfolio*. Volume III, Number 2. Washington June 2009

⁵ Data are based on trends observed until 2007;

2. Definitions

This report focuses on ‘youth’, an age group defined as persons 15 – 24 years old.⁶ Five life transitions take place during this period, including (1) learning after primary school age; (2) starting a productive working life; (3) adopting a healthful lifestyle; (4) forming a family; and (5) exercising citizenship.⁷ Definitions of youth vary in national legislations across South Asian countries. In Pakistan, the lower bound of the age bracket starts at 12; in Bangladesh at 18. The upper bound in Pakistan or Nepal is 40.⁸

The World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) use the terms ‘adolescent’ for those 10 – 19, ‘youth’ for those 15 – 24, and ‘young people’ for those 10 – 24. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child defines a ‘child’ as any human being below the age of eighteen years. National age definitions have to be considered for some topics, including for example for the analysis of child marriage, employment or child labour data.

It is important to keep these definitional overlaps in mind when considering youth issues and concerns. Many young people under the age of fifteen may start making the life transitions mentioned above, while socio-economic circumstances might at the same time delay others in completing all transitions – sometimes well into their thirties. While this document focuses primarily on ‘youth’, it will also present data on issues affecting children younger than fifteen, since malnutrition in early childhood or child labour, for example, have serious consequences for education and health outcomes.

Table 1: Minimum Age of Work, Legal Age for Marriage, Minimum Age for Criminal Responsibility

	Minimum age for work	Legal age for marriage		Minimum age for criminal responsibility
		Male	Female	
Afghanistan	14	18	16	12
Bangladesh	14	21	18	9
Bhutan	-	18	18	10
India	14	21	18	7
Maldives	14	18	18	7
Nepal	14	20	18	10
Pakistan	14	18	16	7
Sri Lanka	14	18	18	8

⁶ United Nation’s Youth Employment Network (YEN) consists of United Nations (UN), World Bank (WB), and International Labor Organization (ILO);

⁷ World Bank (2007). *World Development Report 2007. Development and the Next Generation*. Washington 2007

⁸ Ibid.

3. Overview

South Asia is home to 1.619.757.000 people with an annual population growth rate of 1.9%. 317 million youth live in South Asia, surpassed only by the East Asia and Pacific region.⁹ 30% of the population lives in urban centers with an average annual growth rate of the urban population of 2.6%.¹⁰ 40% of the population lives below the international poverty line of US\$1.25 per day and GNI per capita is US\$ 1092.¹¹ Life expectancy at birth of 64 years is low compared to other regions.

Table 2: Life Expectancy at Birth and Human Development Index¹²

	Life expectancy at birth (years)	Human Development Index¹³ (HDI), 2010, rank out of 169 countries
Afghanistan	44	155
Bangladesh	67	129
Bhutan	66	n.a.
India	64	119
Maldives	72	107
Nepal	67	138
Pakistan	67	125
Sri Lanka	74	91
South Asia	64	0.516 (value)
<i>East Asia and Pacific</i>	73	0.643
<i>Middle East and North Africa</i>	70	0.588
<i>Sub-Saharan Africa</i>	53	0.389
<i>Latin America and Caribbean</i>	74	0.704
<i>CEE/CIS</i>	69	0.702

3.1. Birth Registration

Birth registration rates are very low in the region. Only 36 % of children under five are registered at birth (50% urban, 31% rural).¹⁴ This means that 24 million children grow up without a birth certificate, 16 million in India, 3.6 million in Bangladesh, 1.2 million in Afghanistan, and 500,000 in Nepal.¹⁵ Without a birth certificate, age determination is difficult and access to services, including health and education, might be denied.

⁹ 352 million in EAPRO; 85 million in MENA;

¹⁰ UN Population Division; 2009 data

¹¹ World Bank data

¹² Unless otherwise indicated, see UNICEF's 2011 State of the World's Children for more information on specific indicators, data sources, and definitions.

¹³ The Human Development Index combines indicators of life expectancy, educational attainment, and income.

¹⁴ DHS, MICS, national vital registration systems

¹⁵ UNICEF (2009). *Progress for Children. A report card on child protection*. New York 2009

Table 3: Birth Registration

	Birth Registration 2000-2009 (%)	Urban	Rural
Afghanistan	6	12	4
Bangladesh	10	13	9
Bhutan	n.a.	-	-
India	41	59	35
Maldives	73	-	-
Nepal	35	42	34
Pakistan	27	32	24
Sri Lanka	97	97	98
South Asia	36	50	31
<i>East Asia and Pacific</i>	71	82	66
<i>Middle East and North Africa</i>	77	87	68
<i>Sub-Saharan Africa</i>	38	54	30
<i>Latin America and Caribbean</i>	90	-	-
<i>CEE/CIS</i>	96	96	95

3.2. Gender Inequality

South Asia is the region with the highest gender inequality in the world. The Gender Inequality Index (GII) uses five indicators reflecting inequality achievements between women and men, including maternal mortality, adolescent fertility, parliamentary representation, educational attainment, and labour force participation. The GI¹⁶ puts South Asia at the bottom of the regional ranking. For example, only 45 % of births are attended by skilled health personnel, compared to 48 % in Sub-Saharan Africa, 77 % in Arab States, and more than 90 % in other regions.

Table 4: Gender Inequality Index, Youth Literacy Rate, and Secondary School Attendance

	Gender inequality Index 2008 (rank out of 138 countries)	Adolescent Fertility Rate – Number of Births per 1,000 Women ages 15 - 19	Seats in Parliament (%) - Female¹⁷
Afghanistan	134	121.3	25.9
Bangladesh	116	71.6	6.3
Bhutan	n.a.	38.3	13.9
India	122	68.1	9.2
Maldives	59	13.4	12.0
Nepal	110	101.4	33.2
Pakistan	112	45.7	21.2
Sri Lanka	72	29.8	5.8
South Asia	0.739 (value)	65.0	10.4

¹⁶ See UNICEF (2011) for more information on data sources and indicators.

¹⁷ Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union IPU

<i>East Asia and Pacific</i>	0.467	18.1	19.8
<i>Middle East and North Africa</i>	0.699	42.6	8.7
<i>Sub-Saharan Africa</i>	0.735	122.3	17.3
<i>Latin America and Caribbean</i>	0.609	72.6	17.5
<i>CEE/CIS</i>	0.498	28.2	12.5

3.3. Child Marriage

Child marriage, defined as marriage before age eighteen, is widespread in the region. Globally, more than 64 million young women 20-24 years old report they were married before age 18; half of them live in South Asia.¹⁸ 28% of girls aged 15 – 19 and 46% of women 20 – 24 were married or in union before they were 18 years old (30% in urban and 55% in rural areas). Child marriage has serious consequences: girls who get married at a young age are less likely to attend school, more likely to be a victim of domestic violence, and suffer health complications associated with early sexual activity and childbearing, leading to high rates of maternal and child mortality and sexually transmitted infections such as HIV.¹⁹ In South Asia, 22% of women aged 20 – 24 had given birth before age 18 and 54 per 1,000 girls aged 15 – 19 had already given birth.

Table 5: Child Marriage

	Women aged 20 – 24 who were married/in union before age 18, 2000 – 2009 (%)	Women aged 20 – 24 who gave birth before age 18, 2000 – 2009 (%)	Births attended by skilled health personnel (%)²⁰
Afghanistan	39	n.a.	14
Bangladesh	66	40	18
Bhutan	n.a.	n.a.	51
India	47	22	47
Maldives	n.a.	n.a.	84
Nepal	51	23	19
Pakistan	24	10	39
Sri Lanka	12	4	99
South Asia	46	22	45
<i>East Asia and Pacific</i>	18	8	91
<i>Middle East and North Africa</i>	18	-	77
<i>Sub-Saharan Africa</i>	38	28	48
<i>Latin America and Caribbean</i>	29	18	91
<i>CEE/CIS</i>	11	5	96

¹⁸ UNICEF (2009)

¹⁹ International Center for Research on Women: <http://www.icrw.org/what-we-do/adolescents/child-marriage>

²⁰ Source: WHO

3.4. Violence against Women

In the South Asian region, social acceptance of violence against women is very high. 56% of male and 51% of female adolescents aged 15 – 19 think that a husband is justified in hitting or beating his wife if she burns the food, argues with him, goes out without telling him, neglects the children or refuses sexual relations.²¹ In Bangladesh, 40% of women in Dhaka and 42% in Matlab reported physical violence; 37% in Dhaka and 50% in Matlab reported sexual violence by their husband and 10% of women in Dhaka and 12% in Matlab were physically abused during at least one pregnancy, including punches or kicks to the abdomen.²²

Table 6: Attitudes towards Domestic Violence

	Percentage of Women 15 – 49 years old who consider a husband to be justified in hitting or beating his wife
Afghanistan	-
Bangladesh	36
Bhutan	-
India	54
Maldives	70
Nepal	23
Pakistan	-
Sri Lanka	53
South Asia	51
<i>East Asia and Pacific</i>	36
<i>Middle East and North Africa</i>	-
<i>Sub-Saharan Africa</i>	58
<i>Latin America and Caribbean</i>	-
<i>CEE/CIS</i>	27

Sex selective abortions are a form of violence against women. The 2011 census in India found about 7.1 million fewer girls than boys under the age of 6, compared with a gap of roughly 6 million girls a decade earlier. Estimates indicate that 4 to 12 million selective abortions of girls have occurred in India in the past three decades. Consequently, male youth might not be able to marry and start a family and increased competition for girls might lead to increased incidences of child marriages.²³

Dowry murder is a brutal practice involving a woman being killed by her husband or in-laws because her family is unable to meet their demands for her dowry — a payment made to a woman’s in-laws upon her engagement or marriage as a gift to her new family. It is not uncommon for dowries to exceed a

²¹ MICS, DHS

²² WHO (2005). *Multi Country Study on Health and Domestic Violence*. Geneva 2005

²³The Lancet (2011). Volume 377, Issue 9781, Pages 1921 - 1928, 4 June 2011

family's annual income.²⁴ Dowry murder occurs predominantly in South Asia. According to official crime statistics in India, 6,822 women were killed in 2002 as a result of such violence. Small community studies have also indicated that dowry demands have played an important role in women being burned to death and in deaths of women being labeled suicides.²⁵ In Bangladesh, there have been many incidents of acid attacks due to dowry disputes,²⁶ leading often to blindness, disfigurement, and death. In 2002, 315 women and girls in Bangladesh were victims of acid attacks;²⁷ in 2005 that number was 267.²⁸

Honor killings are prevalent in Pakistan. Rape victims, women suspected of engaging in premarital sex, and women accused of adultery are being murdered to protect a family's honor. The annual world-wide number of honor killing victims may be as high as 5000 women.²⁹ In Pakistan, 4,000 women and men were killed to defend the honor of a family between 1998 and 2003.³⁰

3.5. Nutrition and Health

2.635.000 children under 5 die annually in South Asia, equivalent to 71 per 1,000 live births³¹. 47 % of under five year olds are underweight. In a global country ranking of under five mortality, Afghanistan is number 2, Pakistan 37, India 48, Bangladesh 57, and Nepal 59. Most other countries ranked 1 – 50 are in Sub-Saharan Africa. In India, 56% of adolescent girls (15 – 19) are anemic and the underweight prevalence among adolescent girls is the highest in the world with 47%. The implications for adolescent girls are particularly serious, since underweight or anemic mothers have a higher risk of pregnancy complications and maternal mortality. Also, such nutritional deprivations continue throughout the life cycle and are often passed on to the next generation.³²

Table 7: Nutrition and Health

	Neo-natal mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births), 2009	Maternal mortality ratio (deaths per 100,000 live births), 2008	Children under 5 yr. underweight prevalence, moderate and severe, 2003 – 2009 (%)
Afghanistan	52	1,400	39
Bangladesh	37	194	41
Bhutan	33	200	19

²⁴ UN Women. Fact and Figures on Violence against Women

http://www.unifem.org/gender_issues/violence_against_women/facts_figures.php

²⁵ General Assembly, *In-Depth Study on All Forms of Violence against Women: Report of the Secretary-General*, 2006. A/61/122/Add.1. 6, July 2006

²⁶ Carrin Benninger-Budel and Anne-Laurence Lacroix. *World Organisation against Torture, Violence against Women: A Report 1999*. Geneva 1999

²⁷ Bangladesh: Death for Man who Maimed Girl, New York Times, 30 July 2003

²⁸ BBC News, Dhaka, Roland Buerk, Bangladesh's Acid Attack Problem, 28 July 2006

²⁹ UNFPA (2000). *The State of the World Population*. New York 2000

³⁰ General Assembly. *In-Depth Study on All Forms of Violence against Women: Report of the Secretary-General*, 2006. A/61/122/Add.1. 6 July 2006.

³¹ UNICEF (2011). *State of the World's Children 2011: Adolescence, An age of Opportunity*, New York 2011

³² Ibid.

India	34	230	48
Maldives	8	37	30
Nepal	27	281	45
Pakistan	42	260	38
Sri Lanka	9	39	27
South Asia	35	290	47
<i>East Asia and Pacific</i>	14	88	11
<i>Middle East and North Africa</i>	19	170	14
<i>Sub-Saharan Africa</i>	37	640	27
<i>Latin America and Caribbean</i>	11	85	7
<i>CEE/CIS</i>	11	34	5

HIV prevalence in South Asia among youth (ages 15 – 24) is low compared to other regions, only 0.1%. However, only 36% of males and 17% of females (ages 15 – 24) have comprehensive knowledge of HIV³³ and only 38% of males and 22% of females use condoms when engaging in higher risk sex.³⁴

Table 8: HIV/AIDS

	Adult HIV/AIDS prevalence rate (15 – 49 years), 2009 (%)	Young people aged 15 – 24 who have comprehensive knowledge of HIV (2005 – 2009)		HIV prevalence among young people (aged 15 – 24), 2009
		Male	Female	
Afghanistan	-	-	-	-
Bangladesh	<0.1	-	15	< 0.1
Bhutan	0.2	-	-	0.1
India	0.3	36	20	0.1
Maldives	<0.1	-	-	< 0.1
Nepal	0.4	44	28	0.2
Pakistan	0.1	-	3	0.1
Sri Lanka	<0.1	-	-	0.1
South Asia	0.3	36	17	0.1
<i>East Asia and Pacific</i>	0.2	-	24	<0.1
<i>Middle East and North Africa</i>	0.2	-	-	0.2
<i>Africa</i>	4.7	34	26	2.3
<i>Sub-Saharan Africa</i>	0.5	-	-	0.2
<i>Latin America and Caribbean</i>	0.5	-	-	0.1
<i>CEE/CIS</i>				

³³ AIDS Indicator Surveys (AIS), Behavioural Surveillance Surveys (BSS), Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS), Reproductive Health Surveys (RHS) and other national household surveys.

³⁴ Ibid.

3.6. Education

621 million children under 18 live in South Asia.³⁵ An estimated 164 million of these children are of primary school age, but 42 million (25 per cent) do not attend school.³⁶ Of these, 38.4 million (91 per cent) live in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, and approximately 23 million (55 per cent) are girls.³⁷ The primary completion rate in the region is 79% and the net attendance ratio in secondary education is 51 %, 55% male and 47% female.³⁸ Literacy rates are lower for young women than men (15 – 24): 79% overall, 86% male and 73% female.³⁹ Only 47% of girls attend secondary school, compared to 55% of boys.⁴⁰

The numbers show a significant gender gap, both in terms of attendance and literacy numbers. Women in South Asia make up 21% of the world’s female population, but 44 per cent of the total number of illiterate women.⁴¹ Gender discrimination, compounded by caste, class, religious and ethnic divisions, keeps girls out of school. Poor families, faced with a decision between educating a daughter or a son, often decide to keep girls out of school, sending them into domestic labor or marrying them at a young age.

Table 9: Youth Literacy Rate and Secondary School Attendance Ratio

	Youth (15 – 24 years) literacy rate		Secondary School Attendance Ratio	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Afghanistan	49	18	18	6
Bangladesh	73	76	46	53
Bhutan	80	68	-	-
India	88	74	59	49
Maldives	99	99	-	-
Nepal	86	75	46	38
Pakistan	79	59	39	33
Sri Lanka	97	99	-	-
South Asia	86	73	55	47
<i>East Asia and Pacific</i>	98	98	63	65
<i>Middle East and North Africa</i>	92	86	54	51
<i>Sub-Saharan Africa</i>	77	67	30	27

³⁵ UN Population Division

³⁶ UNICEF ROSA website. <http://www.unicef.org/rosa/>

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ DHS and MICS;

³⁹ UNESCO Institute for Statistics

⁴⁰ DHS, MICS;

⁴¹ UNICEF ROSA website. <http://www.unicef.org/rosa/>

<i>Latin America and Caribbean</i>	97	98	68	74
<i>CEE/CIS</i>	99	99	-	-

3.7. Youth Unemployment

The economic crisis has resulted in the largest ever cohort of unemployed youth: at the end of 2009, there were an estimated 81 million unemployed youth globally, 7.8 million more than in 2007. 15.3 million youth were unemployed in South Asia. The global youth unemployment rate rose sharply from 11.9 to 13.0% – in South Asia from 10.0 to 10.3%.⁴²

In general, the South Asia region shows discouraging trends with increasing youth unemployment rates, after unemployment rates descending from peaks in 2005. Youth inactivity in South Asia has climbed from 134.5 million in 1998 to 167.7 million in 2008 and 169.7 in 2009. 65.4% of those inactive in 2009 were female. Both youth labor force participation rates and employment-to-population ratios are declining.

However, the rebound of GDP growth rates is expected to lead to tentative improvements for young people in 2012. The youth unemployment rate in South Asia is forecast to drop from 10.3% in 2010 to 9.8% in 2011, which corresponds to a change from the peak in 2009 of – 0.5%.

Table10: Recent Youth Unemployment Data and Trends for South Asia:⁴³

	Total (%)			Male (%)			Female (%)		
	1998	2008	2009	1998	2008	2009	1998	2008	2009
Youth labor force participation rate	48.9	46.6	46.6	66.6	64.1	64.4	29.9	27.7	27.4
Youth population (millions)	263.4	313.9	317.8	136.5	162.9	165.0	126.9	150.9	152.8
Youth employment (millions)	117.4	131.6	132.8	82.8	94.3	95.6	34.6	37.4	37.3
Youth unemployment (millions)	11.4	14.6	15.3	8.0	10.2	10.7	3.4	4.4	4.6
Youth employment- to- population ratio	44.6	41.9	41.8	60.7	57.9	57.9	27.3	24.7	24.4
Youth unemployment rate	8.9	10.0	10.3	8.9	9.7	10.1	8.9	10.6	10.9
Ratio of youth-to adult unemployment rate	3.8	3.1	3.1	4.0	3.2	3.3	3.2	2.8	2.8

Table 11: Youth Unemployment World⁴⁴

	Total (%)			Male (%)			Female (%)		
	1998	2008	2009	1998	2008	2009	1998	2008	2009
Youth labor force participation rate	48.9	46.6	46.6	66.6	64.1	64.4	29.9	27.7	27.4
Youth population (millions)	263.4	313.9	317.8	136.5	162.9	165.0	126.9	150.9	152.8
Youth employment (millions)	117.4	131.6	132.8	82.8	94.3	95.6	34.6	37.4	37.3
Youth unemployment (millions)	11.4	14.6	15.3	8.0	10.2	10.7	3.4	4.4	4.6

⁴² ILO (2010). *Global Employment Trends for Youth*. Geneva 2010

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

Youth employment- to- population ratio	44.6	41.9	41.8	60.7	57.9	57.9	27.3	24.7	24.4
Youth unemployment rate	8.9	10.0	10.3	8.9	9.7	10.1	8.9	10.6	10.9
Ratio of youth-to adult unemployment rate	3.8	3.1	3.1	4.0	3.2	3.3	3.2	2.8	2.8

Table 12: Youth Unemployment Rate, by Sex and Region, 1998, 2008 and 2009⁴⁵

	Total (%)			Male (%)			Female (%)		
	1998	2008	2009	1998	2008	2009	1998	2008	2009
WORLD	12.4	12.1	13.0	12.3	11.9	12.9	12.6	12.3	13.2
Developed Economies & European Union	14.0	13.1	17.7	14.1	13.8	19.5	13.9	12.2	15.6
Central & South-Eastern Europe (non-EU) & CIS	23.0	17.3	20.8	22.5	16.8	20.6	23.7	17.9	21.1
East Asia	9.1	8.6	8.9	10.6	10.0	10.3	7.6	7.2	7.4
South-East Asia & the Pacific	12.2	14.5	14.7	12.1	13.9	14.0	12.4	15.2	15.7
South Asia	8.9	10.0	10.3	8.9	9.7	10.1	8.9	10.6	10.9
Latin America & the Caribbean	15.6	14.3	16.1	12.9	11.7	13.2	20.1	18.2	20.4
Middle East	22.8	23.3	23.4	20.6	20.3	20.4	29.1	30.8	30.9
North Africa	26.5	23.3	23.7	23.7	20.2	20.3	32.6	30.3	31.7
Sub-Saharan Africa	13.5	11.9	11.9	12.7	11.5	11.6	14.5	12.3	12.4

Table 13: Labour Force Participation⁴⁶

	Labour Force Participation Rate %	
	Female	Male
Afghanistan	33.3	85.5
Bangladesh	61.4	85.5
Bhutan	54.1	71.9
India	35.7	84.5
Maldives	58.3	76.5
Nepal	65.9	81.9
Pakistan	21.8	86.7
Sri Lanka	38.5	80.3
South Asia	37.2	84.2
<i>East Asia and Pacific</i>	70.1	84.5
<i>Middle East and North Africa</i>	27.0	78.2
<i>Sub-Saharan Africa</i>	63.8	82.3
<i>Latin America and Caribbean</i>	55.3	83.3
<i>CEE/CIS</i>	58.6	75.0

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Youth unemployment incurs costs to the economy, to society and to the individuals and their family. It threatens to compromise a person's future employment prospects and frequently leads to unsuitable labor behavior patterns that last a lifetime. An inability to find employment creates a sense of uselessness and idleness among young people that can lead to increased crime, mental health problems, violence, conflicts, and drug taking. The UN High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change estimates that the combination of a booming adolescent population with unemployment and urbanization can raise the risk of civil strife.⁴⁷

With a continuing tight labor market, youth will continue to face challenges in accessing the local labor market – even more so in sub-national areas where growth may be stagnant. Additional efforts will continue to be necessary to increase youth employment and to ensure that more vulnerable groups are included.

3.8. Child Labor

Globally, 150 million children⁴⁸ 5 – 14 are engaged in child labour.⁴⁹ In South Asia, 13% of boys and 12% of girls 5 – 14 years old are involved in child labor, totaling about 44 million.⁵⁰ ILO estimates that more

⁴⁷ <http://www.un.org/secureworld/report.pdf>

⁴⁸ UNICEF estimate. The ILO global estimate for the 5 – 18 year age bracket is 215 million, excluding household chores;

⁴⁹ ILO Convention no. 138 on the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment and Work sets the age at which children are legally allowed to work. It sets the basic minimum age for employment at 15, the age at which compulsory schooling ends in most countries. Children between the ages of 13 – 15 are allowed to do light work, as long as it does not threaten their health and safety, or hinder their education or vocational orientation and training. Hazardous work, defined in Convention 138 as any work which is likely to jeopardize children's physical, mental or moral health, safety or morals, should not be performed by anyone under the age of 18. Recommendation 190 Concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour 1999 defines "hazardous work" as (a) work which exposes children to physical, psychological or sexual abuse; (b) work underground, under water, at dangerous heights or in confined spaces; (c) work with dangerous machinery, equipment and tools, or which involves the manual handling or transport of heavy loads; (d) work in an unhealthy environment which may, for example, expose children to hazardous substances, agents or processes, or to temperatures, noise levels, or vibrations damaging to their health; (e) work under particularly difficult conditions such as work for long hours or during the night or work where the child is unreasonably confined to the premises of the employer. According to Article 3 of ILO Convention no. 182 concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, the worst forms include (a) all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict; (b) the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances; (c) the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties; (d) work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children. These are strictly prohibited for children under the age of 18.

⁵⁰ UNICEF (2011)

than two thirds of all child labor is in the agricultural sector (60%), followed by services (25.6%) and industry (7%).⁵¹

Parental poverty and illiteracy, social and economic circumstances, lack of awareness, lack of access to basic and meaningful quality education, internal conflict, migration and trafficking, and high rates of adult unemployment and under-employment contribute to child labor. The forms of child labor which are most prevalent in South Asia include child domestic labor; hazardous child labor; children in export-oriented industries (often home-based and difficult to control); child trafficking and migration (both internally and across borders); child bonded labor particularly in agriculture; and child labor in the informal economy, particularly in urban areas.

For youth aged 15 – 24, the following links with child labor have to be considered. First, adolescents aged 15 – 18 might be caught up in one of the worst forms of child labor, including hazardous work, trafficking, forced and bonded labor, armed conflict, prostitution and pornography and illicit activities. Second, youth might be recovering from the consequences of exploitation as child laborers, having suffered physically and lacking adequate education.

Table 14: Percentage of Children Involved in Child Labour

	Percentage of children 5 – 14 years old involved in child labour⁵²		
	Total	Male	Female
Afghanistan	13	17	9
Bangladesh	13	18	8
Bhutan	19	16	22
India	12	12	12
Maldives	-	-	-
Nepal	34	30	38
Pakistan	-	-	-
Sri Lanka	8	9	7
South Asia	12	13	12
<i>East Asia and Pacific</i>	11	11	10
<i>Middle East and North Africa</i>	10	11	9
<i>Sub-Saharan Africa</i>	33	34	32
<i>Latin America and Caribbean</i>	9	9	7
<i>CEE/CIS</i>	5	5	4

⁵¹ ILO (2010). *Accelerating action against child labour. Global Report under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work 2010*. Geneva 2010

⁵² In MICS and DHS, a child is considered to be involved in child labour under the following conditions: (a) children 5 – 11 years old, during the week preceding the survey, did at least one hour of economic activity or at least 28 hours of household chores, or (b) children 12 – 14 years old who, during the week preceding the survey, did at least 14 hours of economic activity or at least 28 hours of household chores.

Child labor has negative long-term consequences on education outcomes, health and psychological wellbeing and is an obstacle to achieving decent work.⁵³ The conceptual link between eliminating child labor and promoting decent youth employment is fundamental. However, many policy gaps exist and few major programmatic breakthroughs have been achieved. Childhood and youth by and large determine success or failure throughout later working life and child labor, youth unemployment and underemployment remain challenges to finding gainful employment as an adult⁵⁴.

3.9. Trafficking, Forced, and Bonded Labor

Asia accounts for the biggest share of the world's forced and bonded laborers.⁵⁵ Many of those exploited are migrants.⁵⁶ However, the exact scale is unknown, indicative of the failure by states to undertake a systematic and sustained approach to the eradication of bonded labor.⁵⁷ In the Asia-Pacific region, the International Labour Organization estimates a minimum of 9.5 million people in forced labor, most of them in bonded labor.⁵⁸ In Pakistan, there were over 2.8 million bonded laborers in brick kilns and sharecropping in 2000.⁵⁹ India has the largest number of children in bonded labor: some estimates suggest that the figure may be as high as 15 million.⁶⁰ Bonded labor in South Asia is a result of poverty, social exclusion, and the failure of governments to act against the practice and its underlying causes. Bonded laborers are desperately poor and predominantly from scheduled castes and minority groups. It exists in a range of sectors; in those facing extreme competitive pressures, such as handloom weaving and rice mills, and those expanding rapidly, such as brick kilns and stone quarrying.

Trafficking⁶¹ in human beings occurs in the majority of countries in South Asia. However, data collection and reporting is limited in scope and no official data are available. Most of the countries in South Asia

⁵³ ILO (2008). *Forging linkages between child labour and youth employment programmes across Asia and the Pacific*, ILO Handbook for Field Staff, 2008

⁵⁴ ILO (2010).

⁵⁵ Debt bondage is defined in the UN Supplementary Convention on Slavery, the Slave Trade and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery (1956): "the status or condition arising from a pledge by a debtor of his personal services or those of a person under his control as security for a debtor, if the value of those services as reasonably assessed is not applied towards the liquidation of the debt or the length and nature of those services are not respectively limited and defined."

⁵⁶ ILO Forced Labour: Facts and Figures, The Costs of Coercion.

⁵⁷ Anti-Slavery International (2008). *Poverty, Discrimination and Slavery: The reality of bonded labour in India, Nepal and Pakistan*. London 2008

⁵⁸ Ibid ILO Forced Labour: Facts and Figures, The Costs of Coercion.

⁵⁹ Piler (2000). *Bonded labour in Pakistan*. Pakistan 2000

⁶⁰ Human Rights Watch (2003). *Small Change" Bonded Labour in India's Silk Industry*. New York 2003

⁶¹ Article 3, paragraph (a) of the [Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons](#) defines Trafficking in Persons as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the

are countries of destination, origin, and transit in the human trafficking chain. Internal trafficking (trafficking within national borders) also occurs and is estimated to be a significant form of trafficking in the region. Victims of trafficking, the majority women and children, are exploited in prostitution, domestic labor, or forced labor. Therefore, governments in South Asia have multiple responsibilities: to prevent trafficking; to protect victims or those at risk; to prosecute perpetrators; and to ensure the recovery and empowerment of victims of trafficking.

3.10 Migration and Urbanization

There are 214 million international migrants worldwide, 49% of which are women.⁶² In South Asia, the stock of emigrants amounts to 26.7 million or 1.6 percent of population. Top 5 emigration countries include India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Sri Lanka. Most of these migrants head towards high-income OECD countries (23.6 percent), high-income non-OECD countries (34.2 percent), intra-regional (28.2 percent), and other developing countries (9.4 percent). The top 5 migration corridors are Bangladesh–India, Afghanistan– Iran, India– United States, India–Saudi Arabia, India–United Arab Emirates.⁶³ In Bangladesh, 78% of interviewed youth 15 – 24 said that they would migrate if they had the legal opportunity, most only temporarily. In Nepal, up to 25% of GDP stems from remittances.

Table 15: Urban Population and Stock of Emigrants⁶⁴

	Urban Population (%)	Stock of emigrants	Stock of emigrants % of population
Afghanistan	24.4%	2,348.7 thousands	8.1%
Bangladesh	27.6%	5,380.2 thousands	3.3%
Bhutan	35.6%	44.6 thousands	6.3%
India	29.5%	11,357.5 thousands	0.9%
Maldives	39.2%	2.0 thousands	0.6%
Nepal	17.7%	982.2 thousands	3.3%
Pakistan	36.6%	4,677.0 thousands	2.5%
Sri Lanka	15.1%	1,847.5 thousands	9.1%
South Asia	29.8%	26.7 million	1.6%
<i>East Asia and Pacific</i>	45	21.7 million	1.1%
<i>Middle East and North Africa</i>	57.6	18.1 million	5.3%
<i>Sub-Saharan Africa</i>	36.9	21.8 million	2.5%
<i>Latin America and Caribbean</i>	79.0	30.2 million	5.2%
<i>CEE/CIS</i>	64.0	43.1 Million	10.7%

prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

⁶² United Nations' Trends in Total Migrant Stock: The 2008 Revision, <http://esa.un.org/migration>

⁶³ World Bank (2011), *Migration and Remittances Factbook*. Washington 2011

⁶⁴ Ibid.

Youth are affected by migration in various ways. They migrate with their families or alone, leaving parents, partners, and children behind. They might be left behind by one or both migrating parents or their partner or they live in a context affected by migration.

When youth migrate alone and leave their families at home, they are able to contribute to family income, giving them a sense of empowerment and teaching them new skills. Their opportunities widen when they migrate. They might decide to migrate to escape from violence at home, discrimination, and lack of opportunities in their villages and communities.

However, youth in many developing countries have few legal options to migrate internationally, leading to illegal migration or trafficking. They can face discrimination, instability, exclusion or language barriers. They are often excluded from health services in their destination country and face language barriers.⁶⁵ At their destination, they might be exposed to exploitation and violence, including as domestic laborers⁶⁶, victims of sexual exploitation, or end up in early marriage. They might get into conflict with the law and face detention, deportation and repatriation policies that do not take young people's special needs into consideration. Young migrants are also especially vulnerable to HIV/AIDS.⁶⁷ It is estimated that returned migrant workers accounted for 41% of all diagnosed HIV/AIDS cases in Bangladesh and 25 % in Sri Lanka. Major reasons for the greater vulnerability of migrants are their tendency to engage in risky sexual behavior and their limited access to information and prevention services.

Parents might decide to migrate, leaving their families behind to protect them from uncertainty and the dangers of traveling. Remittances may increase health and education opportunities and women left behind might gain new decision making powers. On the other hand, family units are broken up and the absence of men can create material and psychological insecurity.

3.11. Political and Natural Emergencies

Political and armed conflict and natural disasters, both frequent in South Asia, destroy homes, communities, and families; create conditions in which disease and under-nutrition spread; keep children out of school; destroy the social systems that protect vulnerable populations; and have serious negative psychosocial consequences.

⁶⁵World Bank (2007)

⁶⁶ See ILO's Convention Concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers, June 2011.

http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_norm/@relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_157836.pdf

⁶⁷ World Bank (2007)

Conflict in particular exacerbates youth transitions by breaking down social norms and cultural practices; exposing youth to appeals to violence by societal leaders; disrupting employment opportunities; and promoting a sense of identity based on the exertion of power through violence.⁶⁸ Exposure to violence, either as a victim, participant or an observer, leaves youth particularly susceptible to psychological trauma and increased distrust of others.⁶⁹ Studies have shown that demographic youth bulges may increase the risk of domestic armed conflict, especially under conditions of economic stagnation with widespread poverty and inequality, as well as weak governance^{70,71,72}. The recent crises in the Middle East are generally accepted to be an outcome of these conditions.

Youth are recruited by military groups to participate in combat or atrocities, or to act as sexual slaves. World Bank led country and project conflict analyses have identified youth as key actors in the ongoing conflicts in Pakistan and Afghanistan. The Taliban offer competitive economic incentives for new recruits, providing a way out of poverty or accumulated debt for entire families. In Pakistan, children have been used by armed groups to carry out suicide attacks. In February 2011, a boy in school uniform blew himself up at a Pakistani army recruitment center, killing himself and 20 cadets. Children are also affected by cross-border recruitment into Afghanistan.⁷³ In Afghanistan, a total of 1,396 children were killed or maimed in 2010 (a 35% rise compared to 2009) and 197 education-related incidents throughout the country were verified, including direct attacks on schools, killing and injury of students and education personnel, threats and intimidations, and forced school closures. In India, reports of recruitment and use of youth and children by the Maoist armed groups (Naxalites) were received, especially in some districts of Chhattisgarh State, and schools were occupied by security forces. In Sri Lanka, women and girls have reported lack of safety due to the presence of members of the Sri Lankan Army or local officials.

Youth may also become involved in violence because of their growing interest to actively participate in politics.⁷⁴ In Nepal, particularly in the Tarai region, politically affiliated youth groups are consistently identified in operations conflict analyses as risk groups for extortion and violence. Frequently recurring bandhs/strikes organized by these and other groups repeatedly halt economic activity in the country.

Women and girls are especially vulnerable in situations of emergencies and conflict. They are often the victims of sexual violence and exploitation and are increasingly recruited into armed forces. However,

⁶⁸ World Bank (2005). *Youth Development Notes*. Volume 1, Number 1, November 2005

⁶⁹ World Bank (2006). *Youth Responsive Social Analysis: A Guidance Note*. Social Analysis Sector Guidance Note Series. Social Development Department. Washington 2006

⁷⁰ Urdal, H. (2004). *The Devil in the Demographics: the Effect of Youth Bulges on Domestic Armed Conflict, 1950-2000*. Social Development Papers No. 14. World Bank, Washington 2004

⁷¹ Yousef, Tarik M. (2003). *Youth in the Middle East and North Africa: Demography, Employment, and Conflict. Youth Explosion in Developing World Cities: Approaches to Reducing Poverty in an Urban Age*. Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington 2003

⁷² Collier, Paul 2007. *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can be Done About It*. Oxford University Press, New York 2007

⁷³ Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council, A/65/820-S/2011/250, April 2011

⁷⁴ UNICEF (2011). *The State of the World's Children 2011, Adolescence, An Age of Opportunity*. New York 2011

demobilization and reintegration programs often ignore them. Education is often disrupted for girls because of security and economic concerns. Gender based violence has recently been used as a weapon

	Persons recognized as refugees	Internally displaced persons protected/assisted by UNHCR
Afghanistan	37	297,129
Bangladesh	28,586	-
Bhutan	-	-
India	185,323	-
Maldives	-	-
Nepal	106,164	-
Pakistan	759,392	1,894,557
Sri Lanka	251	434,900

of war in several conflicts.⁷⁵

Table 16: Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons⁷⁶

3.12. Crime, Access to Justice, and Juvenile Detention

Adolescents and youth most at risk of coming into conflict with the law have often grown up in difficult family circumstances that might include poverty, family breakdown, parental abuse or alcoholism. A large number of juvenile offences are actually ‘status offences’, including truancy or running away from home, that would be acceptable behavior in an adult and are only outlawed on the basis of age. Adolescents’ involvement in gangs is another frequent reason for detention.⁷⁷

Violence against those detained in justice institutions⁷⁸ or in the custody of the police is common. In too many countries, the criminal justice system is used as a substitute for adequate care and protection systems. The vast majority of boys and girls in detention are charged with minor or petty crimes and are first time offenders. Very few have committed violent offences or were convicted of a crime. They are simply awaiting trial. In Pakistan, as of March 2003, out of around 2,340 children detained in prisons, in just four regions of Pakistan, 83% were under trial, or waiting for their trial to start. Disturbingly, many

⁷⁵ Website SRSV violence against children in armed conflict.

<http://www.un.org/children/conflict/english/index.html>

⁷⁶ UNHCR (2009). *Statistical Yearbook 2009*. Geneva 2009

⁷⁷ UNICEF (2011)

⁷⁸ Detention of children should be in line with the UN Standards on Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice, which include specific protection with regards to the age of the child, access granted to child protection partners, appropriate legal counsel and provision of psychosocial support and activities. The treatment of children must be predicated on the objective of their future reintegration into society.

are detained for long periods, but are never convicted of a crime. In Pakistan, only 13-17% of detained children were eventually convicted of any offence - a low rate that is in line with the general low conviction rate in the country. In the interim, they are detained for months or even years in overcrowded conditions, at risk of violence from staff, peers, and adult inmates. The void left by the absence of a formal justice administration has led to increased community justice and in some high profile cases to mob lynchings and extrajudicial killings. In Nepal, 85% of children and young people interviewed in prisons reported abusive treatment while in the custody of police or security forces, and 58.6% reported torture with methods such as electric shocks, beatings with hard objects, beatings with their hands tied, and beatings while blindfolded.⁷⁹

Young women and girls fleeing forced marriages, trafficking victims, and those exploited in the commercial sex industry are often detained as criminals, rather than receiving help and care. For example, under 'safe custody' laws in Bangladesh, boys and girls can be detained in jails or homes for vagrants in cases where they have been the victims of rape or sexual assaults, rescued from brothels or from traffickers, or, in the case of girls and women, where they have married someone from another religion or without the consent of their guardians. Similarly, in India and Nepal, trafficking survivors and girls found in brothels are often forced by the police and NGOs into 'protective custody' in secure institutions.⁸⁰

Detention of young people for alleged association with armed groups or other threats to security remains a significant concern. This includes the use of administrative detention in several conflict scenarios. An unknown number of children have been captured, arrested, and detained by security and law enforcement forces in contravention of international standards for juvenile justice. As this year's Annual Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed states, detention is a particular concern in countries such as Afghanistan.⁸¹

4. Taking Action – Towards Effective Policies for Child and Youth Development

Below is an overview of possible interventions and strategies to address youth issues. Many are taken from recent World Bank publications.

Effective policies for child and youth development include:⁸²

⁷⁹See *United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children* (2006). Chapter on Violence against Children in Institutions.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Website SRSV violence against children in armed conflict.
<http://www.un.org/children/conflict/english/index.html>

⁸² World Bank (2010). *Notes Child and Youth Development: "Investing in your country's children and youth today: good policy, smart economics"*. Volume VI, Number 1, August 2010

- General: early childhood development; parenting programs; financial incentives to promote good decision-making; life skills training; mentoring programs; birth certificates for the undocumented;
- Education: secondary school completion; education equivalency programs;
- Employment: comprehensive job training that include a mix of technical skills, life skills, and internships; youth service programs or public sector internships; employment services; comprehensive entrepreneurship programs;
- Health: key risk prevention messages in schools and media; reproductive health services targeted at young people; higher-price and lower availability of tobacco and alcohol; access to contraception;
- Non-violence: safe neighborhood programs; reduced availability and use of firearms; rehabilitation and second-chance opportunities for young offenders; anti-violence messages in all media;

4.1. Youth Participation

Traditionally, society in South Asia is based on power relations and respect for the elderly, particularly men. Children and to some extent youth are expected to obey their elders. The participation of youth in decisions that affect their lives is very limited and adults do often not understand the value added by their views. In Bangladesh, for example, 50% of young women (ages 15 – 24) feel they themselves have had the most influence on work, 18 % on school, and only 4 % on marriage decisions. Bangladeshi males feel significantly more in control than females about work and marriage, but not about school decisions.⁸³

As a result, youth have restricted access to information and opportunities to participate in decision-making processes. Also, decision-making skills are not developed and supported and youth lack the self-confidence to actively participate. In particular girls and young women, disabled youth, and those from minorities are not encouraged to express their views or to participate in decision-making and their voices are not heard. This exclusion also means that many issues affecting them remain poorly reflected in local development planning and government service delivery.⁸⁴

Participation is meaningful when public information is widely available; many views are taken into account through a variety of methods, including discussions, surveys and referendums; and decisions are made cooperatively, through the joint formulation of plans and policies, and in the shared management of institutions and services.⁸⁵

⁸³ World Bank (2007). *World Development Report 2007. Development and the Next Generation*. Washington, 2007

⁸⁴ Plan International factsheet

⁸⁵ Inter-Agency Working Group on Child Participation (2007). *Children's participation in decision making: why do it, when to do it, how to do it*. Bangkok 2007. (Inter-Agency Working Group on Children's Participation consists of ECPAT International, Knowing Children, Plan International, Save the Children Sweden Regional Office for Southeast Asia and the Pacific, Save the Children UK Southeast and East Asia Regional Office, UNICEF EAPRO and World Vision)

Informing youth is critical, using schools and broader media, improving the content of dissemination campaigns, and harnessing new technology. Options outside school and school curricula are to be explored. In India, the Better Life Options program provides a combination of various services to young women (ages 12-20) in peri-urban slums and rural areas in India. It disseminates information on reproductive health and services, provides vocational training, and promotes women's empowerment through recreational events and dissemination of information material. Those in the program were significantly more involved in key life decisions than those who were not.⁸⁶ New technologies, such as the Internet, could be used to inform youth, to connect them and to deliver information in a way that is inclusive, relevant and accessible.

Below is a short selection of good practices on child and youth participatory processes in South Asia. Since the terms "child", "youth", or "young person" are often used interchangeably, children's initiatives might include youth 18 and older and youth initiatives might include children under the age of 18.

South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children (SAIEVAC), formerly called South Asia Forum (SAF), is a regional mechanism at the ministerial level initiated in 2005 as part of the process guiding the UN Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children⁸⁷. A regional secretariat is hosted by the Government of Nepal and all countries in the region participate. The initiative has a strong youth participation component. Young participants from all SAARC Countries were represented in a Regional Consultation of Children during the Ministerial Meeting in June 2010, Kathmandu and they presented a set of recommendations to the Ministers.

According to the child and youth participants, issues to be addressed in the region include:

- early marriage and the dowry practice;
- corporal punishment in schools;
- sexual abuse and lack of prosecution;
- discrimination (caste, religion, ethnicity, gender, disability);
- domestic child labor;
- trafficking;
- commercial and sexual exploitation.⁸⁸

They suggest to create a regional program on child participation, including establishment of coaching centers and issue based workshops; linkages at national level among existing children forums and

⁸⁶ World Bank (2007)

⁸⁷ UN Study on Violence against Children (2006)

⁸⁸ SAIEVAC (2010). *Report of the Children's Consultation for the first Governing Board Meeting and the Legal Reform Workshop of the South Asian Initiative to End Violence against Children*. Kathmandu 2010

networks; formation of Child Clubs; development of a better understanding on child protection issues through comics, school curriculum, printing drawings, media; organization of awareness campaigns on child labor, corporal punishment, and physical torture using dramas in public places, puppet shows, films; development of child friendly materials, child friendly laws and policies in simple language; ensure children participation in law making process; child friendly discussions with simple language and recreational time when organizing consultations between children and government representatives; development of an internet and Face book interface; studies on child protection issues to inform laws and policies involving all stakeholders.

Children’s Parliament Pakistan⁸⁹ has a regional and a central Assembly. Children are elected from schools in their districts and different casts and religious groups are included. The Children’s Parliament is supported by the Norwegian Embassy, Plan, Friedrich Naumann Foundation, and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC.

Examples for recent youth participatory research⁹⁰ include a) Aparajeyo-Bangladesh (2010). Youth-Led Survey on the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Vulnerable Children & Youth in Dhaka Slum Areas; b) Maiti Nepal (2010). Youth-Led Study in the Vulnerability of Young Girls Working in Restaurants, Bars and Massage Parlors in Kathmandu; c) Sanlaap (2010). Vulnerability of Children Living in the Red Light Areas of Kolkata, India. The methodology used here might be useful for the design of future youth participatory research.

Potential partners in South Asia, dealing with youth and child participation include

- [Interagency Working Group on Child Participation](#) (ECPAT International, Knowing Children, Plan International, Save the Children Sweden Regional Office for Southeast Asia and the Pacific, Save the Children UK Southeast and East Asia Regional Office, UNICEF EAPRO and World Vision): They assist children to participate in decisions about their rights and welfare.
- [YouthBuild International](#): A youth and community development program that simultaneously addresses core issues facing low-income communities, including housing, education, employment, crime prevention, and leadership development. They are or have been active in Bangladesh, India, and Sri Lanka.
- [Plan International](#): Youth participatory activities include health messaging in Nepal; use of media to combat violence in schools in India and Bangladesh through the Young Hearts Youth Arts and Media project; support to peer educators in Nepal around life skills training; involvement of youth in community vigilance groups in India to raise awareness about trafficking; and inclusion of youth in community led sanitation programs.
- UNICEF: Several useful online forums are available, including UNICEF’s Voices of Youth and the group “Youth Engagement in Social Transformation (<http://groups.google.com/group/youth-engagement-in-social-transformation->). They promote active discussions on innovative practices,

⁸⁹ <http://www.childparticipation.com/>

⁹⁰ www.childtrafficking.org

experiences and tools to strengthen meaningful youth engagement in social transformation to realize human rights.

Finally, there has been increasing recognition of the importance of youth participation in emergency situations. Encouraging the participation of adolescents and youth in all aspects of community life is not only the best way to realize their potential, but also often the best means to ensure their protection. Their participation in challenging situations can allow them to develop their problem-solving and negotiating skills, while fostering a wider atmosphere of tolerance, democratic practice, and non-violence and ensuring that programs and aid delivery take the specific needs of youth into consideration. Adolescents are more likely to flourish and realize their potential in conditions of peace and security. At the same time, these conditions of peace and security are more likely to be attained if young people are encouraged to play a full part.⁹¹

4.2. Changing Norms, Behaviors, and Attitudes

Many harmful traditional practices, including early marriage or female genital cutting (FGC), result from social conventions and social norms: when they are practiced, individuals and families acquire social status and respect. Families typically do not deviate from these societal norms for fear of being excluded and ostracized. Understanding the dynamics and factors that perpetuate harmful social practices is important for the development of programmes and policies leading to positive social change and the abandonment of these practices. Social convention theory helps explain why the decision of a family to continue a certain cultural practice depends on the decision of others to do so.

Often, discriminatory and unequal societal gender dynamics lie at the roots of harmful practices and are deeply anchored within societies, making the involvement of all stakeholders in society crucial to bring about change. In emergencies, disruption of the social fabric undermines protective norms, sharply increasing vulnerability to violations of rights and compounding factors such as displacement and loss of shelter. In communities affected by HIV, discriminatory attitudes and practices aggravate the vulnerability of affected youth and their families. Shifts in societal attitudes and behaviors can be slow, but in some cases gains have been made rapidly: understanding FGC as a social convention, for example, provided insights for programming that has led to significant levels of abandonment of the practice in some heavily affected communities. Norms and values also play an important role in the functioning of formal institutions, and civil society and young people can play critical social roles that lead to stronger government accountability.⁹²

UNICEF's Child Protection Strategy lists the following strategic actions for supporting social change:⁹³
(a) increasing knowledge and data collection; (b) strengthening the protective role of families;

⁹¹ UNICEF(2011)

⁹² Economic and Social Council (May 2008). UNICEF's Child Protection Strategy. E/ICEF/2008/5/Rev.1.
http://www.unicef.org/protection/CP_Strategy_English.pdf

⁹³ Ibid.

(c) strengthening the protective role of communities; (d) promoting meaningful participation and empowerment; (e) supporting public education and social dialogue.

(a) Increase knowledge and data collection: Much remains to be learned about supporting long-term social and behavioral change strategies, making further research, data collection and analysis essential.

- Expand academic partnerships to focus on specific challenges that concern social norms and practices harmful to children, particularly to girls.
- Prioritize further disaggregation of data pertaining to protection-related social norms and practices.
- Commission or promote external evaluations of innovative initiatives.
- Conduct pilots and support scaling-up of social and behavioral change initiatives in selected urban, peri-urban and rural communities.

(b) Strengthen the protective role of families: Governments should implement culturally appropriate and gender-sensitive parenting and care-giving programs to support families in providing a violence-free home. Such programs should include: (a) increasing the understanding by parents and caregivers of the physical, psychological, sexual and cognitive development of infants, children and young people in the context of social and cultural factors; (b) promoting non-violent relationships and non-violent forms of discipline and problem-solving skills; and (c) addressing gender stereotypes.

- Promote parenting education to encourage alternatives to violence for disciplining children.
- Secure greater access to social protection for vulnerable families.
- Strengthen advocacy on the elimination of violence against women and girls in the home, school, community and society.

(c) Strengthen the protective role of communities: Communities are primarily a source of protection and solidarity for children and youth. Working at community level is an effective way of promoting social change, notably through non-coercive and non-judgmental approaches that emphasize the fulfillment of human rights and empowerment of girls and women.

- Raise community awareness and stimulate open dialogue on the rights of the child and on practices that result in social exclusion or harm.
- Encourage outreach by community members to interconnected social groups to gain the consensus needed for positive change.
- Support/evaluate community-based child protection networks that monitor child rights, promote behavior change, and provide protection services and support to victims of violence and harmful practices.

(d) Promote meaningful participation and empowerment: Engaging youth in active dialogue, and promoting respect for their views is critical for their empowerment as actors in their own protection and that of their peers. This includes participation in both formal and informal justice processes.

- Strengthen work in education, HIV and adolescence to promote children and youth as agents of change according to their evolving capacity, including through life skills education, prevention of stigma and discrimination, and peer communication.
- Partner with and support civil society networks to promote children’s and youth’s participation and empowerment.
- Promote the legal empowerment of girls, boys and families, including through legal awareness and the provision of legal and paralegal services at community level.

(e) Support public education and social dialogue: Public awareness campaigns can play a role in reducing the prevalence of unfavorable or discriminatory attitudes, beliefs and harmful practices.

- Develop an approach to communication for social change that encourages the abandonment of harmful or unprotective social practices and norms.
- Encourage opportunities for open dialogue on child protection topics, in schools, institutions and community centres.

A recent Study “Delaying Marriage for Girls in India: A Formative Research to Design Interventions to Change Social Norms”⁹⁴ lists the following key findings: 1. Gender norms and expectations affect girls’ value and role in the community. 2. Economic considerations motivate child marriage. 3. Role model individuals value education and aspire for alternative roles for girls. 4. Lack of public education infrastructure, facilities and teachers affect motivation to send girls to school. 5. There are increasing signs of change, enabling girls’ access to education. 6. Lack of public awareness and weak enforcement of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006. 7. Local NGOs and community groups actively work to delay child marriage and address social norms. 8. Government schemes to discourage child marriage lack correspondence and outreach. Recommendations for an integrated intervention include 1. Increase girls’ access to high quality education. 2. Strengthen awareness and enforcement of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006. 3. Scale up successful and promising interventions. 4. Create an enabling environment and advocate for change.

4.3. Gender-Sensitive Development

The World Bank’s Reproductive Health Action Plan 2010 – 2015 “Better Health for Women and Families” lays out the following action points to help improve reproductive health systems:

- More contraception and better access to modern contraceptives;
- Skilled attendance at birth;
- Spread preventive knowledge;
- Train new health workers;
- Expand girls’ education;

⁹⁴International Center for Research on Women, UNICEF (2011). *Delaying Marriage for Girls in India: A Formative Research to Design Interventions to Change Social Norms*. New Delhi 2011

- Work closely with lead health agencies;

The document underlines, how important it is to reach youth and adolescents. The Bank pledges to support countries to improve access to reproductive health services for youth, especially for the treatment of sexually transmitted diseases, and to work closely with countries and development partners in providing training to doctors and nurses to deal with the special reproductive needs of youth clients.

Safe and easy access to schools is critical, especially for girls as they highly influence both girl enrollment and attendance in the region. Sanitation facilities in schools are often inadequate, directly influencing decisions whether girls attend and how long they will stay in school. One study in Bangladesh indicated that providing a separate toilet could increase the number of girls in school by 15 per cent. Menstruation is treated as a ‘shameful issue’ in Bangladesh. Lack of facilities at school, including water and usable toilets, force them either to leave the school or continue with the physical complications and psychological pressure that are barriers for them to concentrate on their lessons. The menstruation issue leads girls to remain absent from school, which will eventually contribute to increasing their drop-out rate.⁹⁵

“There is a permanent school here, but we are often sitting outside it in the sun due to there being no space.” – Girl, 12, Sri Lanka

“Sometimes parents go to the village and we have to stay and take care of younger sisters and brothers, and our belongings.” – Girls, 10–14, Sri Lanka, asked why they miss school

“During displacement the extra chores that we had to do to help our families were about the same, but after we resettled it is more common for the girls to have to help out with the family and have less time for play and schooling.” – Girls and young women, 13–18, Sri Lanka

“[Girls] also can’t attend schools due to some family restrictions. The male members of the family think that if girls go to school it is a shame for us and what will people think of us!” – Young woman, 15, Afghanistan

“The principal in the school is very strict – we have no shoes and he does not accept Bata [local plastic slippers] in school.” – Girl, 14, Sri Lanka⁹⁶

⁹⁵ UNICEF Regional Office South Asia (2009). *Equity in School Water and Sanitation, Overcoming Exclusion and Discrimination in South Asia*. Kathmandu 2009

⁹⁶ Machel Study 10 Year Strategic Review. *Will you listen? Young Voices from Conflict Zones*. New York 2007

4.4. Preventing Violent Behavior⁹⁷

The policy toolkit for middle income countries “Supporting Youth at Risk” identifies five key risk areas for young people around the world, including youth unemployment, underemployment, and lack of formal sector employment; early school leaving; risky sexual behavior leading to early childbearing and HIV/AIDS; crime and violence; and substance abuse.

It suggests to 1) focus on the first five years of life to prevent risky behavior among young people; 2) keep children in school until they have completed secondary education; 3) use students as a captive audience in schools to give them key risk prevention messages and to identify at-risk youth who need remedial support; 4) make reproductive health services meet the specific needs of young people, especially those from poor, underserved communities; 5) use national and local media to expose young people to social marketing messages and reduce their exposure to negative behaviors; 6) promote effective parenting as the cornerstone of policies and programs for at risk youth.

General policies include 1) Invest in safe neighborhood programs by ensuring a strong police presence and fostering good police-community relations; 2) Reduce the availability and use of firearms; 3) Increase prices and reduce the availability and use of alcohol and tobacco; 4) Increase access to contraception through condom social marketing and enable the widespread provision of emergency contraception; 5) Reduce youth crime and violence by focusing on rehabilitation and on providing second-chance opportunities for young offenders; 6) Promote anti-violence messages in all media, particularly targeted to males and young people; 7) Provide birth certificates for undocumented young people.

4.5. Child-Sensitive Social Protection

A joint statement on advancing child-sensitive social protection, supported by the World Bank, suggests the following steps to be taken by governments and international development partners to promote child-sensitive social protection:⁹⁸ Avoid adverse impacts on children, and reduce or mitigate social and economic risks that directly affect children’s lives. Intervene as early as possible where children are at risk, in order to prevent irreversible impairment or harm. Consider the age- and gender-specific risks and vulnerabilities of children throughout the life-cycle. Mitigate the effects of shocks, exclusion and poverty on families, recognizing that families raising children need support to ensure equal opportunity. Make special provision to reach children who are particularly vulnerable and excluded, including children without parental care, and those who are marginalized within their families or communities due to their gender, disability, ethnicity, HIV and AIDS or other factors. Consider the mechanisms and intra-household dynamics that may affect how children are reached, with particular attention paid to

⁹⁷ World Bank (2008). *Supporting Youth at Risk, A Policy Toolkit for middle Income Countries*. Washington 2008

⁹⁸ DFID, HelpAge International, Hope & Homes for Children, IDS, ODI, Wave the Children UK, UNICEF, UNDP, World Bank. *Joint Statement on advancing child-sensitive social protection*. June 2009

the balance of power between men and women within the household and broader community. Include the voices and opinions of children, their caregivers and youth in the understanding and design of social protection systems.

Any action should be guided by the principles of child-sensitive social protection:

- Ensure existing social protection policies and programs are child-sensitive. Review the design and implementation of existing social protection policies and programs to ensure they are child-sensitive, including taking into consideration the viewpoints of children, youth and their caregivers.
- Progressive realization. Set priorities and sequence policy development and implementation to progressively realize a basic social protection package that is accessible to all those in need and is fully child-sensitive.
- Increase available resources. Governments and donors alike should seek to improve fiscal space and increase available resources for child-sensitive social protection programs.
- Increase capacity and co-ordination at all levels. The design, implementation and evaluation of child-sensitive social protection involves a wide range of development actors. Accordingly, broad efforts are needed to build awareness, political will, capacity and inter-sectoral coordination.
- Ensure balance and synergies between social transfers and social services. Adequate investment in and linkages between transfers and social services are needed to ensure the reach, effectiveness and impact of social protection.
- Continue to build the evidence base on child-sensitive social protection and ensure research findings are well disseminated. Ongoing research, data disaggregation, and monitoring and evaluation are needed to better understand effective program designs and implementation for maximum impact on children (particularly in low income countries) and how child-sensitive approaches benefit the wider community and national development. It is important to include the voices and opinions of children and their caregivers in the design of these systems and programs.

4.6. Selection of Issue-Specific Recommendations

ILO suggests a number of interventions to address youth employment barriers⁹⁹, including addressing

- Technical skills mismatches, including vocational training programs¹⁰⁰, training “plus” comprehensive programmes, and entrepreneurship training programmes;

⁹⁹ ILO (2010)

¹⁰⁰ Vocational education as a measure to reduce youth unemployment seems to not always yield the expected results. In India (World Bank. *Skill Development in India, The Vocational Education And Training System*, Washington 2008), there is evidence of growing demand for workers with secondary education but the same

- Non-technical skills mismatches, including soft and life skills training programmes targeting primarily disadvantaged youth and youth with a history of substance abuse, criminal offences, teen pregnancy, and low educational, social, and vocational skills;
- Slow job growth barriers, including wage and training subsidies and public works programmes;
- Discrimination in the labor market, including affirmative action programmes and employee mentoring programmes;
- Inadequate job matching, including employment and intermediation services;
- Poor signaling with, for example, skills certification systems;
- Lack of access to start-up capital, including comprehensible entrepreneurship programmes.

Key recommendations by UNODC/UNGIFT to combat trafficking in the region¹⁰¹ include the improvement of ratification status of major conventions for a more uniform system of anti-trafficking frameworks to tackle internal and cross-border trafficking; incorporation of clear definitions of trafficking, organized crime and who is a child into existing domestic laws; improvement of labor standards to prevent demand for cheap illegal labor and trafficking for the purpose of labor exploitation; and the strengthening of cooperation mechanisms at domestic as well as cross- border levels.

Most countries in the region are sending, transit, or destination countries for migrants. According to the World Bank's 2007 WDR, receiving countries can increase the benefits by providing more opportunities for youth to migrate, perhaps through temporary worker programs – and by letting migrants develop and use their human capital. Developing countries can maximize the development impact of youth migration through policies that increase the benefits from existing migrants; through policies that expand the opportunities for other youth to migrate; and through policies that mitigate the risks associated with international migration.¹⁰²

Banning corporal punishment in schools can increase enrolment and attendance rates. Violence at school, particularly corporal punishment, has been identified by youth in a number of surveys in South Asia as a major factor in students' decision to drop out of school. A study in Nepal, where harsh corporal punishment is routine, found that 14% of school dropouts can be attributed to fear of teachers.¹⁰³ A report by Save the Children found that children in South Asia were unanimous in their opinion that corporal punishment is a major reason why children drop out of school. They also said that regular

cannot be said of workers with technical/vocational skills. Vocational students seem intent on entering higher education rather than entering the labor market. Relative wages of workers with secondary education have been growing since the 1980s, while the relative wages of workers with technical/vocational skills have declined.

¹⁰¹UNODC, UN Women, UNGIFT (2011). *Responses to Human Trafficking in Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Sri Lank..* New Delhi 2011

¹⁰² World Bank (2007)

¹⁰³ International Save the Children Alliance (2004). *Mapping Save the Children's Responses to Violence against Children in South Asia Region.* Kathmandu 2004

beatings result in a loss of interest in studies and a drop in academic performance.¹⁰⁴ Sexual abuse by teachers or bullying also lead to high drop-out rates. Children from official castes and indigenous tribes suffer from exclusion, discrimination, and bullying in schools.¹⁰⁵

5. Overview of Youth in CAS and ISN in South Asia

India: India's 2009-11 CAS focuses on achieving rapid, inclusive economic growth, ensuring that development is sustainable and increasing the effectiveness of service delivery. It puts emphasis on results delivery through the use of demand-side accountability involving beneficiaries, civil society and communities.

Sri Lanka: Estate youth seem to be increasingly unwilling to work on the estates, in spite of limited work opportunities. This might have contributed to rising poverty in the estates and a fall in the average number of income-earners in estate households. Estate youth are very isolated and especially disadvantaged in terms of mobility and economic opportunities. For example, lack of access to all-weather roads connecting estates to towns and the resident labor structure prevalent in most estates contribute to their social isolation. The Bank committed to improving livelihoods and re-building the lives of conflict-affected people, inter alia through supporting a reduction in youth unemployment and assisting in the introduction of trauma counseling programs at the village level. Outside the main conflict zones, the Bank caters to the housing needs of the long-term displaced and their host communities. The Bank's *Gemi Diriya* project encourages specific reconciliation-enhancing sub-projects, in particular those focusing on strengthening inter-ethnic relations and youth. The project aims at empowering youth and providing them with an alternative to joining the army or militant groups. Youth are equipped with tools to participate in, and benefit from, income generating project activities. A study on Youth Transitions was planned for FY06, but was dropped in the CAS PR.

Bangladesh: The CAS identifies two youth related issues, including low youth literacy rates and the enormous population growth. There is no specific youth strategy in place. The strategic objective for more inclusive growth is through improving social service delivery. In FY11-12, this will include Bank's second-generation support for sector-wide approaches with other partners in primary education and health, population and nutrition services, as well as an expansion of targeted social assistance through an Employment Generation Program Project for the Poorest. A more focused youth engagement could either be channeled through support to employment generation operations or through the governance pillar, engaging in dialogue with a wide range of stakeholders and fostering greater demand for good governance from civil society.

¹⁰⁴ International Save the Children Alliance (2005). *Ending Physical and Humiliating Punishment of Children – Making it Happen*. Submission to the United Nations Secretary General's Study on Violence against Children. Stockholm 2005

¹⁰⁵ *United Nations Secretary General's Study on Violence against Children*, New York 2006

Nepal: Two out of three issues identified as potential flash-points for political discord are youth focused: military integration and the reform of the armed forces; and the role of and control over party-affiliated youth groups (which have been intensifying their tactics of violence and intimidation). There has been considerable unrest, mainly in the Tarai region, and rolling *bandhs* (strikes) frequently bring economic standstill. International Development Assistance concentrates on the macro-framework, understanding the sources of growth and the dynamics and options through an ongoing Migration and Remittances Programmatic AAA. It also engages in a Jobs and Skills Development Programmatic AAA and continued work on education. Beyond that, the Adolescent Girls' Employment (AGE) Initiative supports a program to enhance school-to-work transition for young women. This pilot will be coming to a midterm review and could provide an entry point for more sustained engagement on youth employment in coming years. During consultations around the PRSP and the CAS, youth participants listed jobs and employment creation and greater involvement and participation of youth as key priorities going forward. They requested special programs for youth in the mid- and far-West and stronger partnerships with civil society.

Pakistan: The current CAS includes the Enhanced Rural Livelihoods pillar, which includes a focus on vulnerable groups such as women, disabled people and youth. Community-based programs focus on the enhancement of productive assets for the poor, including their skills and financial assets, and the development of producer organizations and community institutions so that they can more effectively link with markets and access government services (including safety net programs).

Afghanistan: The Interim Strategy Note FY09-11 mentions that social safeguards efforts also focus on mainstreaming notions of ethnic equity and gender inclusion in projects, the latter being further facilitated by the preparation of the Country Gender Assessment (CGA) in 2006. The CGA-recommended interventions in support of gender equity—strengthening women's involvement in agricultural production, credit markets, employment in the health and education sectors—are being mainstreamed in the Afghanistan lending portfolio across development sectors. For example, Bank operations in education, health, microfinance, rural development and livelihoods have effectively mainstreamed gender issues and have had a definite and clear impact in strengthening the social and economic position of women across the country. In addition, the Government of Denmark has committed funds to help develop the Afghanistan Female Youth Initiative (FYI), which was piloted in FY10 as a training program to create wage employment opportunities for young women and to encourage retention of girls in school past the primary level. In general, CGA recommendations are the basis for the Bank's strategy on gender mainstreaming, which aims not only to contribute to improved service delivery by targeting women and children, but also to empower women economically in key markets. This strategy lends support to the government's policy of '*Gender Equality*' and '*Gender Mainstreaming*,' reflected in MDG 3 and in the National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (2007-2017).

6. Overview of Selected Donor Activities in the Region

A selection of major donor programs focusing on social development, gender and/or youth follows below. Programs most relevant for youth include DFID's programs in Nepal (strong gender component) and in Afghanistan (job creation for young men and women and vocational training); USAID's program in India, promoting gender equality and combating sexual exploitation and trafficking, and in Sri Lanka; and CIDA's Bangladesh program providing non-formal education.

a) UK Department for International Development (DFID) just published its Operational Plan 2011 – 2015 for the Asia Region in May 2011¹⁰⁶. Some of DFID's largest country programs are in South Asia, including in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, and Nepal.

The Asia Regional Program (ARP) complements and supplements country programs by unlocking progress on key regional constraints that hold back potentially large development benefits in areas like intra-regional trade and cross-border natural resource management. It will focus on cross border issues, including regional integration, climate change and human trafficking, and hunger and maternal health across the Asia region. The Gender Policy Fund (£600,000 in 2010-11) will no longer continue. The Asia Regional allocation of £15m/year over 4 years is intended to leverage much larger flows from the wider development community, including the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and IFC, and will seek to work with the Commonwealth, EU, US, Australia, South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and large global foundations like Gates and Nike.

Specific country goals and activities related to youth include:

- Afghanistan: create 200,000 new jobs for men and women; provide technical and vocational education and training for 45,000 young people (15,000 in Helmand); help over 100,000 more children enroll in school – at least 40% of them girls; encourage at least 4.3 million Afghans (1.7m women) to vote in 2013 and 2014 elections;
- Nepal: DFID's work in Nepal has a strong gender component.¹⁰⁷ Specific targets include create 230,000 jobs, 50% of them for women; avert 108,200 unintended pregnancies; ensure 110,000 people benefit from safe latrines, partly through our support to the Gurkha Welfare Scheme.
- Bangladesh: This program also has a specific gender annex.¹⁰⁸ Ensure 1.5 million more girls and boys complete a full cycle of primary education; ensure 1.2 million births are assisted by skilled carers;

¹⁰⁶ DFID Operational Plan 2011 – 2015, DFID Asia Regional Team, May 2011.

<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications1/op/asia-reg-2011.pdf>

¹⁰⁷ DFIDN Nepal Operational Plan: Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Annex;

<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications1/op/nepal-2011-annex.pdf>

¹⁰⁸ <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications1/op/bangladesh-2011-gend-annex.pdf>

- Pakistan: Get over four million more children into school; recruit and train 90,000 new teachers; provide more than six million text book sets; and construct or rebuild more than 43,000 classrooms; prevent 3,600 mothers dying in childbirth; prevent half a million children from becoming under nourished; and save the lives of 110,000 children, including 44,000 newborns, by expanding basic health services at community level. Help 1.5 million people, more than half of them women, access microfinance loans to enable them to set up their own business and lift themselves out of poverty;

- India: plan not yet published

- Sri Lanka: Sri Lanka is now considered a middle income country. DFID's bilateral program in the country closed in 2006 when Sri Lanka graduated to middle income status. However, DFID still contributes to Sri Lanka through the [Conflict Prevention Fund](#) (£2 million in 2010/11).

b) Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA): The work in South Asia focuses on the following priority areas, including governance; private sector development; and health.

- Bangladesh: Within a consortium of donors, CIDA is supporting the public education system in Bangladesh. By building the capacity of systems and institutions, the Primary Education Development Program II is improving the quality of primary education for more than 17 million girls and boys. CIDA is also supporting non-formal schools administered by BRAC, a Bangladeshi organization. BRAC provides non-formal education to 1.3 million children (between 60 and 65 percent of them are girls) from poor areas of Bangladesh who have either dropped out of formal schools or have never attended.

- In Sri Lanka, CIDA is collaborating with CARE to empower community-based organizations in rural areas affected by conflict to contribute to improved income, food security, and access to health and education services for their members.

- Pakistan: Social development, democratic local governance, and equality between women and men are specific objectives of CIDA's assistance to Pakistan. In 2002, the Government of Pakistan made a commitment to these objectives by reserving 33 percent of local government seats for women. With the help of CIDA and the Aurat Foundation, a Pakistani non-governmental organization, more than 40,000 determined female counselors are benefiting from a nationwide campaign to provide orientation, training and critical support to their efforts to make government more responsive to local development needs, particularly those of women and girls.

c) United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

- Bangladesh: The USAID program includes investments in health and education (provision of low-cost, quality family planning services, maternal and child health care, and treatment for tuberculosis, social marketing of contraceptives and improvement of the use of contraceptives, reduction of maternal deaths; provision of early childhood education and funding of a Sesame Street

television program "Sisimpur", the most widely viewed children's television program); and peace and security and combating human trafficking.

- India: USAID's education program works with Indian nongovernmental organizations, state governments, and private corporations to reach vulnerable groups, including out-of-school youth, illiterate women and those facing violence and abuse. Projects focus on improving the quality and relevance of education through the use of education technology. USAID also supports activities that keep girls in school, improve the legal rights of women, address the problem of sex selective abortion, and combat human trafficking. Partnerships with the private sector provide disadvantaged youth with the skills they need to participate in India's growing economy.
- Nepal: Strategically targeted activities are improving the income-generating potential of the poorest and stabilizing conflict-prone regions. USAID supports a multifaceted "education for income generation" program that trains disadvantaged and conflict-affected youth for employment. This program responds to a root cause of conflict: exclusion of disadvantaged and rural youth from relevant education, training, and employment opportunities. Up to 70,000 youth will graduate and secure gainful employment by 2012.
- Pakistan: USAID's education program helps educate teachers, renovate schools, manage educational systems, improve teaching outcomes, and expand basic literacy skills. The Fulbright program in Pakistan is the largest in the world and offers students and scholars the opportunity to pursue higher-level studies at U.S. universities. USAID also provides scholarships to thousands of talented, financially needy students so they can complete degrees at local institutions in areas critical to Pakistan's political and economic stability. USAID integrates a concern for building a better life for Pakistani women into all of its programs. Objectives include increasing women's participation in the labor force, expanding girls' access to quality basic education, improving maternal and child health, and promoting women's rights in political, economic, and social realms.
- Sri Lanka: A strong partnership was established with the private sector and more than 2,500 youth received training for high-skilled jobs in areas such as information technology, small engine and automotive repair, carpentry, electronics, and the apparel sector. USAID provides technical training and support to local government institutions, civil society organizations, community reconciliation groups, and professional journalists. In 2009, USAID is training 17 young professional journalists in a program designed to improve access to information by local citizens. In eastern Sri Lanka, USAID is bringing together religious leaders, community leaders, and members of multi-ethnic associations to develop creative solutions to reduce ethnic tensions. USAID's assistance helped to develop a national database to track human rights violations in Sri Lanka. In eastern Sri Lanka, programs are helping to create training and employment opportunities for at-risk youth, including former combatants. The program addresses core conflict issues through support for small-scale infrastructure, vocational training, the return of displaced persons, and community policing.

7. Towards an effective strategy that addresses youth concerns

This document highlights the multitude of issues and obstacles youth face in South Asia during their transition into adulthood. Widespread violence and conflict and some of the worst gender indicators in the world make this transition particularly challenging. Paradoxically, the Bank's Country Assistance Strategies or sectoral strategies pay little attention to youth. The Bank seems to focus on youth primarily through primary and secondary education, vocational training, employment strategies, and temporary cash transfers.

This document contains several suggestions for interventions and programs addressing youth issues, including around youth participation; changing norms, behaviors, and attitudes; gender sensitive development; preventing violent behavior; and child-sensitive protection. The development of a regional youth strategy could build on these suggestions.

Preliminary suggestions for a possible future strategy include (i) improved inclusion of youth-at-risk in education and employment strategies; (ii) greater participation of youth in decision-making; (iii) increased attention to youth development issues in country and sector strategies; and (iv) increased attention to violence, crime, and conflict prevention. It is important to note that these are only preliminary suggestions. The development of a detailed regional strategy would have to be based on extensive consultations with World Bank staff at the regional and global level; representatives from International Organizations and NGO partners; and donors.

(i) Improved inclusion of youth-at-risk in education and employment strategies

The Bank has a strong track record in South Asia of targeting education and employment strategies to include poverty, gender, caste, or indigenous variables. However, it has focused less on identifying local or more qualitative drivers of discrimination, risk or vulnerability. A classification system to define youth target groups taking into account these drivers might contribute to better targeting, customized approaches per target group, and improved monitoring of the impact of education, employment, and cash transfer programs. The inclusion of at-risk youth groups in national or provincial education and employment strategies would reduce the need for separate stand-alone operations.

(ii) Increased attention to youth in CAS and Sector Strategies

Bank CAS and ISN barely focus on youth issues other than education, and do not provide for age-disaggregated monitoring of results. Given the scope of issues, the impact they have on the

development of youth, and the sheer size of the youth cohort in South Asia, a cross-cutting approach similar to gender issues may be advisable for some countries.

(iii) Improving youth participation in decision-making

National youth policies in the region have not been integrated with other sectors or at the subnational level. They are designed, implemented, and monitored without the involvement of youth stakeholders themselves. In addition, youth ministries are often among the weaker ministries, with less financial resources or technical capacity than other ministries. As a result, Bank task teams prefer to work through the traditional partner ministries. Issues of concern for youth might not necessarily be the same as the social issues, the grievances or root causes of conflict that are identified through project and country social assessments, or in CAS consultation rounds. Better participation and involvement of youth in consultation and decision making processes would help identify and respond to their educational, economic, and social needs. Youth participation in decision making could therefore be improved at two levels: First, at country and sub-national levels, by supporting youth ministries to work more closely with youth stakeholders, including non-governmental stakeholders, in the design and implementation of youth development plans; and, second, at operational level, by customizing social accountability and grievance redress mechanisms in Bank operations so that they respond to the needs of youth.

(iv) Youth, violence and conflict prevention, and peace building

Conflict analyses often identify “young men” as drivers of conflict, without fully explaining why young individuals engage in violent, anti-social or extremist behaviour. The World Health Organization (WHO) developed an Ecological Risk Model that identifies factors at four levels that influence whether an individual engages in violent behaviour, including at the societal level, community level, relationship-interpersonal level, and individual level. Applying a customized, detailed approach of this model to the violent gangs in Indian slums, the gangs in the Nepali Tarai, youth in the areas that are most heavily affected by maoist violence of India, and young men in the North-western areas of Pakistan, for example, would provide a clearer picture of how to prevent these young men from engaging in violent behaviour. Impact evaluations in Aceh, the Philippines and East Timor have demonstrated that Community Driven Development programs are an effective tool to foster inclusion, reconciliation, and peace-building in conflict situations. CDD programs targeted at youth-at-risk can provide them with training and employment, equip them with leadership and entrepreneurial skills, contribute to community level conflict resolution, and connect and engage them at a political level.

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