Young People Speak Out

Youth Consultations for the World Development Report 2007

THE WORLD BANK
Young People Speak Out:
Youth Consultations for the World Development Report 2007

Viviana Mangiaterra and Gerold Vollmer

June 2006

THE WORLD BANK
World Bank
Human Development Network
Washington, D.C.
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Acknowledgements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Methodological Remarks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Demographics of Consulted Youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Introduction of Results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Limited Access: Lack of Secondary Education Opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Risk Factors: Poverty and Exclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Quality / Learning Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Curriculum: “The Wrong Stuff”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Other Issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Employability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Employment Opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Entrepreneurship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Other Issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Health Definitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Health Services: Not Youth-Friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>“Risky Behaviors”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Sexual Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Other Issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Family Formation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Parental Home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Leaving Home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Parenting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Girls and Young Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Citizenship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Definitions of Citizenship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Youth Participation in “Civil Society”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Barriers to Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Policy Demands on Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Politics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Military, Civil, and Voluntary Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page</td>
<td>Section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Violence and Conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Manifestations of Violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Causes of Violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Globalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Views on Globalization: More Opportunity than Threat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Manifestations of Globalization: More Interactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Migration: Mostly Short-Term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acknowledgements

This report was written by Viviana Mangiaterra and Gerold Vollmer in cooperation with the World Development Report (WDR) consultation team composed of Maya Brahnam, Stephen Commins, Natsuko Kiso, Christopher Neal, Juan Felipe Sanchez and Kavita Watsa.

The authors would like to thank the Director of the WDR core team, Emmanuel Jimenez for his invaluable guidance during the consultations, as well as all of his team members for their interest and support. The team would like to thank all regional experts that have accompanied this process, especially Katherine Baines, Nina Bhatt, Wendy Cunningham, Muge Finkel, Minna Hahn, Lola Ibragimova, Ursila Jung, Gloria La Cava, Linda McGinnis, Yaa Opong, Pia Peeters, Mansoora Rachid, Helena Ribe, Cristobal Ridao Cano, Bachir Sahloul, Yasmin Tayyab, Aby Toure, and Jill Wilkins. Further, it would like to express its gratitude to all country office staff, especially Dina El Naggar, Ha Thanh Hoang, Zeze Weiss, Renato Zaratz, and everyone else who generously contributed with their time and expertise to the success of this endeavor.

The consultation teams owes its gratitude to the Government of Denmark for contributing its resources to making the WDR consultation process possible.
Introduction

The following pages relate to the experience of over three thousand young people with regards to what it means for them to be coming of age in today’s world. Between September 2005 and April 2006, these young women and men met in twenty-six developing countries to talk about what concerns them: getting a degree, landing a job, staying healthy, finding a partner, moving into their own place, and making a difference in their society.

By voicing their concerns and policy demands, these young people contributed to what is universally regarded as one of the most influential perennial development research publications: The World Development Report (WDR). The authors of the report recognized the value of listening to the subjects of their research and working together with a team of consultation experts to devise what may well be among the most extensive stakeholder consultation processes to date.

Given the focus of the 2007 WDR on youth, it was especially important to devise a consultative process that would foster a dialogue not only about youth but also with young people themselves. At the same time, it had to be made clear to the youth constituency that the report could not be written by youth.

The consultations had three clearly stated objectives: information, validation, and traction. They provided information to the team of researchers to learn about and understand the perspectives of the young people. Moreover, the dialogue with the youth in developing countries helped the team to validate their research. Finally, the consultations were also a key instrument to foster political traction with global youth organizations, governmental agencies, and development partners to enhance the “operationalization” of the report.

Many organizations have visited us, but after we explained our situation to them we do not see them again

—Sierra Leone

Methodological Remarks

A multisectoral team chaired by the World Bank’s Children and Youth Adviser, comprising Children & Youth experts, together with External Relations and Development Research experts, coordinated the consultations in close cooperation with the Director of the WDR team. The consultation team devised a number of consultative processes reflecting the heterogeneity of the youth constituency: country and “grassroots” consultations aimed at establishing a dialogue with disadvantaged and difficult-to-reach youth, while e-discussions and open commentaries on the World Bank’s “YouThink” webpage were used to reach youth with access to IT and global youth groups and young people in developed countries.

The present report, however, solely reflects the findings of the “grassroots” and country consultations in developing countries, with additional inputs from a global classrooms videoconference, which was held in collaboration with the United Nations Association of the United States and brought together high school students from five countries (namely Ghana, China, India, Mexico and the United States).
The guiding principles of all consultations were that they would be youth-led to the extent possible and would provide clear strategic value to the implementing country office to advance the youth-related agenda at the country level.

In terms of research methods, the consultations aimed to provide micro-level perspectives, as well as in-depth case studies to complement the macro-level research of the WDR. The objective was to gather select cultural data (i.e.: what it means to be young in society X) rather than individual level data (i.e.: systematic data on income levels among youth in population Y). Purposive sampling techniques were used for country selection, and selection of youth for Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) whenever possible. While the results are relevant and extensive, they do not claim to be scientifically representative.

Consultations were also deliberately country-driven, which affected the methodologies chosen. While the consultation team supplied the country teams with a set of guidelines and background documents, they gave the teams free hand to choose what was applicable in their context. The guiding structure in almost all of the consultation events were the five transitions identified in the WDR: going to school, finding a job, staying healthy, forming a family, and exercising their citizenship. Some countries chose to focus only on some of the transitions. For example, both Georgia and Timor-Leste consulted only on education and employment. Others added topics they felt were of special concern. Violence was the issue most frequently added, as for example in countries as diverse as Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Honduras and Thailand. Globalization was added as a specific thematic area in China and Honduras. Although family formation was the topic that was most frequently dropped, it nevertheless yielded rich results where it was discussed.

**Demographics of Consulted Youth**

In total, 3248 youth in developing countries were consulted during the country and grassroots events.

Overall, a gender balance was achieved. However, only half of the participating countries reported the exact age of the young people consulted, therefore, the age distribution results are inconclusive.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographic Distribution of Youth Consulted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Country</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burkina Faso</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana (global classrooms)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honduras</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macedonia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico (global classrooms)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian Federation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timor Leste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yemen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Only developing countries are listed since only events in those countries were grassroots and country consultations.*
Introduction of Results

The following pages give an account of how young people perceive their realities. The compiled voices of youth are reported according to the five transitions identified in the WDR: education, employment, health, family formation, and citizenship.

For each transition, the information is structured in a very simple, two-step model: a) first, youth give a gap analysis from an emic perspective: they tell us “how it is” and “how it should be;” b) second, they give an indication on “what has to be done.” In other words, youth assess their concerns and constraints, both in terms of how they themselves feel about a certain issue, as well as how they perceive the situation of young people at-large and compare it to how they would aspire the situation to be. This is followed by policy demands on the government or other political actors to drive the behavior change.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>51.36 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>48.63 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 15</td>
<td>4.93 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>10.84 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>17.95 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 and older</td>
<td>18.17 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>48.12 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Young people around the world are very aware of the importance of their education. While most of the young people attend or have graduated from school, they perceive many problems with regards to access to and quality of schooling.

**Limited Access: Lack of Secondary Education Opportunities**

Limited opportunities in terms of uneven access to schooling are a big concern to many of the young people surveyed. This comprises not only the dearth of school infrastructure and transport but also economic and socio-cultural deterrents to enrollment with poverty being the most prevalent. As the scarcity of educational opportunities is perceived as a manifest of societal exclusion of youth, young people’s policy demands aim at providing more equitable opportunities for all.

**Infrastructure.** An issue raised in consultations in Honduras, Nigeria, and Peru is the general lack of schools. In the Dominican Republic, specifically the lack of schools in poor neighborhoods and rural areas in Vietnam. Moreover, several young people decry the bad condition of schools. As one girl from a Brazilian indigenous community puts it, “Schools are falling apart.”

Not surprisingly, youth surveyed ask for more schools to be built in Honduras, an increase in infrastructure investments in Nepal, and for an overall augmentation of the education funding in Turkey and Peru.

**Lack of Secondary and Tertiary Opportunities.** Both in Mozambique and Kenya, the secondary school system is perceived to be ill-equipped to cope with the demand of those who are completing leaving primary school in unprecedented numbers. This observation is confirmed in Papua New Guinea where the school system is described as a “pyramid.” And in Brazil, where youth demand university education for all.

**Transportation** to and from schools is also an issue in many countries surveyed. For example, some schools in the Dominican Republic offer evening classes to fit the schedule of working youth, however, many are deterred from attending these classes, because taking public transport back to slum areas is dangerous at night. **Rural areas,** however, are seen to be especially disadvantaged in terms of school coverage, as youth in Brazil, Honduras, Nepal and the Dominican Republic report that they had to walk great distances in order to get to a school. A policy demand expressed by Hondurans and Brazilians is to provide transport from and to school at all times. Kenyans and Nepalese suggest distance learning programs to expand access also to remote areas.

**Risk Factors: Poverty and Exclusion**

When asked about the main deterrents for schooling, **poverty** is named in almost all consultations as the number one reason for both out-of-school youth and drop-outs. More specifically in Burkina Faso, the
Dominican Republic, Papua New Guinea, Vietnam and Yemen, school fees or prohibitive indirect costs constitute a barrier for the access to education for many poor families, as many do not “have the means to buy their children clothes, shoes and bus tickets.” Youth in Mozambique, Peru, and Yemen add that photocopies, uniforms, lunch money or books can also be a real deterrent even when there are no fees. Yet, some Brazilian students see cash transfer programs, where they exist, as inefficient.

Policy demands from students in Honduras, Turkey, and Vietnam focused on broadening the access to schooling include the abolition of school fees, need-based scholarships, as well as the provision of school lunch or other forms of transfer payments. An anecdote by a girl from Burkina Faso illustrates this: “In 1996, at the end of the school year, the teachers brought couscous bags to their pupils’ parents as an encouragement to enroll their children for the following year. This worked very well, there were over 60 students more at that school the following year. The parents believed that having a child at school would feed them.”

**Opportunity costs** of schooling rise abruptly between primary and secondary education as poor parents have strong incentives to send their children to work. Some of the young people consulted affirm that parents don’t see the value in schooling—often because they did not attend school themselves. Consultations with youth in Argentina, Bangladesh, Nepal, Peru and Vietnam revealed that this is also because the return on investing in education is unclear to parents and youth, who opt to work instead. As reported from Nepal “even college graduates are not absorbed in the job market. Students do not find a university degree economically strengthening their future and career.”

The main policy recommendations from Bangladesh, Peru, and Vietnam were to accommodate the needs of working youth are the introduction of flexible timetables, e.g. the introduction of night classes, and part-time jobs for students. As a Bangladeshi boy illustrated, “If we could go to school in the evenings, or for a few hours in the middle of the day, we could pull rickshaws during part of the day, and go to school for the rest. We cannot be in school the whole day, we need to earn money.”

In consultations with Kenyan youth, the importance of providing possibilities to re-enter the school process was emphasized, as was the provision of special second-chance programs for Georgian students who have dropped out of school. In Honduras, it was said that such second chance education should be “supported through scholarships” or expanded such as ProJovem in Brazil.

**Exclusion** is more accentuated for certain groups than for others: the lack of special education for young people living with disabilities is a concern raised in consultations with Nigerian and Thai students. The deaf cannot take part in examinations because there is no one to translate. Disabled participants in the Brazil grassroots consultation, however, demand full integration of young people living with disabilities in all classes instead of segregated education, hand-in-hand with sensitization training for teaching staff, didactical material, and physical accessibility to schools.

**Parents and peers** may contribute to educational failure as they yield considerable influence over education decisions. Bangladeshi youth say that family members have control over young people’s education. They might, for example, “feel ashamed if they cannot support their offspring to buy their school lunch. Therefore, in Honduras, parents are observed to often not matriculate their children because of “negligence.” Dominican students add that “families need orientation and support to ensure that students remain

---

“One of my neighbors is an intelligent girl, but she could not register at school because her mom did not have the 250 Lempiras she needed for the matriculation”

—Honduras
in school.” Peruvian youth also mention rebellion against parents as a reason for dropping out, which in turn leads to a deterioration of trust between the generations. In Bangladesh, mixing with “bad boys or girls” is identified as another reason for drop-outs.

Finally, the **lack of documentation** may also be a deterrent for enrollment: The lack of birth certificates impedes passing the baccalaureate in the Dominican Republic. Ensuring that the authorities undertake efforts that everyone has the necessary documentation is therefore seen as very important.

### Quality / Learning Environment

A cluster of issues raised concerns with the quality of schooling. In Mozambique, Nigeria and the Dominican Republic, **overcrowding** was seen to be leading to the “deteriorating quality of teaching,” and to an environment not suitable for learning. Indigenous and rural youth from Northeast Brazil, as well as young Yemenis lament the overcrowding in their schools. In Nepal, “you might not get a place to sit and it is very likely that there is no teacher to attend to the class.” In Peru, multi-grade schools were mentioned as a cause for dropouts.

The lack of access to **technology** is another issue: in Argentina and Honduras, computers, where they exist, are old or broken and without internet access. Brazilians and Hondurans also demand what they call “digital inclusion,” i.e. access to IT in educational institutions, “from kindergarten to university.”

In Argentina, the youth say that “school prepares **spectators instead of creators**.” According to Turkish youth, the current education system does not provide critical thinking and questioning skills to students. Kenyan, Thai, and Yemeni consultations further added that there is “no place for alternative ideas” and that the system does not empower the young people to be creative and innovative. In Peru, teaching methods are perceived as “vertical,” boring, and repetitive. And in Brazil, students miss extracurricular and multidisciplinary activities.

In Latin America, **security at school** can also be an issue: in these countries youth observe that schools sometimes host gangs, and are a venues for drug trafficking and arms dealing, which is seen to foster drop-outs by Dominican and Honduran students. In Brazil, authoritarianism and violence are observed to be prevalent. Vietnamese youth report widespread incidence of bullying and discrimination by peers.

In terms of policy demands with regards to educational quality, the youth surveyed in the consultation put increased youth **participation** on top of the list. Brazilian students would like to see schools to be “more participatory and emancipated.” Honduran “students enjoy participatory active learning the most.” Students from Yemen desire “open discussion lessons” and “special venues for creative activities,” which don’t have to be schools. Brazilian and Mozambique youth add that “parents should be given a bigger stake in the education system,” as families are not involved in school administration at all.

Finally, youth in Georgia, Peru, and Nepal would like to **participate in education policy making**, saying that there should be a “wider consultation of all the stakeholders […] especially the young people, to formulate strategies and devise the education policies.”

### Curriculum: “The Wrong Stuff”

The curriculum is often seen as detached from local realities and judged to be too theoretical: “**Theory is detached from practice.**” In Georgia, Kenya, Mozambique, and Turkey, students opine that the “curricu-
lum does not provide any practical skills and experiences.” It is viewed as being “too theoretical; [the] practical part is missing” making it “difficult to apply knowledge gained in school in daily life.” Brazilian students also see it as having “no link to local realities”—to be de-contextualized. Another critique from Thai youth is that schools “do not produce what the market wants.” Honduran and Peruvian students ask for the adoption of a curriculum relevant to suit individual and societal needs, with more links to “other social spaces.” Georgian youth suggest that students should be taught to develop their decision making skills.

There is a “lack of quality education materials” in Thailand and Yemen. Books and other teaching materials are considered outdated in Georgia, while Turkish young men and women assess that many things learnt in school are not up-to-date. Moreover, they think that there is too much focus on memorization.

Egyptian students lament the rigidity of the curriculum, as the marks received in the final secondary school exam are the only condition for university admission. Thai students complain about the pressure to pass entrance (and other) exams.

In Latin America, youth specifically mentioned the need for sexual education classes. Brazilians also mentioned the need for discussions on gender and sexual diversity in the classroom.

A main policy demand concerning curriculum is to introduce more vocational training. According to Kenyans “vocational training provides more opportunities than formal education.” Turkish students would vocational training to be “giving more importance,” along with “part-time opportunities for students.” Nigerians think that skill acquisition must be at the center of the curriculum. In Brazil and Timor-Leste, there is a wish for more vocational training institutions and for practical issues, such as problem-solving to be part of the curriculum.

“‘We need practical or hands-on activities provided by vocational training centers, for example sewing activities for women’

—Timor-Leste

“‘We need practical or hands-on activities provided by vocational training centers, for example sewing activities for women’

—Timor-Leste

Teachers

In describing their education systems, youth in all consultations mention teachers: In Thailand, students complain that teachers sometimes prefer to offer extra classes instead of teaching during regular hours. In China, the youth say that teachers are “too strict” or “do not understand students.” In Honduras and Nepal, they are said to abuse their authority and corporally punish students. In Turkey, Honduras, and Brazil students comment that teachers are not objective during lessons, lack training, and often go on strike because they are not paid well. In Peru, the teachers’ union is seen as the “worst enemy of education.”

Tutoring by teachers outside regular hours is reported to be a widespread in several countries such as Egypt and Vietnam. In Egypt, teachers often abandon the classroom and ask their regular students to pay them an extra fee for their tutoring services. This in turn increases a gap in learning opportunities, discriminating against students from poorer households. In Vietnam, students feel that tutoring should be eliminated.

In many of the consultations, the young people suggest enhancing the capacity of teachers or introducing mechanisms to evaluate them. In Georgia, students that teachers “need to be retrained to get familiar with modern teaching standards and methods” and “get the tools needed for teachers to do their job.” Furthermore, they “should be better paid so that they are more motivated—currently they have very low salaries and basically work on a voluntary basis.” Good teachers “must motivate and stimulate students to give their best.”

“My friend asked the teacher: Why are we studying this vector. He replied: To pass the exam”

—Nepal
Other Issues

Gender-related barriers to education are mentioned in several consultations. Early marriage is one: in Bangladesh, “young girls get married in their teens and this usually signifies the end of their educational path.” In Nepal, youth observe that female enrollment diminishes as the education level goes up, which is attributed to parents’ attitude: “Daughters are destined to go to others’ home. So, what is the use in educating them?” Similarly, in the Dominican Republic, parents take girls from school because they think that “girls are not supposed to work.” In Peru, “machismo” is seen as a barrier to education for girls and young women, with sexual harassment of girls in schools also being mentioned. In Northern Nigeria, “girls are not sent to schools.” In Yemen, parents are reported to not recognize the value of girls education—the young girls in the consultations demanded “raising parents awareness about the importance of girls’ education.”

Some cultural barriers to education are noticed by the youth: For example, traditions in Southeastern Nigeria are such that young men are encouraged “to go into business ventures” instead of completing school. In the Andes in Peru, the language of instruction, Spanish, is not spoken by the local population, which leads to lower education outcomes and dropouts. Teaching in local languages is a clear policy demand made by the youth.

Values. The consulted youth are, however, also quite self-critical: Students often lack passion to learn and graduate for the sake of graduating, students. Thai students say that some “lack values” which should develop these values through extracurricular activities. In the Dominican Republic, the youth note that sometimes students “repeat a year and feel ashamed, so they drop out instead of going back to school.” They add that, “students’ self esteem needs to be strengthened.” Also, Turkish students see counseling and psychological support at school level as desirable.

Corruption. In Peru, corruption at school level is seen as a problem—both “in the classroom and with authorities at various levels.” In Yemen, young people report widespread “sales of booklets for exams” by teachers, so that only those that pay for these booklets pass these tests. They also say school officials often accept bribes for the admission of students. The youth demand stricter punishments for corrupt teachers and administrators to end these practices.

Non-Formal Education. Several young people mention non-formal education through youth-led extracurricular activities such as volunteering as a tool for youth development. In Turkey and Georgia youth say that governments should recognize non-formal education, by “giving it more attention” and by “developing more non-formal education opportunities.”

“The problem is that education in Peru is anachronistic; the teachers are very strict, authoritarian. Education should be more horizontal. […] During the lessons, only the teachers talk, they do not discuss with the students, the young people can study, but they are not motivated”

—Elvis Bonner, 21, Lima, Peru

“They [young people] don’t go to school because they have a family to take care of, they cannot continue to rely on the good-will of their own parents”

—Elvis Bonner, 21, Lima, Peru
Employment

Youth unemployment is brought up in a number of consultations as one of the key challenges faced by young people today. They attribute this to both supply and demand factors in the labor market, but put a relative emphasis on the lack of preparation by schools and the inactivity of the government as regulator of that market. Policy demands, therefore, often focus on strengthening young peoples’ capabilities to obtain skills and credit.

Employability

Youth in Egypt, Georgia, Honduras, Kenya, Nepal, Turkey and Yemen feel that the education system does not prepare them well for the job market. In Timor-Leste, they judge that the “quality of education is low,” and youth lament the “lack of practical subjects” in Turkey, and the lack of choice in “subjects that actually interested them” in Egypt. As mentioned earlier (see discussion on education), many young people voice the desire for more vocational subjects in their curricula to prepare them better for the job market. Young people in George, Kenya and Turkey say that employers often demand previous work experience, which complicates their entry into the labor market as no employer would give these young people a first chance. Young Vietnamese say that their job prospects are out of their control even if they invested in further training, as the businesses that made agreements with training centers sometimes back out at the very last minute leaving them jobless.

Bangladeshi youth sometimes turn to “collecting degrees” as a strategy to overcome what is perceived to be a tight labor market. Similarly, Hondurans think it is especially important to have a “title” of some sort when leaving school. Whereas in China, many students accept temporary jobs with low income and no insurance to boost their employability.

Young people make many policy demands with regards to an increase of their employability. In Timor-Leste the youth feel that the formal, public school system should be expanded, especially tertiary education. At the same time, they demand the establishment of training centers at a decentralized level. Brazilian and Nepalese youth would like to see the introduction of career counseling and classes on job search skills in the secondary school curriculum. Also the cost of vocational training programs needs to be addressed, with the Vietnamese suggesting that such programs ought to be free or allow for a repayment plan after securing a job.

Employment Opportunities

Many young people say that there is no youth employment policy in their country. While Peruvians say that “the role of the government is not to give employment, but to promote a favorable environment for
investment and employment creation;” Kenyans lament the absence of a governmental youth employment policy. Brazilians, further add that “firms have no incentives to hire young people because government does not provide these incentives.”

The youth call upon their governments to create more jobs in Kenya and Timor-Leste, to invest more in SMEs that absorb a lot of young people in Brazil, and to revive industries “that are moribund already” in Nigeria. Nigerians also think that privatized national companies should employ a minimum of 80 percent Nigerians.

Information. The lack of access to reliable job information is perceived as a problem in lower income countries, such as Burkina Faso, Nepal, Kenya, Timor-Leste and Vietnam. Nigerians demand a database “showing the number of employed and unemployed,” while others in Kenya and Bangladesh ask for “job search centers for young people.”

Formal vs. Informal Sector. In lower income countries such as Bangladesh and Burkina Faso, young people agree that they aspire to a position in the formal sector and think that the government should aim at creating more formal sector opportunities for young people. The informal sector is seen as “not suited for those that have graduated from formal schooling institutions.” For many young Timorese “working in the informal sector, do not consider themselves as workers.” In Sierra Leone, where there are hardly any jobs in the formal sector, some youth recommend that the government to “strengthen the informal sector” by adopting measures to insert those who cannot get a formal job into the informal sector.

Public vs. Private Sector. Opinions on the comparative advantage of either sector varied greatly. In some countries, such as Nepal and Peru, working for the government is seen as undesirable due to low pay, lots of red tape, and corruption. Whereas in Peru the private sector is seen in a positive light, due to a perceived higher permeability and the chance to gain experience and responsibilities quickly.

In other countries, such as Bangladesh and Egypt, however, government jobs are in high demand—especially because of the job security they offer. Egyptians repeatedly underscore that many of their peers aim at working for the government, as only employment in the public sector is perceived to promise absolute job security. The private sector is generally seen as suboptimal as employees can be laid off anytime. Bangladeshis affirm that “all intend to sit for the civil service entrance examination,” whereas it is mostly the “uneducated aspire to start businesses.” The policy demand from Bangladesh is that the government (as an employer) free itself from all forms of bias such as “tribalism, bigotry, corruption, gender inequality.”

Entrepreneurship

Starting up one’s one business is discussed in all consultations and is primarily seen in a positive light throughout. Yet as cited by a Nepalese youth, “entrepreneurship is not a spontaneous phenomenon and needs to be backed by preparation as well as by a business culture.” Lack of credit and know-how are observed as the main impediments to starting a business.

Restricted access to credit, together with the lack of a positive business environment, are cited as the main obstacles in Bangladesh, Brazil, Nepal and Sierra Leone. Lack of collateral is also seen as a major deterrent for self-employment in Egypt and Mozambique. In Bangladesh, youth see themselves confronted with a lot of bureaucratic hassles when attempting to set up a business. In Peru, however, it is mentioned that working independently can be very time consuming, not leaving sufficient time for being with one’s family and children.

“Government service has its deficiencies, but young people like us should get into it and change the whole scenario”

—Rabi, male, Nepal
Youth are generally interested in developing their entrepreneurial skills. In Bangladesh, China, Kenya, and Sierra Leone, therefore, access to credit “should be improved,” and procedures to set up a business should be reviewed. In Brazil and Burkina Faso, youth recommend that governments and donors “provide more microcredit programs.” In Nigeria, young people say the government should “encourage youths who want to go into small business ventures with soft loans to kick start such projects,” so that youth can put their “creative energy into income generation activities.” In Brazil, ownership is demanded at the program planning stage: “Financial programs supporting youth must be formulated by young people themselves.”

In Nepal, the young people express an interest in having entrepreneurship skills courses as part of the secondary school curriculum, instilling the “motivation to start a business at school level.” Peruvians say there is a real need for an alliance between the education system, the government and the private sector to promote self-employment. Further, young people in Sierra Leone say that post-training assistance is necessary, as fledgling youth enterprises often fail due to a lack of continued post-training support. Finally, they ask for multi-purpose youth centers that also offer vocational training activities.

Other Issues

In some African countries, older people’s attitudes are perceived to be aggravating young people’s job prospects. In Mozambique youth say that they are seen as a dependent and inexperienced group, and that youth were “caught in a trap of pessimism.”

Gender. Several young people mention specific gender-related problems in the job market. In Papua New Guinea, Peru, and Yemen, it is perceived that “girls have less opportunities in the job market than boys.” Some Chinese state that “it is easier for the undergraduate female to find a job than for the postgraduate female, because of age.” Whereas Georgian youth say that it is actually harder for men to find jobs than for women. In Bangladesh, daycare centers for women are seen as an important measure to help young mothers stay in the job market.

Concerning youth with disabilities, Kenyans think that there have to be “jobs created for the disabled youth,” and Sierra Leonean youth ask for quotas. Brazilian youth, however, say that firms hire disabled youth because they have to fill a quota, but despite compliance, firms do not provide any capacity building to these young people. They also feel that quotas are often “masked,” in the sense that “firms ask for disabled youth who are not actually disabled.” They see a need for capacity building courses and internships earmarked for disabled youth and laws establishing a quota system for firms have to give a clear definition of what is a disabled person.

Unemployment is reported to be aggravated in rural areas, especially in China and Vietnam. In Sierra Leone, however, youths in rural areas feel that they have the necessary skills for farming jobs but often do not perceive farming skills as real job skills as they were not learned in a formal environment.

“When we work, […] there remains no time or energy for depression, juvenile delinquency, aggression and the like”
—Nepal

“Your Way In”—From Social Networks to Corruption. Several consultations raise the issue of personal connections as an important variable for a successful insertion into the job market. This is, however, mostly
seen as something negative. Young people in Timor-Leste condemn what they perceive as “nepotism” or “wantonism” in Papua New Guinea. In Bangladesh, a young person commented that “a well-placed bribe is likely to result in a job.” Also in Sierra Leone, youth report that often a considerable bribe is often necessary to land a job. Nepalese youth call on the government to address this issue more vehemently, encouraging “healthy competition.”

But even when not perceived as purely negative, young people assess social networks as very important, saying that they “accounted for 50% of successful job searches” in China and that “even with a degree [in Honduras,] it was difficult to find a job without recommendations from friends.” In Peru, networks linked to one’s home community are seen as an important element for finding a job.
A range of issues are raised: Health services are often not perceived as youth-friendly: HIV prevention campaigns do not always change behavior and drinking, smoking, drugs, and gambling are seen as risky behaviors that might endanger health. Finally, environmental concerns are also raised.

**Health Definitions**

Health, in most consultative meetings, is defined both in terms of physical and mental wellbeing, for example as “having no diseases and good self esteem.” Youth in Asia mentioned the following protective factors: exercise, diet, sleep, as well as recreational opportunities and “being optimistic.”

**Poverty** is identified as the main reason for unhealthy lifestyles in Bangladesh, saying that the key for staying healthy is having an income. According to some Chinese youth, young migrant workers in Beijing do not understand the “concept of health by urban residents. In their views, to be healthy means merely having no diseases, so they can make money.”

Most of the youth, when asked, said that they felt “healthy.” Argentineans observe two contradictory feelings among them: on the one hand, young people feel “invincible” being at the apex of their physical strength, with a feeling that “it’s not going to happen to me.” On the other hand, many feel very vulnerable, asking themselves whether they truly know how to adequately prevent diseases.

**Health Services: Not Youth-Friendly**

Many of the youths consulted find health services in their communities inadequate. In Papua New Guinea, they assert a “lack of infrastructure and medication.” And in Burkina Faso, they think that consultation costs are elevated for youth and regard health services as not youth-friendly, saying, “health services are poorly used by young people because the personnel does not know how to deal with them.” In Brazil, health staff are often found to be insensitive to needs of the young, which leads to young people not go to a health center even if they should. In Egypt, the lack of health insurance is said to be a main deterrent.

Brazilian disabled participants mention a lack of products and services for people living with disabilities, for example some young people have to wait over a year to get a wheelchair. And even in hospitals there are no public restrooms for the disabled.

In the opinion of the youth from Burkina Faso, it is crucial to build the capacity of health staff and increase their number. They demand affordable medication in Nigeria and affordable consultation costs in Burkina Faso, the creation of community health offices in Brazil, as well as youth participation on the health councils and other bodies to enhance “social control” of health.

“We believe we can [stay] healthy by practicing things that will keep us healthy”

—Yvonne, 21 Papua New Guinea

“We pass directly from the pediatrician to the clinic”

—Argentine youth, lamenting the absence of youth-specific doctors
In several Latin American counties—Brazil, the Dominican Republic, and Honduras—the need for more information resources and youth-friendly health services and the creation of specific youth-health programs are underlined. The need for workshops on sexuality, reproductive rights, STDs and teenage pregnancy were also discussed.

“Risky Behaviors”

In several consultations “risky behaviors” were brought up in the health focus group discussions, although they were not always labeled as such. Some young people see a clear link between unemployment and risky behaviors, the former being a big contributor to the latter. Nigerians stress the link between poverty and risky behaviors.

Alcoholism, drugs and STDs are the main health problems identified by Honduran and Peruvian youth from low-income neighborhoods. Delinquency and prostitution are problems in the Dominican Republic. Alcoholism is on top of the list for indigenous Brazilians. Chinese think that while “smoking, drinking and gambling” are rare among Chinese high school students, that these behaviors “should be forbidden.” Indigenous participants in the Brazil grassroots consultation think that employment programs and non-formal educational opportunities would be the best protective factor against alcoholism in their communities.

Young people in Thailand are worried about drug abuse. They feel that “youth ignore the critical problems of drugs,” as they are “easily accessible.” They see “corrupted officers, an unstable environment, lack of care at home, and emotional problems” as causes for widespread drug abuse. Thai youth call on the government to regulate media regarding advertisements for alcohol and cigarettes, to punish drug dealers harshly, and to provide treatment centers for addicts. Burkinabés think that the government should introduce severe penalties for drug consumers. Brazilians, on the other hand, do not mention punishment as a deterrent but focus on the availability of prevention programs. They note that treatment centers for substance abuse only exist far away and should be installed closer to communities. Prevention programs, on the other hand, should be decentralized in order to be more effective.

In two Latin American consultations, young women noted what they call “beauty pressure.” According to Argentinean girls and young women, excessive diets lead to unstable health and low self-esteem. Honduran girls see a link between this pressure and low self-esteem because “we try to look like the models.”

Sexual Health

Sexuality is discussed in many consultations—mostly using a health lens. It is, however, not always perceived solely as a health issue. In Vietnam, young people regard it as a moral issue, which complicates HIV-prevention work.

In many consultations, youth discuss the reasons for elevated HIV infections among the youth population. In China and Honduras, youth assert a lack of knowledge about ways of HIV transmission. “Sexual relationships start early,” in Thailand and Honduras, and “are often unprotected as people lack a real understanding of sex.” But in Mozambique and Nigeria, others say, that “the prevalence of STDs does not result from lack of knowledge... but is due to poverty.” According to Hondurans, STDs are widespread because of high rates of infidelity. Whereas youth from Mozambique say that the consumption of alcohol is linked to the spread of STDs.

However, knowledge of HIV/AIDS does not necessarily lead to a change in behavior. In Peru, young men from low-income neighborhoods say they “know where to get condoms,” but they “do not use them.”
Despite affirming that they are “afraid of catching HIV/AIDS,” Mozambicans state that **condom use** is still “very limited among youth.” They say that “one of the reasons for the limited use is the inadequate social campaigns, which sideline the positive effects (pleasure etc.) focusing only on the useful purpose,” hence the rejection. In Vietnam, on the other hand, despite widespread knowledge on the merits and availability of condoms, they are associated with immoral behavior. According to one Burkinabe, condoms are also often second-rate due to careless handling by resellers.

Views on **abstinence** as a method for HIV/AIDS prevention vary greatly. On the one hand, young people say that expecting young people to abstain from sex is unrealistic. For example in Burkina Faso: “They talk to us about abstinence, but not everyone can abstain.” On the other hand, in Yemen, young people say that “raising religious awareness” would be a way to keep young people from “illegal sex, thus destroying values and principles.”

In terms of policy demands, youth in Thailand and Peru recommend further media-based campaigns against unprotected sex. The Vietnamese suggest that TV advertising, soap operas, game shows and websites should carry preventive messages. They also think that HIV/AIDS education should become a standard component of school curricula in their country. In Peru, there is a demand for health information centers in low-income neighborhoods. And while Kenyans think that there is “a lot of focus on HIV on the expense of other ailments such as malaria, cancer, diabetes, etc.” they also say that they “must be empowered to negotiate for prevention [with their sexual partners].”

**Other Issues**

**Nutrition.** Eating right is often mentioned as a protective factor in staying healthy. In Asia, youth note that fast food leads to obesity and can cause many diseases. While the Thai deem it important to raise the awareness among youth to realize the importance of their own culinary tradition, Chinese think that sports are the best way to stay healthy.

**Sanitation.** In some of the consultations, lack of basic sanitation is noted as one of the top health-related concerns in Bangladesh and Honduras. “The biggest concern is the absence of environmental and personal hygiene,” which is also noted in rural areas of Brazil. Consequently, a demand is made that the “state should provide more latrines, canalization, etc.”

**Suicide.** This issue was exclusively discussed in East Asia, specifically in Thailand and China. The consulted youth identified high levels of competition, high expectations from parents, and “harmful examples by peers that had committed suicide” as the root causes of the phenomenon. Thai youth think that getting “spiritual advice, following the principles of Buddhism,” and strengthening moral ethics in school could reduce the number of youth suicides in their country.

**Environmental Issues.** The excessive use of fertilizers and pesticides is mentioned as an environmental concern to youth in Yemen, Peru and Brazil. In addition, rural Brazilians say that the polluting of rivers and waterways, as well as the amount of trash pose a real problem for their communities. Thai youth point out that slum dwellers face environmental hazards that can only be eradicated by improving environmental conditions in these areas.

Brazilian demands concerning the environment were, among others, teacher training on environmental issues, as well as media campaigns to alert young people themselves to the dangers of polluting and a polluted environment.

“My mother often asks me to eat eggs and drink milk, so I think I am very healthy”
—13 years. Beijing, China
Family Formation

Family formation is picked up as an independent topic in fifteen consultations, namely Argentina, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Brazil, China, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, Honduras, Kenya, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Peru and Thailand, Vietnam and Yemen. While the family is an important factor in young people’s lives, the parental family is more prominent in young people’s minds than the family they will eventually form. Discussions highlighted sensitive subjects such as domestic violence, teenage pregnancy, leaving one’s home, as well as marriage and parenting.

Parental Home

In analyzing the situation in the parental home, young people often regard intergenerational communication inside the family as problematic. Youth in the Dominican Republic, Honduras, and Thailand states that parents do not understand their children and scold them, or that they exert “pressure on their children to be like they want them to be.” Thai youth also mentioned that, parents are sometimes unable to express their affection for their children or might always be working and have no time for their children. Whereas the Vietnamese say that young people have to find an equilibrium between respecting their parents and making their own decisions.

Domestic violence (see also “Violence” below) was mentioned in the Argentinean, Brazilian, Peruvian, and Thai consultations as an issue that has, among others, a detrimental effect on education outcomes. Young Vietnamese say that “parental adultery, gambling,” and “alcoholism of the father” are triggers for family conflict. Hondurans make a clear link between the level of violence in the household and the overall culture of violence and insecurity in their country.

As a result of these tensions inside the household, children often look for relationships in the wrong places, for example “in gangs.” As one Thai workshop participant mentions: “Children who have grown up in an incomplete family might not be able to raise their children properly when they have their own.”

Proposed solutions go from family-level activities such as “spending more time with the family, talking more with one another, and having a family plan” in Thailand, and “improved intergenerational communication to prevent youth leaving their homes prematurely” in Honduras, to Brazilian demands of increasing coverage of social assistance services to all families.

Relationships

There exists great diversity in what is perceived as common and/or appropriate in terms of pre-marital relationships among young people. They are stated as a mere fact in Latin American consultations, with a Honduran noting that “she left home to live with her boyfriend.” However, the Chinese youth discussed

“Parents always want the best for you, but sometimes they don’t realize how much pressure they put on you”

—Daney (female), 17, Cusco, Peru
the appropriateness of pre-marital relationships at length: some youth say that although love between high school students is forbidden by law, they think that love between classmates is understandable “as long as it does not interfere with their studies.” At the university level Chinese “students are looking for love, but few want to get married. Yet, cohabitation—couples living together without getting married—gets mixed reviews, some object and some don’t care. Men, however, were more concerned about practical issues (rent etc.) while women feared for their reputation.

Leaving Home

When asked why young people leave home, both “pull and push factors” were mentioned by the youth:

**Pull factors** as noted by youth in the Dominican Republic, Honduras and Papua New Guinea were: education opportunities, the lure of city life, employment opportunities, friends, and marriage. Although in Papua New Guinea, the youth noted that getting married does not always mean that you will leave home, because parents will help you in child rearing and young people want to repay the parents for having invested in them.

**Push factors** were abuse in the family, economic pressures, lack of communication/love in the family, or young people being kicked out by their fathers. Pregnancy was also mentioned as a factor in the Dominican Republic—young mothers go to live with their boyfriends, which can be problematic as they are considered to be dropping out of school and unemployed.

When asked about the right time to leave home, Hondurans say that it is “when you have finished your schooling and have an education.” However, this is not always possible. In Argentina, young people can often not move out of their parental homes because of prohibitively high rents and an unstable job environment. Yet staying at home for too long might also cause a lot of problems, as one Burkinabe participant observes, “parents will not be able to support you anymore and you will feel restricted in your movements, so you should marry whatever your economic situation.”

For Papuans, independent living is a relatively new phenomenon, mostly concentrated in cities. In rural China, many young couples live with their family even after marriage, while in the cities this is different, people leave home when still celibate.

Marriage

Not all young people can choose their partners. In several countries, young people say that their parents have considerable control over who they marry. “Forced marriage is still a problem in Burkina Faso” and parents in Papua New Guinea “still often decide whom their offspring marry.” In Bangladesh, where arranged marriages are quite common, parental control on whom to marry is not resented as much as the timing—i.e.: that they might do that too early, in other words before young women could finish their education.

Youth in Bangladesh express that finding the right partner is a matter of faith and luck and not of planning. Argentineans would rather “stumble upon” a new family instead of actively looking for it.

When asked about the ideal time to get married, young people usually link this to their educational or employment status. Youth in Bangladesh say you should get married when you are “established in life;” Hondurans, “when you have a job and have finished education.” Kenyans observe that working young
people marry later than the idle ones. Yemenis point out that girls in urban areas delay marriage, which they attribute to the fact that they continue their education. In China, most female interviewees say that affection is the most important determinant of the right point in time; male interviewees say monetary independence determines the best moment to get married. Egyptians say that the prohibitive cost of setting up a new household often delays marriage, which can be aggravated when youth are faced with unemployment.

**Parenting**

Several consultation groups raise the issue of **teenage motherhood**. In Brazil, there are “many teenage moms.” In Honduras, teen mothers are often discriminated against; they are seen as “loquitas” that have no moral principles. In China and Honduras, the explanations for the phenomenon center around the lack of knowledge and contraceptives: “…the lack of communication inside the family and the absence of or lack of knowledge about contraceptives.” Among those in Argentina who have formed a new family because of not having used contraceptives some try to make the best of it while others “take refuge” in their own parental family instead of assuming their new responsibilities. Compare this with Yemen, where early childbearing—in wedlock—is widespread, but is perceived to be detrimental to the young mothers’ health. Youth in Bangladesh and Honduras also talk about the ideal family size saying that they would like to have no more than two children.

There are several **policy demands to improve the lot of young mothers and families**: Youth in China and Kenya feel that young families should be supported through special programs, such as daycare, kindergartens, longer maternity leave, access to loans, and information—as youth often lack parenting skills and might not be capable to give their children the best care. In Kenya and the Dominican Republic, youth say that single mothers “should be supported through special programs,” including more night schools for young mothers. Further, health centers should not only serve young mothers, but provide preventive services [and more reproductive health information] to young girls to avoid unwanted pregnancies.

Along these lines, there is also demand in Yemen for raising parents’ awareness of the disadvantages of early marriage and childbirth. And in Honduras, it is seen as “important for parents of young couples to continue their support to the newlyweds.”

**Girls and Young Women**

Several observations are made on the situation of young women – overall the impression is that traditional gender divisions seem to be shifting. A girl in Burkina Faso says that “work should be a woman’s first husband,” and according to the Brazilians “women do not want to be submissive anymore.”

In Bangladesh, however, youth overall still think that women should get married earlier than men, although the customary dowry makes girls a burden, so parents try to marry them off before they “stand

“Having a child will affect career development, especially for me as a woman. Also it stops you from getting further education”

—23 yr. old female from suburban Beijing, China

“We young women are not prepared to become mothers. I would like to continue my studies, but since I have had my daughter my options have changed, because I have many more obligations now. I hope that this will not be a barrier for me to succeed in life”

—Eylin Ivetth Cerrato, 19, Honduras

“Having a child will affect career development, especially for me as a woman. Also it stops you from getting further education”

—23 yr. old female from suburban Beijing, China

“We young women are not prepared to become mothers. I would like to continue my studies, but since I have had my daughter my options have changed, because I have many more obligations now. I hope that this will not be a barrier for me to succeed in life”

—Eylin Ivetth Cerrato, 19, Honduras

“We young women are not prepared to become mothers. I would like to continue my studies, but since I have had my daughter my options have changed, because I have many more obligations now. I hope that this will not be a barrier for me to succeed in life”

—Eylin Ivetth Cerrato, 19, Honduras

“We young women are not prepared to become mothers. I would like to continue my studies, but since I have had my daughter my options have changed, because I have many more obligations now. I hope that this will not be a barrier for me to succeed in life”

—Eylin Ivetth Cerrato, 19, Honduras
on their own feet," which is seen as a very negative phenomenon. In Yemen the empowerment of young women is very closely linked to raising the parents’ awareness of their daughters’ needs in terms of education and health outcomes. The Yemeni girls consulted therefore suggest programming to focus on changing the parents’ minds, convincing them of the importance of delaying marriage and keeping their daughters in school.
While there are several different views on what citizenship actually means, most of the comments circle around youth participation. Young people assess the space for their participation and give policy recommendations on how youth could have a bigger stake in society.

Definitions of Citizenship

Some of the youth give what can be grouped as “formal” or legalistic definitions. Among these were that “a person born in a (certain) country,” “the rights and duties obtained when you come of age,” “suffrage and the right to be elected” or “military service and taxes.” In this spirit, formal citizenship for the Nepalese is something that is granted to a certain individual, which “does not mean that before getting the citizenship certificate, an individual should enjoy no rights or have no duty towards the society.”

Other definitions are “material’ in the sense that they associate certain political rights with the meaning of citizenship: Dominican youth state that citizenship means the “right to decide” or more precisely “when they take our views into account; when they listen to us.” “Being a full citizen means active participation possibilities, equality of opportunities,” say youth in Turkey.

In Bangladesh, however, citizenship is mostly defined by what one is able “give back to [one’s] community.” Becoming an accomplished professional through entrepreneurial activities would be a way to reach this goal: “being an active participant in the progress of the nation… involvement in nation-building.” Or in Papua New Guinea, asking yourself “what I should do for my country.”

Citizenship is also constructed through a feeling of pride in one’s country, which is most clearly expressed in China. When asked when they felt most aware they were citizens of China some of the youth answer that it was when they heard about Beijing’s successful bid for the 2008 Olympic games or “when the Chinese embassy in Yugoslavia was bombed.” But patriotism is also mentioned in other countries: Nepalese you responded that being a citizen creates a feeling of “identity, a nationalistic sentiment and sometimes a fundamentalist attitude.” “Loyalty to Yemen” is seen as an important element of citizenship by the youth of that country.

Interestingly enough, only the youth in the Dominican Republic use a concept of citizenship that includes access to basic services (electricity, water, sanitation) and the absence of repressive action from state organs (such as the police.)

“Being a citizen means being an active participant in the progress for your nation. Being a citizen you have certain rights and with these rights you have gained responsibilities”

—Martyn, 19, Papua New Guinea
Finally, in Vietnam, there is no discussion on participation or citizenship beyond individual values such as “studying hard and earning an income for the family” inferring an absence of the civil society concept in that country.

According to some, citizenship can also be global as “we can easily connect with people oceans apart and look for opportunities beyond the border.”

Youth Participation in “Civil Society”

Wherever asked, many of the youth indicate that they actively participate in activities outside their home, workplace, and school. For example, 30 percent of Bangladeshi youth surveyed are involved in some club or organization. Also, Chinese youth report participation in social and community activities. Argentinean youth differentiate between active and passive participation, underlining that the former is more desirable, as it is based on a conscious decision.

Rationales and avenues for youth participation. Youth explain their participation in organized activities and associations as a positive force in their lives, to either improve society—i.e.: “to help others in my community” or for their own benefit—i.e.: “to gain practical experience for my career.” Argentineans say that the main motivation for their involvement is the “contagion by peers,” their family, and educational background. Nepalese suggest that voluntary service “could be used as a qualification criterion for entering the bureaucracy. It could well replace the civil service exam.”

Examples of participation that are directed to achieving social change are given by young people saying that they participate or volunteer in community-based NGOs because they think that organized youth groups have more clout. In Thailand, you say that “lack of participation leads to alienation” and exclusion. In Honduras, this participation doesn’t have to take place in their own community. And in Argentina, middle and high-income youth report that they are active in an NGO to help more disadvantaged populations.

Examples of apolitical participation as stated by Dominicans are “participating in community activities keeps young people from engaging in risky behaviors” or in Argentina that it “is good for my career.”

In terms of venues, young people in Latin America are most active in churches, sports clubs, and cultural organizations.

Barriers to Participation

There are a great many comments on barriers to youth participation in society, some concern youth themselves: individualism, lack of compromises, and general apathy are seen as very strong in Argentina. Thai youth are seen to be lacking confidence and Turkish youth say they generally mistrust political and social life. Ignorance of “their own rights” is seen as a problem in Burkina Faso, Kenya, and Papua New Guinea, as is the lack of resources in Kenya. Also, some young people fail to see the benefit of becoming active in their communities without a direct financial return.

Cultural norms favoring seniority are also often seen as barriers to youth participation, particularly in Papua New Guinea and Thailand. In Kenya, youth feel that they are “dismissed by the old guard.” And in Honduras and Thailand, youth activism “is laughed at by adults; we’re not being taken seriously.” Youth in

---

1. The term refers to a concept that developed in the Western tradition and might not be fully applicable everywhere.
rural Papua New Guinea, however, report circumventing this barrier by running a radio station that eventually made community elders listen to them.

**Policy Demands on Participation**

Policy demands made can be roughly separated into calls for self-organization, unspecific demands to the government, suggestions concerning the reform of the education system to include “democracy education,” and finally, calls for institutionalized youth participation.

**Calls for self-organization** made in Latin American and Asian countries include: the view that “collective action will bring change” in Argentina and Brazil. The “need [for] more social organizations” in the Dominican Republic and more youth organizations in Bangladesh, so that youth can become active members of civil society. Also the need to strengthen youth organizations in Thailand.

**Unspecified demands** were also made. Young people in the Dominican Republic say that “the government should do something.” Youth feel that in Macedonia there “should be better cooperation between governments and civil society,” and that in Bangladesh more programs fostering youth participation and voluntary service are needed. In Thailand youth state that, “social responsibility activities should be encouraged,” and propose creating prizes and TV attention for civic engagement role models.

While many of the young people decry that they are never involved in decision making. In some countries such as Kenya, there is a call for specific institutions such as youth councils to represent them. Brazilians demand institutionalized participatory mechanisms for young people—like a youth council, information system, financial support to youth organizations. The Turks and Macedonians both say that there is “an urgent need for a youth council to be formed.” While the Nepalese demand a constitutional provision for the institutionalization of a youth commission.

In many places, the consulted youth feel that the education system must change. In Turkey, they call for classes in “democracy education” and in Mozambique for “university students [to] learn about community development.” Young people in Yemen say “Democracy should start at school where students should be able to vote for their class leaders.” And in Nepal, the inclusion of civic studies in the curriculum is seen as a positive factor to understand citizenship.

**Politics**

Politics and politicians are seen in a negative light everywhere. Argentineans are “deeply distrustful of the political system” due to a “lack of transparency and control.” In Burkina Faso, turnout in the elections is observed to be low.

In the Dominican Republic, youth commented that “politicians make decisions but do not care about young people.” In Bangladesh, the belief is that “they only want to enrich themselves.” Political leaders are perceived to be far removed from citizens, separated from them by a power gap. A young person from Papua New Guinea commented that, “every time we go to shake hands with them, we have to show our respect . . . an ideal situation will be when you [can talk to] your leaders just like “you and I.” Whereas, young Yemenis see no accountability mechanisms for politicians.

“Citizenship does not only regard the individual, by forming networks of young people we can have a bigger impact on our community”

—Thidarat Siriyontakan, female, 21, Thailand
Also, youth participation in political parties is often not seen as an option. It is either not mentioned or comments are along the lines of “political groups do not provide any opportunities” for youth in the Dominican Republic or as in Turkey that there is a “lack of effective political parties and their youth branches.”

**Military, Civil, and Voluntary Service**

Comments on military service were made only in a couple of countries: Chinese youths say that recruits “go to dangerous places and do good things,” and young Macedonians judge that it “could be a valuable experience.” Young Kenyans, however, have a different opinion: “military service is a bad experience, national youth service is fairly good.”
Violence and Conflict

Violence and conflict are discussed in depth in several consultations: Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Honduras, Thailand, and Nepal. Young people look at these issues from many different angles, mostly discussing the type of violence that is most prevalent in their respective societies. In this, they touch on a spectrum of issues ranging from domestic and school-level violence to gang violence, crime, the violations of rights by the state, civil unrest and terrorism. Both, young people’s role as both perpetrators and victims is discussed.

Manifestations of Violence

Domestic Violence (see also Family Formation)

Interestingly, many youth emphasize the link between micro- and macro-level violence: “Parents who don’t educate their children have the biggest responsibility for the level of insecurity.” In Thailand, youth comment that the level of domestic violence may lead to children becoming criminals. In Argentina, sexual violence is reported as widespread, as is an increase in the cases of abuse and violence against women the last few years.

Gang violence is a problem in Honduras. According to the youth consulted, only very few programs—mostly church organizations—address this problem. Tribal violence is another problem mentioned by Yemeni youth.

Institutional Violence. Several youth complain about police harassment. They report random evictions from slum dwellings in Bangladesh and harassment by police because of ethnicity. As one member of a poor community in Argentina says: “They arrested me at the corner of my house because I am black. When I asked them why they said “because of your face.” Thai youth denounce the mistreatment of young people in conflict with the law by the justice system.

In several consultations—in Argentina, Brazil, Bangladesh, and Nepal—young people said that their minority community was being discriminated against by society. Gay and lesbian youth in Brazil feel that the “state is more violent” in its treatment of them.

“A bad husband is someone who beats you in public, in front of everyone, a good husband is someone who beats you quietly, at home, so no one realizes”

—Kalyanpur basti girls, Bangladesh

“When parents don’t support their children—abandoning them—the kids turn to the streets and become criminals. I used to steal cellular phones, but that is dangerous, they can put you to prison and even kill you. I did that because I wanted money and under the influence of my gang. I quit that life and now I can walk the streets again without being afraid of someone robbing or killing me [for my gang involvement]”

—Freddy Andino, 16 Honduras
Argentines point out the violent undertones of current public discourse—led primarily by politicians but also by some civil society actors. Further, they affirm that “the absence of the state, or its inappropriate actions generate violence.” Faced with a violent and/or inactive state, young people often feel impotent. Therefore they say that strengthening self-confidence and a sense of belonging to the community are important strategies to de-escalate violence in society.

**Armed Conflict and Terrorism.** In Nepal, young people identify the lack of opportunities for many young Nepalese as a key reason for the current conflict in the country. They suggest the expansion of community level activities and programs to deter them from picking up arms. And in Bangladesh, young people report an increase in terrorist activities.

**Causes of Violence**

For the Argentineans the deteriorating economic situation and the rising inequality in their society is at the root of the manifestations of violence. As one young person puts it: “It seems to me that economic violence is the root cause for many other types of violence be it beating up your son or fighting the machine.” For them, the social injustice they observe is both the “structural cause” for and manifestation of violence in Argentina.
SOME OF THE CONSULTATIONS DISCUSSED THE TRANSVERSAL TOPIC OF GLOBALIZATION, NAMELY CHINA, HONDURAS, KENYA, MACEDONIA, AND NEPAL. OTHER CONSULTATIONS CONTAINED DISCUSSIONS ON THE TOPIC WITHOUT DEVOTING A SESSION TO IT. ON THE CONTRARY TO THE DISCUSSION ON CITIZENSHIP, GLOBALIZATION WAS NOT DEFINED ANYWHERE, WHICH SUGGESTS A CERTAIN COMMON UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT CONCERNS THE EFFECTS AND MANIFESTATIONS OF THE PHENOMENON.

**VIEWS ON GLOBALIZATION: MORE OPPORTUNITY THAN THREAT**

“GLOBALIZATION IS HERE TO STAY” ACCORDING TO MACEDONIAN AND NEPALESE YOUTH—but opinions differ on what that means for the future of the youth interviewed. WHILE A MAJORITY SEE OPPORTUNITIES PROVIDED BY MORE INFORMATION, PERMEABLE BORDERS, AND NEW SOCIAL PATTERNS; SOME PERCEIVE A CERTAIN DOWNSIDE, TOO.

BY SOME, GLOBALIZATION IS REGARDED AS UNJUST. IN BURKINA FASO, “GLOBALIZATION HAS BEEN INVENTED BY THE NORTH TO PUT MORE PRESSURE ON THE SOUTH,” TO THE ADVANTAGE OF INDUSTRIALIZED NATIONS, “[WHO CAN] IMPOSE THEIR PRICES ON AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS PRODUCED IN BURKINA FASO.” YOUNG PEOPLE ALSO FEAR THAT THEIR ECONOMY AND EDUCATION SYSTEM MIGHT NOT BE UP FOR THE CHALLENGES POSED. A YOUNG MACEDONIAN STATED THAT, “IMPORTS SHOULD BE MATCHED WITH EXPORT IN WHICH MY COUNTRY HAS A COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE.” KENYANS SAY, “DEVELOPMENT AID SHOULD NOT BE TIED TO CONDITIONALITIES FAVORING FOREIGNERS TO TAKE OUR LOCAL JOBS,” ADDING THAT THEIR “EDUCATION SYSTEM SHOULD MATCH GLOBAL NEEDS AND STANDARDS,” PROVIDING FOR A “GLOBAL CURRICULUM.”

BY OTHERS, GLOBALIZATION HARBORES A THREAT TO INDIGENOUS CULTURE AND IDENTITY. CHINESE YOUTH CALL ON THEIR GOVERNMENTS TO CREATE SAFEGUARDS FOR INDIGENOUS HERITAGE.

**MANIFESTATIONS OF GLOBALIZATION: MORE INTERACTIONS**

**INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION PATTERNS.** LIVING IN A GLOBALIZING WORLD MEANS AN INCREASED “AWARENESS OF COMMON GLOBAL PROBLEMS” AND THE GLOBAL CONSUMER SOCIETY, WHICH IS OFTEN EMBODIED BY “ADVERTISEMENTS OF FOREIGN BRANDS.” AS THE INTERNET IS GAINING GROUND VERY FAST, SOME YOUNG PEOPLE IN NEPAL THINK THAT IT LEADS TO A SHIFT OF COMMUNICATION “FROM THE HEART TO THE HEAD.” IN MANY CONSULTATIONS, YOUTH REPORT A WIDESPREAD USE OF CHAT ROOMS, MESSENGER SERVICES, AND E-MAIL TO CONNECT WITH PEERS. HONDURAN YOUTH ESPECIALLY APPRECIATED CHATS FOR THEIR LOW COST. HOWEVER, OTHERS IN MACEDONIA THINK THAT ACCESS TO INTERNET IS STILL TOO EXPENSIVE.

**FAMILY PATTERNS/VALUES.** SOME YOUNG PEOPLE OBSERVE THE IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION ON THEIR RELATIONSHIPS. A CHINESE YOUTH SAYS THAT HIS PARENTS DON’T APPROVE OF THE FOREIGN MOVIES HE LIKES TO WATCH. AND THE NEPALESE ATTRIBUTE THE PHENOMENON OF YOUTH MOVING OUT TO LIVE WITH BOY/GIRLFRIENDS AS CONCURRENT WITH “A RISE IN LIBERAL THINKING.”

“The digital divide must be defined as a wider concept than the access to the internet. Even if you have it, if you do not know how to navigate it you will find nothing in it.”

—ARGENTINA
Youth culture. During the Chinese consultations, overseas pop culture in the form of Korean soap operas and Japanese cartoons is discussed at length but mostly seen as enrichment to the young people's lives. Global TV channels have also become popular in Honduras. The only downside detected by the Chinese youth is very pragmatic: “time loss.”

Global goods. Youth observe a change in consumption patterns in China, Honduras, and Thailand. Having unprecedented choice confuses some, while those without the means to afford imported goods may feel frustrated, as foreign brands often enjoy higher prestige than domestic ones.

Migration: Mostly Short-Term

Young people are more mobile than adults. In consultations in China, Egypt, Macedonia, and Nepal, young people say that they would want to leave their country for a limited period of time but not for good. In China, the desire to migrate is mostly expressed by high school and university students from Beijing.

When asked for reasons to go abroad, most answer that they either want to study abroad, as “studying abroad gives more credibility,” with Nepalese students adding that they would also like look for jobs in another country. In Eastern Europe, youth from Georgia, Macedonia, and Turkey mention a lack of information about educational options and scholarships in the country and abroad and ask for a strategy to fill this gap.

In some countries such as China and Nepal, parents are perceived to be pushing their children to seek opportunities abroad. One Nepalese quotes his parents saying that “the son of the neighbor went abroad and brought back a lot of money . . . why are you still studying instead of working?” In China, however, some young people say that they feel the obligation of caring for their parents, illustrating a Chinese proverb: “As long as the parents are alive, children should not embark on a long journey.” Hondurans, on the other hand, point at an inevitable alienation between those who stay and those who leave. As one 18-year old young woman puts it: “Illegal immigrants can get injured or even die when trying to cross the American border. If they make it, they might improve their lot a bit, but over time and due to the little communication with them, they don’t feel close to their families anymore. I don’t know if that’s worth it in the end.”

Kenyans point out the negative image of youth migration in developed countries by saying that “immigration by youth should be viewed as resourceful and not as opportunistic.” Chinese students are also worried about the brain drain this poses on their country: “In particular, students of well-known universities aim at continuing their studies abroad. It means that the elite of young people is leaving China.” According to them, immigration should be counterbalanced with the provision of governmental incentive structures to retain these young people.”