

Investing in Youth Empowerment and
Inclusion: A Social Development Approach
Insights from the ECA and LAC regions

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This publication was developed and produced by the Social Development Family of the World Bank as a background paper for the Social Development Strategy. The Environment, the Social Development, and the Agriculture and Rural Development Families are part of the Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development (ESSD) Network. The Social Development Family is made up of World Bank staff working on social issues.

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Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank the following colleagues for their invaluable contribution: Steen Jorgensen, Shelton Davis, Alexandre Marc and Sue Matzen for strategic support; Estanislao Gacitua Mario, Maria Donoso Clark, Maria Valeria Pena, Maria Elizabeth Dasso and Yolanda Avila (LCSEO) for sharing their work on youth in Paraguay, Argentina, Honduras, Trinidad & Tobago, Peru, Brazil and Guatemala. Research assistance of Carla Avellan and Mertixell Martinez is gratefully acknowledged.

INVESTING IN YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AND INCLUSION: A SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

I. Background

This paper mainly focuses on the ECA and LAC experiences, yet globalization and relatively greater access to information have made youth everywhere more aware of the opportunities they lack, not just in terms of unemployment¹. For example, much as in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 51 percent of older youth in Arab countries express a desire to emigrate to other countries, usually in the West, due to their dissatisfaction and lack of opportunities.² Everywhere, from Kabul to Nairobi to Tirana young people desire more access not just to job opportunities, but to a better quality of life, including leisure, information and entertainment. Everywhere they resent being marginalized in decision-making processes and are eager to have greater control over their lives. Unless these gaps are addressed, conflict, violence and a missed generation for global development will be the costs of neglect that more developed societies will also pay one way or another. These circumstances have policy implications for all World Bank regions, and in particular for the achievement of the overall mission of Social Development as “societal change which leads to equity, social justice and inclusion”³.

II. Objectives

This paper is an input to the Bank-wide Social Development Strategy currently under preparation, and draws from the global youth strategy paper, also prepared by Social Development as a contribution towards the Children and Youth Strategy⁴. The SD anchor requested the SD teams who have been active in the relatively new domain of youth development, namely the ECA and LAC teams, to share key lessons from their analytical and operational experiences. These lessons yield interesting insights into the rationale, the value-added and the scope for the contribution of social development to inclusive youth development. This paper does not aim to provide a comprehensive review of processes and practices of exclusion affecting youth in ECA and LAC, nor of existing responses. However, key issues and relevant examples will be provided.

The paper argues that putting the empowerment and inclusion of young people on the “radar screen” of the research and operational agenda of the SD family will be extremely valuable for effective preventive strategies to encourage a more equitable, sustainable and secure future in our client countries.

III. Why Youth Inclusion Efforts Should Matter

¹ Generally speaking, the definition of youth utilized in this paper relates to the four MDGs, covering youth from 15 to 24 years. The authors also acknowledge that childhood and adulthood are defined within different cultural contexts in which the age range for youth may vary.

² United Nations Development Program, *Arab Human Development Report 2002*, p. 30

³ *World Bank Strategy for Social Development: from Commitment to Results*, Draft August 2003.

⁴ La Cava and Lytle, *Youth: Strategic Directions for the World Bank (2003)*,
www.worldbank.org/childrenandyouth2003

1. From a demographic standpoint, youth represent a large proportion of the human capital of developing and transition countries.

In 27 countries of *Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia*, youth, defined as those young people between the ages of 14 and 25 years old, constitute 16 percent of the population (65 million). The proportion of youth is lowest in the Baltics (1 in 7 persons) and highest in Central Asian states (1 in 6). Taken together with the age groups 0-14, young people make up 38 percent of the region's population, ranging from 55 percent in Central Asia to 33 percent in the Baltics. (See Appendix 1). In *Latin America and the Caribbean*, youth stand for 19.5% of the regional population, that is 10% of the global youth population. The forecast for 2010 is that youth will count for 18% of the regional population (Quintana, 2002:6)). The proportion of youth is very high in certain LAC countries, such as Paraguay, with 59 % of the population under 24 years old.⁵

2. Youth can be potential agents of positive economic and social change.

In post-conflict countries, youth, in some cases, have been agents of social change. One of the most visible examples in *ECA* is the grassroots mobilization of resistance to the Milošević regime by the student movement Otpor. In certain areas, the movement linked its political opposition with a focus on poverty in Serbia. In Kragujevac, local Otpor activists distributed bread to pensioners as a means of illustrating the dire economic situation in the region, and some continue to focus activism on improving the economy, even after the political change. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, certain youth groups have worked slowly and gradually towards ethnic reconciliation. In Mostar, youth arts programs and a youth-run radio program have brought together Bosniacs and Croats in the divided city. Elsewhere in the country a few dormant youth organizations have been revitalized, either with the support of international organizations or via local initiatives (see box). More recently, following the Rome conference, Bosnian youth activists organized a Youth Parliament, a venue in which the various youth organizations met to discuss strategy, and initiate a lobbying effort directed towards the development of a youth policy. These examples indicate possible avenues for future activities.

Box 1: Youth and Social Cohesion

In Gornji Vakuf / Uskoplje, the Youth Center (*Omladinski Centar*) created in 1996 by international NGOs has played an important role in reestablishing contacts between the Bosniac and Croat communities, and bringing closer divided leisure associations. Two ethnic mountaineering clubs have organized their first common excursions in the year 2000 has had positive consequences even for the activities of the Youth Center, as a representative of the Youth Center describes.

Source: Bosnia Local Level Institutions and Social Capital Study, World Bank 2002.

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, certain youth groups have worked slowly and gradually towards ethnic reconciliation. In Mostar, youth arts programs and a youth-run radio program have brought together Bosniacs and Croats in the divided city. Elsewhere in the country a few dormant youth organizations have been revitalized, either with the support of international organizations or via local initiatives (see box). More recently, following the Rome conference, Bosnian youth activists organized a Youth Parliament, a venue in which the various youth organizations met to discuss strategy, and initiate a lobbying effort directed towards the development of a youth policy. These examples indicate possible avenues for future activities.

Traditionally, *LAC* countries saw youth as mere beneficiaries of public policies and as part of development problems. Rodriguez (2002:220), one of the major Latin American experts on youth development recently argued that youth should now be seen as “part of the solution to development challenges”. Decision-makers should recognize youth as “strategic agents of development” in view of at least two main factors, the demographic transition and the emerging knowledge economy. The current youth cohort is the biggest ever in *LAC* history. Young people tend to be more equipped than adults to take leadership on new Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). Rather than stigmatizing youth, public policies should empower them by opening spaces for their creativity and their generous contribution to development (ibid).

3. However, few of these youth have access to secure economic, social and political opportunities and assets, which could help them to fulfill their potential.

⁵ Against 45% in Argentina and Chile (BASE,2002).

- **The proportion of youth who are neither employed nor in education is high.** Out of the entire juvenile population (age 14-25) of the ECA region (some 65 million people in all transition countries), 27 % (18 million) are neither in education nor employed.⁶
- **Youth employment** is characterized by higher levels of exclusion than the general population. In ECA, figures from 1998 show widespread unemployment, with an estimated 8 million (out of 65 million) youth looking for work, but unable to find it. Youth unemployment rate for 18 of the 27 transition countries stood at 30 percent, 15 percentage points higher than the overall unemployment rate. In LAC, youths are extensively affected by unemployment, accounting for half of the total unemployed population (Quintana,2002:7). Moreover, this trend of unemployment among the young is increasingly rising. Most Latin American youths either do not have enough “educational capital” to have access to comfortable job positions nor the necessary “social capital” especially important for the first-time job searchers.
- **Education cannot act as factor of ascending social mobility.** In transition countries, 9 million youth or a third of the population aged 15-18 years old is out of school. Most countries allow students to leave school as early as 15 years old with the completion of basic education, and some in Southeastern Europe require an additional year of education.⁷ In Central Asia, evidence suggests there is a increasing number of children who do not even complete primary education. Research in the West has found strong correlations between leaving school at an early age and unhealthy behaviors, and there is also a risk of long-term social exclusion of these youth. In the LAC region, a significant proportion of youths abandon school before reaching secondary education. In 2000, **almost half** of 20 year-old LAC youth had not completed **secondary school**, and the proportion rises to 3 out of 4 in rural areas (Quintana, 2002:7).
- **Youth disadvantage also includes other dimensions, which are harder to quantify.** Youth have psycho-social needs related to care, support, and guidance which are particularly relevant as they move from childhood to adulthood. These needs which can be difficult to meet in times of economic crisis and family breakdown. On an individual level, youth often lack positive role models, especially young men in conflict-affected countries. On a community level, the lack of structured opportunities is a dominant theme. Consultations with disadvantaged youth in both LAC and ECA underline their exclusion from cultural and entertainment opportunities and their feeling that poverty is boredom and idleness. This multidimensional nature of youth disadvantage is described in more detailed in analytical section IV below.
- **Finally, across regions, youth feel that their voices are not sufficiently heard** in the decision-making processes affecting their lives, ranging from family, community or national levels. At a Guatemala workshop organized by the WB, a young indigenous man argued: “ *Our contribution was made invisible and this is why our self-esteem is so low.*” Consultations with both Moldovan and Guatemalan youth also illustrate that access to information also emerges as a priority to them, especially for the poorest and most isolated youth. In Moldova, advanced factors for poor information included lack of published youth newspapers, prohibitive costs and power outages limit radio and TV viewing (Gomart, 2002).

⁶ UNICEF- 2000- , p. 4, p.64

⁷ UNICEF, 2000, 3, 53-55

4. The first consequence of youth marginalization is increased vulnerability. Young people who are subject to poverty, unemployment, lack of access to social opportunities, and lack of support are at high risk to both themselves and society as a whole, as detailed in section 5 below. The combination of lack of opportunities and poor access to information create high risks for youth themselves, as their coping strategies often are associated with risky behaviors, as illustrated below.

- Across regions, internal and external migration is a major coping mechanism for young people. In the ECA region however, migration can take dangerous forms, as young women are particularly vulnerable to **human trafficking**.⁸ An estimated 175,000 persons are trafficked from Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS annually -- that is, up to 25 percent of the 700,000 to 2 million people trafficked around the world annually.⁹
- Feelings of marginalization can also lead to extreme negative outcomes and despair, as reflected in the increase in the number of **suicides** in some countries, **particularly among young males**. Among 24 transition countries, suicide rates were higher in 1998 compared to 1989 in 16 countries. Rates more than doubled in Belarus and Turkmenistan where incidence was still low.¹⁰ In Central Asia, suicide has become the third most common cause of death after heart disease and respiratory illness. According to Djurat Umargaliev, Director of Psychiatry at the Uzbek Ministry of Health, the young are particularly vulnerable to suicide as their inexperience makes them ill-equipped to deal with the current economic and social difficulties. In the year 2000 for instance, Djizak (pop. 1 mil.) registered 40 suicides; 70 percent were male (Kuehnast,2002).
- As described above, youth complain of “idleness” and lack of attractive and safe entertainment activities. It is in this context that alcoholism or substance abuse have emerged as a coping strategy for many, as clearly illustrated in the case of rural Paraguay.
- Reliable data is still lacking in many countries on the exact dimensions of the HIV/AIDS crisis and other Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), but available evidence suggests high vulnerability of young people. In Moldova, HIV infection is spreading quickest through

Box 2. Explaining substance abuse: Voices from rural youth in Paraguay

Focus groups with youth from rural settlements (*asentamientos campesinos*) showed how youth aspire to friendly and safe spaces where they could entertain themselves in a healthy manner, as opposed to market-driven entertainments such as alcohol or drug consumption.

“Drinking alcohol ... is way to have fun, to spend time (BASE,2002:55)

“For spending so much time on the street, youth take on bad habits. They get together to drink, smoke and they do this because in many cases they can’t study or work” (ibid:56)

“I don’t see that it (the government) provides healthy spaces for entertainment . They don’t prepare youth for getting entertained without alcohol and drugs.” (ibid)

“They do not /teach us that youth has rights. They show us what entertainment there is out there. It seems that we are told.. here youth can consume alcohol... This isn’t the way to provide us with leisure activities.... We have the right to have a space, there is lots of space but we don’t have one” (ibid).

SOURCE: BASE 2002

⁸ The ECA Social Development Unit is currently preparing a scoping exercise (ESW) on the root-causes of the phenomenon in South East Europe and on the ways in which existing Bank operations could mitigate its significance, and this in line with the Bank regional priorities of poverty reduction, inclusion and gender equity. The East Asia region also called for the senior SD gender specialist to help preparing a Bank position paper.

⁹ The Central Intelligence Agency Briefing Report, ‘Global trafficking of Women and Children, Assessing the Magnitude,’ April, 1999, in IOM, 2000, 1

¹⁰ UNICEF, 2000, 2, 24

intravenous drug use and unprotected sex, and is affecting young people at an alarming rate. In the LAC region, pregnancies and AIDS/HIV disproportionately affect youths coming from low-income families. 29% of Brazilian men with AIDS are between 10 and 19 years old, 31% in the case of Honduras. In Guatemala, the risk of contagion is increased due to the fact that two out of three poor youths are not aware of what AIDS is. (Quintana, 2002:9).

- **The external negative costs of not investing in youth inclusion are also very high, putting at risk sustainable development. Economic survival tactics of the young, especially of young males, are paired with semi-legal activities, violence and crime.** Lack of productive outlets or idleness also leads some to engage in crime and violence as a way of creating some connectedness or peer identity. Conflict-affected countries are particularly fertile ground for these types of illegal behaviors, due to the breakdown of rule of law. The social, economic and financial costs associated with such behaviors are high and often exceed the cost of preventive and remedial interventions, as illustrated in the calculations made for certain Caribbean countries.¹¹
- **Youth exclusion can lead to conflict.** Studies show that countries with a youth “bulge” and few economic avenues open to the young are much more vulnerable to disruption and may inadvertently allow terrorist activities to emerge.¹² Frustrated youth can be found to be involved in racist and ethnic violence. Recent reports by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) found that in Kosovo an increasing number of cases of ethnic violence are being committed by young males under the age of 18 years. Such statistics serve as a reminder that a younger generation without economic opportunities, increased poverty, and social and legal constraints represents a high social risk for any society.¹³
- The financial costs of not **preventing widespread propagation of sexually transmitted diseases and other diseases linked to substance abuse are high.** While there is lack of systematic research to confirm the efficacy of prevention efforts, there are logical reasons to believe that treatment programs of risky behaviors is much more costly than preventive action (Fontes, 1994-LAC). The African region already provides clear illustrations of the economic and financial impact of HIV AIDS.
- **Migration of youth generates remittances, but it also constitutes a major brain drain, which may threaten economic growth in the long term.** Through migration, an estimated 1 million youths aged 5-14 in 1989 have left the ECA region altogether. Only five countries have a positive balance for migration (UNICEF,2000). Armenia has lost an estimated 25 percent (or nearly one million people), Kyrgyzstan has lost 10 percent.. Among youth, the desire for emigration is overwhelming as it is often seen as the sole means of providing for a family and reaching their socioeconomic potential. In Bosnia for example, 63 percent of youth said they would readily emigrate. Latin American youths also massively take part in both intra-regional and extra-regional migration flows. In 1997, 2.3 million Latin American and Caribbean youths were residents of the United States (Quintana, 2002:9).

¹¹ Donoso (2000:ix) and Cunningham and Correia (2002)

¹² Kuehnast, 2002. See also Jennifer S. Holmes, *Terrorism and Democratic Stability* (Manchester University Press, 2001).

¹³ R. Jeffrey Smith, “Kosovo’s Youth Blamed for Brutal Ethnic Crimes,” *The Washington Post*, (1999): 1, 18, 20; Sommers, M., “Urbanization, War and Africa’s Youth at Risk: Towards Understanding and addressing Future Challenges”, USAID report, 2003.

- **Migration of young parents creates risks of neglect for their small children.** In Trinidad and Tobago, the proportion of youths living in two-parent families has declined dramatically, with serious implications for the environment of the child (Donoso,2000:8). “Youth in such families are often called barrel children because they receive financial support packages from abroad in place of a parent’s day-to-day attention” (ibid).

IV. Rationale for SD Involvement in Inclusive Youth Development

The analytical framework and concluding sections of this paper will highlight the value-added and the scope for the interventions of the SD family. This section focuses on the reasons why we should be involved in the first place.

The SD family can learn from and build on a wide array of activities that have already been developed by the SD teams Bank-wide, and especially in the LAC and the ECA regions:

- Analytical activities include a series of valuable research papers on youth exclusion. LAC took particular leadership in this area with studies carried out in the Caribbean (Trinidad and Tobago), Central America (Honduras) and the Southern Cone (Paraguay, Argentina and Brazil). In ECA, upcoming activities include an ESW on youth in SEE (FY03-04) and a strategic note on human trafficking in SEE (FY03), which mainly affects young women. The Social Development Strategy for ECA also had largely expanded on youth marginalization in its chapter on social inclusion .
- Operational activities aiming at empowering youth through integrated approaches has been a hallmark of SD work, particularly because youth is one of those groups who has been largely excluded and falling within the cracks of sectoral project in HD and elsewhere. An important area of thematic overlap of the emerging youth work has been the conflict prevention and post conflict reconstruction, where youth are increasingly being regarded as key agents for the peace building process. Another important area is clearly CDD, given that the merging portfolio, for example in the ECA Region, combines broader youth policy issues with community-based approaches.

Box 3: The Macedonia Children and Youth Development Project

(US \$4 million Learning and Innovation Loan over 5 years) aims to significantly increase social cohesion, through the integration of youth at risk from different socio-cultural backgrounds. In a conflict-affected country with youth unemployment estimated at nearly 70 percent, community-based approaches to youth development (through activities disseminated in youth centers throughout the country, including rural areas) and institutional capacity building are the two main strategies being employed for youth empowerment and conflict prevention. Given the difficult circumstances faced by the formal educational system in Macedonia as in others South Eastern European countries, the project is developing an approach centred on non-formal education (life skills, livelihood skills, and peer education) which aims at short-term impacts to complement on-going efforts in improving the quality of formal education in Macedonia. Life skills include communications skills; decision-making skills; leadership skills; critical and creative thinking; skills for coping with emotions, stress and conflict and values clarification skills. Life skills aim at promoting responsible citizenship and life-long learning. Livelihood skills, increasingly recognized as an important requirement for better preparation of young people in securing employment, include job-searching skills, interviewing skills, leadership skills, entrepreneurial skills as well as specific marketable skills appropriate to the local economy. Linkages to private sector groups are being developed to provide apprenticeship and placement opportunities.

- Upon the request of the Social Protection anchor, the Social Development Family has been requested to prepare the strategic directions for WB youth policy, as a contribution to the World Bank Children and Youth Strategy.¹⁴ This lays out the foundations for a multi-dimensional policy and investment for youth inclusion and empowerment, and for an institutional partnership between SD and HD, especially on youth issues.
- Learning, participation and civic engagement activities are increasingly relating to youth. At the FY02 ESSD learning week, LAC and ECA organized an event on youth inclusion in conflict affected countries, which gathered foreign experts and allowed to share experiences. In close collaboration with UNICEF, the ECA SD team organized a Conference on Youth inclusion and empowerment in SEE which gathered youth, civil society and government groups from SEE. In LAC, voices of youth groups on youth policies were also heard through innovative initiatives in Guatemala and in Peru, through the civil society project *Voces Nuevas* (New Voices). A similar initiatives are now being replicated throughout the Bank, including the ECA Region. Finally, the SD ECA-led Multisector Team Learning initiative on ECA youth yielded important data on existing local knowledge base and client countries' responses to youth exclusion and vulnerability, using local consultant reports in Serbia, Tajikistan and Croatia, desk-based interviews (Ukraine, Latvia, Caucasus), stakeholder interaction workshops, and focus groups with youth (Moldova).
- Advocacy for the respect of human rights in World Bank activities is likely to become increasingly important for the Social Development Family. Although there is enough evidence supporting a strictly economic rationale for investing in youth, an SD engagement in the youth agenda can also effectively contribute to support the implementation of the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*¹⁵ and the related rights-based approach developed by UNICEF. The rights-based approach provides new content to the global concept of citizenship and advocates that young people should be given the freedom to express themselves and become involved in decisions that affect their lives. It implies a new way of thinking, as well as the development of institutional mechanisms to protect the rights of children and youth, hence the strategic partnership established by Social Development with UNICEF in South East Europe.¹⁶

¹⁴ La Cava and Lytle, 2003.

¹⁵ *The Convention on the Rights of the Child* was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1989. This international human rights treaty covers every person under the age of 18 in the world, implying the equality of each individual as a human being; the inherent dignity of each person and rights to self-determination, peace and security. The Convention establishes new ethical principles and international norms of behavior towards children and youth, ensuring their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, and it calls on governments, even those with scarce resources, to take action to protect children's rights.

¹⁶ UNICEF-World Bank, *Youth in South Eastern Europe: Report of the Rome Conference on Participation, Empowerment and Social Inclusion*, June 2002, p. 14.

Box 4. Voces Nuevas

New Voices work as part of the activities of the Civil Society Program in the Lima Office, which has as its main purpose to bring together a group of young people who are expected to become a consultative group for the WB staff. The youth group is expected to bring to the Bank fresh ideas and recommendation from their experience. The initiative includes the allocation of a meeting room for 6 months in the Lima Office where a group of 13 young professionals or university students come together. They have access to the internet and the WB's web, and are able to exchange ideas and propose projects and carried out talks with WB staff. Participants are selected through 50 local organizations that work with youth groups (including religious and youth groups, municipalities and NGOs). Currently, participants are preparing papers on their learning process, which, once concluded, will be presented during an information Festival in which Bank staff, other donors, and Government agencies are expected to participate. The main concerns of youth include job opportunities, training in information technology, access to credits and financial resources to implement youth projects and opportunities in political participation

I. Main Outcomes –

- Sharing knowledge youth and WB staff in Education, Poverty reduction, property rights, environment, natural resources, indigenous peoples, afro-descendant culture, basic health, social development and social accountability.
- Brown Bags Lunch discussion meetings on Education, the conversation was with the Vice Minister of Education; BBL about the income distribution and social justice with two WBG experts the LAC Poverty Specialist and the Legal Adviser; among other discussions.
- Production of working papers on the following issues: (a) Education using the methodology of the voices of the poor, (b) Reproductive Health; (c) Youth under violence; (d) Afros and Indigenous Youth; (e) Building bridges with Government and civil society organizations.
- Virtual Forum on public policies and youth, this virtual Forum used the site of the <http://www.ventanancivil.org.pe>
- Adjustment of the Peruvian experience to similar programs in Venezuela and Ecuador, and selective replication throughout other regions.

Source: Maria Elizabeth Dasso , Senior Civil Society Specialist (LCSEO)

V. A Multi-Dimensional Framework For Youth Inclusion And Empowerment

The main objective of this section, is to clarify the analytic perspective behind the vision of youth as assets in an inclusive environment. It also presents a policy framework that can inform a social development approach to youth development in a multi-dimensional and dynamic way.

1. Analytic framework¹⁷

The proposed approach combines a social inclusion perspective, aimed at getting the right environment for youth, with an empowerment perspective, emphasizing the role of youth as agents of positive change. The social exclusion perspective involves the identification of the interrelated dimensions and processes of exclusion that create the social disadvantage of youth in a particular context. This is a pre-requisite for (i) the development of inclusive policies aimed at the removal of institutional barriers and the enhancement of incentives to increase access of youth to assets and development opportunities, (ii) the process of youth empowerment, defined as the “expansion of assets and capabilities of young people to

¹⁷ Special thanks to Carine Clert's for her inputs into this section.

participate in, negotiate with, influence, control and hold accountable the institutions that affect their lives”¹⁸.

Against this background, it is proposed that SD teams working on youth in different regions and countries ask the following questions. Who are the most socially excluded youth? Which assets are important to youth? What are the main barriers or processes that prevent access of teenagers and young adults to these assets and what are the processes that seem to enhance these assets? Who are the key institutions and agents involved? What are the assets youth themselves bring to development? What are the economic costs of youth social exclusion?

a) Who are the most socially excluded youth?

Clearly identifying the incidence of such youth on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, household composition and dynamics, physical or mental disability, as well territorial distribution should be a starting point for building the inclusion-empowerment *continuum*. In LAC, ECA as well as in other countries, those youth who are neither in school nor employed constitute a most excluded and at risk segment of the 15 to 24 youth cohort. Going back to school is not an option for many teenagers as schools can be increasingly perceived as spaces of exclusion, with educational content that they find irrelevant¹⁹.

b) Which assets matter for youth development & poverty reduction? - capturing multidimensionality

Evidence found in both ECA learning activities and LAC analytical studies suggested the need to acknowledge the multifaceted nature of youth’s experience and perception of marginalization. Recognizing multidimensionality does not mean setting out a catalogue of lacking assets but rather emphasizing the cumulative and complex processes involved. For instance, combined poverty and rural isolation typically influence access to information and youth-friendly spaces. However, it will be useful for future measurement and analysis purposes to spell out the key assets and opportunities (e.g. access to markets) which should be worthy of attention. These assets may be labeled as a) tangible assets and access to markets; and b) relational or intangible assets. **In simplified terms, the former can potentially lead to important outcomes related to income dimensions of poverty while access to intangible assets such as social capital or information can lead to positive outcomes in terms on non-income dimensions poverty.**

Tangible assets and access to markets relate to exclusion from or poor access to the labor market (unemployment, precarious employment); human capital (labor, education, health, malnutrition); physical assets (land, housing, basic infrastructure, durable and semi-durable goods) and financial assets (credit, savings). Related outcomes include the inability to generate (or benefit from) a sufficient and stable income and to have access to quality basic services in order to meet basic needs- all of which belongs to standard approaches to poverty. Existing evidence in ECA and LAC reports confirmed the importance of all those dimensions for youth development. It is particularly noteworthy that young adults (18-25) were found to lack access to crucial assets leading to self-employment opportunities, particularly land and credit. In Transition countries for instance, they are likely to have been too young to benefit from privatization of productive assets such as land and industrial equipment and other crucial assets such as housing (Gomart, 2002). In Paraguay, lack of access to land and other productive resources clearly

¹⁸ UNICEF and World Bank, *Youth in Southeastern Europe: Report of the Rome Conference on Participation, Empowerment and Social Inclusion*, June 2002, p 29. Adapted from *Empowerment and Poverty Reduction: A Sourcebook*, The World Bank, 2002.

¹⁹ See adolescents’ life histories in Rampele, M., *Being Young in South Africa*, 2003.

affected young adults who were compelled to migrate. Marginalized urban youth often included rural migrants who found themselves in precarious situations (BASE, 2002).

Access to less tangible assets also matter for youth development and inclusion, all of which can enhance positive impact on poverty reduction. This paper suggests that SD teams include at least the four main following assets in their analytical framework, as summarized below.

- **Psycho-social assets should be fully taken into account.** They clearly relate to the emotional and psycho-social needs of youth, as they are in a transition age.²⁰ They include, first of all, self-esteem.²¹ Low self-esteem may originate in an oppressive and elitist education system or in difficult family relations. This may in turn contribute to youth dropping out of school and/or simply seeking understanding and support among group of friends or street groups. Other psycho-social assets include access to care, emotional support and guidance.
- **Positive social capital also matters.** Both ECA and LAC evidence suggest that marginalized youth suffer from lack of, or a precarious insertion into extra-household social networks -or social capital²² which could provide them with adequate support. Such support may be material or it may lead to better education and employment opportunities. As a learning note on Central Asia youth puts it: “youths in CA know how the informal rules of the game are played, and in most situations, they lack the social capital and resources to navigate the demands of this new terrain. They know that those peers who have the “right contacts” will pass their examinations and get the few well-paying jobs”(Kuehanst, 2002). Support can also be of a more emotional nature, which may help prevent risky behaviors. The poor quality of the relationship with key agents such as school teachers, welfare and care providers may be compensated by good support from street or youth centers’ educators. The Paraguay youth study found a positive impact of such support on marginalized youth, particularly those young people who are neither employed nor in education: “youth may have low trust in institutions.. may not be studying , be unemployed.. but they can also avail themselves of networks of support (youth centers, significant adults) in which they can interact, feel oriented, learn and incorporate new attitudes/behaviors for positive action... The lack of youth policies supporting this and supporting the strengthening of such networks diminishes these chances to happen.” (BASE,2002:16) Even worse, one may argue that the absence of such policies may create more incentives for young people to build up what some experts have called negative social capital i.e. referring to violent youth gangs²³.
- **Safe and valued free-time cultural and entertainment activities were found to be important assets for young people.** In many transition countries, the economic crisis has also affected extra-curricular activities. Cultural programs and events that local communities used to provide for youth have been eliminated or drastically curtailed.²⁴ In Bosnia-Herzegovina, much of the

²⁰ It is not in the scope of this paper to review the theoretical analytical literature on adolescents psychology. However, important materials refer to the construction of youth identity (e.g. Erikson,1968) and youth culture.

²¹ As young people repeat situations of failure or frustrations, their sense of identity becomes more fragile. This creates emotional problems such as feelings if sadness, depression, isolation or aggressive behavior (BASE,2002:18).

²² As outlined in WDR 2000, these social relationships can be usefully characterized as being of three types: bonding (relations with immediate family members and neighbors); bridging (relations with those from different socio-economic circumstances); and linking (access to those in positions of authority)

²³ Moser, C., “Urban Poverty and Violence: Consolidation or Erosion of Social Capital?”, *Development in Latin America and the Caribbean*, Bogota’ Conference, 1996.

²⁴ MTL ECA youth local reports (2002): Croatia, Serbia, Moldova.

public infrastructure devoted to youth activities was destroyed by the war or has been converted to other purposes subsequently.²⁵ School clubs now charge fees, and the state no longer supports sports and other cultural events. Rural families in particular, from CEE to Central Asia, complain that villages offer nothing to youth. In LAC, studies such as the one in Paraguay illustrate the frustration of youth with the lack of safe spaces, which in turn reinforces risky behaviors.²⁶ (BASE, 2002). Quantitative data from the study on Honduras youth is also revealing, as shown in table 1.

Table 1: Exclusion of adolescents from cultural goods in Honduras

Proportion of young people (13-18) who never went to ...	(13-18). Male	(13-18). Female
A Pop concert	83.2	92.7
A circus	34.7	49
A Stadium	23.1	53.3
A museum	65.2	69.1
A Cinema	15.5	22.9
A Theater	66.8	66.6
A local cultural centre	75.5	52.4

Source: ESA,2002

- **More broadly, a final series of intangible assets relate to the domains of empowerment and rights.** Access to organizational or associative life was already discussed under the theme of social capital above. SD teams should also pay particular attention to access to relevant and quality information and to possibility to participate meaningfully in decision-making processes. The ECA Multisector Learning report clearly stressed that “without information youth feel disempowered to make the right choices, pursue opportunities, understand society and trends that affect them and keep government officials accountable” (Gomart, 2002:46-47). Lack of information is a main obstacle to effective decision-making with regard to reproductive health, risky behaviors, education and employment.

An analytical perspective on youth inclusion should fully take into account the existence and the respect of citizenship and basic human rights for young people- including those present in the Convention for the Right of the Child. Key elements to be assessed include: exclusion from representation; denial of human rights- civil, political and basic socio-economic rights; and the impossibility of defending one’s rights, through court action for instance.

c) Which processes create or remove barriers to youth inclusion?

For each specific context, the proposed analytical framework proposes to identify key processes and institutions, which restrict or enhance the access of youth to the key assets highlighted above. It advises to identify and analyze the positive or negative influence of key institutions and agents who are involved

²⁵ See Voices of the Poor-Bosnia and the Local Level Institutions and Social Capital study. In the latter, many survey respondents noted the non-existence of services for youth as a problem.

²⁶ These relational and socio-cultural dimensions often combine with material disadvantages, such being unable to afford extra-curricular activities or simply the right clothes to go out.

in these dynamic processes. The policy relevant outcome of such analytical perspective is to identify areas for institutional reform and for empowering agents of change who may bring about more inclusive environment. Examples of exclusionary institutional processes include an oppressive education system with elitist rules, lack of sensitive micro-finance policies or more informal rules such as discriminatory practices against young girls.

d) Who are the key agents and institutions involved?

A number of agents should be identified but the following appear to be crucial:

- **Youth, as** agents of change in their own right – for their community /society (e.g. peace-building efforts);
- **Family, both** family of origin and youth's own;
- **Local community**, including informal leaders;
- **State officials'** behaviors and stereotypes; This should include a careful screening of the behaviors of school teachers, police and judges towards youth;
- **State policies and institutions**, with explicit or implicit biases towards children and youth;
- **Youth-serving civil society associations**;
- **Religious groups** outreaching to youth, for example as service providers.

e) What are the economic costs of youth social exclusion?

World Bank studies are beginning to demonstrate that the risky behaviors of youth are costly not only to the youth themselves but to society as a whole. Quantifying such costs is extremely important for the policy dialogue with client countries and for making a case for investing in youth, as an economically sound approach for Government to take.

According the study *Caribbean Youth Development: Issues and Policy Directions* (World Bank, 2002), risky adolescent behavior has the following estimated costs.

- The net indirect costs over the lifetime of a single cohort of adolescent mothers is estimated to be over USD 2 million in St. Kitts and Nevis.
- School leavers in Guyana forego hundreds of thousand of dollars in net earnings over their lifetimes, costing the state thousands of dollars in foregone income.
- Youth crime and violence in St. Lucia generates over USD 3 million in social indirect costs and USD 7.7 million in private indirect costs annually.
- A one percent decrease in youth crime would increase tourist receipts by 4 percent in Jamaica and by 2.3 percent in the Bahamas.
- The indirect private costs of AIDS deaths among those who contracted it during adolescence ranges from 0.01 of GDP in Suriname and Antigua and Barbuda to 0.17 percent of GDP in the Bahamas in just the year 2000.
- If female youth unemployment were reduced to the level of adult unemployment, GDP would be higher by a range of 0.3 percent in Antigua and Barbuda to 2.9 percent in Jamaica.

A similar exercise is currently being undertaken as part of the study *Youth Inclusion and Empowerment in South Eastern Europe*.

2. Options for Youth Policy

The social policy literature on social inclusion clearly shows how values and assumptions influence policy priorities and methods to tackle the marginalization of different social groups. Public policies to youth development also illustrate such an influence. In a schematic manner, Public policies for young people can be divided into three broad categories: (1) preventive policies, (2) curative policies and (3)

empowerment policies. Each of these policies can be targeted to youth only, or benefit youth although not specifically targeted to them.

Preventive policies try to counteract the processes that generate the problem, allowing measures to be adopted before problems arise²⁷. So far, however, such policies have fallen mainly under sectoral approaches, with the illustrative example of health policies. Such policies typically include awareness-raising campaigns for youth regarding safe sex, drug-free environment etc.

Curative or protective interventions are mainly designed to serve young people in difficult or at risk situations, in the context of a wider range of socially vulnerable groups. The focus is on the restoration of rights which have been violated and leads to compensatory action and protective measures. These policies see youth as being in danger and in need of protection against threats to their development. For instance, social protection approaches on youth at risk certainly fall in the category of protective policies. Unfortunately, these policies tend to be top-down and to view youth as a “problem that needs to be solved”. Recent analysis indicates that a shift in the emphasis from curative toward preventive interventions- from treating the symptoms to dealing with the causes- is more effective.²⁸

Empowerment policies mainly focus on the full development of the capacity of young people. They allow measures to be adopted before problems arise, and concentrate on realising the rights of young people through their participation in the decision-making process at local and national levels, across sectoral policies. Empowerment policies view youth as an asset for development, a medium-long term investment for creating thriving societies, and a base for social capital development. They also promote youth social inclusion by offering educational opportunities in the values and practice of democracy, citizenship and civic engagement. While empowerment policies have a strong element of prevention, they also incorporate dimensions of youth participation, citizenship and cultural identity which are not components of typical preventive or curative policies.

Ideally, curative, preventive, and empowerment policies should reinforce each other to enable young people to realise their full potential. This is particularly the case in societies with high levels of civil and ethnic conflict, high youth unemployment and poverty, as well as trafficking of children and young people. Within the World Bank, the Social Development family strongly supports an empowerment approach to youth policies, while taking into account youth needs and the barriers to their inclusion in a multi-dimensional way. As pointed out in *Youth: Strategic Directions for the World Bank*, the Social Development approach is also especially suited to build the necessary bridges among the various World Bank sectors.

3. Multi-dimensional Framework for Youth Policy

The diagram below represents the different levels on which a social development approach to youth can function. On the positive side, supporting the development of life and livelihood skills for youth can result in increased social capital on the community level. This, in turn, builds social cohesion for the society as a whole. The overall environment can contribute to this process by providing resources for youth or having policies which enhance youth empowerment. Specific assets for youth that can be provided at community level include youth-friendly spaces.

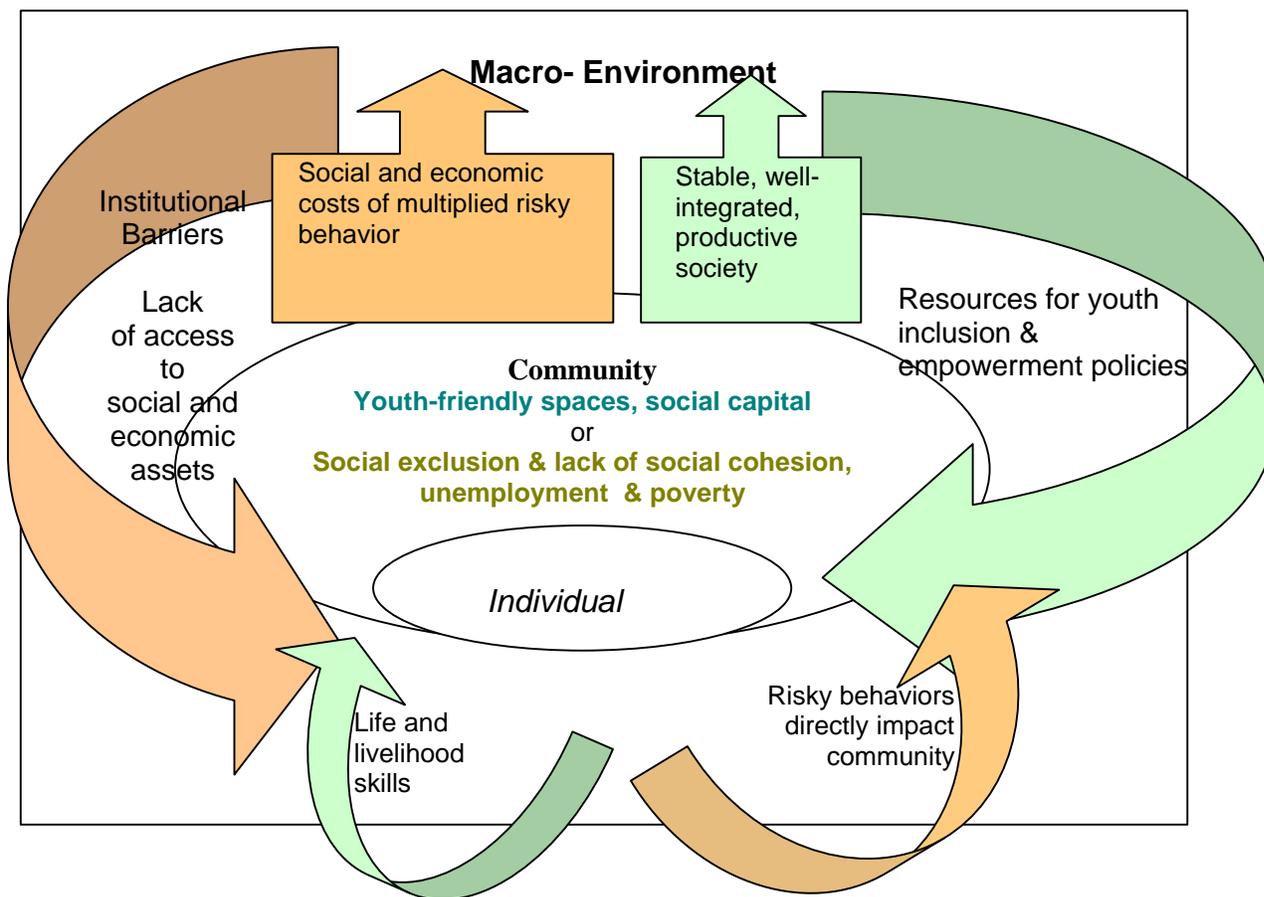
²⁷ Youth forum/OSCE.

²⁸ Martin Godfrey, “Youth Employment Policies in Developing and Transition Countries: Prevention as Well as Cure” draft World Bank commissioned paper, March 2003. Alexandre Kolev, “Addressing the Problem of Youth Unemployment in South East Europe: Evidence and Practices” work in progress- World Bank, April 2003.

On the negative side of the equation, institutional barriers to youth participation and to their access to economic assets (livelihood skills credit, training, income generation and housing), and social assets (livelihood skills, information, social capital, culture and leisure opportunities) all contribute to disempower youth. On the community level, this manifests itself as social exclusion and a lack of social cohesion. When youth engage in risky behaviors, there is a direct impact on the community, and the overall effect is multiplied for the society as a whole.

Multi-dimensional interventions on youth seek to emphasize the creation and strengthening of assets at all three levels (individual, community, and macro-environment) and to break the negative cycle illustrated above. Part of the vision described here requires engaging with youth in all their diversity, taking into account their age (differentiating between young adults and teenagers), socio-economic levels, gender, ethnic origin, or location (recognizing the isolation of rural youth or the specific difficulties experienced by young migrants in urban and peri-urban areas).²⁹

Graphic 1: Framework for Youth Inclusion and Empowerment



Source: La Cava and Lytle, 2003.

²⁹ For a more comprehensive approach on multi-dimensional policies for youth, see La Cava and Lytle 2003.

VI. Operational Directions On Youth Policies and Investment Projects

The key directions emerging from the ECA operational experience with broader World Bank implications for youth empowerment fall into three broad categories: (i) designing policies and programs that take an integrated approach to youth issues, (ii) making youth initiatives sustainable and (iii) youth investment financing.³⁰

Multi-dimensional policies and programs

- Focus on the multi-dimensional needs of youth, encouraging multisectoral approaches to their empowerment.
- Accelerate the development of comprehensive rights-based youth policies, with youth fully participating in policy design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- Support youth empowerment by increasing access to quality formal education and non-formal education (with special focus on life and livelihood skills, as well as peer education).
- Improve access to new technologies.
- Improve young people's access to information.
- Support the development of youth friendly services and spaces and youth friendly approaches in existing services.
- Increase employment opportunities for youth, thus reducing the brain drain and contributing to the economy.
- Establish or strengthen mechanisms for youth policy development at all levels and in all relevant ministries.
- Design programs ensuring the inclusion of rural youth, with focus on outreach services.
- Adopt more gender sensitive youth policies and programs, being more responsive to the specific interests and needs of young women and men, and to the gender relations in their own households or families.
- Ensure greater coverage and inclusion of minority and marginalized groups, returnees and internally displaced young people, through scaling up existing innovative approaches.
- Ensure that national youth policies and programs recognize, and contribute to, the fight against human trafficking, violence, abuse and social exclusion, focusing on both prevention and rehabilitation.

Box 5: The Moldova Youth Inclusion LIL

A recent example of a youth multi-dimensional investment is the **Moldova Youth Inclusion LIL**, currently under preparation under as SD TTL. This LIL will test whether beneficiary youth (16-25) from vulnerable rural and peri-urban households can engage in positive economic and social practices in response to an integrated package of youth-oriented services and opportunities. The integrated package will entail creating synergies between three inter-related types of interventions in selected regions: (i) creating enabling conditions for facilitating access of youth to skills and assets leading to better economic participation (business skills, pilot outreach micro-credit); (ii) support to youth-serving spaces and local civil initiatives for youth inclusion, in strong collaboration with UNICEF-Moldova; and (iii) institutional approach, developing the capacity of a network of government and civil society partners to address youth exclusion in an integrated manner.

³⁰ These were developed in conjunction with UNICEF as part of the on-going partnership in South East Europe.

Sustainable youth initiatives

- Strengthen partnerships among government, civil society, and networks in the youth sector.
- Increase youth participation in all aspects of public life and support their right to play a significant role in identifying and shaping responses to their problems, in close cooperation with families, communities, and civil society.
- Scale up community-based best practice projects and promote the inclusion of youth from different marginalized groups in community development programs.
- Establish, or strengthen, mechanisms for youth policy development at all levels and in all relevant ministries.
- Designate strong focal points to coordinate and monitor youth policy. Country experiences (for example, Macedonia and Moldova) show the potential of youth ministries in this respect.
- Transfer know-how from NGOs/UNICEF to Youth Ministries, agencies and local governments, especially for building capacity on participation, empowerment and community driven development.
- Create conditions for making youth relevant data reliable and regularly available through strengthening the capacity of national statistics systems and qualitative research to assess youth conditions and needs.
- Develop robust indicators and adequate, participatory mechanisms for monitoring the development and implementation of youth policy.
- Increase human and financial investment in youth in the region.
- Facilitate horizontal dialogue and sharing of experiences by youth institutional and civil society representatives from various countries.

Youth investment financing

- The high cost of not investing in youth should be taken into account in the policy dialogue with borrowing countries and relevant international financial institutions.
- Increase stand-alone investment operations focused on adolescents and youth, while maintaining traditional social-sector based investments.
- Extra-budgetary and untied financial resources in the form of grants should be raised for preparation of youth-related activities and lending projects with the assistance of bi-lateral donors (see box 8).

Box 6. The World Bank Social Development Initiative for South East Europe (SDI-SEE)

Funded by Italy's Development Cooperation and the World Bank, SDI-SEE has been instrumental in raising the profile of young people, in the ECA Region. Set-up as a stand alone trust fund, the SDI funded innovative work on youth development and social cohesion through grants in some of the poorest/conflict affected countries in the sub-region, i.e. , FYR of Macedonia, and Bosnia Herzegovina. Through these initial seed grants allocated for project preparation and analytic work, the SDI succeeded to expand the Social Development lending portfolio on youth issues especially in IDA countries, at a time of declining budget availability. For this reason, the SDI can offer an interesting model to be scaled up and replicated in other regions of the World Bank

One potential model to be pursued along these lines is a global youth fund jointly administered SP and SD, with possible participation by UNICEF. Such a fund could be partially financed through net income and through the support of bilateral donors. Bilateral donors could allocate funds according to their own set of geographic and strategic priorities. Other possible partnerships to be pursued could include corporate foundations as large firms are increasingly developing policies of corporate social responsibility. The rationale behind a global fund is based on the extent to which global trends affecting

youth are remarkably similar not just in Latin America and Eastern Europe, but also in the Middle East and in Africa.

The global youth strategy paper makes a strong case for World Bank involvement in youth policy and investment programs. It also lays out the different comparative advantages of World Bank instruments and players, and opens new opportunities for SDV involvement in multi-dimensional youth programs. As a result, an institutional partnership is being established between SDV and HD (Social Protection) for the implementation of the Children and Youth Strategy. Key existing and/or potential new activities are the following:

- multi-sectoral analytic and strategic work led by SD staff;
- cross support to create capacity in different regions for the development of youth policy and investment programs;
- policy dialogue with client governments and assistance to launch multi-sectoral strategies/action plans on children and youth;
- preparation and/or management of stand-alone youth investment programs or youth components of larger projects;
- establishment of youth participation mechanisms in Bank activities, at country, regional and global level (i.e. Youth Voices and the upcoming youth regional consultations of the Children and Youth Strategy);
- demand-driven design of learning activities for youth-related policies and operational activities, possibly in collaboration with WBI.

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