Chapter 4

UNDERLYING RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS THAT AFFECT YOUNG KENYANS

Young people are heavily influenced either positively or negatively by their environment. At the beginning of this study, the study team developed a model of risk and protective factors with the assistance of key stakeholders in the youth development field (see Annex 1 and Chapter 2). In this chapter, we examine and discuss the underlying risk and protective factors that emerged from the quantitative data and from our discussions with Kenyan youths. The factors that most affect young people and result in either positive or negative outcomes or behavior are examined at six levels namely: the macro; community; school/work; family; peer; and individual levels.

Macro/Institutional Level

The macro-environment within which young people live plays a vital role in their lives and yet at the same time is one of the areas that is most beyond their control. Factors such as the economy, education and health institutions, and cultural norms fall within this category. The most important macro-level risk and protective factors for Kenyan youth are discussed below.

Economy: The poor state of the Kenyan economy is one source of risk for youth. Young people constitute the majority of new entrants into the labor market, with approximately 500,000 young people joining the labor force annually. However, poor economic growth has slowed demand for new labor, which has resulted in high youth unemployment rates. Many young people entering the labor market seek employment in the formal sector of the economy, but opportunities in this sector are limited. While some young people have chosen to go into business in the informal sector, many are limited by a lack of financing. Other young people have being driven to crime to support themselves, and the resulting increase in insecurity and violence has had an impact on all of society.

Poverty: Poor young people are at a disadvantage compared with their peers. They are less likely to receive education beyond the primary school level due to the high costs of education at the secondary school level and beyond. They are also more likely to have to work for pay from a young age to augment their family’s income (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2003c). Young girls from poor households are more likely to be teenage mothers (Central Bureau of Statistics et al, 2004). Poverty also adversely affects the mental and emotional state of young people, with poor young people reporting higher levels of depression than their peers (Centre for the Study of Adolescence, 2003).

Uneven Resource Access: Resources are unevenly distributed in Kenya with some areas getting little support for development. This means that young people from these
underdeveloped regions face more risk than others in more favored regions. For example, young people from underdeveloped regions have limited access to education resulting in poor performance on national exams and lower education enrollment rates. In addition, differences between rural and urban wages and development have led to mass rural-to-urban migration, which has created a large labor force in urban areas that cannot be readily absorbed into the labor market (Ministry of Labor and Human Resource Development and UNDP, 2004).

Corruption: Kenya loses massive amounts of its resources to corruption. At the macro level, corruption impedes development and economic growth, which has a resulting negative impact on youth. When service provision is dependent on corruption, young people who cannot afford or are unwilling to pay the necessary bribes are deprived of the services in question. In some cases, employment and education opportunities are dependent on bribes and a patronage system, which excludes many deserving young people. Corruption within the police force leads to the harassment of innocent young people as revealed in our focus group discussions with young people from slum areas who are frequently the victims of police harassment. Corruption also causes young people to become distrustful of their leaders, the government, and the judicial system and fosters feelings of hopelessness and rage.

Policy Implementation and Public Institutions: While the Kenyan government has adopted a number of policies that have the potential to improve the situation faced by young people, including the Kenya National Youth Policy, these have yet to be implemented. Therefore, one of the actions that the government should undertake to advance a pro-youth agenda is to put these policies into practice. The policies when implemented can serve as a protective measure for young people.

A well-developed education system can be a protective factor in young people’s lives. However, in Kenya the education system has failed young people in a number of ways. Access to post-primary education is very limited both because of high costs and of limited space in secondary schools. As a result, fewer than 25 percent of eligible young people make it to this level of education. There is also a mismatch between what is taught in the education system and the skills needed in the existing labor market. As stated in the National Youth Employment Workshop Report prepared by the Ministry of Labor and Human Resource Development and UNDP (2004), “The educational system has not been effective in equipping students with the practical skills required by industries or for self-employment.” During our focus group discussions, some participants stated that what they were taught in school often was not sufficiently practical or relevant to the skills that they would need for employment. They also said that there is a need for a wider range of course options and more vocational training. Within the Kenyan context schools can also be a source of risk for young people given that teachers are among the main perpetrators of the sexual and physical abuse of young people. While the government should be lauded for the recent introduction of free primary education, there is still a lot of work to be done within this sector before it meets the needs of Kenyan youth.
The health care sector can also be a source of protection for young people. Health care providers who are sensitized to young people’s needs could do an enormous amount to educate and protect young people from health risks such as early sexual activity and teenage pregnancy. Given the high rates of HIV/AIDS and low levels of contraceptive use among sexually active youth, the government should make a special effort to develop a pool of skilled health care providers to work with young people. It should also widen access to health care services in underserved regions of the country and increase budgetary support for neglected issues such as mental health care.

**Youth Exclusion and Cultural Norms:** A culture that views young people as irresponsible and immature is a risk factor because it excludes young people from leadership positions in society and prevents them from participating fully in national, community and family affairs. In Kenya, there are very few young members of parliament, and even they rarely serve as advocates for their peers. So far, there has been no policy action or initiative to foster the participation of young people in political process. Unlike the early years of Kenya’s independence when young politicians played a leading role, today Kenyan youth are relegated to the back seat.

“The youth in Kenya have been relegated to the back seat in crucial policy formulation and decision-making processes in matters that directly affect them such as; the constitutional review process, education system, leadership, employment and economic empowerment among others.” (Ministry of Finance and Planning/KVDA, 2001).

In addition, there are very few established youth groups, organizations, or NGOs that are addressing the issue of youth inclusion. Young people are not only effectively excluded from participating in the public sphere; they also face similar limitations in their own homes. Young people complain that their parents do not let them make key decisions even on matters that directly affect them such as career and educational choices. Young people are regarded as adults only after they marry or when they are able to sustain themselves economically. Because they receive no respect from their communities and society at large, young people feel marginalized. Sadly, many then act out the negative expectations that have been projected onto them.

**Gender:** Gender can be either a risk or a protective factor. For young women, it is mainly a source of risk, except in the case of violent behavior, depression, substance abuse, and early sexual initiation, which afflict more young Kenyan men than women. Young women on the other hand are more likely to be victims of violence and sexual abuse, gender discrimination in education and employment, lower expectations in school and at home, early marriage, and harmful practices such as female genital mutilation.

Some communities (for example, pastoralist groups) have little interest in educating girls, because they are opposed to what they see as the resulting negative outcomes. According to a focus group participant in Isiolo, “Many families think it is a shame for a girl to be in
school as it is believed it could lead to an adulterous life.” The lower status of women in society and the pressure put on them to marry young sometimes leads girls to underperform in school. A focus group participant in Kisumu characterized some girls as saying to themselves, “Why should I stress myself chopping [i.e. studying], when there is someone already chopping for me?” Some girls take a similarly lackadaisical attitude towards their initiatives in business. A number of young girls also leave school when they marry young. In general, women get married at a much earlier age than men. The KDHS (2003) found that more than half of all women get married before their 20th birthday while only 11 percent of men get married by that age.

Although young women tend to begin having sexual intercourse later than their male peers, they bear the brunt of risky sexual behavior including teenage pregnancy (which is one of the main causes of girls dropping out of school); unsafe abortions and associated risks; and higher HIV/AIDS infection rates than for males in the same age groups. Domestic violence puts young women at a further disadvantage, especially in communities where wife-beating is regarded as socially acceptable. As we have seen, data from the KDHS (2003) showed that over 60 percent of young men and women felt a husband is justified in hitting his wife for specific reasons.

Given the significant impact of gender as a risk factor, it is vital that the government should take gender into account in all of its policymaking on issues that affect young people.

Community

The communities within which young people live and grow up can be a source of both risk and protective factors. The risk factors include negative attitudes toward youth, sexual abuse, harmful rites of passage, and slums, while the protective factors include supportive adults, a positive communal philosophy, and communal recreational spaces.

Negative Attitudes toward Youth: In some communities, young people are perceived as troublemakers, irresponsible, and immature, and this contributes to youth exclusion. Our focus group discussions revealed that youths feel that they are not respected by society and that they lack a forum to give them a voice in community affairs. They feel that they are not taken seriously and are looked upon as irresponsible and unproductive. Youth are not called upon to make contributions in public, and if they do assert themselves or express their opinion, they are regarded as disrespectful. As a consequence, many young people have lost interest in community forums (barazas) and do not attend them. As one focus group participant said, “If they are going to ignore us all the time, why bother?” Staying away, however, as some participants observed, only reinforces the perception of their elders that young people are apathetic. Where structures exist to include young people (such as church youth groups and traditional age group systems), their remit tends to be restricted to youth affairs. In Maasai society, each age-set is expected to consult with their elders and communicate their decisions to them. Sometimes those who ostensibly represent young people in the community are by no means young themselves.
Overall, these negative attitudes towards young people limit their participation and rob them of the opportunity to contribute to their communities.

Sexual Abuse: Although young people’s homes and communities should be sources of protection for them, sadly the community is frequently a source of the sexual abuse of youth. Media reports document incidents in which young girls and women have been raped by members of their immediate community including church ministers, family friends, and relatives. Young people who are sexually abused are more likely to be depressed and have higher rates of alcohol and drug use than their peers (Centre for the Study of Adolescence, 2003). Sexual abuse also places young people at risk for sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS.

Rites of Passage and Traditions: Rites of passage can be either a source of risk or protection for young people. Some communities have harmful rites of passage such as female genital mutilation that adversely affect the health and well being of women. Other harmful practices include the marriage of girls as young as 11, which interrupts girls’ schooling and development. In some cases, traditional practices clash with modern education; for example, the practice of moranism (training to become a warrior) for Maasai boys takes seven years to complete and interferes with their schooling. During our focus group discussions, young people from pastoral societies expressed their concern that the fixed geographical location of schools made it difficult for them to attend school and said that both education and culture would be better served if schools could be equally mobile. On the other hand, some rites of passage can serve as protective factors, especially when they mark a young person’s passage into adulthood and responsibility. Once young people have undergone these rites of passage, they are considered adults and receive the benefits and respect that go along with their new status. However, this is clearly a disadvantage in the case of female genital mutilation as the girl is considered ready for marriage once she has undergone circumcision.

Slums: Youth who live in slums face particular challenges. They are more likely to start having sex early, to abuse alcohol and drugs and to start doing so at an earlier age, to be victims of violence, and to drop out of school. The Nairobi Cross Sectional Slums Survey (APHRC, 2002) revealed that slum residents lack secure and healthy shelter with basic infrastructure such as clean piped water and adequate sanitation. They have lower school enrollment rates than their peers for both males and females and worse health and reproductive health outcomes.

In our focus groups, young people spoke about the stigma that they experience living in slums. The outside world often views them as common criminals, and they are often subject to police harassment, shakedowns, and arrest. Once arrested, it takes a significant sum of money from their family’s limited finances to get them released. The harshness of life in the slums is reflected in the music of the young people who grew up there. Kalamashaka is a successful group of young musicians from the Nairobi slums and presented below are the lyrics from their song, "Tafsiri Hii," (“Translate This”):
Despite the difficulties that they present, the slums can also be a source of protection for youths. Young people who live in slum areas report feeling part of a community and a sense of connectedness and belonging that does not exist in more affluent areas of the city. The slums are also culturally dynamic, and much of the popular music that Kenyan youth listen to today comes from there. A study conducted by the APHRC also found that young people living in slums are more likely than their peers to use contraceptives (APHRC, 2002).

**Supportive Adults:** When there are supportive adults within the community, young people are more likely to succeed, even when faced with adverse conditions such as poverty. Supportive adults encourage young people and usually have high expectations of them, which enhances their self-esteem and gives them a desire to succeed.

**Communal Philosophy:** Young people are more likely to succeed in a setting where the community feels that the success and upbringing of the children is the responsibility of the entire community. This is embodied in the saying “It takes a village to raise a child.” In these communities, there are many responsible, supportive adults who are concerned with the welfare and success of young people.

**Recreational Spaces:** Recreation serves as a protective factor for young people because it keeps them from being idle and having unstructured time during which they may engage in risky behavior. Therefore, it is vital for communities to have recreational spaces for young people to use. The benefit of recreation has been demonstrated by the Mathare Youth Sports Association, which has successfully used football as an intervention for at-risk-youth in Mathare, one of Kenya’s largest slums.

**Young People’s Participation in the Community:** When young people are involved and participate in community activities, this serves as a protective factor. Young people are able to put their vast energy and talents into improving their communities, which boosts their self-esteem. The community also benefits from their involvement, for example, when youths in a slum area participate in environmental clean-up activities.

**School/Work**

Outside of their homes, young people are affected either negatively or positively by their schools and workplaces. Risk factors associated with the school environment include physical/sexual abuse, sexual experimentation, low expectations, and the lack of education alternatives. Being unemployed and/or out-of-school are also risk factors for young people. Protective factors include supportive teacher(s) and feeling connected to a school community. High expectations, positive parent skills, and family social capital
(when the family is part of a broad circle of friends, relatives, and a social network) are protective factors for young people both within the school/work environment and the family environment; therefore, these factors are discussed in the family section.

**Unemployment:** Unemployment is a risk factor for youth. As in most countries, unemployment rates in Kenya are highest among young people. Not only does this mean that they are economically unable to fend for themselves, it also leads to other risk factors such as depression, hopelessness, and low self-esteem. Unemployed youths are idle and may turn to risky behavior such as substance abuse. Also when they see that there are few opportunities available to them to make an income, some youths resort to a life of crime and violence. In Kenya, as in most other African countries, youth crime is financially motivated (United Nations, 2004).

**Out-of-School Youth:** A survey on substance abuse revealed that out-of-school youth have the highest rates of substance abuse in their age group (NACADA). Out-of-school youth are also marginalized and hard-to-reach and consequently are excluded from youth development programs (especially those that are school-based) and from youth organizations.

**Physical/Sexual Abuse and Sexual Experimentation:** Schools can be both a risk and a protective factor for youth. Schools where physical and sexual abuse are common are a hostile environment for young people. Several sources of data indicate that teachers are among the main perpetrators of physical and sexual abuse (Centre for the Study of Adolescence, 2003 and Central Bureau of Statistics et al, 2004). Students are often the victims of physical abuse within the school environment when teachers resort to corporal punishment as a form of discipline. Physical/sexual abuse in the school environment often causes students to perform poorly and to drop out of school. Discussions with youth development workers also indicated that schools can be an environment for sexual experimentation and for youth to learn about their sexuality (some accounts revealed incidents of homosexuality in boarding schools). A study by Kiragu and Zabin (1993) found that boarding schools are a risk factor for early sexual initiation for boys, while rural schools were a risk factor for early sexual initiation for both boys and girls. On the other hand, education protects against early childbearing and teenage pregnancy (Muganda-Onyando et al, 2003 and Central Bureau of Statistics et al, 2004).

**Low Expectations:** When teachers and parents have low expectations of students, this often leads them to perform poorly in school and in some cases may even result in them dropping out of school. Girls in particular are affected by low teacher expectations especially when it comes to subjects such as science and mathematics, which are considered to be the domain of boys.

**Lack of Educational Alternatives:** During the focus group discussions, the participants felt that the education system did not cater for varying student interests and there was no room for students who were not academically gifted. As one focus group participant in Nakuru phrased it, “Not all of us are good at this book stuff.” They felt that education
should focus on the different needs and talents of students. Since there is a lot of evidence that lack of interest is one of the main reasons why young people leave school, it is vital for the educational system to become diverse enough to cater for the different needs, interests, and abilities of students (Ministry of Finance and Planning, 2000).

**Supportive Teachers and Connectedness:** Just as supportive adults are a protective factor in the community, so too are supportive teachers a protective factor within the school environment. These teachers encourage their students to succeed and are concerned with their well-being and welfare. Many young people who have succeeded in spite of their disadvantaged background cite the influence of a supportive teacher as being a key to their success. Supportive teachers also foster a feeling in students of being connected to the school, which is a protective factor for young people enrolled in school. Studies indicate that young people who feel connected to their schools are less likely to engage in risky behavior such as substance use, violence and sexual activity (World Bank, 2003c).

**Family**

The family plays a vital role in a young person’s development. Families are a source of risk where there is abuse and violence in the home, no family planning, or only one or no parents. They are a source of protection for young people when parents have positive parenting skills and high expectations of their children and where the child feels connected to the family. Family social capital is also a source of protection for young people.

**Physical/Sexual Abuse and Domestic Violence:** The family and the home are sources of risk when violence and sexual abuse is prevalent. Young people who grow up in homes where there is domestic violence are more likely to be violent themselves. They also may suffer from depression, feelings of hopelessness, and, in extreme cases, may commit suicide. In Kenya, 50 percent of women report having experienced physical or sexual violence since the age of 15. Since the main perpetrators of violence are husbands (57.8 percent), teachers (25.8 percent), mothers (23.8 percent), fathers (14.5 percent), and brothers (8.2 percent), this indicates that majority of violence inflicted against women occurs in the home (Central Bureau of Statistics et al., 2004). The impact of physical and sexual abuse on young people is extremely negative. Abused youths have higher rates of depression than their peers and are more likely to use alcohol and drugs (Centre for the Study of Adolescence, 2003). Sexual abuse also puts young people at risk for sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS.

**Lack of Family Planning:** When parents do not plan their families, they often have large families with the children born very close together. This can put a considerable strain on a family’s limited financial resources and thus it is not uncommon to hear of cases where parents are unable to afford to educate all of their children. This means that parents may be forced to choose which of their children can attend school, which, in many cases, means that they choose to send their sons to school rather than their daughters.
Therefore, it is desirable that parents be encouraged to plan their families so they can provide adequately for the children that they bear.

**Single-parent Homes:** Growing up in a single-parent home may be a source of risk for youth. Data indicates that households headed by a single female are more likely than others to have an income at or below the poverty level. As we have seen earlier, poverty is a major source of risk for young people. In addition, the absence of a positive male or female parental role model can be a risk factor for young people.

**Orphans:** The epidemic of HIV/AIDS has increased the number of orphans in Kenya. Young orphans frequently end up in situations of extreme poverty. It is not unusual for them to drop out of school because they cannot afford the fees. In some cases, older children in an orphaned family (usually adolescents and youths) are forced to care and provide for their siblings. This puts a heavy burden on them and forces them into roles for which they are not prepared. Young orphans are sometimes exploited and abused by the relatives who are left to care for them.

**Positive Parenting Skills and High Expectations:** Young people are more likely to succeed in school and in life when they have caring parents who exert appropriate discipline and have high expectations for them. Studies have shown that young people who know that their parents expect them to complete school do better in school and are less likely to engage in risky behavior (Resnick et al, 1997 and Luther et al, 2002). Good parents also foster self-esteem in their children, which is a key ingredient for success in both the school and work environment.

**Connectedness:** When young people have a sense of belonging to a family and are connected to their parents, they are more likely to succeed. Studies have shown family connectedness is a protective factor for young people. Youths who feel connected to their parents are less likely to engage in risky behavior such as substance use, violence, and sexual activity (Blum, 2002). Conversely, Kiragu and Zabin (1993) found that having unstable family relationships increases the likelihood that girls will begin having sex early in life.

**Family Social Capital:** Young people have better chances of success in life when their parents and family are connected to the community (in other words, have a broad circle of friends, relatives, and a social network). This is what is referred to as family social capital, and it can benefit young people in many ways, particularly when the family’s network makes it easier for young people to get access to services, information, and employment/educational opportunities. On the other hand, family social capital can be a source of risk and exclusion as it can encourage nepotism.

**Peers**

The behavior of their peers has a significant impact on young people. Most youths tend to confide in their peers and turn to them for advice when faced with a crisis. Peers,
therefore, play a vital role in the lives of young people. Risk factors at the peer level include negative peer culture and deviant friends, while protective factors include youth participation, peer education, and youth organizations.

**Negative Peer Culture:** Peer culture exerts a negative influence when prevailing beliefs among a peer group advocate risky behavior, for example, when they promote substance use, violence, or unprotected sex.

**Deviant Friends:** Studies have shown that young people are more likely to engage in risky behavior such as substance abuse when their friends do so. In the CSA youth survey, one of the major reasons cited by young people for their involvement in commercial sex work was “to hang out with friends” (Centre for the Study of Adolescence, 2003). Therefore, having the wrong group of friends can have a detrimental effect on a young person.

**Young People’s Participation in the Community:** When young people are involved and participate in community development, it increases their sense of agency (the feeling that they matter and can have an impact on the world around them) and self-esteem. This participation also gives young people an opportunity to contribute positively to their communities and helps to change their negative image in the minds of older people.

**Peer Education:** Due to the significant influence that peers exert on young people, peer education has been used as a strategy in HIV/AIDS prevention, and sexual and reproductive health programs in Kenya. Peer education not only benefits the beneficiaries of the programs but also has a positive effect on the peer educators themselves.

**Youth Organizations:** When young people organize themselves into groups to conduct various activities (such as recreational and cultural activities; income generation; peer education, advocacy, and awareness programs; environmental conservation, and HIV/AIDS prevention), this gives them a forum in which they can take on positive social roles and which does not tempt them to engage in risky behavior. The organizations also give young people a sense of belonging and are a source of positive interaction among them. Although some youth organizations are exclusive (for example, if they are faith-based or school-based), on the whole youth organizations are a protective factor in the lives of young people.

**Individual**

Individuals have certain factors that may predispose them to or protect them from risk. These factors may be biological or environmental. These can include disability, substance abuse, hopelessness, depression and thoughts of suicide. Protective factors include self-esteem and spirituality/religiosity.
Substance Abuse: The National Agency for the Campaign against Drug Abuse (NACADA) reports that substance abuse among young people in Kenya is on the rise. Studies have shown substance abuse to be causally related to unintended injury, suicide, violence, and unplanned sexual intercourse (which increases the risk of pregnancy, STIs, and HIV/AIDS). Substance abuse can also lead young people to drive while intoxicated, which increases the risk of accidents, injuries, and fatalities. Data indicate a strong association between drug use, alcohol use, and sexual activity. Boys who report having had sexual intercourse are more than twice as likely to report having drunk alcohol and used drugs (APHRC, 2002).

Substance use is much higher among out-of-school youths than among students. In-school youths who use drugs tend to be in secondary schools and universities and come mainly from rich or middle-class families (NACADA, 2004). Young men are more likely to engage in drug use than females (APHRC, 2002 and NACADA, 2004). Young people who come from families with a history of substance abuse may be more likely to use drugs and to start using them at an earlier age than their peers (Blum, 2002). As has been seen elsewhere around the world (Resnick et al, 1997), data from the CSA youth survey and NACADA indicate young people in Kenya are more likely to abuse substances if their friends are also drug users.

Hopelessness, Depression, and Suicide: Kenyan youths report higher levels of depression than their peers in other countries. Depression has been associated with high levels of substance abuse and with suicide and suicide attempts. Data from the CSA youth survey indicate that poor young people, those who are abused, and those who report being in poor health are more likely to report being depressed (Centre for the Study of Adolescence, 2003). Our focus group discussions revealed feelings of hopelessness among young Kenyans. They feel let down by the government and are discouraged by the limited education and job opportunities that are available to them.

Mental/Physical Disability: Because there is a scarcity of mental health services in Kenya (World Health Organization, 2001), young people suffering from clinical depression or other mental illnesses are unable to get proper health care. Kenya does not have enough support networks catering for either the physically or the mentally disabled. Students who are mentally ill are likely to perform poorly in school and to be prone to substance abuse (as a way for them to self-medicate). Also, if left undiagnosed and untreated, mental illness may result in suicide.

Self-esteem: Young people who have a positive self-image are less likely to engage in self-destructive risky behavior such as substance abuse and risky sexual practices. While no data exists for Kenya, studies from other regions indicate that low self-esteem can be caused by an absence of parental nurturing/connectedness, by a lack of parenting skills, and by sexual abuse (World Bank, 2003c).

Spirituality/Religiosity: Religiosity can be defined as the state of feeling connected to a particular religion. Religion and belief in a higher power can be an important protective
factor for young people. Religious youths are more likely to believe that they can overcome obstacles and are therefore less prone to feelings of hopelessness. Also religious youths are more likely to avoid risky behavior because their beliefs forbid them to indulge in certain practices such as drinking alcohol or having sex before marriage. Kiragu and Zabin (1993) found that religiosity was the only protective factor against early sexual activity among school-going youth. Many youth programs, recreational activities, and organizations are faith-based. Therefore, the religious community in general may also be a source of protection and positive peer interaction for young people.

**Risk and Protective Factors as Intervention Points**

The risk and protective factors that we have identified in this study interact to produce a range of different outcomes for young people. Often, one factor can be the source of a variety of positive or negative outcomes. For example, feeling connected to their parents protects young people against substance abuse, violence, and risky sexual behavior, while sexual abuse results in depression, substance abuse, and low self-esteem. Therefore, it may be a good idea to focus either on reducing a single risk factor or on magnifying a protective factor as one way of targeting several risky behaviors and outcomes simultaneously. Alternatively, the interconnectedness of the different risk and protective factors suggests that a more holistic approach to youth development may be more appropriate.

In the following chapter, we will examine existing youth programs and policies in Kenya to find out how they address the factors that we have identified in this chapter.