



United Nations  
Department of Economic and Social Affairs  
Division for Social Policy and Development

# **“Dialogue and Mutual Understanding Across Generations”**

Doha, Qatar  
8-9 March 2011

The United Nations Programme on the Family and the United Nations Programme on Youth of the Division for Social Policy and Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) organized, in collaboration with The Doha International Institute for Family Studies and Development (DIIFSD), an Expert Group Meeting on **Dialogue and Mutual Understanding across Generations**, held 8-9 March 2011 in Doha, Qatar.

The Expert Group meeting was convened in the observance of the celebration of the International Year of Youth 2010-2011 and as part of the preparations for the Twentieth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family 2014.

The present publication contains the Executive summary, submissions by the experts and other materials of the EGM.

## CONTENTS

<b>Section 1</b>	<b>Statements</b>	<b>Page</b>
	Opening Statement .....	
	Objectives and Expected outcome of the EGM .....	
<b>Section 2</b>	<b>Executive Summary</b>	
	Summary Report .....	
	○ The International Year of Youth and Youth Participation.....	
	○ The World Programme of Action for Youth.....	
	○ Youth and Family at the Regional Level.....	
	○ Intergenerational Relations.....	
	○ Intergenerational Dialogue in Context.....	
	Recommendations .....	
	○ English.....	
	○ Arabic.....	
<b>Section 3</b>	<b>Presentations</b> .....	
	Experts .....	
	Observers .....	
<b>Section 4</b>	<b>Annexes</b> .....	
	Annotated Agenda.....	
	List of Participants.....	

# *Statements*



## سعادة الفاضلة/ نور المالكي الجهني

أمين عام المجلس الأعلى لشؤون الأسرة

### الكلمة الافتتاحية

سعادة السيد/ عبد الله بن ناصر آل خليفة

رئيس مجلس إدارة معهد الدوحة الدولي للدراسات الأسرية والتنمية

الدكتور/ ريتشارد ويلكنز

المدير التنفيذي للمعهد

السيدات والسادة ،

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته...

يطيب لي أن أشارككم افتتاح إجتماع الخبراء حول الحوار والتفاهم المتبادل عبر الأجيال، والذي ينظمه معهد الدوحة الدولي للدراسات الأسرية والتنمية بالتعاون مع برنامج الأمم المتحدة للأسرة، وبرنامج الأمم المتحدة للشباب التابعين لإدارة الشؤون الاقتصادية والاجتماعية بمنظمة الأمم المتحدة، والمخصص لمناقشة جملة من الموضوعات ذات الصلة بالقضية المطروحة سعياً إلى استخلاص النتائج والتوصيات والقرارات التي أرجو أن تكون مثمرة، وتشكل إضافة بارزة في أدبيات ومنهجيات العمل نحو تعميق الحوار والتفاهم المتبادل عبر الأجيال.

### الحضور الكريم،

يعيش شباب اليوم في بيئة متسارعة التغير في مضامينها المادية والبشرية والثقافية والأخلاقية والسياسية، ومتزامنة مع تحديات متعددة لعل من أهمها العولمة والأزمات الاقتصادية والمالية والتقلبات المناخية، ومتأثرة بالتغيرات البيئية، والتحوّلات الديموغرافية والوبائية غير المسبوقة، والتهديدات المباشرة لأمن الإنسان وسلامته، والسلوكيات المؤدية لمخاطر التهميش والاستبعاد والحرمان. ولا بدّ من الإقرار بأنّ فئة الشباب، وأكثر من أية فئة سكانية أخرى، تتأثر سلباً بويلات هذه التحديات وتراكماتها. إنّ هذا الواقع –

وضمن تبريرات أخلاقية وتنموية أخرى – يضع حماية الشباب وتمكينهم وتعظيم دورهم في المشاركة الإيجابية على قمة الأولويات الوطنية والإقليمية والدولية.

إننا نعلم أكثر من أيّ وقتٍ مضى أنّ الشباب – وبالذات في دولنا النامية - يشكلون مصدراً أساسياً لفرص تنموية نادرة، ليس فقط لأنهم أكبر شريحة سكانية تدخل في المدى العمري الإيجابي والإنتاجي، وليس فقط لأنهم يمارسون حياتهم الإيجابية والإنتاجية بالقدر اليسير من عبء الإعالة الديموغرافية، ولكن أيضاً لأنهم ينتقلون إلى هذا المدى العمري وهم أكثر حيوية وتعليماً وإبداعاً وحركة وتفاعلاً مع الأحداث والتطورات الناجمة عن التحوّلات العلمية والتكنولوجية والتقنية والاقتصادية والاجتماعية والثقافية والسياسية، وذلك مقارنة بجيل آبائهم وأجدادهم. ولذا يجب مواصلة البحث المعمّق للأطر المنهجية والعملية التي تستهدف تنمية الشباب بالتركيز على السياسات التي تعتبر أنّ الشباب من الجنسين ليسوا فقط مستفيدين من التحوّل الاقتصادي والاجتماعي والسياسي، بل هم أيضاً عوامل فاعلة ونشطة في هذا التحوّل. وفي رأيي لا بدّ أن تكون مثل هذه الأطر قائمة على هدفٍ مزدوج، أولاً خلق بيئة داعمة لتوسيع فرص التمكين والمشاركة الفاعلة للشباب على كل المستويات، وبالذات في الأسرة والمدرسة ومكان العمل والمجتمع. وثانياً، التغلب على التحديات التي تواجه الشباب في مختلف المجالات، والتي تحول دون بلوغ أهدافهم.

ولكن من ناحية أخرى، فإنه لا بد من الاعتراف بوجود تحديات أمام تحقيق أولويات تمكين الشباب، وتعميق مشاركتهم في تقوية أواصر العلاقات الأسرية، وتعزيز قنوات الحوار الإيجابي بين الأجيال، وفي إدماج قدراتهم وخبراتهم في عمليات التنمية، وفي التغيير الاجتماعي، والابتكار التكنولوجي، وفي صنع السلام والأمن على المستويين الوطني والدولي. وإن اكتساب أدبيات الحوار بين الصغار والكبار في الأسرة، والقدرة على إجراء التواصل والتفاهم البتاء بين الأجيال، ضرورة لا غنى عنها في إزالة أو تضيق الفجوات بين جيل الشباب وجيل (أو أجيال) الكبار من ناحية، وفي توسيع مساحة الحوار والتشبيك التشاركي مع المؤسسات والمننديات خارج نفوذ الأسرة والمنزل.

وفي هذا السياق، تصبح قضية تملك الشباب لأدوات الحوار المثمر – بما فيها مهارات التواصل، وكيفية الإصغاء باهتمام والتعاطف مع الآخرين، وتقبل تباين الآراء، والقدرة على إدارة النزاعات – شرطاً من شروط النجاح في هذا الشأن.

### السيدات والسادة،

تشير الإحصاءات إلى أنّ الشباب يشكلون حوالي 20 بالمائة من جملة السكان في المنطقة العربيّة. وبالرغم من ذلك، تعاني شريحة كبيرة من الشباب في هذه المنطقة من الإقصاء الاجتماعي والاقتصادي والسياسي، فما يزال هناك 13 مليون من الشباب يعانون من الأميّة، ويبلغ معدّل بطالة الشباب 30 بالمائة (أي ثلاث أضعاف معدّل البطالة العام). كما تعاني نسبة كبيرة من الشباب من عدم الوصول إلى وسائل تكنولوجيا الاتصال والمعلومات، ولا تتوفّر لهم فرص المشاركة في الحياة العامة والسياسية. إن الشباب، وبالذات

الشباب، هم ضحايا لعدم الموازنة بين مخرجات النظام التعليمي ومتطلبات سوق العمل، كما أن العلاقة بين مستويات التعليم ومعدلات البطالة – وبالذات بين الإناث – هي علاقة موجبة، بمعنى أن البطالة تتزايد مع الارتفاع في مستويات التعليم. أما بالنسبة للمشاركة المدنية، فالبيانات تعكس انخفاضا واضحا في مشاركة الشباب الاجتماعية والسياسية نتيجة لمعوقات قانونية ومؤسسية تحول دون هذه المشاركة. إن الشباب، وخاصة الشباب، هم أكثر المجموعات السكانية تعرضاً لمخاطر الأمراض المعدية كما أنهم يعانون بدرجات متفاوتة من الحاجة غير الملباة للخدمات والمعلومات الصحية، إضافة إلى كونهم غالباً ما يتبعون نظام حياة غير صحي من حيث التغذية وما ينتج عن ذلك من أمراض سوء التغذية أو من تزايد في معدلات السمنة والبدانة، ومن ثم في معدلات الإصابة بالأمراض المزمنة وأحياناً الوفاة. كما تظهر المؤشرات المتوفرة إزدياد الصعوبات التي يواجهها الشباب في اكتساب الثقافة المتعلقة بالحياة الأسرية، باعتبار أن تلك الثقافة تشكل أساساً قوياً في تكوين أسرة سليمة تعزز تقاسم المسؤوليات، وتمهد لبيئة داعمة لمشاركة الشباب في الحوار والتواصل والتفاهم بين الأجيال.

إن كل هذه التحديات والتعقيدات تؤثر سلباً على إمكانات الشباب في إجراء الحوار بين الأجيال والثقافات والأديان.

### الحضور الكريم،

إن دولة قطر تتمتع عالياً الأطر والمنهجيات الواسعة الموجهة للمناقشات والمداولات حول موضوع الحوار والتفاهم والتي أثبتت جدارتها في تناول القضايا الشائكة والوصول للمبادرات الهادفة في صياغة السياسات الأسرية والشبابية. وإن دولة قطر بقيادة سمو الأمير الشيخ حمد بن خليفة آل ثاني تضع فئة الشباب على رأس أولوياتها كما أظهرت ذلك رؤية قطر الوطنية 2030، وإن الإستراتيجية العامة للأسرة في دولة قطر تضع قضية التواصل والحوار والتماسك بين الأجيال في الأسرة ضمن الأولويات التي تمت برمجتها ومتابعة تنفيذها بواسطة الشركاء المعنيين بالتنفيذ. ويمكنكم الوقوف عند هذه التجربة التي لا أشك أن فيها ما يثري مناقشاتكم ومداولاتكم.

وفي هذا السياق، تعتبر دولة قطر الشباب كفئة اجتماعية – ديموغرافية محددة لها احتياجاتها الخاصة وتواجه تحديات خاصة بها، مما يستدعي استهدافها في سياسات واستراتيجيات خاصة تسعى لضمان حقهم في نوعية حياة أفضل وقد بلورت الإستراتيجية العامة للأسرة هذا التوجه من خلال التركيز على الشباب ضمن محاورها الثمانية الأساسية. ففي المحور الاجتماعي مثلاً ركزت الإستراتيجية على تعميق المفاهيم الأسرية لدى الشباب وتشجيعهم على الزواج باعتبار أن الأسرة هي الوحدة الأساسية في المجتمع. وفي المحور التعليمي ركزت على ترسيخ قيم العلم والمعرفة وتوسيع مجالاتها أمام الشباب من الجنسين باعتبار أن العلم والمعرفة من أهم عوامل تمكين الشباب. وركزت الاستراتيجية في محورها الاقتصادي على تمكين الشباب اقتصادياً وتعزيز مشاركتهم في التنمية. هذا ولم تغفل الإستراتيجية العامة للأسرة موضوع اجتماع اليوم وهو الحوار والتفاهم المتبادل بين الأجيال والذي أخذ حيزاً مهماً ليس في المحور الاجتماعي فحسب، وإنما

في محور المشاركة في صنع القرار أيضاً، حيث أثبتت الأحداث الجارية على الساحة العربية حالياً أهمية الحوار على جميع المستويات و الأصعدة. ويوجد في دولة قطر العديد من الممارسات الفضلى في مجال تعزيز ثقافة الحوار وأدابه الجديرة باهتمام الخبراء المشاركين وأذكر منها على سبيل المثال برنامجي مناظرات الدوحة ومناظرات قطر التي تنفذهما مؤسسة قطر للتربية والعلوم وتنمية المجتمع.

وفي الختام أتمنى لهذا الاجتماع التوفيق والنجاح في تحديد معوقات الحوار والتفاهم المتبادل عبر الأجيال، وأن يخرج برؤية واضحة وعملية لكيفية تفعيل هذا الحوار والتفاهم بغية الارتقاء بأوضاع الشباب بما له من منفعة على المستوى الفردي والأسري والمجتمعي.

والسلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته.

# *Renata Kaczmarska*

## **Objectives and Expected Outcomes of the Meeting**

The Department of Economic and Social Affairs has enjoyed close cooperation with the Doha International Institute for Family Studies and Development over the years. In the past, the Doha Institute organized several expert group meetings on family-related issues as well as ageing and gender issues. An important outcome of our cooperation in the past was an expert group meeting which took place in Doha in 2009 under the theme: “Family Policy in a Changing World: Promoting Social Protection and Intergenerational Solidarity”.

It is important for us to build on the outcomes of previous conferences and meetings. Several recommendations from the meeting mentioned above focused on promoting intergenerational solidarity through building of partnerships and cooperation between youth and older persons’ organizations. The majority of recommendations, however, focused on older persons and related to the prevention of their social exclusion, ensuring their active participation in society and reducing the risks they face through various social protection mechanisms.

Now we are shifting our focus to the young people but still remain focused on a broader picture of quality intergenerational relations, the importance of supporting them and recommending how they can be shaped for the benefit of the old and young alike and a broader society at large.

When we look at current demographic and social trends, the importance of intergenerational relations comes into sharper focus. Among such changes rapid ageing and lower fertility rates are expected to result in higher dependency ratios of older generations on the younger generations. On the other hand, some research shows that financial resources in some countries are primarily transferred from the old to the young. Moreover, the revival of multi-generational family structures in parts of the western world can also be seen, in large measure as a coping mechanisms with the effects of current economic and financial crises.

The importance of quality intergenerational relations cannot be overstated. They contribute to social integration within families, communities and societies. Intergenerational relations are first shaped by the **family**, where children and young adults are taught how to interact in a broader world. Good quality relations within family shape other relations in life and contribute to individuals’ well-being throughout their

lives. Further, **educational institutions**, including schools but also community organizations, sports centers and other entities shape young individuals. Later, the **work place** may create conditions favourable to an exchange of ideas between generations, learning from one another and improving the workplace balance as well.

Governments have various policy instruments that can have a direct and indirect impact on the quality of dialogue between generations. Governments can enact specific policies, e.g. through the provision of social services or institutions, that benefit the quality of intergenerational relations. Such strategies impact families, educational institutions, communities, workplaces and societies at large.

Civil society and private sector influence intergenerational relations as well. Civil society is instrumental in carrying out community based programmes impacting intergenerational relations, similarly private sector policies in the work place may impact older and younger generations' interactions at work and influence their creativity, cooperation and productivity.

Governments have a difficult task of raising awareness of the importance of intergenerational communication and deal with challenges relating to demographic, social and economic changes affecting societies. Apparently, often Governments are not very effective at it. For instance, a recent Eurobarometer survey on solidarity between generations indicates that the EU citizens give a strong negative opinion on the performances of the government in promoting better understanding between the young and the old.

The objectives of this meeting are to provide policy recommendations to all stakeholders on areas of social policy and specific policies that support intergenerational dialogue and mutual understanding with a broader aim to benefit society as a whole and contribute to social integration and cohesion.

We have an urgent task to focus on youth as agents of intergenerational dialogue and understanding. We have been witnessing a movement for change throughout the world, where young people demand greater recognition, voice and participation. Governments, private sector, civil society, families and individuals should make efforts to help young people fully participate in their societies. Our meeting will attempt to make a contribution to this important task.

Our meeting will consist of seven sessions focusing on different issues affecting young people today. We will review several aspects of intergenerational relations, focus on issues relevant to different regions of the world and examine different frameworks for

building of understanding across generations. We also want to highlight lessons learnt from existing approaches and ways to enhance youth participation.

We would like each session to produce concrete recommendations for policy makers, as well as civil society and private sector, depending on the context of actions required. Our recommendations should stipulate what investments should be made in promoting intergeneration dialogue and advance youth development and social integration strategies. In particular, recommendations should focus on the role of existing frameworks for dialogue and mutual understanding across generations we identified: family, community, educational institutions and workplace.

I would like to emphasize that your deliberations and recommendations are very important for our work at the UN.

Firstly, the findings will be compiled into a report which will be accessible to all interested stakeholders.

Secondly our recommendations will serve as an input for the upcoming conference on youth and will be an important outcome of the observance of the International Year of Youth.

Thirdly, the outcomes of expert groups meeting are very useful to formulate issues and recommendations in the reports to the Commission for Social Development, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. The findings of this meeting and its recommendations will constitute an important input for the upcoming report of the Secretary-General on the “Preparations for and observance of the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family” and other reports and publications prepared by the Programme on the Family.

The recent resolution adopted by the Commission for Social Development of the UN requested the Commission to consider several themes to guide the preparations for the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of IYF in 2014.

They are:

- (a) poverty eradication: confronting family poverty and social exclusion
- (b) full employment and decent work: ensuring work-family balance
- (c) social integration: advancing social integration and intergenerational solidarity

Our concern here is mostly the third theme relating to intergenerational solidarity and ways to achieve it through intergenerational dialogue. Other themes however, bear much relevance to the issues we will discuss today and tomorrow. Poverty and unemployment affect young people in disproportionate numbers. Without jobs, young people may find it difficult to establish families and may need to rely on their parents longer. Work-family balance seems more and more difficult to achieve impacting on intergenerational relations as well. In fact all issues we will discuss here are of much relevance to the broad themes guiding the upcoming activities of the UN in the area of family policy and overall family well-being.

In the upcoming reports on the preparations for the twentieth anniversary of the IYF, we will present the issues of concern to families world wide and quote research that you present. We illustrate our reports with examples of effective policies and examples of good practices to show what works and what could be emanated in other countries and regions. Finally we also offer recommendations which then find their way to the resolutions and are recommended to the UN member states at large.

I am sure our deliberations will result in good recommendations and will find their way into concrete actions at national and international levels resulting in better policies supporting dialogue and mutual understanding across generations in many countries and regions.



# *Executive summary*

## **Summary Report**

### **Background and objectives**

1. The United Nations Programme on the Family and the United Nations Programme on Youth, of the Division for Social Policy and Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) organized, in cooperation with the Doha International Institute for Family Studies and Development (DIIFSD), an Expert Group Meeting on Dialogue and Mutual Understanding across Generations, on 8-9 March 2011 in Doha, Qatar.

2. Experts dealing with various aspects of social development were invited from a broad geographical distribution to participate in the meeting in their personal capacities. The Experts included youth delegates, to reflect the theme of the Meeting and promote the participation of young people in line with the objectives of the International Year of Youth.

3. Experts were asked to present a paper, participate in group discussions and provide specific policy recommendations on the topics under discussion, as well as in other areas they consider relevant to the main theme of the EGM. They were also asked to provide examples of good policies/practices and to give their professional opinion on policy recommendations for strengthening dialogue and mutual understanding across the generations. This was done in the context of examining: the role young people play in advancing dialogue and mutual understanding; the role of the family in providing a space for intergenerational dialogue; the challenges and opportunities for dialogue across generations; and the examination of existing regional frameworks and mechanisms for intergenerational dialogue and mutual understanding. This report is a summary of expert discussions and reflects varied inputs from the meeting.

### **1. The International Year of Youth and Youth Participation**

#### **The International Year of Youth**

4. Young people, aged 15 to 24, comprise more than 18 per cent of the world's population, the largest proportion of youth in history. With increased recognition of the importance of investing in youth, the United Nations declared 2010-2011 as the International Year of Youth under the theme: "Dialogue and Mutual Understanding". The United Nations system's approach for the Year aims to provide a concrete framework for

collective efforts during the Year. The approach focuses on the three key areas outlined below. In each of these areas, collaborative partnerships with young people are fundamental. The progress achieved during this Year in each of these areas will lay the foundation for further work in youth development, including the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

**1. Create Awareness (increase commitment and investment in youth)**

- Increase recognition of youth development as a smart investment by the public and private sectors
- Advocate for the recognition of young people's contributions to national and community development and to achieving the MDGs
- Promote understanding of inequalities amongst youth and how to effectively address the needs of the most disadvantaged
- Foster research and knowledge building on youth to better inform youth policies and programmes

**2. Mobilize and engage (increase youth participation and partnerships)**

- Institutionalize mechanisms for youth participation in decision-making processes
- Support youth-led organizations and initiatives to enhance their contribution to society
- Strengthen networks and partnerships among Governments, youth-led organizations, academia, civil society organizations, the private sector, the media and the UN system, to enhance commitment and support for holistic youth development

**3. Connect and build bridges (increase intercultural understanding among youth)**

- Promote youth interactions, networks and partnerships across cultures
- Empower and support youth as agents of social inclusion and peace

5. Although the International Year of Youth provides an opportunity to further bring youth issues to national and international agendas the Year is not without its challenges. The 2010-2011 International Year of Youth was declared merely 8 months prior to the start, at a time when the budgets and priorities of both youth organizations and national governments/bodies had already been set for the course of the year. The short time frame between the announcement of the Year and its celebration has potentially limited the number of activities and initiatives being undertaken throughout the Year. Despite this,

the International Year of Youth has provided an opportunity to highlight the powerful role and capacities of young people to participate in all aspects of society, and the various youth led events and activities throughout the Year are testament to the powerful voice of youth.

### **Promotion of Youth Participation and Civic Engagement**

6. The promotion of full and effective youth participation is central to the International Year of Youth and is a priority area of the UN agenda on youth. Through active participation young people are empowered to play a vital role in their own development as well as in that of their communities, helping them to learn vital life skills, develop knowledge on human rights and citizenship and promote positive civic action.<sup>1</sup> The involvement of young people in all phases of policy development, from preparation to implementation and monitoring, ensures that policy and programme responses reflect the needs and situation of youth. To participate effectively, young people must be given the proper tools, such as education about and access to their civil rights.

7. A strong commitment to youth participation at the national and international levels, is a pre-requisite to ensuring young people's civic engagement. Investment in youth participation through the support of programmes for young people's civic engagement initiatives, networks and organizations is necessary for effective youth participation and inclusive societies.

8. Youth organizations are important forums for young people to develop the necessary skills for youth participation, and to promote dialogue, understanding and cooperation. Participation in independent youth led organizations and youth structures helps promote young people's civic engagement. In addition, Youth Leadership, Youth Mentoring and Youth Cultural Exchange programmes provide valuable tools in preparing young people for civic engagement, intercultural dialogue and in strengthening their capacities for participation

9. To ensure youth participation is inclusive, equitable and gender sensitive, social, economic and cultural barriers affecting young women must be removed. In addition, barriers affecting vulnerable and marginalized youth, such as indigenous youth or youth with disabilities, must be dealt with. Youth from marginalized backgrounds require additional support through education and vocational training so as to be properly equipped for full participation in society.

---

<sup>1</sup> United Nations International Year of Youth Fact Sheet on Youth Participation, 2010

## **Investment in Youth**

10. Designated funding for youth policy and mechanisms for youth participation in national budgets as well as a strong political commitment to youth are central to youth development. Within the United Nations there is a need for additional designation of resources on youth related work in promoting and supporting youth development. Likewise, enhanced involvement of young people in the processes of the United Nations, such as the UN Inter Agency Network on Youth Development, is central to ensuring that the United Nations consults in a meaningful way with youth and youth organizations.

11. Many experts emphasize that to function effectively, youth organizations need increased support and funding so that they can promote and engage effectively in participatory processes. The funding of youth organizations and youth work is crucial and in particular, experts drew emphasis on the importance of maintaining not only project based but operational funding so as to ensure the long term sustainability of youth organizations and their work.

## **2. The World Programme of Action for Youth**

12. The World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY), adopted in 1995, sets a policy framework and guidelines for national action and international support to improve the situation of young people. The WPAY focuses on ways to strengthen national capacities in regard to youth and to increase the opportunities available to young people for full, effective and constructive participation in society.<sup>2</sup> The WPAY, detailing 15 priority areas, looks in-depth at the nature of the challenges facing youth. Since its adoption, the WPAY has guided the formulation of national youth policies in many countries. Experts spoke about the priority areas of Intergenerational Dialogue, Education, Employment and Girls and Young Women as they related to the WPAY, as well as progress in its implementation.

## **Intergenerational Dialogue**

13. Among its 15 priority areas, WPAY highlights the importance of strengthening intergenerational solidarity.<sup>3</sup> In particular it recommends *‘increased attention be given to the socio-economic impact of ageing societies’* and the promotion of *‘a two-pronged approach: first, investing in individual life courses, which includes age-adjusted policies and programmes that encourage workplace flexibility, lifelong learning and healthy*

---

<sup>2</sup> World Program of Action for Youth, United Nations, 1995, Preface

<sup>3</sup> WPAY Priority ‘O’ Intergenerational Issues, adopted as a priority issue in 2005 at the 10 year review of the WPAY

*lifestyles, especially during transitional periods, such as youth to adulthood, family formation, or midlife to later years; and second, strengthening the social environment of family, neighbourhood and community.’<sup>4</sup>*

14. The family can provide a valuable space for intergenerational dialogue, bringing together both younger and older generations. Parenting which allows for open communication between the generations and active youth participation is central to promoting young people’s active participation in society more generally. Ensuring resources are available for intergenerational work is critical in meeting the goals of the WPAY. Likewise, the recognition of the roles of both older and younger people in their societies and how they can mutually contribute and benefit from the process of intergenerational dialogue is a necessity.

### **Education**

15. The WPAY recognises access to and quality of education as being a key priority for young people. Experts observed that the improvement of educational opportunities for young people from minority and vulnerable backgrounds, for girls and young women, and those with lack of access to quality education is particularly essential to youth development. Lack of education limits the potential of young people to participate actively in society, does not allow them to develop the skills and resources necessary for effective participation and limits the opportunity for young people to interact with their peers. In the long run, lack of educational opportunities restricts the potential of youth to secure decent employment opportunities and makes young people, particularly young girls, more susceptible to entering into precarious forms of employment.

### **Employment**

16. Experts noted with concern that increasing levels of youth unemployment globally, particularly as a result of the continuing impacts of the 2008 financial crisis, has changed the nature of youth life stage transitions. Experts discussed the issue of ‘waithood’: the time young people wait after graduating from school to find a secure job and establish their own families. In many countries the time young people spend transitioning between life stages is lengthening, due in part to the economic crisis and the increasing instability of jobs. This has prompted many young people to emigrate in search of employment opportunities. Challenges associated with economic migration further impact and delay the transition phases of young people. Support to young economic migrants as well as unemployed youth is essential in ensuring that they remain active and engaged citizens. Unemployment can bring on negative effects such as

---

<sup>4</sup> World Program of Action for Youth, United Nations, 1995, Section 0– Intergenerational Issues - point 42

depression, idleness, isolation, and anger. Protests arising in the Arab world in spring 2011, have resulted from a demand for better opportunities for young people, especially labour market opportunities, education and democratic participation. These protests have highlighted the importance of better investing in youth and involving young people in democratic and policy making processes.

### **Girls and young women**

17. Young people are not a homogenous group. Young people's needs vary widely both within and across countries. The ability of a young person to participate in youth structures or civil society processes can depend heavily upon their social and economic status, gender, disability, and ethnic and religious backgrounds. Developing processes and structures which support the participation of young people from all backgrounds, as well as enhancing opportunities for young people with limited education and employment opportunities, and those suffering from poverty or disability is fundamental to ensuring that policy development is reflective of the needs of all of society's young people.

18. Enhancing the participation of girls and young women in society is particularly essential in creating an equitable society and in meeting the demands of the WPAY. Cultural and legal impediments to the participation of girls and young women in society can severely undermine the development of youth. Developing mechanisms to improve the access to participation for young women is therefore a key priority of the WPAY and the UN system and indispensable for meaningful intergenerational dialogue.

### **Implementation of the World Program of Action for Youth**

19. WPAY is recognised as the primary guiding document on youth issues at the international level and as an effective tool in promoting youth participation and youth engagement. WPAY provides a framework for the development of national youth policies and the support of youth development, youth organizations and youth participation at the national, regional and international levels.

20. The implementation of the WPAY has been piecemeal and limited in many countries and regions. For example, in the Arab region only 5 out of the 14 UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)<sup>5</sup> countries have implemented any form of national youth policy. Even in cases where a national youth policy had been established, these were often not backed up by finances, monitoring or evaluation.

---

<sup>5</sup> ESCWA member states: Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

21. The development of national youth policies and frameworks are essential in the recognition of youth rights and youth development and provide a tool for ensuring support, recognition and funding to youth organisations and youth projects. National youth policies must be tailored to suit the situation of the country and to raise awareness of the importance of youth development and engagement.

22. To help better support the development of national youth policies, ESCWA provides workshops and trainings on the implementation of the WPAY for member states in the region particularly on how to make the WPAY relevant to the realities of youth at the country level. Although national youth policies should be country specific, regional coordination of their development, through bodies such as ESCWA, can provide an impetus for countries to develop strong, transparent and rights based policies.

### **3. Youth and Family at the Regional Level**

23. Several experts drew attention to the fact that many countries and regions are experiencing what is known as a ‘Youth Bulge’, that is, a sharp rise in the youth population resulting in an inability of a country to meet the demand for greater employment opportunities and service provision. This, in turn, leads to a situation of social unrest with youth demanding better opportunities, as witnessed recently in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Bahrain and Yemen. These social changes demonstrate the ability and motivation of young people to mobilize and actively pursue their rights. This report provides an overview of youth policy at the regional level, paying particular attention to the situation in the Arab world.

#### **Arab Region**

24. Within the ESCWA region youth engagement in political life is quite limited with the minimum voting age being set at age 25. In addition to the disenfranchisement of young people, there are often very few fora for youth to actively participate and contribute to democratic processes.

25. In countries in the region which have been affected by ongoing conflict and violence there has been a noted impact on youth development and intergenerational relations. Violence and conflict can serve to break up families and communities, and cause suspicion and tension between generations on political ideals and aspirations. Ensuring young people’s involvement in their communities is fundamental in preventing them from resorting to violent measures to meet their needs in conflict torn areas and in promoting conflict resolution.



26. It was noted by Experts that the 2011 youth driven upheavals occurring in the Arab region<sup>6</sup> provided an insight into the issues and concerns facing young people within the region. In particular, high unemployment rates and lack of opportunities amongst youth were deemed as some of the primary concerns leading to the protests. Despite this, it was stressed that the events were not solely youth specific but rather arose from a demand for change to historical structures which have served to limit the quality of life of the country's populace, such as undemocratic and corrupt governance, censorship, and discrimination. However, due to the utilization of newer technologies, such as Facebook and Twitter, youth quickly became the 'face' of the changes taking place in many of the Arab countries. The use of social media acted as a platform for young people to mobilize, engage and have their ideas and voices heard in the region, as well as to garner global support and recognition. This shift in communication and mobilization has provoked a global debate on how to better engage with youth and social media.

## **Europe**

27. Many European countries have made big strides in job creation for young people over the past 20 years. Youth is high on the agenda of many European countries and of the institutions of the European Union. National Youth Councils work effectively in many European countries and operate along side a plethora of youth led organizations. Participatory processes have been established in many countries as a means of involving young people in the democratic process and inputting into national and EU policy development. At the regional level, the European Youth Forum operates as an umbrella organization for over 100 national youth councils and youth organizations, representing youth towards the European Institutions and other international bodies. The European Institutions and many EU member states provide funding to youth work and youth organizations and their development. For youth organizations to exist and operate on a long term basis, they need to have sustainable operational funding. In recent years there has been a trend to funding opportunities to move from operational to project based funding threatening the sustainability of youth organizations and limiting their ability to develop strategic plans.

28. The development of national and regional youth policies are not only important in setting policy guidelines for youth work and youth related issues, but provide a valuable process through which youth can actively participate in designing policies that concern them.

---

<sup>6</sup> Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen, Bahrain

## **Latin America**

29. Many young people in Latin America continue to experience poverty and social exclusion which has been closely associated with increased rates of violence, particularly in larger towns and cities. In addition, despite progress in youth literacy and access to education, Latin America too suffers from a Youth Bulge, with a lack of decent jobs and opportunities for personal development. This has resulted in many young people turning to illicit ways of making an income, such as organized and violent crime. The issue of violence in the region is one which needs to be addressed by policy makers taking into account the perspective and input of youth.

30. In Latin America progress is being made to better include youth rights on national agendas and to develop a regional coordination of youth policy. The Ibero-American Convention on Young People's Rights, which entered into force in 2008 and was ratified by Ecuador, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Spain, and Costa Rica, proves that growing importance is being placed on youth rights in Latin America. The Convention provides a valuable framework for the development of youth policies at the national level in Latin America and a framework through which youth led organizations can better operate.

31. The UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) has developed four broad areas of focus for its work in the region related to youth: building youth capacity, through increasing primary and secondary level education; creating opportunities in vocational training and youth entrepreneurship; risk prevention through focusing on reduction of sexually transmitted diseases, drug use and risky behaviours; increasing the sense of belonging of marginalized youth. In doing so, it hopes to better educate and engage young people in developing their skills and capacities to be able to better meet the needs of their communities and labour markets.

## **Africa**

32. Sixty per cent of Africa's population are youth. Poverty remains a dominant problem in many African countries, and impacts highly on the role of the family, family structures and intergenerational relations. Lack of adequate education and access to education continues to impact upon the lives of young people in Africa, particularly young women and those from vulnerable or marginalized backgrounds. Such a situation perpetuates a cycle of poverty, which is closely associated with lower levels of participation of youth and civic engagement.

33. In addition, in 2007, an estimated 3.2 million young people were living with HIV in Sub-Saharan Africa alone, with HIV/AIDS accounting for over 53 per cent of deaths

among Africa's youth. The AIDS epidemic has left generational gaps in many African countries, with many young people being raised by their grandparents as a result of their birth parents dying of AIDS and AIDS related illnesses prematurely. This situation has impacted significantly the family structure in Africa and has highlighted the important role that grandparents often take in assuming responsibility as primary caregivers to grandchildren.

34. Youth issues are a key concern for many African countries. The African Youth Charter, established in 2006, sets out a legally binding framework for governments to develop policies and programmes for young people and provides a platform for young people to exercise their rights and actively contribute to development in the region. The ratification, implementation and recognition of the Charter will be central in ensuring that young people are placed high on the development agenda in Africa. Initiatives such as the creation of youth parliaments, youth committees and support to youth organizations in some African countries showcase the increased recognition youth participation is receiving across the continent.

### **Asia and Pacific region**

35. It was noted that in the Pacific region there has been a more coordinated approach to the development of youth policy in recent years, with countries in the region sharing best practices and developing policy within a regional framework. An expert from the region indicated that there had been increased efforts at all levels to increase youth participation, particularly within the context of the family, where young people were increasingly being recognized as active partners in dialogue and family and community life.

### **Developing youth policies at national and regional levels**

36. Several experts emphasized that there has been a paradigm shift in how youth policy has been regarded in many regions. Whereas youth organizations and youth work once, for most part, involved the participation of students, it has broadened to mean the active participation of civil society youth from all backgrounds and in all spheres of life. This shift has also been characterized by a move from project to movement based youth work, where youth organizations not only develop projects to respond to specific needs in the community but work as movements with specific ideals and missions.

37. A number of countries in the Arab region are in the process of developing national youth policies. However, problems and barriers to their development exist including no or little practice or knowledge sharing on youth policy development between countries in the region, resulting in a wide variety of approaches to their

development, from programme based and cross cutting, to project based and non cross cutting. A lack of youth mainstreaming and coordination across ministries and bodies at the national and regional levels results in the development of non coherent youth policies unreflective of the needs and aspirations of young people it is trying to target.

38. With big variations in the development and implementation of youth policy in the region, coordination for young people across these countries becomes more difficult. As such, there is a need to develop a more streamlined and common approach to youth policy development at the regional level, characterized by knowledge and skill sharing, so as to allow for better transfer of knowledge and ideas amongst youth and to enhance cooperation. Regional organizations are noted as having value in providing a template for countries within a region to develop national youth policies and to share skills and knowledge within the region. Regional commissions, such as ESCWA in the Arab region, can also act as a bridge to connect countries internationally and provide a space for countries to develop policies related to youth in a coordinated way.

39. A lack of institutional capacity of governments and ministries to implement youth policies, as well as a lack of awareness of the value of youth participation, has meant that in many cases youth policy is developed without partnering with youth. For youth policies to be reflective of the needs and realities of young people, youth should be included in all stages of the development process. Experts noted the importance of developing youth based policies from the ground up and reflective of a country's individual needs and situation. Prescribing a 'one size fits all' policy is not effective and focusing on developing policies and programmes concerning youth at the local level, with a strong focus on young people's participation in their development is critical.

40. Experts identified National Youth Councils as being valuable entities for the development of youth policy and youth participation. National Youth Councils provide the opportunity for youth organizations to strategize and prioritize together, helping to ensure further opportunities for young people's participation while providing them with a platform to turn to when seeking out participation opportunities. In many Arab countries no laws supporting youth led organizations exist and this severely hinders the possibility for their creation and sustainability, due to lack of recognition and funding. Appropriate funding for both the development for youth policy and the support of youth organizations and processes is essential in ensuring full and effective youth development at the regional level.

#### **4. Intergenerational Relations**

41. “Solidarity between generations at all levels – families, communities and nations- is fundamental for the achievement of a society for all ages.”<sup>7</sup>

42. Intergenerational dialogue is of great importance to society and can be valuable at the family and community levels as well as national and regional levels. Not only can generations learn from each other by sharing knowledge and experience, they also need each other in order to meet the growing care needs of older people. Intergenerational relationships generate mutual benefits; older persons contribute to the education and care of younger generations in an economic, physical and emotional way. Correspondingly, young people provide significant assistance to the wellbeing of the older people<sup>8</sup>, for example through care giving in older age, assisted living arrangements and monetary assistance.

43. Although, as a result of demographic and socio-economic changes, intergenerational relations have been placed under increasing pressure, through intergenerational dialogue and understanding, reciprocity and solidarity between generations can be strengthened and supported.<sup>9</sup> Intergenerational dialogue is characterized by knowledge sharing, cultural norms and traditions as well as mutual care, maintenance and resource exchange.<sup>10</sup> Intergenerational dialogue is essential to the functioning of society as a whole. Although culturally and geographically dependent, most people attach great value to the maintenance of relations between older and younger generations. Despite difference in family values across regions and countries, basic family values of support and nurturing are common across most societies.

44. When discussing the notion of the family, it is important to keep in mind its changing nature and new family types, for example, single parent families, step parent families, transnational families, whose members live in different countries, same sex partners and other family types. The changing nature of family has meant family structures and roles have been shifting, impacting on the opportunities for and nature of intergenerational dialogue. Equality within the family and in society more generally, impacts upon the nature of intergenerational relations. Whereas intergenerational dialogue between women might once have been, and in many countries still is, defined primarily as taking place within the home, women’s entry to the labour force and

---

<sup>7</sup> Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, Issue 5 Intergenerational Solidarity, point 42.

<sup>8</sup> Intergenerational Solidarity; Strengthening Economic and Social Ties Expert Group Meeting, October 2007, recommendations and proceedings

<sup>9</sup> Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002

<sup>10</sup> United Nations International Year of Youth Fact Sheet: Youth and Intergenerational Partnerships  
<http://social.un.org/youthyear/docs/youth-partnerships.pdf>

increased participation in education and community life has allowed for increased intergenerational social interactions in non family contexts. Programmes and initiatives targeting intergenerational dialogue must therefore take these changing structures and roles into account. Families in all their formats should be supported to play a positive role in young people's development and in enhancing intergenerational dialogue.

45. Several experts indicated that despite greater equality of roles within and outside of the family context, as a result of economic, cultural, political and demographic changes, there exists increasing 'generational disjuncture'<sup>11</sup>, that is, a disconnect between the generations. In particular this is characterized by a physical distance between the generations, as a result of migration (economic migration, conflict driven migration), and a social distance. Social distance refers to the distance that exists between the generations as a result of differing levels of education, beliefs, influence of media, and ideas between them. Such differences serve to further distance the generations leaving them with fewer common points of interaction. Social distance can have a negative effect on the ability of generations to support each other, as they begin to feel less responsibility for care-giving to a generation they have little in common with or connection to. This can result in isolation and feelings of loneliness amongst older adults.

46. Isolation and loneliness as it pertains to older people is an area of growing concern, particularly in Europe, where increasingly higher percentages of older people are living in single or couple only family households as a result of demographic ageing, perpetuating both social and physical distance. Demographic change has meant that the traditional system of younger people supporting their parents in their old age is dissipating. Increased life expectancy together with lower fertility rates has put a strain on intergenerational support of older people as well as social security and pension systems. In many societies in Europe most support now flows from older to younger people, as a result of younger people remaining in the home for longer periods and being reliant on their parents' income.

47. To properly address this phenomenon, greater investment in intergenerational processes is needed as well as a commitment by both younger and older people in sharing the responsibility to make the intergenerational dialogue a success. The promotion of emotional bonds between the generations and within the family context is therefore key for improving intergenerational relations. Initiatives such as ensuring quality time for communication between parents and children within the family, ensuring time for visiting older relatives such as grandparents and including grandparents in family events all help to nurture bonds between family members. By actively participating in this process

---

<sup>11</sup> The changing patterns of Intergenerational Relations in South Africa, paper presented by Makiwane Monde at 2011 United Nations and Doha International Institute for Family Studies Expert Group Meeting on dialogue and mutual understanding across generations.

young people can make useful and significant contributions to society and must be considered as key agents and participants in intergenerational dialogue.

48. Greater recognition and redistribution of resources towards intergenerational programming and initiatives, together with adequate resources targeted to the needs of both older and young members of society are crucial for advancing dialogue across generations. Moreover, the recognition of both older and younger people as equal partners and contributors to the process of intergenerational dialogue is critical to its success. In societies where hierarchical structures exist between older and younger people the process of intergenerational dialogue becomes more challenging, as preconceived notions of the capacity of younger people and what they can contribute to the process may serve to limit its effectiveness. It is important that intergenerational relations be based on reciprocity

#### **5. Intergenerational dialogue in context**

49. The changing roles of institutions; such as the family, educational institutions, and the workplace has had an impact on intergenerational solidarity. In all settings for intergenerational dialogue to be successful, intergenerational interactions should be intentional, preparing people for dialogue. Intergenerational dialogue should also be regular, taking place frequently so as to promote intergenerational ties. Dialogue which takes place rarely and sporadically does little to promote intergenerational relationships on a whole. With this in mind, experts discussed intergenerational dialogue and relations as they take place within the follow contexts.

#### **Education**

50. Experts agreed that education provides both younger and older persons with the skills and knowledge necessary to actively participate in society. In particular, Non Formal Education (NFE) is recognized as a valuable tool in developing the life skills needed for effective intergenerational dialogue and communication. Non Formal Education is a planned learning activity which typically involves a series of workshops which aim at developing the skills of the learner outside the constraints of formal education. The process is often peer led and places the learner at the centre of the process. Although NFE is a valuable tool, it is very often not recognized by educational institutions, employers, and often society as a whole. NFE therefore needs greater support, recognition and funding, as a tool for helping young people develop the skills necessary for life and the labour market.

51. In addition, Life Long Learning, which is education taking place throughout the course of the learner's life, can often incorporate aspects of NFE and likewise provide a

powerful tool for people of all ages to engage in the educational process through all life stages.

52. Greater resources are needed toward the investment of skills and transfer of knowledge across generations, in particularly for spaces which promote intergenerational transfers and learning. Both NFE and Life Long Learning are adaptable tools for education and the creation of intergenerational learning spaces.

### **Workplace**

53. Experts emphasized the importance of workplace based initiatives, such as mentoring, in helping to promote intergenerational dialogue and encourage skill sharing between older and younger people. The role of mentorship is particularly important in, though not limited to, the workplace. Mentoring provides a space for dialogue and skill sharing between older and younger workers where ideas can be shared and experiences exchanged. Mentoring can take place in a variety of different contexts, and should be supported as such.

54. Equality in relationships is essential for effective intergenerational dialogue and mentoring, with both younger and older persons being equally valued for the skills and input they bring to the table. Often, when it comes to intergenerational relations, and particularly those within the workforce, an authoritarian power dynamic can exist which undermines the success of intergenerational dialogue. Ensuring a non hierarchical atmosphere is essential for intergenerational mentoring to be successful. Allowing all participants to contribute equally and openly fosters strong intergenerational ties.

### **Family**

55. Experts observed that family is often regarded as the first line of support for society. Promoting extended family ties helps to reinforce the basic role of the family in supporting both younger and older members. Within the family context, intergenerational relations can take many forms. Young people can become carers at an early age to ill parents, sacrificing their free time, friendships with peers and often education, to take care of a sick parent. A young person's contribution to society in this sense can be invaluable, though often left unrecognised. Likewise, parents can continue looking after their children long after the typical 'flea the nest' time has lapsed. In both situations, the family, and its members individually, must be better supported and recognised in the roles they play in an intergenerational context. In this context, it is often advisable to provide support to family caregivers instead of institutionalizing of care to healthcare institutions. For example, monetary compensation could be offered to family members taking care of older relatives, instead of arbitrarily placing older persons in care facilities.



56. In Singapore, policies and schemes highlight the importance placed on the family as the primary space for providing intergenerational contact<sup>12</sup>. Housing policies which encourage intergenerational living, the creation of a taskforce on grand-parenting as well as an intergenerational fund for projects promoting intergenerational interaction are all initiatives undertaken to improve intergenerational issues in Singaporean society.

57. For intergenerational dialogue to develop, the family must be supported. Changing family structures, as mentioned earlier, are important to keep in mind when intergenerational programmes and policies are designed, so as to be inclusive of all realms where intergenerational dialogue can occur.

### **Community**

58. Although the family provides a base for intergenerational relationships, increasingly other spaces where social interactions take place are being recognized for their potential to foster intergenerational dialogue. In families where older and younger generations have little contact or do not live in the same household, community based initiatives and interactions provide a space for intergenerational dialogue to occur. Ensuring a more holistic approach to intergenerational communication is essential, particularly within the community where more public domains for both younger and older generations should exist. It is primarily society's youngest and oldest who are the least mobile and whose interactions take place primarily within their local communities. This creates potential for the development of intergenerational programming and initiatives at the community level. Such initiatives exemplified at the EGM, and spoken about in detail in the Expert papers showcase schemes such as a community combining resources to run an intergenerational school/senior centre, where both young and older people operate activities within the same facility and develop joint activities.<sup>13</sup>

### **Technology**

59. Experts noted that technology is playing an increasingly large and central role in the lives of many people, especially youth. Newer technologies, particularly social media, are changing the nature and frequency of interactions between people. More and more young people are spending time communicating with their peers online as opposed to in

---

<sup>12</sup> Promoting intergenerational understanding between the young and old: the case of Singapore, paper presented by Leng Leng Thang to 2011 United Nations and Doha International Institute for Family Studies Expert Group Meeting on dialogue and mutual understanding across the generations.

<sup>13</sup> Existing framework for dialogue and mutual understanding across generations: family, community, educational institutions and workplace, paper presented by Donna Butts to the 2011 United Nations and Doha International Institute for Family Studies Expert Group Meeting on dialogue and mutual understanding across the generations.

face to face situations. At the same time, older demographics spend less time online. This results in a generational technology gap. As a result, utilizing technology in a way that enhances intergenerational contacts as opposed to distancing them is of importance. Central to this is ensuring the accessibility of technology to older people, those who experience technological marginalization, such as those who speak indigenous languages, those with disabilities and those in communities where computer based technology is not as easily available.

60. Schemes where young people teach older people how to use newer technologies were discussed as having a benefit not only for the older learner, but also the younger person, in enhancing social connections between generations.

### **Research and Funding**

61. The strain being placed on pension and social security systems, as a result of demographic ageing in many countries, may reflect negatively on intergenerational relations, as the generations compete for scarce resources. It is important for policy makers to keep in mind that each family member possesses competing demands. Resources, policies and programmes should be utilized and developed in a way that tries to meet demands so as to promote communication between the generations.

62. In addition to resources, Experts identified the need for greater research and data collection on youth at the regional level so as to be able better identify the needs of young people and develop policies accordingly. For example, identifying how the characteristics of youth unemployment differ from one area to another is important in creating a multi faceted and appropriate policy response. For this to happen, better data collection at all levels is required.

63. Training young people as youth researchers was also highlighted as a means of not only ensuring that data collected is done so with a youth lens but also allows new forms of youth employment to be created and allows young people to be actively involved in analyzing the situation of youth.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

64. As reflected in the meeting, youth participation is central to ensuring full and meaningful intergenerational dialogue. Ensuring both older and younger generations are equal participants in dialogue, as well as providing appropriate funding and space for intergenerational relations to develop is central to fostering dialogue and mutual understanding across the generations.

65. Moreover, the development of policy frameworks and initiatives which serve to strengthen the participation of both older and younger persons in society, as well as their rights and responsibilities is a pre-requisite for promoting successful dialogue and understanding across the generations.

66. Support to structures, such as youth organizations and organizations geared and enhancing intergenerational dialogue allows civil society to foster better relations between the generations. Support should come in the form of both recognition and financing.

67. Likewise, the promotion of the participation of all groups in society, particularly marginalized people, girls and young women, those suffering from discrimination allows for a meaningful dialogue.

68. Programmes and initiatives such as mentoring and leadership programmes both for young people and in an intergenerational setting help develop the skills necessary for young people to participate in dialogue as well as to become active youth leaders in their community.

69. The development of national youth policies and regional coordination mechanisms on youth issues ensures young people's rights are enshrined into policy making. Central to this is the development of policies on youth issues which take a cross cutting and multi-sectoral approach, where youth issues are not only dealt with by bodies or ministries in charge of youth, but where youth issues are mainstreamed and considered throughout all ministries with appropriate communication and coordination between.

70. Social media and new technologies are playing an increasingly important role in the lives of young people and have provided an additional avenue through which youth can mobilize and participate. It is therefore a necessity for governments, policy makers and civil society alike to engage with youth via newer technologies and understand the impacts and potential this technology can have in advancing youth issues and dialogue across the generations.

## **Recommendations**

### **Youth Participation**

1. Promote the full and effective participation of young people at local, national, regional and international levels, with particular attention to marginalised youth
2. Recognize and promote the independence of youth groups and youth organizations
3. Promote the concept of young people as assets and work towards the elimination of negative stereotypes of youth
4. Invest in and ensure the increased participation of girls and women in development
5. Strengthen partnerships with and for youth among all stakeholders to enhance commitment and holistic youth development

### **Research**

6. Foster research and knowledge building on youth, by youth, to better inform real world policy programmes
7. Conduct in-depth regional research and analysis to capture the political, social and psychological dynamics defining youth
8. Establish a permanent mechanism for researchers and policy makers to share information, particularly information that is not widely distributed or accessible.
9. Promote shared or joint research projects conducted by youth
10. Collect data for comprehensive, comparable and participatory research on youth, both qualitative and quantitative
11. Promote research on:
  - Young people older than 18 who remain at home and are supported by their parents;
  - Good practices on work-family balance
12. Assist the development of youth as researchers, and hold a youth researcher summit (UNESCO)

13. Establish an intergenerational pool of consultants for youth development at the United Nations

### **Family Policy**

14. Provide better support to families in encouraging youth participation, empowerment and intergenerational cooperation.
15. Support families in performing their different functions, such as care-giving, nurturing, and caring for the young and the old
16. Strengthen and support policies that enhance resilience and are beneficial to the needs of all family members

### **Education, workplace, community**

17. Implement policies to best harness the benefits of youth migration
18. Develop and implement regional and national policies and initiatives that address barriers to long term and sustainable youth employment, such as vocational training, in order to improve the transition from education to employment
19. Work towards the promotion and development of a variety of educational tools, such as online learning and educational exchanges
20. Strengthen and develop public spaces and programmes in communities that are friendly to youth and allow intergenerational interaction.
21. Provide quality formal and non formal education improving the curriculum to reflect the needs of society
22. Invest in intergenerational solidarity opportunities in the workplace, particularly in mutually beneficial mentorship programmes
23. Improve frameworks for the recognition of volunteering across the ages

### **Fostering Positive Intergenerational Relations**

24. Promote and facilitate youth mentoring and youth leadership
25. Promote the development of school based programmes that involve parents/older adult volunteers in schools

26. Develop mechanisms that allow for the flexible and voluntary involvement of retired persons in society
27. Adopt an intergenerational lens approach to reviewing and evaluating programmes and policies
28. Strengthen community development programmes that support intergenerational relations
29. Provide a platform for intergenerational dialogue, for example by setting up intergenerational councils at the local and national levels
30. Invest in activities to improve dialogue and mutual understanding, and acceptance of others across generations, for example in schools, families, communities, and the labour market
31. Design policies that encourage reciprocal wealth transfer, mutual protection, mentoring and respect between generations
32. Governments should seek to enhance the self-reliance of elderly people to facilitate their continued participation in society. In consultation with elderly people, Governments should ensure that the necessary conditions are developed to enable elderly people to lead self-determined, healthy and productive lives and to make full use of the skills and abilities they have required in their lives for the benefit of society. The valuable contribution that elderly make to families and society, especially as volunteers and caregivers, should be given due recognition and encouragement.

#### **National, Regional, International institutions**

33. Increase commitment and investment in youth within the UN system, in particular supporting the UN programme on youth and mainstreaming youth issues throughout the UN system
34. Enhance regional coordination and call upon the member states of the UN to develop and implement participatory, cross-sectoral and evidence informed youth policies, focusing on creating mechanisms for youth participation
35. Call upon high level political leaders to advance youth development
36. Encourage the development of regional guidelines for youth policies to promote a common understanding of their formulation, implementation and evaluation, within the framework of the WPAY

37. Review the plans and strategies targeting youth in light of current developments in the Arab region
38. Encourage strategic engagement on youth issues at the national, regional and international levels using multi-sectoral and cross cutting approaches.
39. Ensure a strong youth perspective in the post 2015 agenda

#### **Funding and Resources**

40. Encourage governments to provide resources for families to care for younger and older members of society
41. Call upon governments and private sector to allocate resources and ensure sustainable long term funding for youth development.
42. Call upon governments and private sector to allocate resources and ensure sustainable long term funding for programs developed and led by youth.

#### **Technology**

43. Engage with new technologies in promoting dialogue across generations and enhance access for marginalized people, including indigenous people and minorities, including those who speak minority languages

#### **Conflict**

44. Give priority and support to young people affected by conflict in varying contexts, such as foreign occupation or civil war

## التوصيات

### مشاركة الشباب

1. تشجيع المشاركة الكاملة والفعالة للشباب على المستويات الوطنية والإقليمية والدولية ، مع إيلاء اهتمام خاص إلى الشباب المهمشين
2. الاعتراف وتعزيز استقلال المجموعات الشبابية والمنظمات الشبابية
3. تعزيز مفهوم الشباب كأهم مصادر الثروة والعمل من أجل القضاء على الصور النمطية السلبية للشباب
4. الاستثمار في وضمان زيادة مشاركة الفتيات والنساء في التنمية
5. تعزيز الشراكات مع الشباب و بين جميع أصحاب المصلحة من أجل تعزيز الإلتزام الشامل لتنمية الشباب

### المجال البحثي

6. تعزيز البحوث والبناء المعرفي حول الشباب ، و بالشباب ، من أجل بلوغ أفضل برامج سياسية واقعية عالمية
7. القيام بأبحاث و تحليلات إقليمية علمية معمقة لتحديد تعريف إجتماعي و نفسي و سياسي واقعي لمفهوم الشباب
8. إنشاء آلية دائمة للباحثين وصانعي السياسات لتبادل المعلومات ، ولا سيما المعلومات التي لم يتم توزيعها على نطاق واسع أو الوصول إليها.
9. تعزيز المشاريع و البحوث المشتركة التي يساهم في إجرائها الشباب .
10. جمع البيانات من أجل البحوث الشاملة و المقارنة و التشاركية المتعلقة بالشباب ، نوعياً و كميأ .
11. تعزيز البحوث حول ما يلي :
  - الشباب أكبر من سن 18 عام ، و الذين لا يزالون يقيمون مع اسرهم و يعتمدون على والديهم .
  - الممارسات الجيدة في تحقيق التوازن بين العمل والأسرة .
12. المساعدة في تطوير الشباب والباحثين ، و عقد قمة الباحث الشاب (اليونسكو)
13. إنشاء تجمع بين الأجيال من الاستشاريين لتنمية الشباب في الأمم المتحدة

### سياسة الأسرة

14. توفير دعم أفضل للأسر من أجل تشجيع الشباب على المشاركة والتمكين والتعاون بين الأجيال.
15. دعم الأسر في أداء وظائفها المختلفة ، مثل توفير الرعاية ورعاية الصغار والكبار
16. تعزيز ودعم السياسات التي تعزز القدرة على التكيف وتعود بالفائدة على احتياجات جميع أفراد الأسرة



## التعليم ، ومكان العمل والمجتمع

17. تنفيذ سياسات لتحقيق أفضل استفادة من الهجرة الشباب
18. وضع وتنفيذ السياسات الوطنية والإقليمية والمبادرات التي تتناول العوائق المستعصية ، للتوظيف المستدام للشباب ، مثل التدريب المهني ، من أجل تحسين الانتقال من التعليم إلى العمل
19. العمل من أجل تعزيز وتطوير مجموعة متنوعة من الأدوات التعليمية ، مثل التعلم عبر الإنترنت والتبادلات التعليمية
20. تعزيز وتطوير المشاركات العامة والبرامج في المجتمعات المحلية التي هي صديقة للشباب والتي تسمح بالتفاعل بين الأجيال.
21. العمل على توفير نوعية التعليم النظامي وغير الرسمي من أجل تحسين المناهج الدراسية لتعكس احتياجات المجتمع
22. الاستثمار في فرص التضامن بين الأجيال في مكان العمل ، ولا سيما في برامج الإرشاد متبادل المنفعة
23. تحسين أطر للاعتراف التطوع عبر الأجيال .

## تعزيز العلاقات بين الأجيال الإيجابية

24. تشجيع وتسهيل توجيه الشباب والقيادات الشبابية
25. تعزيز تطوير برامج مدرسية تستند إلى إشراك الوالدين أو لا أخلاقي أقدم المتطوعين في المدارس
26. وضع آليات تسمح بمشاركة طوعية ومرنة للمتقاعدين في المجتمع
27. اعتماد نهج الرؤية عن قرب بين الأجيال لاستعراض وتقييم البرامج والسياسات
28. برامج التنمية المجتمعية التي تدعم تعزيز العلاقات بين الأجيال
29. توفير منبر للحوار بين الأجيال ، على سبيل المثال من خلال إنشاء مجالس مشتركة بين الأجيال على المستويات المحلية والوطنية
30. الاستثمار في الأنشطة الرامية إلى تحسين الحوار والتفاهم المتبادل وقبول الآخر عبر الأجيال ، على سبيل المثال في المدارس والأسر والمجتمعات ، وسوق العمل
31. تصميم السياسات التي تشجع على النقل المتبادل للثروة ، الحماية المتبادلة ، والتوجيه والاحترام بين الأجيال .
32. وينبغي للحكومات أن تسعى إلى تعزيز الاعتماد على الذات بين المسنين لتسهيل استمرار مشاركتهم في المجتمع ، بالتشاور مع كبار السن ، وينبغي للحكومات ضمان الظروف الضرورية اللازمة لتمكين المسنين من إدراك حياة صحية مثمرة مع الاعتماد على النفس والاستفادة الكاملة من المهارات والقدرات لديهم في حياتهم لصالح المجتمع ، إن المساهمة المثمرة التي يقدمها المسنون للأسرة و المجتمع و خاصة كمتطوعين و مقدمي رعاية ينبغي أن تعطى داخل إطار من العرفان و التشجيع.

## المؤسسات الوطنية والإقليمية الدولية

33. العمل على زيادة الالتزام والاستثمار في الشباب من خلال منظومة الأمم المتحدة ، خاصة دعم برنامج الأمم المتحدة حول الشباب وقضايا الشباب عبر منظومة الأمم المتحدة
34. تعزيز التنسيق الإقليمي و دعوة الدول الأعضاء في الأمم المتحدة على وضع وتنفيذ خطط المشاركة ، المتعلقة بالشباب و السياسات ذات المصادقية ، مع التركيز على خلق آليات لمشاركة الشباب
35. دعوة القادة السياسيين للنهوض بالتنمية و النهوض بالشباب .
36. تشجيع وضع مبادئ توجيهية إقليمية لسياسات الشباب لتعزيز الفهم المشترك لصياغة و تنفيذ ، وتقييم هذه السياسات ، في إطار برنامج العمل العالمي للشباب The World Programme of Action for Youth
37. مراجعة الخطط والاستراتيجيات التي تستهدف الشباب في ضوء التطورات الراهنة في المنطقة العربية
38. تشجيع المشاركة البناءة حول قضايا الشباب على المستويات الإقليمية والدولية بالإستعانة بالمناهج المتنوعة.
39. كفاءة وجود منظور قوي للشباب في مرحلة ما بعد جدول الأعمال 2015

## التمويل والموارد

40. تشجيع الحكومات على توفير موارد للأسر لرعاية الصغار وكبار السن من أفراد المجتمع
41. دعوة الحكومات والقطاع الخاص على تخصيص الموارد وضمان التمويل المستدام على المدى الطويل لتنمية الشباب.
42. دعوة الحكومات والقطاع الخاص على تخصيص الموارد وضمان التمويل المستدام على المدى الطويل للبرامج التي يقودوها الشباب والمقدمة من قبلهم .

## التكنولوجيا

43. التعامل مع التكنولوجيات الجديدة في تعزيز الحوار بين الأجيال وتعزيز الوصول للناس المهمشين ، بمن فيهم السكان الأصليين والأقليات ، من أولئك الذين يتكلمون لغات الأقليات

## النزاع

44. إعطاء الأولوية لدعم الشباب المتأثرين بالنزاعات في سياقات مختلفة ، مثل الاحتلال الأجنبي أو الحرب الأهلية .

# ***Presentations\****

\* The papers reflect the personal opinion of the experts

# ***Falko Mohrs***

## **Summary**

The European Youth Forum (YFJ) is concerned about the tense conditions young people are facing today, jeopardizing the positive development of youth and the sustainability of societies all over the world. Full and effective participation of young people and youth-led organizations and platforms is required in order to ensure development and social coherence. Demographic change, which is most obvious in developing countries, leverages the need for an intergenerational solidarity pact as well as a renewed Social Model, recognizing the period of transition towards an autonomous life, which marks the specific situation of young people. The YFJ calls upon a rights-based approach to youth policy, matching the needs of young people.

The 12<sup>th</sup> August 2010 marked the beginning of the International Year of Youth; Dialogue and Mutual Understanding. Taking into account all challenges young people, youth organizations and other stakeholders are facing concerning the year's set-up, the YFJ strives towards clear aims for the year and beyond. Namely, a commitment to strong youth participation in the UN's Inter-Agency Network on Youth and Development as well as a post-MDG strategy which includes a strong youth perspective. The Year should be an opportunity to strengthen youth participation in relevant frameworks, which will be sustained thereafter.

## **Introduction**

'The capacity for progress of our societies is based, among other elements, on their capacity to incorporate the contribution and responsibility of youth in the building and designing of the future. In addition to their intellectual contribution and their ability to mobilize support, they bring unique perspectives that need to be taken into account. [...] Youth organizations are important forums for developing skills necessary for effective participation in society, promoting tolerance and increased cooperation and exchanges between youth organizations.' These quotes are taken from the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY), adopted by all Member States of the UN at the 50<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly in 1995.

Since its very beginning, the European Youth Forum (YFJ) has been involved in contributing to the WPAY, striving for its full implementation at the national, regional and global level. The YFJ is an independent, democratic, youth-led platform, representing national youth councils and international youth organisations from across Europe. The Forum works to empower young people to participate actively in society to improve their

own lives, by representing and advocating their needs and interests and those of their organisations. The YFJ's vision is to be the voice of young people in Europe, where young people are equal citizens and are encouraged and supported to achieve their fullest potential as global citizens. Currently the YFJ has around 100 Member Organizations from across Europe, representing the diversity of young people within the region.<sup>1</sup> As a regional youth-led platform, the YFJ works with three main institutional partners, namely the European Union, the Council of Europe and the United Nations and their respective departments and sections relevant to youth. With regard to the YFJ's work with the United Nations, the Millennium Development Goals and the World Programme of Action for Youth provide two concrete references and frameworks for youth development.

Right now, 50% of our global population is under aged 25, more than 18% are between 15 and 24 years old and are therefore considered youth – according to the UN's definition.<sup>2</sup> With 1.300 million young people now living in the world – the largest youth group in history - there has never been a better time or more urgent time to invest in youth.

The YFJ considers the UN as the body most relevant to govern global matters, and one that has a remarkable record of standard-setting in the area of human rights. Regardless there are specific circumstances and challenges. Young people all over the world share the same needs and must enjoy the same rights and strong support from all stakeholders. The World Programme of Action for Youth describes in its 15 priority areas as common aspects of young people. Some parts of the United Nations system have recognized the importance of working with and for youth. However, there is still a long way to go to ensure youth becomes a cross-sectoral issue in UN policy. Failure to seize this opportunity to empower young people more effectively to be active citizens could lead to widespread disillusionment and further social tensions – a development which can be monitored in various circumstances and regions.<sup>3</sup> Bearing in mind the number of young people and their proportion in the society all stakeholders must recognize that investing in young people is not only an investment in the future, but in the present too. All decisions which are taken today concern young people - nowadays and in the future. All goals related to peoples and society's development must therefore include a strong youth perspective and strive to provide answers to their life circumstances. It needs to be said that the Millennium Development Goals are mainly Youth Development Goals since young people's education, positive development and contribution to the society are relevant for the present and the future. The global level is a field of utmost importance for young people and the therefore the YFJ and its Member Organizations are committed to working with and contributing to the UN.

---

<sup>1</sup> Mission and Vision of the European Youth Forum ([www.youthforum.org](http://www.youthforum.org))

<sup>2</sup> based on <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/documents/wpay2010.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> based on 'The European Youth Forum and the United Nations System: the way forward!'

## **Youth and their full and effective participation**

In order to meet the needs of young people full and effective participation at all levels is needed. Only the involvement of young people in the preparations, decision making implementation and monitoring can ensure an efficient cross cutting youth policy matching the circumstances of young people's life. The United Nations Member States have recognized by adopting the youth resolution at the General Assembly 2005 for the first time that the implementation of the World Programme of Action and the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, require the full and effective participation of young people and youth-led organizations and other civil society organizations at the local, national, regional and international level.<sup>4</sup>

It should be kept in mind that in the current societal circumstances the disenchantment with politics, the mistrust towards political parties and the complexity of democratic decision-making processes is creating a democratic deficit, which is particularly relevant for groups that are underrepresented as well as underprivileged and therefore less involved in decision-making processes. Big parts of policy makers, institutions and civil society are aware of the existing need to improve the participation of young people and especially youth organisations in democratic decision-making processes, nevertheless the value of youth organisations for sustaining and strengthening democracy is not yet fully recognised and needs to be fostered. While the European Youth Forum acknowledges the changes in participation trends and the fact that not all young people are members of youth organisations, it is firmly convinced that non-governmental - and especially youth - organisations provide a solid and democratic representation of the interests of young people. Through their wide-ranging networks and democratic decision-making procedures as a crucial addition to representative democracy, youth organisations are giving young people the possibility to experience democratic decision-making in practice. Further, the YFJ is convinced that youth organisations are the actors to reach out to more and more diverse young people, as they are the closest ones to their lives.<sup>5</sup> Recent developments in the Arab region have proven that young people – if they are excluded from social security, the society, employment, politics, democracy or decisions that are taken for the society and can't benefit from development – have the power and will strive for their rights and change their societies. The previously so-called lost generation of the Arab Region has caused what the TIME called a Youthquake, referring to a society where six out of ten people are below 30, compared to only 41% in the US. In a survey from May 2010 of the Middle Eastern youth, the number one wish of the young in nine countries was to live in a free

---

<sup>4</sup> UN General Assembly's resolution 'Promoting youth participation in social and economic development' A/RES/62/126

<sup>5</sup> based on the YFJ's 'Policy Paper on Democracy and Youth Organizations'

country, however. Certainly, jobs and the desire to live in well-run, modern societies ranked very high as well.<sup>6</sup>

Knowing its responsibility for young people in Europe and beyond the YFJ is coordinating and cooperating not only with its Member Organizations in order to effectively represent the voices of young people but has close ties to other regional youth platforms as well as to globally active International Youth Organizations. The main space for global cooperation for the YFJ is the International Coordination Meeting of Youth Organisations (ICMYO), which gathers membership-based, democratic, representative, and accountable International Youth NGOs (INGYOs) and Regional Youth Platforms (RYPs). The main objectives of ICMYO are the strengthening of the cooperation among youth organisations at the regional and global levels and the coordination of political inputs to global youth policy processes.<sup>7</sup>

In order to guarantee the legitimacy of political inputs on youth issues at the institutional level, the following principles have been valued and prioritised by the YFJ as guidelines to choose its youth partners in democratic processes at the global level:

- Internal democratic processes;
- bottom-up approach;
- accountability and transparency
- legitimacy and credibility;
- constructive and positive common goals;
- effectiveness and efficiency impacts;
- sustainability for global cooperation;
- respectful of cultural and ideological diversity, as well as
- human rights.

All this is not an obstacle for the YFJ's recognition of the expertise of researchers and other actors in the youth field but sets the clear precondition that political input on behalf of youth should be coordinated and put forward by democratic youth-led structures.<sup>8</sup>

### **Youth and the demographic change**

Before the middle of this century, older persons and youth will comprise a roughly equal share of the world's population. The proportion of those aged 60 years and over is expected to double, rising from 10 to 21 per cent between 2000 and 2050, and the proportion of

---

<sup>6</sup> 2nd Annual ASDA'A Burson-Marsteller Arab Youth Survey

<sup>7</sup> <http://icmyo.wordpress.com/about/>

<sup>8</sup> YFJ's 'Policy Paper on Global Governance'

those under 14 years of age will decline by a third, from 30 to 20 per cent. It is forecast that the youth population will decrease from 18 to 14 per cent of the total population.<sup>9</sup>

This changing situation is most visible in developed countries and regions such as Europe. While life expectancy is increasing fertility rates are falling. This has not only changed the age pyramid of societies but also its coherence. Between 2005 and 2030, the working age population (15-64 years) is due to fall by 20.8 million. Moreover, the demographic dependency rate, defined as the ratio of the population aged 0 to 14 and over 65 to the population aged between 15 and 64 years, will rise from a rate of 49% in 2005 to 66% in 2030.<sup>10</sup> This makes it obvious that while the EU is striving to become a knowledge based economy there is a need for a knowledge society alongside it. This can only be achieved by investing in the formal and non-formal education of young people in order to ensure life long learning. Formal and non-formal education are complementary, and ensures that education is not reduced to its economic value but aims to empower young people to contribute to society. Furthermore a comprehensive development of young people supports a smooth transition from education to work and an independent life.

Both older people and young people are facing discrimination due to their age; therefore in 2005 the YFJ asked, in the framework of the discussions around the EU's green paper on demographic change, for an 'intergenerational solidarity plan' and a 'renewed European Social Model'. This is seen as a set of measures able to harness the economic power of the free market, within a regulatory system designed not only to prevent abuses but also to guarantee the satisfaction of basic social needs and social security; a system that combines freedom and civil equality before the law with social justice and solidarity.<sup>11</sup> These measures need to guarantee the inclusion and empowerment of all young people, regardless of their social and economic background.

Without such a renewed Social Model, specifically targeting the needs of the respective region or country, demographic change jeopardizes the sustainability of societies all over the world and an intergenerational approach is particularly needed in times of economic crisis. The World Youth Report 2005 outlined demands, which are – from the YFJ's point of view, complementary. The report demands that 'increased attention should be given to the socio-economic impact of ageing societies. There is a case to promote a two-pronged approach: first, investing in individual life courses, which includes age-adjusted policies and programmes that encourage workplace flexibility, lifelong learning and healthy lifestyles, especially during transitional periods, such as youth to adulthood, family

---

<sup>9</sup> World Youth Report 2005

<sup>10</sup> European Commission's Green paper (2005)

<sup>11</sup> YFJ's 'Policy Paper on Youth & the European Social Model'



formation, or midlife to later years; and second, strengthening the social environment of family, neighbourhood and community.’<sup>12</sup>

### **Youth and their Rights**

There is no doubt that globally there is a need to recognise young people as a demographic group, between childhood and adulthood, with specific needs. This period of life is marked by transition – for example from the educational system to work, from being protected to being responsible and autonomous members of society. During this period the young person is facing tremendous challenges related to their situation and to establishing their own space and approach to life, gaining employment, setting up their own family, accessing services and this is a situation that needs more attention. Although the International Year of Youth in 1985 was followed by the development of numerous national Youth Policies, there is still a lack of legal frameworks which would be particularly beneficial to the development of youth.

Young people moving from education into work are at a particularly vulnerable point in their lives, and this is especially the case for the least qualified, who generally experience the greatest difficulties in establishing a foothold in the labour market. One year after completion of initial education, a significant proportion of young people are not in employment, although the situation varies considerably across EU Member States - with employment rates ranging from 16% in Greece to 77% in Denmark.<sup>13</sup> Although there are considerable differences between Member States, the important general finding is that youth with low qualifications have significantly lower employment rates one, five and ten years after leaving initial education (OECD, 2008). Surveys from the last decade state that after examining many other factors higher youth insecurity is associated with higher co-residence rates with parents – in other words, young people are becoming autonomous at a later age.

Therefore a rights-based youth policy should strive to actively promote the autonomy of young people as well as their full participation in society. Protection against discrimination should be strengthened and specific measures to include young people with fewer opportunities in society need to be put in place. Youth rights encompass a wide range of basic rights and fundamental freedoms, already enshrined by international and regional human rights instruments. Young people have different needs and face different challenges than children and adults, which should be legally codified through youth rights.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> Word Youth Report 2005

<sup>13</sup> ‘Employment in Europe report’ (Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities)

<sup>14</sup> YFJ’s ‘Fact sheet on Youth Rights’

The YFJ aims to work towards the full realisation of the rights of young people as a prerequisite to further develop and build a democratic Europe with a sound social and economic model at all levels able to ensure the full development of the human and social potential of young people.<sup>15</sup>

### **Youth and their International Year**

The International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding, which was proclaimed by the UN General Assembly 2009 and started on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2010, provides a chance to mobilize young people and youth-led organizations worldwide in order to raise awareness, develop constructive and new solutions as well as discuss their needs. While the first International Year of Youth – celebrated in 1985 – was decided upon in 1979, stakeholders were this time around confronted with setting up an International Year in less than eight months. As a result, when the current Year on Youth was proclaimed, youth organizations and relevant institutions, such as the UN Programme on Youth, had already planned and budgeted their activities for the upcoming year without having included specific IYY activities. This left them feeling a lack of ownership over the year. While many stakeholders were committed to making the most out of the year, the objectives, priorities and concrete aims remained unclear. In addition, the vast majority of governments all over the world remained reluctant to provide youth organizations with additional funding or other resources. Despite these challenges many projects and activities have already been held at all levels.

The International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding is an opportunity to stress young people's needs and use the year for bringing youth on the political agenda where it was not done before; in particular, the year provides international youth organizations and platforms with a chance to raise awareness concerning the global dimension of youth work. A widespread means of running events in the frame of the International Year of Youth is to 'label' planned youth activities and add a global dimension. Examples are capacity building activities with a focus on global and interregional youth work, activities of Universities and new partnerships between youth organizations in different regions.

Besides the commitment of youth organizations and platforms, institutions and governments need to support young people and youth organizations with financial resources, a youth friendly framework and the necessary recognition. Bearing in mind that the year will soon have reached its last third, there is still the opportunity to bring young people and their needs back to the political spotlight, foster the discussion towards the rights of young people and the role youth has in the global development agenda. The last

---

<sup>15</sup> YFJ'S workplan 2011 - 2012

month of the year, including the UN High Level Meeting on Youth, can be a starting point for developing a post-MDG strategy for beyond 2015, which includes a strong youth perspective, stressing the link between investing in young people and sustainable development. The YFJ is advocating for a think tank – which includes experts from youth-led organizations – in order to set up this strategy.

Furthermore the Forum sees a need for improved youth participation at the global level; recent negotiations have displayed a lack of understanding and recognition of youth participation. Official Youth Delegates are still an exception – counting 27 UN Member States at its peak. Furthermore we see a need to establish permanent youth participation at the UN's Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development.

The clear aim of the YFJ and numerous other youth-led organizations and regional youth platforms is to advocate towards concrete and measurable results by the end of the International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding in order to end the 12 months with success for young people worldwide and in order to give them a perspective for the future.

# *Jacque Koroi*

WPAY! Including the family Unit

“Our cultures value wisdom and maturity over youth. But we can no longer say to them ‘I have been young, but you have never been old’ because they can respond by saying ‘but you have never been young in the world I am growing up in’. What that underscores is the imperative for greater dialogue and engagement on the issues of the moment. We who are in a position of leadership and authority must engage and involve them in creating their future”.

Ratu Joni Madraiwiwi (Traditional Leader)

## **Introduction**

This paper outlines the history of the World Programme of Action (WPAY) and of the International Year of the Youth (IYY) to date. It also briefly analyses the links between the WPAY and the IYY 2010. It further provides an overview of the situational analysis of Youth in the Pacific region in the context of Intergenerational Relations and Youth Participation and discusses the overall challenges facing the WPAY. The paper concludes with suggestions and concrete recommendations on advancing the work of stakeholders in addressing youth issues.

## **Background World Programme of Action and International Year of the Youth**

The first official recognition by UN Member States and the UN family with respect to the roles and responsibilities of young people dates back to 1965 when they endorsed the Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples<sup>1</sup>. The Declaration, set against the backdrop of the UN Charter, included the need to secure a sustainable future and to take all necessary actions to raise young men and young women to believe and promote the principles of liberty, peace, equality, love, respect and creativity. It also named the family as a key player in achieving this.

---

<sup>1</sup> A/Res/20/2037 Declaration on the Promotion Amongst Youth of Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples

Following the Declaration, two decades later, the United Nations General Assembly made a historical move by marking the year 1985 as the International Year of the Youth under the theme: Participation, Development and Peace<sup>2</sup>. UN member states highlighted the potential role young people play in shaping national developments during the year.

The momentum in the recognition of Youth as partners continued and UN member states adopted the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY) in 1995. The WPAY, had 10 priority areas of youth issues to be addressed namely: Education, Employment, Hunger and Poverty, Health, Environment, Drug Abuse, Juvenile Delinquency, Leisure-Time, Girls and Young Women, Full and effective participation of youth in the life of society and in Decision making. In 2007, UN Member states further adopted 5 priority areas: HIV/AIDS, Information and Communications technology, Inter-generational Issues, Armed Conflict and Globalization. The WPAY framework identified practical guidelines and actions at national level with support at regional and international level. It focused on strengthening national youth stakeholder capacities and measures to increase the quality of life for young people.

In 1999, the General Assembly endorsed the recommendation by the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth meeting, Lisbon, 1998, that August 12<sup>th</sup> be declared the International Youth Day. Following this, history witnessed the first observation of the International Youth Day in 2000. The day has since been marked with the following themes:

2001: Addressing Health and Unemployment,  
2002: Now and for the Future, Youth Action for Sustainable Development,  
2003: Finding decent and productive work for young people everywhere,  
2004: Youth in an Intergenerational Society,  
2005: WPAY+10 Making Commitments Matter,  
2006: Tackling Poverty Together,  
2007: Be seen, Be Heard Youth Participation for Development,  
2008 Youth and Climate Change Time for Action,  
2009 Sustainability Our Challenge Our Future.

Once again the UN Member states endorsed August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2010- August 12<sup>th</sup> 2011 as the Year of the Youth (IYY) with the theme: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding. The framework of the IYY identifies the following three key objectives: 1. Create awareness (increase commitment and investment in youth) 2. Mobilize and engage (increase youth participation and partnerships) 3. Connect and build bridges (increase intercultural understanding among youth).

---

<sup>2</sup> *Economic & Social Affairs World. 2010. Programme of Action for YOUTH. Pg 1.*

At the UN level, it appears that there is ample support and recognition for young people. However the gap between such support and ensuring that the young men in a village in Tuvalu or the young woman in the highlands of Papua New Guinea are informed and can benefit from the impact of these decisions at the highest level is not always apparent. Translating international commitments onto community and national level remains a challenge.

### **WPAY links to IYY 2010-2011**

The objectives of the IYY 2010 framework are fully aligned with the objectives of the World Programme of Action. The first objective 'Create Awareness' calls for the public and private sector to invest in youth development, stakeholders to recognize the contributions of young people in achieving the MDGs, address the needs of disadvantaged youth and conduct research to inform youth policies and programmes. These suggested actions correspond with the proposed actions of the WPAY under Education, Drug Abuse, Juvenile Delinquency, Girls and Young Women to name a few.

The remaining two objectives of the IYY also have corresponding action points under the WPAY. It is clear that whether intentional or not, the WPAY has, since its adoption, remained relevant to both the Year of the Youths and all themes of the international day. The questions of 'relevance' can be interpreted as the UN Programme of Youth either being under resourced, limited in capacity or fragmented- that it cannot provide advice to UN member states on the topics of International Youth Day/ Year themes.

According to the WPAY Publication 2010, we are at the end of the third phase- 2001 to 2010 period, focusing on the further implementation and evaluation of the action points: it attempts to suggest appropriate adjustments to long-term objectives and specific measures to improve the situations of young people in the societies in which they live<sup>3</sup>.

### **Meeting the objectives of the WPAY: Pacific Experience**

The UNICEF State of the Pacific Report (2005) estimates that there are 1.6 million people aged 15-24 years in the Pacific Region. This accounts for 20%-50% of the nation's population under the age of 25. Traditional culture and the respect for elders and authority, coupled with urbanization, globalization and hardship feature prominently in the daily lives of our young people. Furthermore, Youth Stakeholders such as Departments responsible for Youth and Youth NGO's are under resourced, lacking capacity and having to compete with other national priorities for budgetary allocations and political support. The Youth Civil Society has also faced the same predicament,

---

<sup>3</sup> *Economic & Social Affairs World. 2010. Programme of Action for YOUTH. Pg 12*

being more vulnerable, as programs tend to be ad hoc based on available government and donor funding.

The Pacific, although often isolated from other regions, have carried out a number of activities to mark the Year of the Youth 2010, in countries such as the Cook Islands, Fiji, Nauru, Vanuatu, Tuvalu and Tonga. Across the countries there have been events such as Dance Off Competitions, information booths, designing t-shirts, youth forums, clean-up campaigns, dedicated church services and a Youth Portal to name a few. Additionally, Pacific countries do acknowledge the International year of the Youth.

The WPAY unlike other Plan/Platform of Actions has not strongly translated itself in the national agenda in the Pacific. Several overarching key Regional Youth Documents such as the Pacific Youth Strategy 2010, State of the Pacific Youth Report 2005, Suva Point Declaration 2009 do not make any reference to the WPAY. Personal observations note that the WPAY is a policy document that has been loosely used by the United Nations, Government departments and divisions responsible for Youth and has been non existent amongst the Civil Society. This of course weakens the value of the WPAY, as it does not seem to have visibility in a region like ours. However, despite the absence of references, youth developments initiatives on the ground achieve action points noted in the WPAY. The question remains: Do Pacific Youth Stakeholders identify as being part of the international movement of youth stakeholders and share its vision?

As mentioned earlier, the 1965 Declaration<sup>4</sup> states inclusion the family unit as integral to addressing youth development. The question begs: Why wasn't the family unit kept as a partner in finding solutions to youth challenges? I would like to attempt answering this question from my personal experience. At present, it would be difficult for me to naturally consider taking part in activities that would aim at strengthening relationships with my parents. Growing up in a society, rooted in traditional culture, I am taught to listen, follow, and ask no questions. There is minimal room for dialogue, and certainly not on matters such as relationships or personal issues. My relationship with my father is stricter than that with my mother. I do hope I would find the grace and strength to endure programs that aims to break barriers within families

Monitoring and Evaluation has not been a strong asset as it appears that countries and regions have steadily invested in research and data collection but it's the implementation phase of the recommendations that progresses slowly. Furthermore, the presence of experts to monitor and evaluate the impacts of youth programmes on the ground is almost absent. In the Pacific, youth attend church functions and a lot of youth-related events, but little is known about the impact and these activities remain often unreported.

---

<sup>4</sup> Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples

Furthermore, young people's participation in policy making remains a challenge. A friend of mine from Tuvalu, an island state known for the impact of climate change, recently said: "Getting young people's voices heard sometimes feel like climbing a tree full of thorns". He is right, we talk about youth inclusion in policy making, but we should not assume that young people always know how to participate. My peers have repeatedly said they can only be heard in places where they feel secure and can openly express their views. They often want to be involved in discussions relating to them; however they need to understand the realities and the complexities of international and national development processes to be able to engage effectively and appropriately. It takes courage for young people to speak up, particularly in cultures where young people are told to keep quiet. It takes adults to reassure young people that their voices can be meaningful, even though they may lack the experience that adults have.

### **Recommendations**

**WPAY Teeth:** There have been a considerable number of research reports on situational analysis of Youth the international level such as the World Youth Reports 2003, 2005, 2007, Growing Together Publication to name a few. Whilst these provide important information, greater efforts are required to strengthen our approach in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation phases to youth development. This would require a deeper commitment by member states to implement and report. Additionally, it allows us have a steady account of our progress and solidarity in meeting them.

**Coordination and Partnerships:** Ideally Member States should consider establishing a separate UN Entity tasked with youth issues, similarly to what was done for UN Women. It can also be argued however, that youth issues are cross-cutting and that most UN Agencies have a mandate to work with them. There is however a need to strengthen coordination among UN Agencies and to assign clear roles and responsibilities. The numerous UN inter-agency working groups on youth are often meeting to share information but there is room for improved collaboration and greater ownership and accountability. Furthermore, the effective coordination of youth programmes and policies requires partnerships: between governments, donors, communities, NGO's, churches and young people. On a regional level, it is worth calling for collaborations amongst regional agencies and international agencies that are responsible for youth.

**Basket Funding:** In support of youth stakeholders in developing countries, Pooling of Funds by donors, specifically in achieving youth related challenges would assist national countries run programmes/initiatives that meet their youth priorities and ultimately that of the WPAY and related international human rights conventions. This would need to be coupled with accountability of countries to properly manage these funds.





أولويات برنامج العمل العالمي للشباب وصلتها بأهداف السنة الدولية  
للشباب

جيهان أبو زيد

## الشباب و حقوق الانسان مصدر المعلومات

- هذه المادة مأخوذة من دراسة “قيد النشر” حول قيم حقوق الانسان و الشباب فى خمس دول عربية هى: مصر و تونس و البحرين و لبنان و المغرب. أعدتها الباحثة لصالح “مركز المرأة العربية للتدريب و البحوث بتونس بالتعاون مع صندوق الامم المتحدة للسكان”
- اعتمدت الدراسة على الحوارات المعمقة كمنهجية كيفية ,وجمعت البيانات قبل عام 2007



### 1- فئات الشباب

#### الفئة الاولى :

فئة قادمة من شرائح المجتمع الثرية ,قادرة على شراء خدمات تعليمية أرقى من المتاح، حيث تجيد استخدام اللغات الاجنبية ,وتتعامل بمهارة مع تكنولوجيا الاتصال ,وتستفيد منها فى إنجاز الأعمال وتطور المهارات ، وبالتالي فقد امتلكت هذه الفئة قدرات واسعة على التواصل لدولى

تشغل افضل المواقع فى اسواق العمل.

يتفاعل شباب تلك الفئة مع الثقافة الغربية بثقة و مرونة .



## الفئة الثانية

هم هؤلاء الشباب الذين يتعاطون الإمكانيات الوطنية المتاحة . غالبا لا تمدهم بالمهارات والمعارف اللازمة لدخول سوق العمل.

تضم تلك الفئة شباب الحضر والريف (الحائز على نصيب من التعليم )،يجيد التعامل مع التكنولوجيا الحديثة ,وان كان يوظف كاداة للتمرد على المحظورات الكثيرة ,أكثر من كونه وسيلة معرفية.

يسعى هؤلاء الى تحقيق نقلة نوعية فى وضعهم الاجتماعي الاقتصادي ,الدراسة بالنسبة لهم هى المعبر الى وضع مهني /اجتماعي لا ئق ,

و لهذا فالنجاح الدراسي هام جدا بالنسبة لهم ,وهو ما يجعل الدراسة تتخذ طابع الكفاح من اجل بناء هوية نجاح ومستقبل . :



يحصل شباب هذه الفئة على تعليم متواضع لا يؤهله للمنافسة في سوق العمل, وليس بمستغرب أن هذه الفئة ينتشر بها ارتداء الحجاب الحديث - الذي يغطي الشعر أو جزء منه - مع احتفاظ الفتيات بارتداء الموضات الحديثة بصورة ملفتة, فهم في سعي دائم للوصول إلى حالة توازن بين الثقافة القادمة والثقافة المحلية التي تغلفها بعض القيود.

\*برغم ذلك، فمعظم هؤلاء الشباب هم الأكثر التصاقاً بهوم الوطن - وهم العمود الفقري لمظاهرات الجامعات الوطنية, فضلاً عن نشاطهم الفاعل في القضايا العربية المطروحة. وإذا كان هناك ثمة صراع ثقافي داخلي يتشكل داخل الفئة الأولى، فإن الصراع الداخلي لدى هذه الفئة أعلى صوتاً، خاصة صراع البحث عن الهوية .



### الفئة الثالثة :

هم الشباب الخارج من عمق الفقر والإهمال , خاصة القادمين من المناطق الحضرية الفقيرة ومناطق العشوائيات، وهم فئة واسعة يختلف حجمها من بلد لآخر، إلا أن أخطر مشكلاتها , هو هذا التعرض الكثيف لقيم جديدة تقدم بواسطة أنداد لهم من شرائح أخرى، الأمر الذي يدفع شباب تلك الفئة إلى التقليد بدون الاستناد إلى بناء فكرى نقدي يقلص من التقليد .

هذه الفئة تشكل القوة الأساسية للجريمة - وللمخدرات - وللعنف المنظم فى كل أشكاله

تختنق تلك الفئة من الشباب بين تطلعات مستحيلة، وقدرات عاجزة، تلك الفئة من الشباب هى الأكبر عددا وهى فئة "شباب الظل " انها الشريحة المهمشة الفائضة عن الحاجة و بالتالى المستغنى عنها والتي لا تدخل فى حساب السلطة و مخططاتها , الا فى مجال الحذر منها و قمعها .

## تعريف المشاركة :

تبنت الدراسة تعريف المكتب الانمائى للامم المتحدة حول المشاركة .  
والذى اكد على اهمية أن يتوفر للأفراد الفرص الكافية والمتساوية للتعبير عن  
اهتماماتهم. وتعني المشاركة عدم معاملة الناس كأهداف سلبية (أي مجموعة مستهدفة  
نصوب عليها)  
بل هم فاعلون وكاملو النشاط . كما أن المشاركة دون تمكين لا تعني الكثير،  
والتمكن يتطلب التعليم (الإدراك  
الحقوق) ويتطلب بناء القدرة على العمل الجماعي وعلى إطلاق النشاط التشاركي  
للمجتمع المدني بصفته إطاراً شاملاً للحقوق يتيح التمثيلية والاتصال والمحاسبة  
ومكافحة الاستبعاد حيثما وجد (بدءاً من العائلة مروراً بمكان العمل وصولاً إلى  
التشكيلات الاجتماعية الأوسع).

## 2- مشاركة الشباب



هناك عدة قنوات لادماج المواطنين فى صناعة القرار , تختلف من بلد لآخر ومن نظام سياسى لآخر , الا ان اغلب الدول العربية تتيح للطلاب فرصا للمشاركة عبر المجالس الطلابية. كما توجد منظمات الكشفة و المرشدات .

و على مستوى المشاركة السياسية فان سن التصويت فى الانتخابات يتراوح فى دول المنطقة ما بين 18 سنة الى 21 سنة .  
على الفرد ان يبلغ اكثر من 21 سنه فى مصر كى يحق له تاسيس مجلس ادرارة او العضوية فيه .

إن دولة مثل مصر التى يتجاوز عدد الجمعيات فى مصر بها ستة عشر الف جمعية أهلية لا تضم بينها الا 33 جمعية شبابية فقط.  
على صعيد اخر فان القليل جدا من المجالس التشريعية العربية هو الذى خصص من بين لجانها لجاناً للشباب ومنها مصر وتونس والأردن واليمن .

## 1-المشاركة فى اتخاذ القرارات داخل الاسرة:

بقدر التزام الفتيات بالاعمال المنزلية فى دول الدراسة خاصة فى الطبقات الفقيرة و الوسطى منها , الا ان هذه المشاركة المنزلية لا تؤمن لهن المشاركة فى اتخاذ القرار داخل الاسرة .

على صعيد آخر يضيف الاحتكاك بالفضاء الخارجى مكانة اكبر للشباب , وهو الامر الذى يعزز موقعه كمشارك فى اتخاذ القرارات داخل المنزل بما فيها القرارات المتعلقة بمصير الفتيات من الشقيقات .  
وتعد مشاركة الشباب فى اتخاذ القرارات داخل المنزل احد المداخل الاساسية لاكتساب مهارة اتخاذ القرار.

## 2-المشاركة فى المؤسسات التعليمية :

رغم توفر السياسات التى تهدف إلى تفعيل مشاركة الطلبة فى دول الدراسة, فقد كشفت الدراسة عن ضعف مشاركة الشباب فى مراحل التعليم المختلفة , بسبب سيطرة الكبار و الديمقراطية الزائفة , وادراك الشباب صعوبته التخلّى عن السلطة بالنسبة للكبار .

رفض الشباب الاندماج فى الأنشطة التعليمية , لادراكهم انها امتداد لهيمنة الادارة على العملية التعليمية . (فالصحف الجامعية والمدرسية مثلا خاضعة لمراقبة الادارة ) و هو فضاء لا يراه الشباب فضاءا للتعبير والحرية , و لا يرون مبررا كافيا لبذل جهد فى مطالب "صعبة المنال" مفضلين التخلّى عن ممارسة مشروطة لصالح مطالب قد تكون اكثر حيوية بالنسبة اليهم "كاصلاح ملعب كرة القدم .



### 3-المشاركة السياسية :

#### اولا: "العزلة الاختيارية"

الذى عرفته الدراسة بمستوى "الامشاركة" عزوفهم و انعزالهم رفضا للمناخ السياسى ,  
يشير المصريون الى التزوير فى الانتخابات و الى تسلط الدولة و سيطرة نخبة حاكمة , كعوامل مستفزة و كافية لاجهاض حق المشاركة .

تقول ليلى " لا , السياسة دى كلها كلام و خطب و بس ) و هو نفس ما اكد عليه الشباب فى المغرب الذين ابدوا نفورا من مصطلح "السياسة " "ما عنديش فى السياسة " (لا احب و لا امارس السياسة ) , وينظر مجدى -تونس- إلى الحياة السياسية على أنها المشاكل بعينها حيث يقول: " السياسة بكلها مشاكل ولهذا الإنسان يخدم حاجة أخرى خير وما يدخلش رוחو في السياسة"

#### ثانيا: "التطلع للمشاركة":

تتجسد قيمة المشاركة فى هذا المستوى في توفر مجموعة من المؤشرات تعكس اهتماما و متابعة للأحداث العالمية والوطنية، وصولا إلى اتخاذ موقف نقدي من مختلف المستجدات والأحداث محليا ودوليا  
فى لبنان فان 24% من الشبان يهتمون بالبرامج السياسية , يسبقها البرامج الرياضية التى يفضلها 30% منهم , و فى تونس تقول نور " أريد أن أتابع باستمرار مختلف المستجدات بالولايات المتحدة الأمريكية التى يدور حولها فلك السياسة العالمية , و اقليميا لا اتابع الا قضية فلسطين، تروقني مثل هذه المتابعات إذ يمكنني إبداء رأيي والحديث مع الأصدقاء في مثل هذه المواضيع"



### ثالثا: المشاركة

ينتمى مجموعة قليلة من مستجوبى الدراسة الى هذه الفئة , و هى فئة لا تمتلك اتجاهات ايجابية نحو المشاركة فحسب - كالفئة الثانية- بل تتقدم خطوة اخرى نحو "الفعل" , عبر الاشتراك فى " جماعة ما " .  
و وفقا للدراسة فقد انطلق الشباب الى العمل العام عبر قناتين اساسيتين , الاولى و هى الجمعيات الاهلية و الثانية الاحزاب السياسية او الحركات السياسية .

### دوافع المشاركة لدى الشباب :



الاتاحة  
قنوات المشاركة



الوضع السياسى  
الحافز الدينى  
البيئة المحيطة  
المناخ الاسرى  
دوافع ذاتية \نوعية

- عوائق المشاركة
- لم يقرر بعض مما تجنبوا الفعل السياسى من الشباب "الاعتزال" بل عزلوا تحت ضغوط التهميش التى فرضته عليهم بيئتهم المعيشية، فشباب الريف فى مصر و تونس و المغرب عزلوا فى نطاق عزلتهم عن المدنية و عن الخدمات الاساسية , تسأل نرجس المقيمة فى احدى قرى مصر " اين تقع الاحزاب ", ان الفقراء هم الكتل الانتخابية الاهم و رغم ذلك فهم الكتل المهملة و المنسية من قبل المشرع .
- اكد (استطلاع اراء الشباب في صيدا وريفها فى لبنان) ان سكان المدن اكثر اهتماما بالمشاركة السياسية من سكان الريف)\*

### عوائق المشاركة

- غياب مشروع المستقبل لدى الشباب يعزز بدوره من غياب مبرر للمشاركة السياسية , فالمشاركة تستند فى كل الاحوال الى مشروع او جنين مشروع متبلور .
- ان المشاركة تعتمد فى جانب منها على الثقة بالمستقبل و هو الامر المفقود لدى غالبية الشباب العربى. و بين مستجوبى الدراسة , فان الفئات التى قررت العزلة الاختيارية كانت الاكثر تعثرا فى ضباب المستقبل .
- اشار تقرير التنمية الانسانية 2003 الى ان المناهج الدراسية العربية تركز الخضوع والطاعة والتبعية، ولا تشجع على التفكير النقدي الحر، فمحتوى المناهج يتجنب تحفيز التلاميذ على نقد المسلمات الاجتماعية أو السياسية، ويقتل فيهم النزعة الاستقلالية والإبداع.

## عوائق المشاركة

- يحجب غياب مؤسسات المشاركة افق المشاركة، فغياب الجمعيات و مراكز الشباب و المؤسسات المعنية بتفعيل مشاركة الشباب انما يجهض فرص المشاركة يقول مجدي أحد المستجوبين من تونس: "أناحب ندخل لجمعية او نادي أو اي حاجة، لكن ما نلقاش".
- الفقر: يعوق الفقر الشباب من المشاركة، و قد عبرت الفتيات تحديدا عن ان ضعف القدرة المادية يمنعهن من المشاركة على اى مستوى
- القبضه الامنية



## سياسات تعزيز المشاركة :

- 1- سياسات تربوية : معنية بمراجعة اسس العملية التعليمية و تطويرها نحو ترسيخ مبادئ الديمقراطية ,وتعزيز حقوق الانسان .  
مراجعة المناهج الدراسية فى كافة مراحل التعليم ,و تنقيتها من التمييز ضد الفقراء و النساء و الاشخاص ذوى الاعاقة ,و تضمين قيم حقوق الانسان.
- 2- سياسات اعلامية :تعتمد الشفافية و مد المجتمع بالمعلومات الصحيحة .
- 3- سياسات اقتصادية :تحد من البطالة وتوفر فرص عمل عمل حقيقية للشباب
- 4- سياسات سياسية : فتح قنوات مشاركة فاعلة امام الشباب ,وتمكين الشباب من مهارات المشاركة السياسية

# *Ahmed Younis*

## **Youth Arab's Immigration, Employment and the Future of the Region**

As the Arab world undergoes significant and sweeping change, the voice of young people from each country is a critical component of any cogent analysis on what the future holds. The Silatech Index<sup>\*</sup>, created by the Gallup Organization, is a bi-annual poll of 15-29 year olds in the 22 MENA countries about life, employment and the future. The Index is the first ever poll of young people on a regular basis in all MENA countries and is used by opinion shapers and decision makers to catalyze the job creating potential of the region to meet the challenge of employing millions.

One of the challenges of Intergenerational Dialogue is listening. The Silatech Index affords all segments of society globally the opportunity to listen to the voices of youth in their pursuit of building a society that is keen on integrating the skills and talents of all segments. The following is a portion Silatech Index Analysis from the newest version of the study (April 2011) that highlights the Progress made for young people on the metrics we follow.

It is with great pride and respect that I offer this element of analysis to the larger group for assessment and study.

---

<sup>\*</sup>For a full copy of the Silatech Index, please visit [Silatech.com](http://Silatech.com) or the Qatar HQ of the Silatech Organization.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (SILATECH INDEX ANALYSIS)**

This fourth installment of The Silatech Indexes: Voices of Young Arabs charts Arab League members' progress from 2009 to 2010 towards creating a better climate for job creation and entrepreneurship. The findings, based on surveys conducted twice each year with more than 16,000 country nationals aged 15 to 29, reveal strengths and challenges across the region and within countries. Although the data were collected before periods of civil unrest in late 2010 and early 2011 across several countries, the recommendations in this report are perhaps now even more important for those seeking to implement meaningful initiatives to foster job creation and entrepreneurship.

### **Silatech Index Rankings**

The Silatech Indexes are based on three fundamental pillars: Mindset, Access, and Policy. The mindset Index measures young people's views of the job climate, obstacles to employment, and their societies' investment in young citizens. The access Index gauges young people's attitudes about their countries' current economic and business environment. The Policy Index measures young people's views on market competitiveness and their perceptions of how well societies are maximizing human capital.

Many countries saw changes in their index scores from 2009 to 2010. Some, such as Bahrain, gained ground on the access Index but lost ground on the policy Index. Other, such as Sudan, fell behind on the Access and policy indexes. A few, however, showed positive momentum in all three dimensions. These differences underscore why policymakers need to closely examine strengths and challenges at the regional, national, and local levels.

HIGH-INCOME COUNTRIES								
MINDSET	2009	2010	ACCESS	2009	2010	POLICY	2009	2010
Qatar	83+	82+	Qatar	62+	71+ ♣	United Arab Emirates	82	84
United Arab Emirates	81	79	Kuwait	51	63 ♣	Kuwait	69	74 ♣
Bahrain	78	78	Saudi Arabia	51	60 ♣	Qatar	75+	71+
Kuwait	73	77 ♣	Bahrain	50	58 ♣	Bahrain	66	61 ♣
Saudi Arabia	74	71	United Arab Emirates	58	58	Saudi Arabia	71	-

MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRIES								
MINDSET	2009	2010	ACCESS	2009	2010	POLICY	2009	2010
Algeria	61	70 ♣	Tunisia	49	45 ♣	Tunisia	78	-
Tunisia	74	70 ♣	Algeria	37	44 ♣	Jordan	66	63
Jordan	68	66 ♣	Morocco	40	39	Morocco	65	57 ♣
Syria	68	66 ♣	Syria	38	34 ♣	Algeria	44	52 ♣
Lebanon	61	60	Jordan	40	33 ♣	Syria	62	51 ♣
Morocco	69	60 ♣	Lebanon	24	24	Libya	-	50
Egypt	60	56 ♣	Egypt	26	23 ♣	Lebanon	37	37
Libya	-	55	Iraq	27	23 ♣	Iraq	38	29 ♣
Iraq	51	43 ♣	Libya	-	22	Egypt	55	-

LOW-INCOME COUNTRIES								
MINDSET	2009	2010	ACCESS	2009	2010	POLICY	2009	2010
Somaliland Region	65	72 ♣	Somaliland Region	43	50 ♣	Djibouti	60	69+ ♣
Djibouti	73	70+	Djibouti	52	48+ ♣	Somaliland Region	65	69 ♣
Sudan	66	64	Mauritania	28	36 ♣	Mauritania	51	62 ♣
Mauritania	57	63 ♣	Sudan	41	36 ♣	Comoros	50	53 ♣
Yemen	53	55	Palestinian Territories	27	29	Sudan	67	52 ♣
Comoros	51	54 ♣	Comoros	19	27 ♣	Yemen	50	48
Palestinian Territories	48	49	Yemen	26	23	Palestinian Territories	45	45

♣ Indicates a statistically significant difference from 2009  
 + Based on one wave of data collection  
 - No index score could be calculated because of the unavailability of survey items.

## Regional Progress Report

At the regional level, many countries' 2010 scores demonstrated noticeable progress from 2009, while others dropped below previous performance scores on one or more of the three Silatech Indexes.

### *Increase in Access to mobile Technology*

Young Arabs gained more access to information technology and communication. Eighty-seven percent of young Arabs say they have access to cellular phone, compared with 79% in 2009. Internet access at home and in the community improved slightly as well. Greater cellular phone and Internet penetration could open doors to job opportunities for young Arabs. Leaders should encourage innovations that capitalize on the growing connectivity, such as social enterprises that are already using SMS messages to connect young job seekers with employers.



### ***Local Outlook Improving***

Young people's views of their communities-as places to live and the local economic situations-show signs of positive momentum. Young Arabs are more likely to say their communities are becoming better places to live and their local economy is improving. At the same time, young people grew more negative about national economic conditions. Policy makers should focus on policy interventions at the local level where they can tap into growing optimism.

### ***Rising Concern About Affordable Housing***

Young people's satisfaction with the availability of affordable housing in their communities declined sharply. Slightly less than one-third of young Arabs are satisfied, down from early half in 2009. Because rising housing costs are barrier to young people's transition into adulthood, policy makers need to make the affordable housing crisis a top priority.

### **Progress Report by Income group**

#### **High-income countries: Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates**

##### ***More Believe Their Leaders Harness Young People's Talents***

More Young people in high income countries say leaders maximize on their potential. The percentage of Young Arabs in high-income countries who say their leaders do this surged to 86% in 2010 from 67% in 2009. This likely reflects a combination of economic growth and investments in education and healthcare. These young people are also increasingly satisfied with their countries' efforts to increase the number of quality jobs.

##### ***Less Friendly Climate for Entrepreneurs***

Young people in high-income countries are now less likely to see their communities as providing a hospitable environment for entrepreneurs. Further, they are less likely to believe entrepreneurs can trust the government to allow their businesses to make a lot of money. Policy makers must create an environment that helps these young people perceive the business climate differently if they want to convert economic growth on the national level into new businesses and jobs.

## **Middle-Income Countries: Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia**

### *Young People Are More Connected*

Young people in middle-income countries are more likely now than in 2009 to have cellular phones and community Internet access. Eighty-seven percent of young Arabs say they have access to cellular phone, compared with 79% in 2009. Sixty-nine percent have Internet access in their communities now, compared with 63% in 2009. The progress in middle-income countries largely mirrors the region as a whole, because these countries make up the bulk of the population surveyed.

### *Less Willing To Do Home-Based Work*

Young people in middle-income countries are less willing to do home-based work if they faced unemployment for at least six months. Slightly less than half (48%) say they would be willing to do this, down from 58% in 2009. This decrease may hinder small enterprise creation and weaken prospects for economic entrepreneurship. This is the only area in which middle-income countries' setbacks did not largely mirror the region as a whole.

## **Low-Income Countries: Comoros, Djibouti, Mauritania, Palestinian Territories, Somaliland region, Sudan, Yemen**

### *Improving Confidence in the Judiciary*

Young people in low-income countries place considerably more faith in the rule of law now than in 2009. Their confidence in their judicial system and courts increased to 50% in 2010, up from 31% in 2009. This significant step forward may prompt these young people to feel more confident that they can trust their assets and property will be safe, which can often be a sizeable barrier to starting business. They are also more likely to say they know someone they trust enough to go into business with, which may also increase the chances they will follow through on their entrepreneurial aspirations.

### *Greater Obstacles to Business Creation*

Young people in low-income countries are increasingly less likely to say their government makes paperwork easy enough for entrepreneurs and to believe their business will be allowed to make a lot of money. While these young people's growing confidence in the judicial system and

in the supply of potential business partners are perceived strengths, policy makers need to address all aspects of entrepreneurship for people to feel the risks of business ventures are worth it.

### **The Research**

The findings in this report are based on surveys conducted twice a year in 2009 and 2010 in 20 countries in the league of Arab States and the Somaliland region of Somalia. Index scores and all other data are yearly averages, unless otherwise noted.

To compare Silatech Index scores as well as other data across countries, Gallup grouped countries into categories according to International Monetary Fund's (IMF) 2010 estimates of GDP per capita (in U.S dollars). Countries fall into one of three income categories: high income (GDP per capita of at least \$23,000), middle income (GDP per capita ranges from \$2,600 to less than \$23,000), and low income (GDP per capita of less than \$2,600).

# ***Makiwane Monde***

## **The changing patterns of Intergenerational Relations in South Africa**

### **Introduction**

An intergenerational “contract” has existed between generations from time immemorial. This contract is usually in a form of reciprocal solidarity. Solidarity manifests itself when “one generation uses its vantage position of being outside a particular generation to be of assistance to a generation in need” (Biggs 2007). Unfortunately, major economic, cultural, political and demographic changes have had a negative impact on the reciprocal relations between generations in many parts of the world (United Nations 2003). This disruption particularly in Africa can be attributed to a number of issues. These may include the rising levels of youth unemployment, youth morbidity and mortality, migration and widening social distances between generations.

In line with the trend in Africa, the contemporary South African society is characterised by high generational disjuncture. Generational disjuncture refers to the level of disconnection between generations. Two aspects of the intergenerational disjuncture are discussed in this paper, namely

(i) physical distance that has its roots in the historical experiences of the country as a racially divided society and (ii) social distance that is in large measure developed from past and current socio-economic policies.

Intergenerational disjuncture is especially acute in South Africa. Like many other social aspects, intergenerational relations in contemporary South Africa are related to its Apartheid past, which was characterised by social and political segregation for the greater part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Apartheid system dictated where people were allowed to stay and work. An important feature of the Apartheid state was the separation of South Africa into mainland “white” city scrapers of South Africa and tribal homelands, which were ostensibly black African. “Able bodied” young men left the homelands and sought employment in the cities, where they were not allowed to stay with their families. Although significant changes have taken place in the last sixteen years since the birth of constitutional democracy in 1994, the legacy of the Apartheid system is nevertheless still experienced in the current state of intergenerational relations in contemporary South Africa.

South Africa is also in the midst of major demographic changes which are driven by the decline in the rate of childbearing and the rise in the rate of morbidity and mortality of young adults mainly as a result of the AIDS pandemic.

Wide physical distance between generations is evidenced by the low rate of co-residence between fathers and their children. The existence of social distance is a manifestation of different epochs within which different generations grew up. The situation is exasperated by the increase in the proportion of young people many of whom cannot be absorbed by the economy. As a result, the emerging pattern of wealth flow between generations is not conducive to wealth creation, and nation building which are so needed by a society that has suffered oppression over a long period. Nation building is “the social process of transforming an underdeveloped, poor and divided society into a community with equal opportunities and economic viability” (Vorster, 2005). Wealth accumulation through co-operation between generations can play a big role in societies that are struggling with a project of nation building like South Africa.

### **Physical distance between generations**

Wide social and physical distances between generations that characterise contemporary South Africa create conditions that are conducive to generational disjuncture. Physical distance relates largely to occupational commitments of parents. For the greater part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a culture of labour migration has prevailed among black South Africans especially. Most notably, the gold mines of Johannesburg attracted large numbers of young black men from around the country. During this period, many black children have had to grow up with absent fathers.

Even now, physical distance between fathers and children is quite common. About 50% of children growing up in South Africa did not stay in the same household as their fathers for the greater part of their childhood years (Richter et al 2010). A major factor is the wide prevalence of non-marital childbearing in South Africa. During the Apartheid era, the enforced separation of men from their families resulted in weak conjugal bonds, resulting in many children being born outside stable sexual unions. In addition, norms governing responsible paternity were not enforced in the urban industrial locations. As a result, many men in these areas did not associate fathering a child with full commitment to parental responsibility. Children fathered outside a formal marriage were hardly regarded by many men as their primary social and financial responsibility. Secondly, in some communities, men are required to pay “damage fees”, a traditional requirement for men to have access to their children that they fathered out of wedlock. This is a major barrier for many men, especially poor young fathers (Swartz et al 2009). Another factor which contributes to the absence of fathers in the lives of their children is a high male mortality rate in the region, shown by the fact that in the last South African census, which was conducted in 2001, by the age 60, there were 80 males to every 100 females among people of African descent in South Africa. Thus many children growing up do not benefit materially and socially from their biological fathers, something that might deprive them of lifetime opportunities that may otherwise have been available. In some households, where both mother and father work eight-to-five jobs, children are typically attended to by domestic helpers.

In these households, social contact between parent and child is typically minimal. Physical distance in such cases are delimited by time.

### **Social Distance between generations**

Social distance is “the grades and degrees of understanding and intimacy that characterise personal and social relations” (Karayali 2001). The notion of social distance is traditionally used to describe the distance between different groups in society, such as social class, gender, race and ethnicity. This concept is appropriate to describe what is happening in African communities and of special interest in this paper, within families, due to rapid socio-political changes in many African societies. Social distance between children and parents may be a result of vast difference in educational status between generations. In South Africa specifically, as a result of parents who have grown up in a closed Apartheid society who are parenting children who are growing up in a liberal post-Apartheid society, a wide social distance between generations is common. Social distance has resulted in a growing gap between the younger and older generation (Bohman, et al. 2008). For instance, in preparing children for the role expected of them once they are grown up, they might be assigned gendered household chores. Thus, young girls within a family are committed to domestic chores of house-keeping and caring for younger siblings. Fulfilling these household chores can be time-consuming, thus significantly compromising time spent on school work. This is likely to have a cumulatively negative impact on the academic performance of such girls.

The same experience is true for young boys in rural South Africa who are groomed to become breadwinners. For these boys, school attendance is sporadically interrupted by goat, sheep and cattle-herding and as well as other homely responsibilities. In this case, a marked decline in academic performance can be attributed to differences of interest between generations. This, in turn, has a hindering effect on a variety of opportunities in the later stages of life. Thus, responsibilities and values in the parent generation can work together to undermine human potential for girls and boys in the subsequent generation. On the other hand, social distance can manifest in the case of children socialized in a culture of “Model C” schools (a popular term for multiracial schools in South Africa). Such children are likely to experience difficulty relating to adults who grew up within the Apartheid education system. Social distance also develops between generations when a parent and child are educated in systems that emphasize different values. Language barriers between generations are also common in South Africa, with children being unable to communicate fluently in the vernacular of their parents. This is especially the case for those children who attended multiracial schools who were taught in a second language. The implication here is that language can be a factor in creating such differences.

Social distance has a dire consequence on the ability of generations to support each other materially. According to Clay and Van der Haar (1993), children’s ability to support their

parents may depend on the feelings of loyalty they hold for their parents. As explained above, intergenerational relationship can be weakened by educational difference between generations, and by the influence of mass media especially digital communication (Nuget, in Clay and Vander Haar (1993). Mainly due to the fact that many older persons cannot cope with the rapid pace of advancement in digital communication, it remains an age segregated activity. As a result, fear is often expressed by the aged with regard to the societal transition under way in South Africa which has tended to give them less influence, less control and less respect while heaping more care for family members than previous generations were responsible for (Bohman et al., 2008:7). Thus, older people might not be well placed to undertake the job that society has been placed on their shoulders.

### **The impact of the changing population structure on generational relations**

Demographic changes generally have a significant impact on intergenerational relations in society. It is commonly noted that the increase in the expectation of life and the drastic decline of the rate of child bearing has put pressure on intergenerational support of older persons in more developed countries. Less documented is the impact of the demographic transition happening in less developed countries have on intergenerational relations. Demographic transition is a once off period in society when the proportion of the population in the working age group is particularly prominent. For instance the economic upsurge in the Asian region is partly attributed to economic benefit accrued from demographic transition. During transition, the proportion of young people increases significantly compared to other age groups because of the historically high fertility and mortality rates, which has been followed by a sustained decline in fertility. This results in what is generally called the 'youth bulge'. The youth bulge has, in some parts of the world, been translated to a demographic dividend, which is the economic advantage that has been accrued by members of all generations. In countries where the demographic dividend has benefited the general population, young adults enter the labour market and in the process, increase the tax base of the nation at large. At the same time costs to the state to take care of children declines because of the declining proportion of population at older and young ages, which are dependant ages. Within households, benefit is derived from having more members earning an income with which to support fewer children. A further advantage is that this group of young people is historically the healthiest segment of society and in all likelihood the first generation that would have benefited from wide coverage of a comprehensive education system. Society would benefit greatly from job creation and productivity derived from this segment of society.

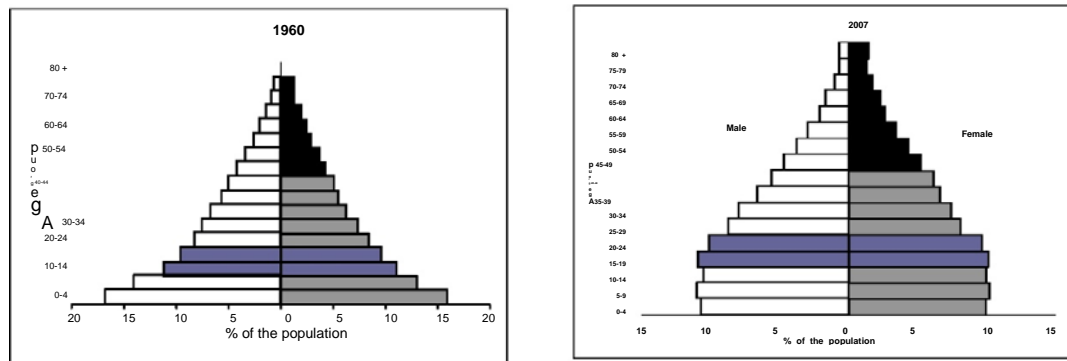


Figure 1 The South African Population Pyramid, 1960, 2007

Some African countries, including South Africa, are well advanced in their demographic transition. In Africa today, however, due to the burden of disease, particularly HIV/AIDS, unemployment and experimentation with drugs and alcohol, many young adults continue to be a burden of parents in their childhood households. On the other hand, population ageing in South Africa has been accompanied by declining sex ratios, whereby a larger proportion of females are reaching old age than males. This has caused a higher proportion of elderly households to be headed by women who have not traditionally been the breadwinners of African families. This means that those with perennially lower incomes have only gained more responsibilities with their meagre resources. Thus, because of the failure by society to transmit cutting edge hard and soft skills, young people remain dependent on meagre resources provided for by the previous generation. The demographic dividend, which is the term used to explain the economic advantage accrued to the entire society due to the increase in the proportion of young people in society, has thus far not been realised.

### **Intergenerational co-residence**

A number of recent studies situate generational issues in the context of socio-political change, high levels of unemployment and poverty, and the incidence of HIV/AIDS amongst South Africans. There is an emerging literature which emphasises the role of grandparents in the nurturing and the grooming of the young. Studies conducted in South Africa make two points that are important for this debate on intergenerational relations. Firstly and historically, grandparents especially in African communities consider it a duty and an honour to care for their grandchildren. In fact in the Apartheid past, grandparents took care of their grandchildren; whilst the latter's biological parents were working in the cities (Pinnock 1984, Makiwane et al. 2004). Secondly, in the cities, parents go to work during the day leaving children behind in the care of their grandparents. In the urban areas the imposition of the Group Areas Act (a law which separated residential areas according to race during Apartheid) has separated families and weakened the extended family since the 1960's. In a response the communities in many townships have witnessed the emergence of gangs who have become a socially disruptive force.



Gangs have contributed to the overall high crime situation in South Africa (Kinnes 2000). Thus, the continuous positive role played by families in guiding younger generations has been replaced by their role of providing cover during the times of crises. Gangs are typically generational groups operating outside the accepted norms set by the previous generations, formed in order for individuals to make headway in life. These alternative social structures, like gangs have replaced the extended family system which historically was crucial for the socialisation of the youth (Pinnock, 1984). This creates perennial generational conflicts that retard progress in wealth accumulation.

Two main roles of intergenerational solidarity are in care giving and economic support that is given by one generation to another. To receive care and be given economic support is crucial to individuals from the time of infancy until one reaches adult years as well as when one is in twilight years. It is also crucial during times of crises, when one is sick or is in financial trouble.

Co-residence between generations during crucial stages of life cycle is an important indicator of the level of support between generations.

The table below shows the level of co-residence between generations.

**Table 1 Percentages of Co-residence by age groups in South Africa**

Household Type	Age Groups					
	Whites			Blacks		
	18-34	35-59	60+	18-34	35-59	60+
One generational households	54.8	35.6	78.3	59.9	28.7	18.9
Two generational households	43.0	59.0	15.3	37.7	46.1	14.8
Three generational households	1.7	4.2	4.3	1.2	20.4	41.2
Skipped generational households	0.1	0.5	1.9	0.6	3.4	24.0

**Data sourced from Statistics, South Africa, 2007**

The period during which young people stay with their parents vary considerable. About 10% of children leave their parental households before the end of their childhood years, to stay with foster parents, who are likely to be better off financially than their parents (Status of the Youth Survey data, 2003). Some of them might end up being street children<sup>1</sup>. The vast majority leave their parental households between the late teens and early twenties. Yet about 35% of the children remain in parental households well beyond their thirties.

**Table 2. The Relationship to Head of Young People in South African Households, 2007.**

Youth Are:	Age group		
	15-19	20-24	All (15-24)
Head or acting head of household	2.9	11.5	7.1
Husband/wife or partner	0.7	5.6	3.1
Biological son or daughter	59.0	50.2	54.7
Adopted son or daughter	1.6	1.3	1.5
Step child	1.2	0.9	1.1
Brother or sister	5.5	7.2	6.3
Grand/great grand child	18.5	9.5	14.1
Son/daughter in-law	0.9	2.0	1.4
Other relative	8.9	9.7	8.3
Non-related person	0.9	2.1	1.5

It has been noticed that children who become successful in their careers leave parental households earlier, while the less successful remain behind to be a burden to their ageing parents (Makiwane 2010). As early non-marital childbearing is common in South Africa, many of the women who remain in parental households are likely to bear children, thus creating two generations of dependents. Data obtained from the South African 1996 census which was analysed by Rama and Richter (2007) indicates that child dependency ratio is high among low income households. Households headed by pensioners are most likely to fall under this category.

The study revealed that most pensioners live in three generational households, often female-headed, having responsibility over unmarried children and grandchildren and possibly even other relatives. Under normal circumstances, the aged in African culture regard the younger generation as securing the future of the household. But in the face of unemployment and HIV/AIDS the social roles have been reversed. The elderly are responsible for raising children and grandchildren and also responsible for care giving and financial support later in life. This is captured by this statement from one elderly woman: “I am responsible for the children and grandchildren...instead of getting help from them. They should look after me being an old

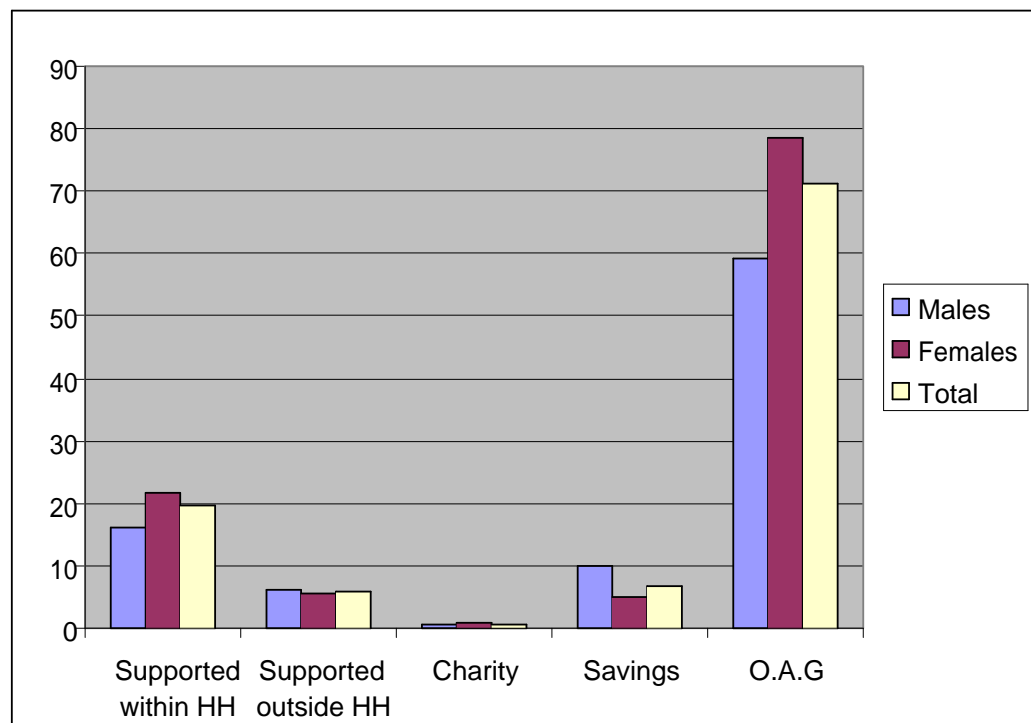
<sup>1</sup> Street children live in the street, and are deprived of family care and protection

lady.” (Bohman et al., 2008:5). From the perspective of the elderly their relations with the younger generational should be reciprocal, grandchildren and children should be able to “payback.”

### **Flow of Economic Wealth between generations**

A simplistic analysis of wealth flow between generations was stated by Caldwell in 1976. Caldwell posited two wealth flow regimes, one which is found in “primitive” and “traditional” societies, where the wealth flow moves upwards from younger to older generations, a contrasting wealth flow regime is found in developed societies where the net flow of wealth moves from the older to younger generations. Thus, Caldwell concluded, that parents in Less Developed societies have vested in giving birth to as many children as biologically possible. The South African context is an example where such simplistic analysis could not have been far from reality. All indications are that mutual beneficiation has always existed in many developing societies. Thus, as shown in the table below, few older persons survive on the support they get from their children.

**Figure 2 The distribution of the main source of income received by to older persons (60 years or above) in South Africa, by Gender**



*Data Source: National Community Survey, Statistics South Africa, 2007*

*OAG – State non contributory old age grant*

*HH - Household*

A common trend in developed countries is that wealth flows from parents to children when children are young. This is followed by a long lull period when children are working and little wealth is shared between generations. Eventually this is followed by a windfall period when there is a flow from parents to children in the form of inheritances. This is usually possible if the younger generation is able to acquire sufficient skills early in their youth through the guidance of their parents, and are able to live an independent life once they reach adulthood. This model is common among societies where there has been fairly stable economic growth over two or more generations. In developing countries, wealth flows change over time. Initially, wealth flows from parents to children when they are young. This is generally followed by a period of mutual beneficitation when children have reached adulthood, with children sending regular remittances and parents assisting children during the time of social and economic distress. This model is possible if there are uninterrupted relationships between generations, something that is being challenged by rapid socio-demographic changes that are occurring throughout the world.

In addition to economic benefit of wealth sharing between generations, remittances play a big role in connecting the middle that have moved in search of work with both parents and children. Due to economic volatility that is a common feature of many developing countries many working migrants constantly lose jobs and may consequently lose their connection with the rest of their family. The start-stop working conditions of young people in the developing world are not conducive to creating lasting family relationships.

Over decades, many rural households in South Africa were sustained by remittances from the meagre salaries of mineworkers. This continued until recently, when many mineworkers were retrenched en masse from the mines. The lack of vibrant economies in rural areas of South Africa has had a negative impact on the economic flows from the middle generation. Even among young people who are employed, there is generally low rate of remitting compared to many developing societies. It has been observed, that as a general rule, areas with low economic activity are less likely to attract remittances from the middle generation that has left the area (Kaufman 1997). This is related to the fact that remittances are also a form of diversification of investments by young adults who have left their underdeveloped areas. Thus, areas with vibrant economies are more likely to attract remittances than areas where such remittances will mainly be used for consumption.

### **Policy options**

South Africa, like many countries in the world has policies that support families, which include tax exemptions for children, and child support is tax deductible. Non-contributory old age pension and the child support grants, which target poor families, play a big role in enabling generations to support each other. In addition to a number of laws pertaining to family welfare, a draft family policy is in place that seeks to strengthen South African families and maintain their well-being through specific programmes and actions.

Nevertheless, it is only recently that the government has initiated a national dialogue with the aim of drafting a national framework to build intergenerational solidarity. Many of these strategies are being discussed by government and civil society.

New programmes to rebuild sound intergenerational relations are needed in order to create conditions for wealth creation, and I list some preliminary policy options arising from this preceding discussion.

(i) Technology and media that encourages better intergenerational relations

The first policy option is to encourage the support role of the medial and digital technology. It is common understanding that new technological innovations have played a divisive role among generations. This is due to the fact that young people, who were born during digital age, leave behind other generations who are digital “migrants”. New attempts are envisaged that would make digital communication to be more user-friendly to the older generation, and thus enable them to communicate and transfer knowledge and skills to the younger generations. In addition, the media should encourage a positive and integrative role between members of different generations. This could be done by harnessing the power of mass and multi-media through telling stories that reflect current state of intergenerational relations. Special attention should be made to promote a positive image of fatherhood.

(ii) Creation of Intergenerational Investment schemes

Traditionally, subsistence farming served as a common interest between generations. The middle generation would send regular support for investment in the sector while the older generation would be custodian of the enterprise. This fostered continuous social contact while different generation ripped benefit of the enterprise. With the decline of subsistence farming in South Africa, new innovative ways are needed for common wealth accumulation between generations.

(iii) Support for voluntary and flexible economic and social participation retired persons

The government can facilitate participation by a number of considered incentives to government and other private sector organizations that accommodate flexible participation of older persons. This would enhance skills and knowledge transfer across generations. Multipurpose centres where old people can receive health care, entertainment but also where they in turn can provide a service to children and youth. People of different generations must share physical environment and be encouraged to engage in formal and informal interactions.

(iv) School based programmes

Grandparents and parents should be encouraged to actively participate in the classrooms. They might be tasked to tell or read stories to learners. In addition, pupils might be tasked to do school assignments that encourage young people to interact with older persons on an ongoing basis. National competitions could be tasked to analyze intergenerational relations (either within

family, community, nationally or continentally) and to find constructive solutions. National media will be sought to broadcast some of the most creative interventions.

(v) Research Programmes

More resources should be invested into research programmes that are related to intergenerational relations.

### **References**

Biggs, S. (2007). "Concepts of Generation: social, psychodynamic and gerontological approaches". *Journal of Social Issue*, 65(4): 695-713.

Bohman, D.M., van Wyk, N.C. and Eckman, S.L. (2008). 'Tradition in Transition-intergenerational relation with focus on the aged and their family members in a South African context'.

*Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences* (published on line September 10 2008).

Caldwell, J. (1976) "Towards a restatement of demographic theory" *Population and Development Review* Population Council. 2. pp 321-366

Clay, D.C. and Vander Haar, J.E. (1993). "Patterns of Intergenerational Support and Childbearing in the Third World." *Population Studies Review*. 47 (1): 67-83.

Karakayali, N. (2001) "Social Distance and affective orientations" *Social Forum*, 23 (3) pp 538-562.

Kaufman, C. (1997) "Reproductive Control in South Africa." Working Paper No. 7. Population Council.

Kinnes I, *The future, Gangs and Society*. Monograph 48. From urban street gangs to criminal empires: The changing face of gangs in the Western Cape. June 2000.

Makiwane, M, Schneider M and Gopane M. (2004) "Experiences and needs of older persons in Mpumalanga." A report compiled for Mpumalanga Department

Makiwane, M. (2010) "Is it time to renegotiate an intergenerational relations in South Africa? The state of intergenerational relations in South Africa." (Unpublished paper).

Pinnock, D. (1984) "The Brotherhoods: Street Gangs and State Control in Cape Town." Cape

Town: David Philip.

Rama, S. and Richter, L. (2007). "Children's household work as a contribution to the well-being of the family and household", In A.Y. Amoateng and Heaton, T.B. (eds). *Families and households in post-apartheid South Africa: socio-demographic perspectives*. Cape Town: HSRC Press, 135-170.

Richter, L., Chikovore, J. and Makusha, T. (2010) "The *status of fatherhood and fathering in South Africa*." *Childhood Education* 86(6) pp360-365

Statistics South Africa (2007). 'Community Survey' Pretoria: StatsSA.

Swartz, S. and Bhana, A. (2009) "Teenage Tata: Voices of Young Fathers in South Africa". Human Sciences Research Council. Pretoria

Umsombovu (2003) Status of the Youth Data collected by the Human Science Research Council on behalf of Umsobomvu Youth Fund.

United Nations (2003). "*The global youth report*." Retrieved 15 March, 2009, from <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/documents/worldyouthreport.pdf>

Vorster, J. (2005) "*Nation-building in South Africa: has progress been made?*" *Ecumenical Review*.

*Ana Maria Goldani*

**Challenges to Dialogue and Understanding Across Generations  
Some Lessons from Latin America**

Intergenerational relations are an expression used to discuss a variety of interactions among persons of distinct generations. I believe that a multidisciplinary approach that addresses political, economic, social and psychological dimensions is the best strategy for understanding these relations and establishing a dialogue. In the broad field of intergenerational relations a variety of theoretical, research and practical approaches have been used to address diverse goals. Among these goals, a “society for all ages” that seeks solidarity across generations, appears to be central. An agenda seeking a “society for all ages” was largely inspired by a series of UN international and regional conferences (e.g. Madrid, 2002; Brasilia; 2007) amidst population aging trends. This agenda evolved over time, reflecting changing conceptual perspectives and practices. As a consequence of this evolving agenda, intergenerational social programs themselves also changed; from a traditional focus on leisure activities, learning experiences and friendship for diverse age groups to a source of solution for social problems. The intergenerational programs are conceived as a way of continued exchange of resources and learning between the old and young generations to achieve individual and social benefits (Hattan-Yeo and Ohsako, 2001). The experience of intergenerational programs such as those pioneered by the United States since the 1960s (Newman, et al, 1997), and the most recent debate on legislation to curb ageism in the EU countries are some references to these changes.

Briefly, from a narrow demographic perspective concerned with the needs of a growing elderly population, intergenerational relations came to be viewed as important to both individuals and society. At first intergenerational programs focused on learning and exchanging between the old and young. At a second moment, the predominant view was that intergenerational relations should not be restricted to families but expanded to communities and nations. In this case, intergenerational programs served to promote integration and cohesion both among individuals and societies. Finally, analysts recognized that the cohesion and equilibrium of most societies are based on a more complex set of intergenerational relations. With this perspective, the interactions among generations became a crucial part of the social welfare systems as well as key elements for the economic development of nations. This most recent perspective, -- stimulated by the European Community (2005)--, stresses that to achieve intergenerational solidarity, new elements such as equal opportunities and combat to discriminations are crucial parts of a strategy to achieve a “society for all ages”. Age, gender, race, sexuality or any other



prejudices and discrimination are not acceptable.<sup>1</sup>

### **Some conceptual and methodological distractions or key issues to consider**

The role of institutions in improving or limiting intergenerational relations has been mostly discussed in terms of the family, the state, communities, and the labor market. In the spirit of broadening the agenda towards a “society for all ages”, I would like to suggest three elements to be considered in the discussions for improving dialogue and understanding across generations.

I. The key structuring role that social networks plays in the process of interactions across generations. The idea is that wellbeing and levels of solidarity should be viewed as an outcome of chains of influences that are neither random nor deterministic. The improvement of intergenerational relations would not be facilitated by mere ideas, cultural or material bases, but they would also be produced in the intersection of external shocks and network configurations (Collins, 1998). One way to see this influence could be through the social capital individuals acquire through the resources they have access to via different networks. Therefore, fostering dialogue and understanding across generations involves a broad range of institutions and actors as well as the recognition of both the cooperative and the conflictive aspect of interactions across generations. The potential conflict of interest across generations has been largely discussed in terms of the economic inequalities between age groups, and was inspired by the “intergenerational equity” perspective. Another approach, the “political economy of aging”, sharply contrasts with the equity model. This approach considers the contract between generations in terms of socially constructed roles, relationships, dependencies and obligations at micro (family and kinship) and macro levels (state, market and policies). It offers more room for the discussion of both the cooperative and conflictive aspects of intergenerational relations (Walker, 1993). The bulk of the studies on generational relations in both perspectives recognize the existence of some conflict between generations but there is much disagreement about the nature of the conflict depending on the theoretical approaches as we discussed for the Brazilian case before (Goldani, 2005).

II. The so called principle of “intimacy from a distance” appears to be the current desirable mode of interaction among generations. In a few decades, strong social and economic changes have promoted transitions from a family world governed by traditional norms and gender roles to diverse forms of individual autonomy. As a consequence the expectations of support and

---

<sup>1</sup> A wider debate about the potential of promoting relationships and exchange between the young and old as an integral part of social and public policy and based on different national experiences, is presented by Hattan-Yeo and Ohsako (2001).

personal exchanges were redefined and rather than cohabitation, is the growing “intimacy at a distance” that makes logistics of intergenerational relations more complex. The globalization of singledom, meaning the rise in the number of people who are living alone can be viewed as an example of these changes. A large-scale trend, with diverse forms and rhythms, singledom is associated with the process of individual autonomy and search for identity, and it varies by country depending on the level of development of the individualization process. Although singledom could represent an extra source of support for the old and the reinforcement of intergenerational relations, its effect is way more complex. Single women keep a greater distance between themselves and their parents than married women. They don’t want to be seen as old maids going out with their old parents or to confirm expectations that as singles they are available to do the “care” work. Singledom is also seen as a risk to society to the extent that it threatens the reproduction of the family which is considered central to the process of intergenerational relations (Kaufmann, 2008). In fact, kinship continues to play a very important role, and the desire to stay in touch remains strong. However, such ties often take an elective and occasional form, as members of the family network hold tightly to their autonomy, at all cost.

III. The influence of a sophisticated media system, --in the context of global flows of people, ideas and images-- challenge local cultures and reinventing relations across generations. The technological dissemination of ideas and images across national boundaries also challenges people’s values, norms and beliefs. Participants in computer networks form new types of communities that become very real and important part of their everyday lives. The cyberspace community can be solidary faster than any other community, not only in political upheaval, as demonstrated by recent events, but also in providing economic, emotional, medical and various types of support to their members. These networks represent more than channels of information; they are also channels of interpersonal connection (growing dating sites are only one example). In the actual context of short-term relationships, rapid flows of people, and instability, Rubin (1996), suggests that computer networks could well become the twenty-first century’s “ties that bind”. The connections between people through computer networks have both limiting and liberating potential.

*What should we do? Which questions should we try to answer?*

### **To Improve the Dialogue and Understanding of Relations Across Generations**

By identifying some critical conditions that promote or impede dialogue and understanding across generations, we can also inform policies to advance the agenda for a society for all ages. We agree that although “families still may value the elder as the transmitter of cultural lore, preparing younger individuals for life in the modern and more complex world has become a function of wider social groups that are non-familial” (Newman and Hatton-Yeo, 2008). There is now a need for new paradigms that include not only changes in families but also

“extrafamilial” aspects. Thus we would like to suggest some of the elements we consider important in rethinking relations across generations.

1. Drop the idea that solely certain type of family arrangements can predict the quality of intergenerational relations. Pay attention to the diverse and fluid family arrangements and how this dynamic can help or restrain interaction across generations. People living in non-family households also have family responsibilities but they usually are not “counted”, either for society or by their employers. Individuals who spend several days a week caring for an aging parent in the parent’s separate residence (one in four American households today is providing substantial time and care to an ageing relative, and more than half of all households say they are expected to do so within the next 10 years). Or as was said before, “the place where we keep our clothes isn’t always the only place where we keep our commitments”.

2. People’s new life styles, combined with the undeniable changes in couple arrangements make it increasingly hard to capture new family realities in old survey categories. Thus, using such categories to talk about families and relationships across generations has policy consequences. Many people now live so much of their lives outside marriage and we should raise our expectations for, and commitment to other types of relationships. We need to restructure both work and social life so we can reach out and build ties with others, including people who are single and divorced. Women who entered the work force discovered social contacts and friendships outside home and need deep emotional connections with others, not just their husbands. Studies in the US found that men and women with confidants beyond the nuclear family were mentally and physically healthier than people who relied on just one other individual for emotional intimacy and support (Coontz, NYT OPED 2007).

3. Mutual understanding across generations is associated with how attitudes toward equality in the family shift across and even within generations. How are these attitudes shaped now and how do they translate into interaction? The balance between family and work didn’t change much within the families, by gender and across generations. Women all over the world already figured out how disadvantageous their traditional responsibilities of care can be. In fact, individual’s life course and family needs can conflict and compromise the idea of cohesion or solidarity. Shifting opportunities and constraints are a big part of the story and shape rational decisions. However, there are also changes in individual attitudes and values that lead people to prefer more egalitarian relationships and domestic arrangements (Treas and Drobic, 2010). Therefore, as Amartya Sen noted, family is a “space of cooperative conflict” and this is a good way to begin the dialogue about relations across generations.

4. Vulnerability in relations across generations has to do with power structures, which are shaped or sometime modified by provincial or local customs. A global view of intergenerational relations must be sensitive to the diversity in which these powerful canons of authority exist. Thus, in order to compare models of interactions between generations, we first

have to understand some of the local history in terms of the norms, rights and duties and consider the roles of different institutions. How can different institutions and actors in a specific society provide resources to enhance solidarity across generations? How much should inequalities (income, race, ethnicity and gender) among individuals be considered in designing new intergenerational programs?

5. What is important is not the contribution of each generation but most of all the value each generation adds through its relation with others to the community, society and individuals. The relationship between generations produce more benefits than the sum of their contributions and the emphasis should be put in the concept of synergy as something relatively new in the field of intergenerational relations. The idea is that the whole is bigger than the sum of its parts refers to the set of actions performed by generations in search for certain goals. In this interactional process, generations become connected among themselves and will be affected in their profiles. It is important to note that the synergetic movement will not happen randomly but it results from a series of elements that favor its occurrence. Some of these issues are already considered in a new social paradigm that advanced the notion of synergy between various aspects of a community's social structure (Newman and Hatton-Yeo, 2008).

### **Final Remarks**

Despite the emphasis on the role of institutions in shaping relations across generations, (family, state, market, media, religion, etc..), the fact is that our societies are made by individuals and after all it will be their actions and inactions that will determine how interactions and solidarity across generations will form in the future. The rapid pace and amount of societal changes all over the world is challenging the various social contracts (gender, kinship, and policy) which makes some people feel unsettled. There is also an idea that traditional solidarities across generations are at greater risk than ever before. However, I would like to argue that the increase in such risks and the changes on the old ways of interacting, for example within the kinship group, doesn't mean a breakdown of institutions like the family. We should remember that in periods of strong changes there are also greater opportunities to do things in better ways (or worse ways too), depending on individual and societal structures. Therefore, in this moment of critical transitions, the future of intergenerational relations will depend on the actions of different actors.

The huge scale of contemporary uncertainty is a product of history and from the most recent wave of modernity in Western countries; individuals have discovered a new sense of autonomy and a wider range of choices that now exist in most of the domains. Although historical events may have set the stage for current behaviors across generations, it is only by systematically challenging traditional hierarchies and by learning and practicing new forms of interactions, that we will be able to achieve a genuine improvement in intergenerational relations. One of the major techniques for avoiding conflict involves building on each generation's strengths and allocating

complementary roles. Then, it is not enough to analyse the opposing positions of young and old generations as simply an inheritance from the past, and it is even less important to consider it purely as a biological age factor. It will be from modifications in the interactional mechanism itself that improvements will be possible. Equality of opportunities across generations and respect for the individual is a far cry from the imposition of hierarchical and imposed assignation of roles. Finally, the conflict between the ideal model of intergenerational relations and the reality of relations across generations will continue challenging our discussions for a very long time to come.

### **Some Lessons from Latin America**

It is a commonplace to say that Latin America is the most unequal region in the world. The region is characterized by relatively low levels of GDP, high social and economic inequality and it is in the middle of a profound demographic changes. Compared with other emerging regions, Latin America has a relatively large public sector and a rapidly-ageing population, combined with one of the world's highest levels of inequality in income distribution (CEPAL, 2010). At the same time, it is well accepted that there are variations among the countries of the region, limiting any generalization about the current situation and the future of the intergenerational relations. Regarding interaction across generations, there is a strong tradition of solidarity among family members in the region although at this moment it is said that there is a "crisis of care" ("una crisis del cuidado"), as a result of a simultaneous reorganization of the salaried/paid work (trabajo salarial remunerado) and the non-paid domestic work. Both occur in the context of a continued rigid sexual division of domestic work and gender segmentation on the labor market. These asymmetries are expected to be threatening the continuity and equilibrium of traditional arrangements of care in the Latin American societies. (Espejo, et al. 2010).

Latin America is still a relatively "young region" and the current financial crisis that left record numbers of people jobless had a particularly harsh effect on young workers. Although much of Latin America is recovering faster than elsewhere, the International Labor Organization (ILO) estimates that 600,000 young people in the region have been left unemployed by the crisis – putting a strain on governments and reversing gains made from 2003 to 2008. It also put strain on the majority of household-families that are heavily concentrated in their activities of childrearing. The structure and distribution of households through life cycle stages help to understand the challenges for care activities in the region. A generational typology of households in 2008 shows that 5.6% of households were multigenerational, 36.9% one-generational, 48.2% without elderly adults, 9.1% with no children present and 0.3% without an intermediary generation present. Consistently, the distribution of these households by life cycle stage shows the majority in the stage of expansion (17.2) and consolidation (33.4) ; while households in the initial stage of formation were comprised of 10.2% married couples with children and 4.5% without children. Only 10% of households were formed by old couples

without children present and 24.6% were couples with children leaving home (“shrinking stage”) (Rico, 2010).

The challenges of high levels of unemployment that mark the present and the future of the young generation appear as good examples of how “social risks” are related to intergenerational practices. Unemployment among young workers is typically about two to three times that of adults in the region. In 2008, of 18 countries in Latin America where data was collected, 13.4 percent of young people were unemployed compared with 4.5 percent of adults. Even more worrisome, nearly 20 percent of youth in the region are neither studying nor looking for jobs, threatening to become a “lost generation,” according to the ILO. Despite the recent improvements in the Brazilian economy and in the system of redistribution of economic and social benefits, challenges remain. The 2009 ILO report shows that those under age 30 make up 60 percent of the unemployed. The youth thus face a series of contradictions that deepen conflicts with the adult world. At the same time that globalization requires more education and skills, they have less access to employment and at the same time that they are exposed to new technologies and sources of information, they are left out of decision-making power. They have greater individual autonomy but less financial autonomy. All of this matters because it could create a frustrated 'lost generation' of young adults who give up on career aspirations and they may turn to crime or illegal activities. Their family trajectories are also affected because they lack resources. Youth can't get married or start their own families and they end up staying longer at home and in need of support.

The most recent Social Panorama for Latin America recognizes that unlike previous economic crises, the region faced the 2009 crisis in better conditions, thanks to a set of new public policies which lessened the impact on social and work conditions (CEPAL, 2010:11). The novelty is the institutionalization of a series of social programs that seems to be a reference for a new stage of development in the region. Among those, the Conditional Cash Transfer Programs gained special attention and by the end of the 1990s, they became a common strategy to combat poverty in the region. These programs, mostly focused on poor families with children begun as early as 1981 in Chile and with different formats: Argentina (1997), Brazil, (2003), Chile (1981, 2002), Colombia (2001), Costa Rica (2000), Dominican Republic (2005), Ecuador (2003), Honduras (2000), Jamaica (2001), Mexico (1997) and Peru (2005). Therefore, Latin America countries, like those in other developing regions, are implementing a series of cash transfer programs that are oriented towards the children and the population in situations of “pasividad laboral”, which is equivalent to unemployment or even retirement (Lo Vuolo, 2010). Some other examples have to do with the non-contributive pensions among person at old ages. Some of these examples are: the experience of the non-contributive universal pension system in Bolivia called “Renta Dignidad”, the universal food pension in Mexico city called the “Pension Alimentaria Universal”, and the non-contributive rural pensions in Brazil. Recent results suggest that Conditional Transfer Cash Programs (CCT) benefit 20% of Latin American families with children and youth under very high levels of poverty. Simulation analysis show

that those programs would be able to reduce between 25 and 30% of poverty in countries like Guatemala and Nicaragua, if they were expanded in the current format. CEPAL's report suggests that cash transfer programs should continue and the distribution should consider age group needs under a life cycle perspective. And the World Bank (2009) suggests that these programs are efficient tools in the short run by cutting poverty measured by income and in the long term it increases the formation of human capital by maintaining children in school, and as such they function as a mechanism to disrupt the inherited character of poverty in the region. A critical perspective of the CCTs sustain that they do not represent improvements in social policy regarding developmental models but in fact they still represent an "assistencialist-repressive and productivist paradigm" (paradigma asistencial-represivo y productivista) which was part of social policy in Latin America for a long time. The main argument is that the discourse of human capital in relationship to the expenses of children didn't change the essence of these policies. The programs only add new criteria to measure the meritocratic efficiency of expenditures, which remain very low in comparison to most social spending items in these countries (Lo Vuolo, 2010).

*What are the roles of public and private transfers resources across generations today and in the future?*

### **The Latin America Case**

The "Social Panorama of Latin America", (CEPAL, 2010), which focuses on the life cycle and on the reproduction of unequal opportunities for sustainable social mobility over an individual's lifetime for the region, is our main source in trying to answer the above question. This report mostly discusses how differences created and consolidated during childhood and youth stages of life entrench the intergenerational reproduction of poverty and inequality. The findings presented by the "Social Panorama in Latin America" respond to a growing interest in public transfers as a mean of combating poverty and inequality in the region. In doing this, it improves former studies in the region by controlling the effects of transfers on both age and individual's socio-economic status.

The overarching message of this report is that "the position on the social scale is more than the sum of personal circumstance, effort and decisions. There is a structure of opportunities provided by States, markets, families and communities that are largely beyond the individual's control and that colour prospects for social mobility and access to well-being" (CEPAL, 2010: 1). By sharing this message, I would like to note that it is in the context of these institutions that the process of intergenerational relations will be shaped. However, as was said before, the social networks play a crucial structuring role in this process, by providing for the needs and opportunities of individuals across generations.

## **Some Findings**

The Social Panorama for Latin America in 2010 suggests that “the State’s transfers and its regulatory mechanisms fall short of the mark in addressing inequalities of origin. In other words, the start in life for the children of Latin America depends a good deal on family circumstances. Families, in turn, depend a good deal on the market and receive little support from the State”. Therefore, the lack of robust transfer systems targeting families with children; limited coverage, care and protection by the State during infancy; low penetration of preschool systems; short school days; the system’s inability to retain students during secondary school; and the lack of support for young people and young adults as they become autonomous: these are all factors that dramatically limit the prospects for future social mobility for children born into lower- income sectors.

The analysis of the role of education as one of the State’s best tools for reversing the intergenerational reproduction of inequality and decoupling an individual’s social background from future well-being outcomes concludes that the region has not turned the education system into a driver of equal opportunity. Because, while there have been significant advances in education in recent decades, expanding access has also led to greater supply-side segmentation in attainment and in quality. Thus, social and cultural disadvantages that burden lower-resource students as they enter the educational system are compounded by access to lower-quality education services than are available to students with more resources and then it reinforces the inequality of their learning paths.

The system of public and private transfers centre on age groups that tend to consume more than they produce: children and young people, and older adults the report conclude. The main argument here is that the high concentration of poverty in the early stages of life, the low level of public transfers targeting children and young people and the segmentation of educational attainments and learning (combined with the structural core of an unequal production matrix and labour market) are among the factors that explain, in part, the persistent inequality in Latin America countries. By using the National Transfer Accounts (NTA) system, --a new approach to measuring aggregate flows of economic resources between age groups over time--,<sup>2</sup> the report insists on the need to rethink the intergenerational distribution of public transfers, not only to check the reproduction of inequality throughout the life cycle but also to prepare for the rapid ageing of the population. In addressing these issues a set of measures involving cash transfers to vulnerable households with children aged 0-14 is discussed under the assumption that those would improve the odds that the family will have an appropriate environment for child socialization (nutrition, housing, clothing). Another group of measures envisions another

---

<sup>2</sup> . These accounts include flows associated with transfers and capital accumulation, distinguishing those passing through public institutions from those in the private sphere (CEPAL, 2010)



set of cash transfers for employment and training services targeting young people in the process of becoming emancipated adults (15-24 years of age).

The analysis of the incidence of public spending by age group and socio-economic level (defined as the educational level of the head of household) and by sectoral composition (education, health care and social spending) shows that a greater proportion of public transfers targets older persons, while families account for most of the transfers to children and young people and that is particularly true for Brazil (CEPAL, 2010). This pattern holds at all socio-economic levels but it is significantly stronger at the highest level. The absolute progressivity of public spending is generally greatest in the case of children; it diminishes with rising age and then turns regressive, with greater benefits at the highest socio-economic levels. These differences are due to a large extent to the greater labour incomes of persons with higher educational levels, a determining factor in pension benefits. In Brazil, the point at which spending becomes regressive is age 45 and Chile is 54.

*Are the public and private transfers helping to promote intergenerational relations (and solidarity) in Latin America?*

The findings show the importance of public social spending as an instrument for channelling resources to the poorest population segment and of the importance of social development as a driver of economic development that led the region's countries to gradually increase this type of spending. Thus, the increase in social spending could be viewed as carrying an implicit concern with intergenerational reproduction and practices of solidarity, although it is not stated in these terms in the Social Panorama for Latin America. In pointing to the levels of deprivation and inequality between and within age groups, the findings suggest the difficulties and costs of reproduction for individuals of different groups. Under the perspective of human rights and social justice, --the principles guiding any intergenerational community development project-- these findings are indicative not only of how public and private transfer influence the interaction among age groups but also the different needs of those groups. These findings however, fall short of showing how solidarity between generations flow through the public and private transfers. Regarding this issue, previous studies noted the existence of a reverse intergenerational flow, where benefits to the old end up benefitting younger generations instead of the old getting resources from the young (Saad, 2005, Camarano, 2005). To some people this flow is considered unnatural or even wrong because, implicitly the social contract within the kinship group expects a unidirectional exchange between generations (resources flowing from the young to the old).

In fact, broadly framed under the perspective of "distributional justice between age cohorts", the analysis of the public and private transfers for Latin America implicitly assumed that some age groups are benefiting from the public transfers in detriment of others (Zero- Sum Game). The classical economic rationale of the analysis noted that public and private transfers are

centered on age groups that tend to consume more than they produce and then there is a need to rethink the system of public and private transfers. It also recognized that the state, market and families are responsible to generate mechanisms to develop individual's skills to compete for social mobility. However, the extent that individualism and competition for resources can be hurtful for the relationship across generations is not a concern. In conclusion, in putting emphasis on both inequality between groups and within groups, --e.g. poor students benefit less from the public transfers and has worse educations regardless of their age—the analysis paradoxically questions the main assumption of the equity model. In other words, how can the competition for public and private resources between age groups (a central issue of the intergenerational equity approach used), be evaluated in the noticeable context of inequality within age groups as noticed by the Social Panorama for Latin America.

*What do we learn from the Latin American case?*

We learned that creative social policies and expansion of social protection systems can be crucial in changing the lives of the most needy and for improving citizenship. Despite all the criticisms of the Conditional Cash Transfer Benefits, including fostering political clientelism with a strong negative gender bias, there are some positive results too. For example, the inclusion of the poor in a dynamic cycle of receiving a regular payment of benefits and accomplishing the obligation of sending children regularly to school as well as visiting public health centers, has meant more than simply better economic conditions. For the first time, the very poor are socially visible and have an opportunity to express their demands to the State (Lavinas and Ferraz, 2011). In other words, the beneficiaries of CCTB earn social legitimacy and recognition that they didn't have before. Thus, the Conditional Transfer Cash Benefits, as experienced in its different versions, helped to move the debate from an exclusively economic realm to culture in general. It introduces new actors and questions in the process of democratization and achievement of a full social citizenship. These new programs seem to be achieving both recognition and redistribution. Finally, the examples of Latin America non-contributive pensions remind us that the problem of private versus public solutions is a false contradiction. Society's willingness to benefit from families's caregiving and its unwillingness to share the costs will not go far in promoting cohesion and even less in terms of social and economic development.

We also learned that to advance a dialogue and understand relations across generations in broad terms, we should try to unlock the debate on intergenerational relations from the trap of economic management. Although the scale and allocation of public spending appears as a crucial source to support the reproduction and interaction across generations, we should advance the idea of multidimensionality of intergenerational relations and how those are related to solidarity practices. We also learned the importance of submitting technical discourses and their assumptions to a critical review because it is the way to politicize the debate on solidarity across generations and welfare. To the extent that the technical discourses and knowledge

ignore the need for public, resources of solidarity between generations, and even try to disqualify the benefits and social programs oriented to certain groups ( in general to the old as a non-productive group), they stimulate less participation from the State in promoting intergenerational solidarity. Therefore, we should be aware of the different perspectives and their normative and policy implications because the example of Latin America indicates that institutions and policy makers are not only managers of social risks but they can also be powerful sources in creating risks. By exercising their decisions of power, they can also threaten the action of social movements and generate unnecessary conflict.

### **References:**

CEPAL/ECLAC, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean/ UN). 2010. Social Panorama of Latin America 2010. Libros de la CEPAL, November 2010.

Collins, R. 1998. The Sociology of Philosophies: A Global Theory of Intellectual Change. Belknap, Harvard University Press.

Epejo, A; Filguera, F and Rico , M N. 2010. Familias Latinoamericanas: organizacion del trabajo remunerado y de cuidado. ( not published).

Goldani, A. M. 2005. "Intergenerational Contracts and the Reconstruction of the Welfare State. Why should we Rethink this Relationship? ? In The New Brazilian Elderly: Way Beyond Their Sixties? Camarano, Ana.A. (Org.). Chapter 7 ; pp:211-252. IPEA, Rio de Janeiro.

Goldani, A M, 2010. "Ageism" in Brazil What is it? Who does it? What to do with it? Revista Brasileira de Estudos de População, 27 (2), p. 385-405. (Journal of Brazilian Population Association). Rio de Janeiro

Kuehne, V.S. (2003). The State of our Art: Intergenerational Program Research and Evaluation. Journal of Intergenerational Relationships, Vol1 Issue 1, pp:145-164.

Hattan-Yeo, A. and Toshio Ohsako (Editors) 2001. Intergenerational Programmes: Public Policy and Research Implications: An International Perspective. The Beth Johnson Foundation, 2001.

Kaufmann, Jean Claude. 2008. The Single Woman & the Fairytale Prince. The English Edition. Polity Press, MA, USA.

Lavinas, L. and Ferraz, C. 2011. El Brasil Despues de Lula. Exitos y Desafios de la pobreza y el liderazgo regional. CIDOB-AECID. Barcelona, February 2011.

Lo Vuolo, Ruben M. 2010. Las Perspectivas y los desafíos del Ingreso Ciudadano en America Latina. In a Conference on “Basic Income in Latin america : Perspectives and Challenges (13<sup>th</sup> International Conference of the Basic Income Earth network, Sao Paulo, Brazil) [www.bienbrasil2010.com](http://www.bienbrasil2010.com)

Newman, S. et al. (1997). *Intergenerational programs: Past, present, and future*. Washington, DC: Taylor & Francis.

Newman, S. and Hatton-Yeo, A. 2008. Intergenerational Learning and the Contributions of Older People. AGEING HORIZONS Issue No. 8, 31–39

Rico, M.N. 2010. Transformaciones y persistencias en las familias en America Latina. Genero y estratificacion social comoperspectivas de analisis. Division de Desarrollo Social. CEPAL/ONU. (Semianrio Internacional Nupcialidad y Familia en America Latina), Barcelona, Octubre 2010.

Rubin, B.A. 1996. Shifts in the Social Contract. Undrstanding Changes in American Society. Pine Forge Press.

Saad, P. M. 2003. Transferencias informales de apoyo de los adultos mayores en America Latina y el Caribe: estudio comparativo de encuestas Sabe. Notas de Población, n. 77, p. 175-217, Santiago, Chile: Nações Unidas/Cepal,2003 (número de venda: S.03.II.G.171).

Schindlmayr T. 2006. Reconsidering intergenerational concerns Int J Soc Welfare 2006: 15: 181–184 © 2006 The Author(s), Journal compilation © 2006 Blackwell Publishing Ltd and the International Journal of Social Welfare.

Treas, J. and Drobnic, S. 2010. Dividing the Domestic. Mena , Women and Household Work in Cross National Perspective. Stanford University Press. Stanford, California.

Walker, A. 1993. Intergenerational relations and welfare restructuring: the social construction of an intergenerational problem. In: Bengston, V.L., Aschenbaum, A. (Edits). The Changing Contract Across generations. New York: Aldine De Gruyter, 1993.

# *Jenny Gierveld*

## **Older adults in small households; causes and consequences**

### **Summary**

Nowadays, many older adults are living in small households, either a one-person or a couple only household. This is positive in guaranteeing autonomy, but negative for social isolation and loneliness. Central research question: which factors enable older adults in small households to alleviate loneliness? Data come from the Generations and Gender Surveys. Women and men aged 60-79 years were selected from 4 countries. Results showed that mean loneliness of older adults living alone in each of the countries is high. Satisfying intergenerational relationships with (grand)children and the availability of a confident are important elements of an overall package of loneliness- alleviating interactions for older adults.

### **Introduction**

Many countries in Europe are characterized by high percentages of older people living in small households that is living alone or living as a couple without others. Projections of older people's living arrangements in 2030 in nine European countries, taking into account future trends in health, mortality and marital status, show that an ever increasing proportion of older adults, especially also men and women aged 75 and over, will live in their own households, and grow old either living with their partner or in a one-person household (Gaymu, Ekamper, & Beets, 2008). What are the main driving forces behind this increase in small households? Firstly, an increasing percentage of adults enter old age in better health conditions than older adults of the past. The associated increases in life expectancy for both men and women postpone widowhood for women and men. Given their better health conditions older persons have more options to choose between living with the partner or after widowhood living alone, moving to one of the children, or (in some European countries) to an institution. Although countries and regions show variations in attitudes towards family support and intergenerational support exchanges, more and more older adults decide to continue living independently for as long as possible in one- person or couple only households. This decision-making process is related to changes in demographic attitudes as summarized in the ideas of the Second Demographic Transition (Van de Kaa, 1987). Cultural changes that have taken place in Europe since the 1960s have influenced the system of norms and values cherished by young and older adults. The past decades have seen a decline in normative control on the behaviour of young adults, enabling them to fulfill their wishes and preferences to a much greater extent than their peers were able to do

in the past. The authority of existing normative institutions, the authority of parents and the authority of the church have been eroded. Not only has the authority to exert normative control declined in recent decades, but the wish to exert such control has diminished as well (Liefbroer, 1999). These changes are linked to processes such as secularisation and individualisation, which affect the opportunities of individuals to decide for themselves how they wish to organize their lives. This preference for personal decision making concerning one's life and lifestyle applies to both young and old. Among older people, living as a couple only and living alone after widowhood are typically indicators of an individualistic lifestyle, in contrast to co-residence, which is connected to lifestyles and countries that favour traditional patterns of family life. This corresponds with Verdon's central axiom that any older adult will want to run his or her life and desires everyday economic and domestic autonomy (Verdon, 1998). That is why today's older adults, whilst wanting good relationships with their children and grandchildren, also have a strong desire to live independently for as long as they can. Frequent visits of children are prioritized above sharing the same household: 'Intimacy but at a distance'. And research by Hank (2007) showed that intimate but distant intergenerational relationships still allow for high levels of affinity.

Living independently in a small household is positive in guaranteeing autonomy and independence in decision making, but what are the risks of social isolation and loneliness? In this context, it is worthwhile investigating the intensity and the distribution of loneliness in older adults either living as a couple or living alone at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, especially from a comparative perspective. Knowing more about the factors affecting loneliness, including factors related to intergenerational bonds, is useful for policy makers, in providing them with greater insight into the mechanisms that relate living in small households with being lonely, or not lonely. This is the case for policy makers in Western and Northern Europe as well as in countries, where the incidence of living alone is not yet at high levels but might become so in the near future.

Investigating social integration and loneliness of older adults living independently in one-person or couple only households, is the goal of this study. Data from the Generations and Gender Surveys (wave 1) will be used for the empirical part of the study.

### **Theoretical background**

Social integration is described in this paper as an outcome of the extent to which individual lives are tied to the lives of relevant others; it is the subjective evaluation of being 'well-embedded' in the lives and intimate thinking of people who are important in one's life. The opposite of feeling social integrated is loneliness. Perlman and Peplau (1981, p. 38) define loneliness as "the unpleasant experience that occurs when a person's network of social relations is deficient in some important way, either quantitatively or qualitatively."

Loneliness is a subjective and negative experience, the outcome of the cognitive evaluation of the match between the *quantity* and *quality* of existing relationships and relationship standards. Loneliness has to be differentiated from social isolation which describes the objective characteristics of a situation and refers to the absence of relationships with other people. Loneliness is but one of the possible outcomes of the evaluation of a situation characterized by a small number of relationships. Some people with a small number of social contacts might feel lonely; others might feel sufficiently embedded.

Loneliness has been linked to many aspects of life that combine to explain why some older people consider themselves lonely. Loneliness can be associated with socio-demographic characteristics such as gender, income level, educational level, health status and related care needs of older people and their spouses (De Jong Gierveld, Van Tilburg, & Dykstra, 2006).

Older adults living alone are seen to be at risk of insufficient contacts with others, where all contacts to be realized are with people outside the household. Maintaining contacts with social network members living elsewhere requires more time, more initiative and perseverance than being involved in close contacts with household members. Those older people living with a spouse have more possibilities for sharing intimate feelings, discussing problems and supporting one another in all daily hassles; in doing so the risks for loneliness are mitigated. However, it is well-known that with increasing age, with increasing risks of health problems, with the death of siblings and other peers, the social network of men and women decreases sharply, affecting loneliness.

In addition it is crucial to incorporate familial functioning in the research design. Contacts with children, grandchildren and other family members that are living in the neighborhood or at larger distances, and in which exchanges of support - exchanges from the older generation to the younger generations and vice versa - take place are at the heart of social embedment and attachment theoretical thinking (Attias-Donfut, Ogg, & Wolff, 2005). The net flow of intergenerational support is mostly downwards- from old to young- or balanced (Albertini, Kohli, & Vogel, 2007). Research has shown that providing support to family members is consistent with the altruism perspective, namely that giving brings rewards, rather than the exchange perspective, which emphasises the costs involved in giving support. Those who provided support up, across and down the family lineage tended to be least lonely (De Jong Gierveld, & Dykstra, 2008). In comparing family relationships in several countries in Europe and Asia, Nauck and Suckow (2006) showed that it is especially the emotional support, given and received, that explains the perceived quality of relationships and embeddedness; this is shown to be true for countries with strongly varying socio-cultural contexts.

The integrative functioning of the family seems to be at risk as a consequence of the trends towards increasing rates of divorce, remarriage after marital break up, in combination with the forming of complex new forms of stepfamilies. This brings us to our research questions:

- To what extents are older adults aged 60 to 79 years and living independently in one-person or in couple only households in Europe affected by loneliness?
- Which factors enable older adults living alone or in couple households in Europe to live socially integrated lives and without loneliness and which factors act as barriers to social integration and promote loneliness?

## **Data and methods**

### **Data**

Data for this study come from the Generations and Gender Surveys (GGS), initiated by the Population Activities Unit of the Economic Commission for Europe in Geneva (Vikat et al., 2007). In each of the countries the same sampling procedures are used, plus a centrally developed questionnaire. In most of the GGS countries the sample size of male and female respondents aged 18 to 79 years of age, is 10,000 or above. From the first round of interviews, two countries of West Europe, France and Germany, and two countries of Eastern Europe, Russia and Bulgaria, were selected and more specifically, women and men aged 60 to 79 years, living in one-person or in couple only households. In Table 1 the main demographic and financial indicators of the four countries are shown. Both Germany and France are characterized by high levels of GDP per capita. Moreover, life expectancy at birth for women is more than 5 years higher, and life expectancy for men is more than 7 years higher in Western Europe as compared to the Eastern European countries under investigation.

Table 1 about here

### **Measuring instruments**

*Loneliness*, the dependent variable, was measured using the 6-item version of the De Jong Gierveld Scale (De Jong Gierveld, & Kamphuis, 1985; De Jong Gierveld, & Van Tilburg, 2006). The scale has proven to be reliable and valid (De Jong Gierveld, & Van Tilburg, 2010; Dykstra, & Fokkema, 2007; Pinguart & Sörensen, 2001). It is possible to dichotomize the scale scores around the scale value of two and differentiate between the lonely respondents with loneliness scores of two to six on the scale versus the ‘not lonely’ with scores zero or one on the scale.

*Familial intergenerational relationships* were investigated by recording the number of children and grandchildren. Respondents with children were asked about the functioning of the familial bonds. Firstly, satisfaction with the relationship with each of the children, living outside the paternal household, was investigated. Secondly, respondents were asked if they had talked to anyone about their personal feelings and experiences during the last 12 months; this concerns emotional support exchanges. The first person mentioned as involved



in these exchanges was recorded according to type of network member: spouse, child, other family member or non family members, such as a friend. *Familial norms and values* were investigated using the following questions: 'Grandparents should look after their grandchildren if the parents of these grandchildren are unable to do so', and 'Children should have their parents to live with them when parents can no longer look after themselves'. Answer categories vary between strongly disagree and strongly agree.

*Socio-demographic and background variables.* In investigating the risks for loneliness the following socio-demographic variables were used: sex and age. Health was investigated by asking: 'How is your health in general?' with answer categories of very bad, bad, fair, good, and very good. The socio-economic position of older adults was investigated by using the question: 'Thinking of your household's total monthly income is your household able to make ends meet?' with answer categories ranging from 'with (great) difficulty' to '(very) easily'. Additionally, questions about divorce and about children deceased were included.

## **Results**

### **Descriptive information**

As shown in Figure 1, the loneliness scores of older adults living alone or in couple only households vary broadly. Mean scores for those in one person households are 2.06 for France, 2.31 for Germany, 3.15 for Russia and 4.34 for Bulgaria; these scores are above the 2.00 -level, the threshold-line differentiating between the not lonely people (scores 0, 1) and the moderate or intensely lonely people (2-6). The mean loneliness scores of adults living alone are significantly higher than the mean scores of older adults in a couple only household for each of the countries, see Figure 1. Mean loneliness scores for older adults in couple households are for France 1.42, and for Germany 1.37, that is below the threshold. For Bulgaria and Russia these figures are 2.83 and 2.26, respectively, that is above the loneliness threshold. Figure 1 shows additionally, that those living in small households are more lonely than those in co-residence with children aged 25 or over. However, both in Bulgaria and Russia mean loneliness scores for older adults in all types of living arrangements, are above the loneliness threshold. Older adults in the two Western European countries are mostly under the threshold line. We conclude that regional differences are additional important factors affecting loneliness of older adults.

Figure 1 about here

In Table 2, supplementary information about the older adults' situation in the four countries is provided. German and French respondents are more frequently characterized by a condition of good health and by sufficient household income levels, as compared to their Bulgarian and Russian peers; this is especially so for couple households.

Table 2 about here

The percentage of childless respondents at 30% is highest in Germany. This is reflected in lower mean numbers of grandchildren. Of those having children, the absence of satisfying contacts with children is highest among Bulgarian older adults. Children in Russia are helpful for older parents living alone in acting as first confident more frequently than in the other countries under investigation. In total 75 percent or more respondents per country (strongly) agree with the statement that 'grandparents should look after their grandchildren if their parents are unable to do so'. Less unanimity is registered in answering the statement that 'children should have their parents to live with them if they can no longer look after themselves'; the percentages (strongly) agreeing are much higher in East and the disagreeing answers are much higher in Western European countries. In conclusion, loneliness among older adults living alone is higher than among older adults in couple households; in general loneliness is higher in East than in West Europe. Now that the data showed sharp differences in loneliness between respondents in East and West Europe and in the factors relevant for loneliness alleviation, in the following section multivariate regression analyses are used to identify the factors that function as barriers and the factors that enable social integration of older adults.

#### *Multivariate analyses*

Table 3 shows that background characteristics encompassing health and household income are significantly associated with level of loneliness among older adults in small households: older adults who can more easily make ends meet in their household are less lonely than other older adults; a non-optimal health condition is associated with higher levels of loneliness. But especially the role of children and other family members is crucial in understanding the prevalence of loneliness among older adults in small households.

Table 3 about here

A higher number of satisfactory bonds with children proved to be of crucial importance for alleviating loneliness as compared to childless older adults and adults who have children but miss a satisfactory relationship with their offspring. Intergenerational bonds with grandchildren are important too, and associated with lower levels of loneliness of older people. The importance of grandchildren and the warm feelings for the well-being of grandchildren was reflected in the large proportion of (strongly) agreeing answers on the statement about grandparents' responsibilities for grandchildren when parents are unable to do so. The importance of intergenerational responsibilities of grandparents for grandchildren has been registered both in the countries of East and of West Europe, among grandparents living alone and among grandparents living together with more household members.

Compared to the high proportions of older adults without confidants to discuss personal experiences and feelings, those with a confidant are better protected against loneliness. For couples, it is primarily the spouse who acts as first confidant and it is this aspect of the relationship with the spouse that is responsible for the alleviation of loneliness. For older adults living alone in France and Germany, if children were mentioned as confidants this proved to be associated with lower loneliness.

It is the positive functioning of the family that makes the difference: satisfying contacts with children are more important than the number of children per se and especially the bonds with grandchildren are crucial in alleviating loneliness of older adults in small households. Additionally, one or more confidants, encompassing a spouse, a child or another family member, are important in this respect.

### **Conclusions and policy recommendations**

This study showed that mean loneliness of older adults living alone is higher than was shown for the older people in couple only or in co-residence households. In Eastern Europe the mean loneliness scores of older adults indicate moderate or severe loneliness, above level '2' on the 6-item De Jong Gierveld loneliness scale. In Western Europe, with a more individualistic cultural pattern, the loneliness scores of older adults, be it living alone, in couple only households or in other types of living arrangements, are mostly below level '2'. For that reason it is important to investigate the variables that might help alleviate loneliness and support social integration and feelings of embedment. This study showed that health and household income are significantly associated with level of loneliness among older adults in small households: older adults who can more easily make ends meet in their household are less lonely than other older adults; a non-optimal health condition is associated with higher levels of loneliness. But especially the role of children and other family members is crucial in understanding the prevalence of loneliness among older adults in small households. High quality intergenerational bonds within the family, especially satisfying relationships with children, the grandchildren, and the availability of a confidant to discuss personal experiences and feelings with are important elements of an overall package of loneliness alleviating interactions for older adults who live in small households, be it a one person or a couple only household, in France or Germany. It is the positive functioning of the family that makes the difference.

Promoting older adults' social integration and embedment within the bonds of the family has benefits for the individuals themselves in increasing the possibilities for a more optimal level of well-being, including the alleviation of loneliness. A higher level of social integration of individuals is also associated with positive outcomes at the community level. It will postpone communal care and support, and it will postpone the change from independent to dependent living. This is in line with the World Health Organization's

pronouncement that policies and programs that promote social connectedness are as important as those that improve the physical health status of older adults (WHO, 2002).

This brings us to the conclusion that the composition and functioning of the network of close family members, including satisfying contacts with not co-resident children, is a first prerequisite for social integration and alleviation of loneliness in older adults. As Buber and Engelhardt (2008) have stated, a high frequency of contact with children is a sign of integration, whereas less contact with children is interpreted as a sign of disinterest and lack of concern for one's older parents. Hank (2007) and Lyon and Glucksmann (2008) provide evidence that notwithstanding new trends towards small households, the quantity of emotional and instrumental support via the family to persons in need exceeds by far the quantity of formal support which is provided.

After controlling for differences in the composition of the older population per country, by taking into account the gender and age composition, as well as the health and socio-economic position of older adults, the composition and functioning of the network of close family members in the European countries continued to be an important factor in guaranteeing that older men and women are embedded and socially integrated. So, adult children are to be considered as very important vehicles for social integration and embedment and this type of familial intergenerational bonds are the first ones to promote an age-integrated community.

Policy makers and others need to continue to work together towards the realization of the goal of ensuring 'a society for all ages' with social integration and embedment for all groups: younger and older, in small households or co-resident, men and women.

## **References**

- Albertini, M., Kohli, M., & Vogel, C. (2007). Intergenerational transfers of time and money in European families: Common patterns - different regimes? *Journal of European Social Policy*, 17, 319-334.
- Attias-Donfut, D., Ogg, J., & Wolff, F. (2005). European patterns of intergenerational financial and time transfers. *European Journal of Ageing*, 2, 161-173.
- Buber, I., & Engelhardt, H. (2008). Children's impact on the mental health of their older mothers and fathers: findings from the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe. *European Journal of Ageing*, 5, 31-45.
- De Jong Gierveld, J., & Dykstra, P. A. (2008). Virtue is its own reward? Support giving in the family and loneliness in middle and old age. *Ageing & Society*, 28, 271-287.
- De Jong Gierveld, J., Dykstra, P. A., & Schenk, N. (in press). Living arrangements, the family and intergenerational support types affecting loneliness of older adults in Eastern and Western Europe.
- De Jong Gierveld, J., & Kamphuis, F. (1985). The development of a Rasch-type loneliness scale. *Applied Psychological Measurement*, 9, 289-299.
- De Jong Gierveld, J., & Van Tilburg, T. (2006). A six-item scale for overall, emotional and social loneliness: confirmative tests on new survey data. *Research on Aging*, 28, 582-598.
- De Jong Gierveld, J., & Van Tilburg, T. (2010). The De Jong Gierveld Short Scales for Emotional and Social Loneliness: Tested on data from Seven countries in the UN Generations and Gender Surveys. *European Journal of Ageing*, 7(2), 121-130.
- De Jong Gierveld, J., Van Tilburg, T., & Dykstra, P. A. (2006). Loneliness and social isolation. In A. Vangelisti & D. Perlman (Eds.), *Cambridge handbook of personal relationships* (pp. 485-500). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dykstra, P. A., & Fokkema, T. (2007). Social and emotional loneliness among divorced and married men and women: Comparing the deficit and cognitive perspectives. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 29(1), 1-12.
- Gaymu, J., Ekamper, P., & Beets, G. (2008). Future trends in health and marital status: effects on the structure of living arrangements of older Europeans in 2030. *European Journal of Ageing*, 5, 5-17.
- Hank, K. (2007). Proximity and contact between older parents and their children. A European comparison. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 69, 159-173.
- Liefbroer, A. C. (1999). From youth to adulthood: understanding changing patterns of family formation from a life course perspective. In L. J. G. van Wissen & P. A. Dykstra (Eds.), *Population issues, an interdisciplinary focus* (pp. 53-85). New York/Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.
- Lyon, D., & Glucksmann, M. (2008). Comparative configurations of care work across Europe. *Sociology*, 42, 101-118.

Nauck, B., & Suckow, J. (2006). Intergenerational relationships in cross- cultural comparison; How social networks frame intergenerational relations between mothers and grandmothers in Japan, China, Indonesia, Israel, Germany and Turkey. *Journal of Family Issues*, 27(8), 1159-1185.

Perlman, D., & Peplau, L. A. (1981). Toward a social psychology of loneliness. In R. Gilmour & S. Duck (Eds.), *Personal relationships 3: personal relationships in disorder*. (pp. 31-43). London: Academic Press.

Pinquart, M., & Sörensen, S. (2001) . Influences on loneliness in older adults: A meta-analysis. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 23(4), 245-266.

United Nations (2010). *World Population Ageing 2009*. New York: United Nations: DESA.

Van de Kaa, D. J. (1987). Europe's second demographic transition. *Population Bulletin*, 42(1), 1-47. Verdon, M. (1998). *Rethinking households; an atomistic perspective on European living arrangements*.

London: Routledge.

Vikat, A., Spéder, Z., Beets, G., Billari, F. C., Bühler, C., Désesquelles, A., et al. (2007). Generations and Gender Survey (GGS): Towards a better understanding of relationships and processes in the life course. *Demographic Research*, 17(14), 389-440.

Table 1. Selected countries: Demographic and financial indicators

	Bulgaria	Russian Fed.	Germany	France
Population size*	7.544.600	140.873.600	82.166.700	62.342.700
Percentage population aged 60 +*				
F	27.2	21.7	28.4	25.0
M	21.0	13.1	22.9	20.2
Life expectancy at birth*				
F	76.8	73.1	82.4	84.7
M	69.7	60.3	77.1	77.6
Percentage of the population aged 60+ living in a one-person household				
F	25	31	42	38
M	12	10	16	15
GDP per capita, PPP USD **	6.366	8.490	26.428	26.820

\*) Source: World Population Ageing 2009. New York, United Nations, Population Division.

\*\*) Source: Development in an Ageing World. World Economic and Social Survey 2007. New York, United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP, value added): The principal measure of total economic activity occurring within a country's geographical boundary. As an aggregate measure of production, the GDP of a country is equal to the sum of the gross value added of all resident institutional units engaged in production of goods and services (plus taxes and minus subsidies). Gross value added is the value of output minus intermediate inputs (that is, the value of goods and services consumed as inputs by process of production, excluding fixed assets which contribute to gross value added).

Table 2. Description of the samples

Variable	Bulgaria		Russia		Germany		France	
	Alone <i>N</i> = 514	Couple <i>N</i> = 1143	Alone <i>N</i> = 1108	Couple <i>N</i> = 892	Alone <i>N</i> = 922	Couple <i>N</i> = 1456	Alone <i>N</i> = 960	Couple <i>N</i> = 1340
Mean score loneliness (0 $\hat{=}$ 6)	4.34	2.83	3.15	2.26	2.31	1.37	2.06	1.42
Mean age respondents	69.7	68.3	70.0	68.5	69.9	67.6	69.8	68.2
Percentage female	71.2	38.2	85.0	47.1	68.9	39.4	69.3	46.0
Percentage in (very) good health	21.6	29.2	4.3	5.8	43.6	54.5	48.9	56.5
Can household make ends meet?	1.4	3.1	1.9	8.1	34.4	72.0	23.9	69.6
Percentage (very) easily								
Percentage ever divorced	11.3	3.0	26.8	13.8	20.5	6.4	27.5	8.5
Mean number of children	1.59	1.83	1.67	1.86	1.56	1.77	2.04	2.29
Children with satisfying contacts?								
Childless	16.7	6.3	13.7	8.3	30.0	19.3	24.5	7.3
0	46.9	46.4	29.9	24.0	22.0	20.7	16.8	19.4
1	13.6	15.7	28.8	28.4	22.2	23.4	19.5	22.6
2 or more	22.8	31.6	27.6	39.3	25.5	36.7	39.3	50.7
Children died? (% yes)	0.08	0.08	0.21	0.14	0.07	0.04	0.11	0.10
Mean number of grandchildren	3.05	3.22	2.88	3.12	2.35	2.55	2.83	3.16
First confidant re emotional support?								
No	51.0	37.4	34.8	33.6	61.8	52.7	43.9	57.3
Spouse	[1.6]	51.9	[0.9]	44.5	[5.7]	37.8	[3.4]	23.7
Child	21.6	3.5	32.2	11.2	13.7	2.7	6.2	3.9
Other family member	7.4	3.0	13.3	3.9	4.2	1.0	15.8	5.1
Non family (e.g. friend)	18.5	4.3	18.8	6.7	14.5	5.7	30.6	10.1
Grandparents should look after grandchildren...% (strongly) agree	74.9	79.2	78.3	79.4	84.5	88.3	80.3	87.5
Children should have their parents to live with them.... % (strongly) agree	74.4	73.9	68.6	64.9	43.9	39.8	37.5	32.1



Table 3. Results of Multivariate Regression Analyses on loneliness, adults aged 60 – 79 years (source: GGS, wave 1)

	East Europe; Bulgaria & Russia		West Europe; Germany & France	
	No partner, 1pp hh	With partner, Couple only hh	No partner, 1pp hh	With partner, Couple only hh
Constant	16.372	9.205	4.618	-1.303
Sex (Male-Female)	-.10***	-.05*	-.00	.05*
Age (60↗ 79)	.06**	.06**	.03	.02
Percentage in (very) good health	-.17***	-.22***	-.20***	-.15***
Can household make ends meet? (difficult – easily)	-.14***	-.13***	-.14***	-.13***
Percentage ever divorced	.03	.04†	.06*	.03
Number of children with satisfying contacts: Childless (ref.)				
0	-.01	-.02	.05†	.09**
1	-.12**	-.03	-.07*	-.03
2 or more	-.19**	-.07	-.22***	-.15***
Children died? (% yes)	.04	.02	-.01	.00
Mean number of grandchildren	-.02	-.11***	-.07*	-.08**
First confidant to share emotional support? No (ref.)				
Spouse	---	-.07**	---	-.04*
Child	-.04	.00	-.06**	.02
Other family member	-.04	-.01	-.01	.04*
Non family (e.g. friend)	-.01	-.01	-.04†	-.00
Grandparents should look after their grandchildren if ... (disagree – agree)	-.08***	-.06**	-.03	-.08***
Children should have their parents to live with them ... (disagree – agree)	-.01	-.02	.03	-.02
Country	-.26***	-.20***	-.03	.04*
N	1619	2028	1839	2752
R sq. adj.	.200	.138	.170	.119

# رشا فتیان سلیم

## دور الشباب في حوار الأجيال

تأتي مداخلتي هذه في ظل متغيرات إقليمية تشهد انهيار للنظم التقليدية وأجواء من التحول الديمقراطي ورياح الحرية التي قادها الشباب. إن هذا المتغير الجديد على مستوى الإقليم سيحمل بين ثناياه - سواء كان ذلك في المدى المنظور أو المدى البعيد تأثيرا على علاقات الأجيال.

كما أن مداخلتي تستند إلى ما جاء في القرار الذي اتخذته الجمعية العامة (130/64) – السياسات والبرامج المتصلة بالشباب ( الذي جاء تحت عنوان: الحوار والتفاهم حيث أكد على القضايا المشتركة ما بين الأجيال كأحد القضايا الخمسة عشر ذات الأولوية لبرنامج العمل الشبابي العالمي، كما أقر في المادة (10) من نفس القرار على أهمية تعزيز الشراكات بين الأجيال والتضامن بين الأجيال.

سيتم عرض مداخلتي وفقا للمنهجية التالية: مقدمة، مؤتمر مدريد السياسي حول الشيخوخة في العام 2002، العلاقات بين الأجيال في مرحلة انتقالية، التضامن بين الأجيال وخلاصة.

أولا: مقدمة

كثيرا ما يواجه اللوم للجيل الحاضر من الشباب الذي يتهم بالعناد والغرور وعدم التماسك، وفقدان الانتماء، والإحساس باللامبالاة. وفي الواقع العربي كثيرا ما نسمع اتهام الجيل الجديد بأنه جيل مغترب وأنه أقرب في سلوكه إلى تقليد الغرب منه إلى العادات والتقاليد والقيم العربية والإسلامية.

في المقابل فإننا كثيرا ما نسمع عن القيود التي يفرضها الآباء على الأبناء وأنهم مطالبون بأن يعيشون زمنا غير زمنهم وأن تأتي آمالهم وطموحاتهم وتوقعاتهم في القلب الذي وضعه لهم الآباء والأجداد.

ولفهم العلاقات بين الأجيال فإننا سنحاول إلقاء الضوء على المتغيرات البنيوية في المجتمعات المتقدمة والنامية والتي من أهمها تعادل نسبة كبار السن إلى الأطفال في المجتمعات المتقدمة والنامية وأن ذلك يؤثر بشكل مباشر على العلاقات بين الأجيال كما يؤثر ذلك على الخطط والسياسات الحكومية وغير الحكومية.

إن هنالك زيادة سريعة في عدد ونسبة المسنين في المجتمعات المتقدمة والنامية في نفس الوقت الذي نشهد فيه ترجعا في معدل نسبة المواليد. وأن هذا التغير في بنية المجتمعات ستؤدي إلى الكثير من التغيرات الجذرية في هذه المجتمعات سواء من حيث صياغتها لأولوياتها أو من حيث طبيعة العلاقات بين الأجيال في هذه المجتمعات.

منتصف القرن الحالي ( الواحد والعشرين ) سيشهد تعادلا في نسبة كبار السن مقارنة مع الشباب في المجتمع. عالميا، فإن نسبة كبار السن فوق عمر 60 من المتوقع أن تتضاعف وأن ترتفع من 10% الى 21% في

الفترة بين العام 2000 والعام 2050. كما أن نسبة الأطفال ستراجع بنسبة الثلث ، من 30% إلى 21% في ذات الفترة.

من المهم الإشارة إلى أن الإحصائيات السابقة عن التعادل في نسبة كبار السن مقارنة مع نسبة الأطفال في المجتمع أمر لا يقتصر على المجتمعات المتقدمة. إن المجتمعات النامية تشهد نفس التوجه من حيث توقع زيادة عدد كبار السن في المجتمع من 8% إلى 19% مع حلول العام 2010، كما أن نسبة الأطفال ستتناقص من 33% إلى 22%.

إن التغير في البنية الديمغرافية للمجتمعات المتقدمة والنامية تنعكس على رؤية كل مجموعة لنفسها ولدورها ولطبيعة علاقاتها بالمجموعات الأخرى. لنأخذ مثلاً كلا من كبار السن، حيث نرى أن هنالك توجهات وسلوكيات جديدة أنتجها هذا التغير في بيئة المجتمعات وأهمها رفض كبار السن والمسنين للدور والصورة الذهنية التي تحاول بعض المجتمعات أن ترسمها لهم. إن هنالك نوع من " الثورة " على الصورة النمطية السائدة للمسنين في العديد من المجتمعات.

كما أن الكثير من الشباب ممن يسعون إلى الحصول على دور ومسؤوليات أكبر في مجتمعاتهم. إن ما جرى في تونس ومصر وما يجري في ليبيا وفي غيرها من الدول العربية والدور القيادي للشباب العربي في أحداث التحول الديمقراطي . إن كل ذلك أمور تستحق التوقف عندها ودراستها و تحديد أثرها على طبيعة العلاقات بين الأجيال، في ظل حالة الثقة التي تجتاح الشباب العربي وحقهم بأن يكونوا في مواقع القيادة والقرار.

كما أن من المهم أن نرى عاملاً آخر يؤثر على طبيعة العلاقات بين الأجيال والمتمثل بتوجه المرأة إلى سوق العمل وانعكاس ذلك على رؤية المرأة لذاتها وتوقعها لكيفية رؤية المجتمع لها ولدورها. إن هنالك تنامياً واضحاً لدور المرأة في المجتمعات العربية في مجالات العمل والتعليم وفي مجالات السياسة من حيث وجود النساء في مواقع القيادة والقرار.

تبقى الإشارة هنا إلى أن التغيرات الديمغرافية في الدول النامية ستكون أسرع من التغيرات في الدول المتقدمة مع فارق جوهري أن هذه التغيرات لا يرافقها سياسات وخطط مناسبة في الدول النامية. لنأخذ مثلاً أن موازنة السلطة الوطنية الفلسطينية للعام 2011 والتي تعطي لقطاع الشباب نسبة أقل من 1% من الموانة العامة رغم التقدم الحاصل في أداء السلطة الوطنية في هذا القطاع وعملها وفقاً لخطة استراتيجية لقطاع الشباب للأعوام 2011 – 2013.

ثانياً: إعلان مدريد السياسي:

اعتمد ممثلي الدول الذي اجتمعوا في الجمعية الثانية للشيخوخة التي عقدت في مدريد في العام 2002 خطة عمل دولية للشيخوخة في محاولة للاستجابة للفرص ومواجهة التحديات في مجال شيخوخة السكان في القرن الواحد والعشرين ودعم بناء " مجتمع لكل الأجيال " ( المادة 1). لقد تمثل هدف حكومات الدول المشاركة في تحقيق رؤية مشتركة للمساواة بين الأشخاص من جميع الأعمار ( المادة 19 ).

كما أعلن المجتمعون التزامهم اتخاذ إجراءات في ثلاثة اتجاهات ذات أولوية هي: كبار السن والتنمية، وتعزيز الصحة والرفاه في السن المتقدمة؛ وضمان بيئة تمكينية وداعمة.

إن أهم الملاحظات التي يمكن تسجيلها على مؤتمر مدريد في مجال الشيخوخة التالي:

اعتماد هذا المؤتمر للمقاربة " التنموية " بديلا لمقاربة " الرفاه " التي ميزت المؤتمر الأول الذي عقد في فيينا بخصوص الشيخوخة في العام 1982.

إن هذه المقاربة تحتاج من الدول إدماج شيخوخة السكان في سياساتها وخططها الوطنية.

إن مقاربة مدريد تمتد بجذورها إلى العام الدولي لكبار السن الذي أعلنت عنه الأمم المتحدة في العام 1999 والذي جاء تحت عنوان " مجتمع لكل الأجيال ".

كما أن مقاربة مؤتمر مدريد قد أكدت على أهمية التنمية التي محورها الإنسان والتي جوهرها التأكيد على مشاركة الجميع في عملية التنمية، وأن هنالك أهمية في مشاركة الفئات المهمشة في هذه العملية التنموية.

كما أنها مقاربة عملت على التسليم بضرورة تعزيز التضامن بين الأجيال، وإقامة شراكات فيما بينها، مع مراعاة الاحتياجات الخاصة لكل من كبار السن والشباب، ونشجع إقامة علاقات التجاوب بين الأجيال ( المادة 16).

وأن هنالك التزام بالدفاع عن كبار السن وموازرتهم في حالات النزاع المسلح والاحتلال الأجنبي ( المادة 9). إضافة إلى أن الشباب هم غالبا من أبرز ضحايا النزاع المسلح( المادة 3 – القرار 130/64 – السياسات والبرامج المتصلة بالشباب )

إن لهذا البند أهمية خاصة في الحالة الفلسطينية التي ما زالت تواجه الاحتلال الإسرائيلي إضافة إلى حالة الانقسام الداخلي. إن الاحتلال الأجنبي ( الاحتلال الاسرائيلي لفلسطين ) والنزاع الداخلي ( الانقسام الداخلي ) يؤثر على كبار السن وعلى الشباب بشكل سلبي وهو ما يحتاج إلى عناية ورعاية خاصة في مثل هذه الظروف.

ثالثا: علاقات الأجيال في مرحلة انتقالية:

هنالك اتفاق على أن هنالك تحول في علاقات الأجيال، وأن هنالك من يرى بأنها علاقات صدام وآخرون يرونها على أنها علاقات تعاون وحوار. إن تفسير ذلك يرتبط باحتمالين:

الاول: إن التغير في علاقات الأجيال ارتبط بالتغيير في المعتقدات والقيم والمفاهيم السائدة في المجتمع. إن هنالك عوامل عدة ليس أقلها أثر العولمة على قيم ومعتقدات المجتمعات في الدول النامية، وتأثر هذه المجتمعات ( وخاصة جيل الشباب ) بما يرد إليها من المجتمعات المتقدمة خاصة عبر وسائل الاعلام وفي ظل ثورة تكنولوجيا المعلومات.

يعلل البعض الصراع القائم بين الأجيال بأن المجتمعات تمر بمرحلة انتقالية صعبة تتشكل فيها أفكار واتجاهات الشباب للانتقال من طور القيود وتلقي الأوامر والتعليمات إلى طور الحريات والقدرة على التعبير، نتيجة التطور السريع في جميع مجالات الحياة والذي لن يستطيع الآباء الحول دون تقدم مسيرته رغم محاولاتهم إرغام أبنائهم علي العيش في ظل ثقافة محافظة، لاعتقادهم بأن هذا التطور في الفكر والاتجاه يقود الشباب إلى الهاوية.

الثاني: إن التغييرات الاقتصادية والاجتماعية قد قادت إلى تغير في دور الأسرة وفي طبيعة العلاقات بين أفراد الاسرة في هذه المجتمعات.

و يعزو بعض آخر سبب الصراع إلى ظروف سياسية واقتصادية تلقي بظلالها على الواقع الاجتماعي وتخلخل العديد من مسلماته و ثوابته، حيث يلعب عدم الاستقرار السياسي في المنطقة دوراً رئيسياً في العلاقة بين الآباء والأبناء إذ نجد الشباب اليوم غير مبالين بجميع القيم الاجتماعية كما أنهم يعيشوا حالة من عدم الثبات في المبادئ والأفكار إضافة إلى أنهم بحاجة لمتطلبات كثيرة غير متاحة في ظلال الوضع الاقتصادي السيء ، ما يجعلهم ساخطين على هذا الواقع بكل قيمه ..

من المهم الانتباه إلى أنه من الصعب الاعتماد على أحد التفسيرين دون الآخر، وأن هنالك علاقة جدلية خلاقة فيما بينهما.

وحتى يتم الانتقال من المستوى النظري الى المستوى الواقعي فإنني سأقدم بعضاً من مظاهر الانتقال في علاقات الأجيال في السياق الفلسطيني حيث نلاحظ:

1- التغير في علاقات القوة داخل الأسرة الفلسطينية: رغم أن المجتمع الفلسطيني جزء من المجتمع العربي المحافظ وأنه كغيره من مجتمعات الدول النامية تأثر ويتأثر بالعولمة إلا أننا نشهد انتقالاً لعلاقات القوة داخل الأسرة الفلسطينية نحو الأطراف بدلا من تركيز القوة في كبار السن " الأب " .

إن هنالك عوامل عدة تتداخل في أحداث هذا التغير ليس أقلها وجود الآلاف من الآباء في سجون الاحتلال الإسرائيلي مما فرض على الأمهات أو الأبناء أن يكونوا هم البديل وأن يصبحوا مركز القوة في العائلة.

كما أن هنالك تراجع في النظرة التقليدية لدور المرأة في المجتمع الفلسطيني. إن فرضيتي هنا لا تعني بأن المرأة الفلسطينية قد حققت ما تصبوا إليه ولكن هنالك مؤشرات على حراك جاد وحقيقي وبالاتجاه الصحيح، وأنه ما زال في بداية الطرق.

يضاف إلى ما سبق توقعات الأبناء التي تفوق الامكانيات المتاحة لهم، وهو ما يفسر حالة التمرد التي يمارسها بعض الأبناء على محيطهم الأسري وعلى التقاليد والعائدات السائدة في المجتمع. وأنه جيل فردي أو كما

وصفه بعض الباحثين بأنه جيل " اتصالي " وليس جيل " تواصل " نتيجة ثورة تكنولوجيا المعلومات وامتلاك أجهزة الكمبيوتر والانترنت وأجهزة الاتصال التي حلت مكان التواصل الإنساني المباشر.

2- الاهتمام بالتعليم: يمكننا القول أن المجتمع الفلسطيني يعتبر من المجتمعات ذات المستوى التعليمي العالي على صعيد المنطقة، كما يلاحظ أن نسبة التعليم عادة ما تكون مرتفعة بين سكان المخيمات الفلسطينية يليها سكان القرى ومن ثم سكان المدن. إن أحد تفسيرات ذلك هو بحث الفلسطيني عما يحقق له الأمان في ظل التهديدات والتحديات التي يمثلها ويخلقها الاحتلال الاسرائيلي للمجتمع والعائلة والانسان والفلسطيني.

3- تنامي مشاركة المرأة الفلسطينية في سوق العمل والتعليم والحياة السياسية خاصة بعد أن تم اعتماد نظام الكوتا النسوية في النظام الانتخابي ( العام 2006 ) والذي أعطى 20% من مقاعد المجلس التشريعي للمرأة الفلسطينية. يضاف إلى ذلك نسبة النساء الفلسطينيات الأسيرات أو اللواتي استشهدن أو نسبة النساء المشاركات في الحكومة الفلسطينية وفي مواقع متقدمة في المؤسسات الحكومية.

4- جدلية الديمقراطية والانقسام: لقد أشار إعلان الاستقلال الفلسطيني الذي أعلن في العام 1988 إلى أن النظام السياسي الفلسطيني هو نظام ديمقراطي برلماني، وهو الأمر الذي أعاد القانون الأساسي التأكيد عليه. كما أن الانتخابات التشريعية والرئاسية الفلسطينية قد شهدت مشاركة واسعة وامتازت بالشفافية والرقابة الأهلية عليها. إن الأجواء الديمقراطية قد انعكست إيجاباً على محتوى علاقات الأجيال في المجتمع الفلسطيني لنجد تنامياً للمحتوى الديمقراطي في هذه العلاقات. إلا أن الانقسام الداخلي الفلسطيني قد أثر سلباً على المحتوى الديمقراطي من حيث التشدد والتعصب للفكرة والانقسام الأفقي والعمودي في المجتمع الفلسطيني وهو ما أثر بشكل سلبي على علاقات أفراد كل جيل مع بعضهم البعض كما أثر على العلاقات بين الأجيال وبشكل سلبي واضح.

يمكننا القول ان علاقات الأجيال في المجتمع الفلسطيني تمر في مرحلة انتقالية يعاد فيها تشكل هذه العلاقات مما يعطى دوراً أكبر للشباب، كما يعطى دوراً أفضل للنساء. إن كل ذلك يأتي على حساب الدور التقليدي الذي لعبه ويلعبه كبار السن في المجتمع الفلسطيني.

### خلاصة:

يمكننا القول أن الفترة الراهنة هي الأنسب للمجتمعات والدول والمنظمات الدولية ذات العلاقة أن تركز على إدماج علاقات الأجيال والتضامن فيما بينها في سياساتها وخططها، وأن التركيز يجب ان لا يقتصر على الشباب وإنما يجب أن يشمل المسنين في ظل التوقعات بتعاقل نسبة المسنين إلى الأطفال في المجتمعات النامية والمتقدمة مع حلول العام 2050.

كما أن من المهم أن نضع في اعتبارنا النزاعات المسلحة و العدوان والاحتلال الأجنبي والنزاعات الآنية والنضال من أجل التخلص من الدكتاتورية هي حقيقة ماثلة تؤثر على كافة فئات المجتمع كما تؤثر على علاقات الأجيال وهو ما يحتاج إلى إيلاء الاهتمام والتركيز خاصة وأن الكثير من الدراسات التي تناولت

علاقات الأجيال قد ركزت على موضوع الفقر وأثره على علاقات الأجيال ولم تعطي اهتماما مماثلا لمناطق النزاع والأراضي الخاصة للاحتلال الأجنبي كما هو الحال في فلسطين.

## رشا فتيان سليم

الدروس المستفادة من المقاربات الراهنة لنشر الحوار والتفاهم وتعزيز المشاركة الشبابية

### أولاً: المقدمة

يتناول العنوان الذي سأقوم بعرضه اليوم ثلاثة كلمات مفتاحية: الحوار، التفاهم، والمشاركة الشبابية. إن من المهم الإشارة إلى أن الحوار والتفاهم هما عنوان السنة الدولية للشباب كما وردت في قرار الجمعية العامة 130/64 - السياسات والبرامج المتصلة بالشباب وقرار 134/64 - إعلان سنة 2010 سنة دولية للشباب: الحوار والتفاهم.

كما أن مداخلتي ستبتعد عن التجريد والأفكار النظرية لتحاكي الواقع الفلسطيني بشكل خاص، إضافة إلى أنها ستعتمد على ما ورد في برنامج العمل للسنة الدولية للشباب والمجالات لأقدم في نهاية المداخلة بعضاً من التوصيات السياسية والتي تستند في جزء كبير منها إلى الاستراتيجية القطاعية للشباب الفلسطيني.

### ثانياً: نظرة عامة على واقع الشباب:

لقد أشار الأمين العام في معرض رسالته التي قدمها بمناسبة يوم الشباب الدولي إلى أن " البيئة الاجتماعية والاقتصادية المليئة بالتحديات اليوم تستدعي التركيز بشكل خاص على الشباب. وأن 87% من الأشخاص الذين تتراوح أعمارهم بين 15 و 24 عاماً يعيشون في البلدان النامية ". وحتى نمتلك صورة أكثر وضوحاً عن واقع الشباب من المهم الإشارة إلى ما جاء في تقرير البنك الدولي الذي يشير إلى أن الشباب يمثلون 47% من إجمالي العاطلين عن العمل على مستوى العالم، كما أنه يوجد حوالي 113 مليون شاب أمي. إن الإحصائيات في الواقع العربي والفلسطيني ليست بأفضل منها على المستوى الدولي.

تبدأ الخطة الاستراتيجية لقطاع الشباب الفلسطيني بمحاولة وضع تعريف فئة الشباب، حيث تمت الإشارة إلى وجود اختلاف بتعريف فئة الشباب بناء على متغيرات عمرية وسوسولوجية، إذ تعرف الأمم المتحدة الشباب على أنهم الأفراد الواقعين بين عمر 15-24 سنة. أما جامعة الدول العربية فقد اعتمدت الفئة العمرية 15-35، وفي فلسطين فقد تم الاتفاق على أن الشباب يمثلون الفئة العمرية من سن 15-29 سنة.

يشكل الشباب الفلسطيني في الفئة العمرية (15-29) نسبة 29.1% من مجموع السكان الفلسطينيين البالغ عددهم وفق تقديرات منتصف العام 2009 حوالي 3.9 مليون نسمة. يتم تقسيم هذه الفئة من زاوية حياة الأفراد ونموهم إلى: فئة المراهقين (15-19)، وفئة الشباب (20-29).



لقد ذهب مركز الإحصاء الفلسطيني إلى وصف المجتمع الفلسطيني كمجتمع فتي، حيث أن غالبية السكان في فئتي الشباب والأطفال.

### ثالثاً: السياق العام الفلسطيني:

سأقوم في هذا الجزء من مداخلتي باستخدام بعض المجالات الواردة في برنامج العمل العالمي للشباب كإطار لوصف وتحليل السياق العام الفلسطيني، والذي يأتي على النحو التالي:

#### **1- الشباب والنزاع:**

من المهم الإشارة إلى أن الواقع الفلسطيني يتميز بالتعقيد والتشابك. ففي جانب أول ما زالت فلسطين تحت الاحتلال الاسرائيلي الاحتلالي، الذي يدفع الشباب الثمن الأكبر له. إن استخدام الاحتلال واستخدامه للعنف المفرط وغير المشروع واستمرار مشاريع التهويد والاستيطان والحصار والاغتيال قد أثر سلباً على توجهات الشباب في التعامل مع النزاع. إن رد الفعل الطبيعي في مثل هذا الواقع هو استخدام القوة والعنف المضاد، وهو موقف يمكن فهمه من اختصار يقدمه بعض الشباب: أن ما أخذ بالقوة لا يسترد إلا بالقوة. إن تقديس القوة في حل النزاع على المستوى الوطني – في ظل ضعف وغياب المؤسسات الدولية القادرة على إنفاذ الشرعية والقانون الدولي - ينعكس سلباً على مفاهيم وقيم وطرق الحوار والتفاهم. كما أن الاعتقاد بأن هذه القوة هي الطريق الوحيد لإنهاء الاحتلال يعني امتداد مثل هذا المفهوم للتعامل مع النزاعات الداخلية سواء كانت سياسية أو مجتمعية أو عائلية أو حتى على المستوى الفردي.

#### **2- المشاركة:**

كما أن حالة الانقسام الفلسطيني قد عمقت من الانتماء للتنظيم السياسي على حساب الانتماء الوطني وعلى حساب مفهوم المواطنة، إضافة إلى خلق توجهات من عدم الثقة بالآخر حد يصل في بعض الأحيان إلى حد تكفير وتخوين الآخر ونزع الصفة الإنسانية عنه بما يبرر قتله لدى البعض. إن التعصب للموقف .. للتنظيم ، ورفض الآخر .. إن التطرف .. التمييز .. الاضطهاد .. إن كل ذلك يمثل تحديات حقيقية أمام الحوار والتفاهم الداخلي، خاصة إذا ما كان ذلك يجري في مجتمع أبوي وذكوري ومحافظ وهو كما يزيد الأمر تعقيداً وصعوبة.

إن ضعف القوى السياسية في حسم الصراع مع الاحتلال، وما جرى من انقلاب مسلح وانقسام سياسي إضافة إلى حالة الضعف التي تعترى عمل المؤسسات الرسمية الفلسطينية، إن كل ذلك قد انعكس سلباً على مواقف الشباب من الأحزاب السياسية ودفعها باتجاه العزوف عن المشاركة في هذه التنظيمات. تشير بعض استطلاعات الرأي الفلسطينية إلى أن قطاعاً متنامياً من الشباب الفلسطيني يتجاوز 40% من العازفين عن المشاركة في الحياة الحزبية.

### 3- التشغيل، الجوع والفقر:

كما أن ضعف الاقتصاد الفلسطيني وحالة التشوه البنيوي في هذا الاقتصاد الذي حاول الاحتلال الاسرائيلي خلال عقود متواصلة تدميره وإحاقه بالاقتصاد الإسرائيلي، إضافة إلى اعتماد السلطة الوطنية الفلسطينية على الدعم الخارجي لموازنتها ( حوالي 50% من الموازنة التي تصل الى 3.9 مليار دولار تعتمد على الدعم الخارجي ). إن هذا الواقع الاقتصادي قد أغلق الطريق أمام المشاركة الاقتصادية للشباب في سوق العمل وخلق جيشا من العاطلين. إن البطالة ليست تحديا اقتصاديا للشباب وإنما تتعدى ذلك إلى التحديات الاجتماعية والنفسية بحيث يمكننا القول أنها تؤثر سلبا على كل من الحوار والتفاهم والمشاركة.

### رابعاً: الشباب والمشاركة:

لقد أشارت الخطة الاستراتيجية لقطاع الشباب الفلسطيني إلى أن الحديث عن مشاركة الشباب، يقع في صلب تحليل واقعهم، استنادا لتفاعلهم بأسرهم، ومحيطهم الاجتماعي، والمؤسساتي، وهو الباروميتر الأكثر حساسية لقياس مستوى التنمية في المجتمع، فشباب مشارك بفاعلية، يعني مجتمع يستثمر في مختلف موارده البشرية لتحقيق مستوى عال من التنمية، وشباب مشارك بفاعلية يعني: مجتمع يحترم الحوار بين أفراد، وأطر اجتماعية وسياسية تتسم بالديمقراطية، والشفافية، وتداول السلطة، وأخيراً، بنى اقتصادية مرنة، وتتمتع بمسؤولية اجتماعية، وتبني الإبداعات، والمبادرات الفردية والشبابية.

لقد اتسمت مشاركة الشباب الفلسطيني بدورات مد وجزر، حددتها وتيرة النضال التحرري، لاعتبار أن أهم شكل للمشاركة الشبابية كان مرتبطاً بالعمل التحرري، ودون الخوض في تاريخية المشاركة السياسية للشباب الفلسطيني الذي قاد ووجه (عمليا وميدانيا) الانتفاضة الأولى والثانية، فإن مشاركتهم على مستوى صناعة القرار كانت دائما رهن سلطوية سياسية تمارسها النخب السياسية بوتائر مختلفة. الأمر الذي يتطلب إتمام خطوات الديمقراطية الجارية في السنوات الأخيرة، لإتاحة الفرصة أمام جيل الشباب لمشاركة أوسع وأكثر فاعلية على صعيد صناعة القرار.

أما على صعيد المشاركة الاجتماعية، فثمة نوعان من الروابط المتجاورة في المجتمع الفلسطيني، تتفاعل بعض مكوناتها بانسجام، وبعضها بتنافر تطوري، وبعضها الآخر بشكل إقصائي، فهناك الروابط الاجتماعية التقليدية الأبوية، والروابط الطوعية التي توسعت بتوسع منظمات المجتمع المدني الفلسطيني. وهنا تشكل الأولى غالبا عامل كبح لمشاركة الشباب، فيما تمثل الثانية عامل تحفيز وتطوير لمشاركتهم الاجتماعية، وحتى السياسية والاقتصادية. عموما، فإن مشاركة فاعلة للشباب، في صناعة القرار، والتنمية، ومكونات الحيز العام، السياسية، والمدنية، والاجتماعية والاقتصادية، تتطلب حراكا اجتماعيا وسياسيا، وتغييرا تراكميا تطوريا في تركيبة البنى القائمة،

وعلاقات القوة في المجتمع الفلسطيني، وهو الأمر الذي يتطلب إيماناً، ووعياً، وإرادة لدى جميع الأطراف بأن الشباب عماد المستقبل ومادته الأولى.

### خامساً: سياسات تعزيز المشاركة والحوار والتفاهم:

استناداً إلى التحليل السابق ، وإلى المجالات الثلاث الرئيسية لنهج الأمم المتحدة الإطاري للسنة الدولية للشباب، يمكن الخلوص إلى التوصية بالسياسات التالية:

#### **1- النضال الشبابي السلمي:**

رغم وجود رصيد ونموذج فلسطين في النضال الشعبي تمثل بالانتفاضة الأولى والثانية إلا أن هنالك غياباً حتى اللحظة لإطار واضح للمقاومة الشعبية وسيطرة خطاب " القوة المقاومة المسلحة " على ما عداها من أشكال نضال ومقاومة. إن من المهم فلسطينياً ان يتم العمل على وضع إطار ومفهوم واضح للمقاومة الشعبية السلمية، وما يتطلبه ذلك من حشد لطاقات الشباب، وخلق للوعي، **وتعبئتهم للانخراط** في كافة أشكال المقاومة السلمية الشعبية. إن التقدم في المقاومة والنضال الشعبي السلمي يمثل وسيلة للاتصال وبناء الجسور ويمثل تقدماً في مفاهيم الحوار والتفاهم كما أنه تعبير واضح وصادق وديمقراطي عن طابع المشاركة الشبابية في عملية التغيير.

يمكن الإضافة هنا الدرس الذي قدمه ويقدمه الشباب العربي الذي قاد الانتفاضات الشعبية السلمية التي طالبت بإسقاط الأنظمة الديكتاتورية. إن نجاح هذه الثورات الشبابية هو خير رسالة للفلسطينيين وللعرب وللعالَم أن التغيير الشعبي السلمي الذي تقوده جموع الشباب المتحفز والمؤمن بحاضره ومستقبله هو الطريق الأسلم للتحويل الديمقراطي في الوطن العربي وأنه الطريق الأسلم لإنهاء الاحتلال والديكتاتورية والظلم والفساد.

#### **2- تعزيز المشاركة السياسية ( زيادة المشاركة والشراكات الشبابية – التعبئة والانخراط ):**

أعود للقول أن نجاح الثورات الشبابية العربية قد أعاد الثقة للشباب أن بإمكانهم التغيير، وأنهم ليسوا مجرد فئة مستفيدة من التغييرات بقدر ما أنهم قادة هذا التغيير وأصحابه الحقيقيين. إن تعزيز المشاركة الشبابية في الأحزاب والنظم السياسية يتطلب إعادة بناء هذه النظم على أسس ديمقراطية تأخذ من نظام التمثيل النسبي طريقاً لتشكيل مؤسساتها التشريعية. كما ان التداول السلمي والدوري للسلطة يعطي للشباب الفرصة من الصعود في هرم القيادة. هنالك نقد واضح على بيئة النظام الفلسطيني السياسي الذي شاخ وهرم، وأن الشباب الذين قادوا هذا النظام في الستينات من القرن الماضي وهم في جيل الشباب ما زالوا وقد تجاوزوا سن التقاعد هم قادة هذا النظام.

إن من المهم فلسطينياً الحفاظ على الاتحادات الطلابية وأن يستمر العمل الديمقراطي في هذه الاتحادات، إضافة إلى أهمية تجديد الحياة الديمقراطية في الاتحادات والنقابات العمالية والتعليمية والمهنية، كما أنه من الضروري تنزيل سن الترشيح للمجلس التشريعي الفلسطيني من 28 عاماً

الى 25 عاما، إضافة إلى توفير الدعم للمؤسسات الشبابية وأن يكون هنالك نسبة " كوتا " في مجالس إدارة المؤسسات الأهلية للشباب ، وأن يؤخذ بعين الاعتبار المساواة بين الجنسين.

إن ذلك يتطلب وجود سياسات وموازنات حكومية قطاعية للشباب غير القائمة حاليا ( نظرة سريعة على قانون الموازنة الفلسطينية يبين أن موازنة وزارة الشباب والرياضة كانت 0.3% خلال الاعوام 2006، 2007، 2008، وأصبحت 0.5% في العام 2009 من إجمالي الموازنة التي تصل إلى 3.9 مليار دولار تقريبا)، كما يتطلب بناء معارف ومهارات الشباب في العمل الحزبي، وفي تنظيم مجموعات الضغط والمناصرة إضافة إلى مهارات التعامل مع الإعلام وتنظيم الحملات الانتخابية والمهارات القيادية.

### 3- اضعاء الطابع المؤسسي على آليات المشاركة الشبابية في عملية صنع القرار: لقد أوردت الخطة الاستراتيجية لقطاع الشباب الفلسطيني أهمية

التعاون مع المؤسسات الحكومية والأهلية، والحزبية لتطوير الأجسام التمثيلية للشباب، وخاصة برلمان الشباب، برلمان الأطفال، ويمكن إنشاء أجسام شبابية على غرار (مجالس بلديات الأطفال). في هذا الصدد يفضل وضع معايير وإجراءات تضمن تمثيل فعلي للشباب، وخاصة بتوسيع قاعدة المشاركة الانتخابية في برلمان الشباب، أو إجراء انتخابات له على المستوى الوطني العام، تنحصر فيه حقوق التصويت والترشيح للشباب في الفئة العمرية (15-29).

### 4- مشروع الخدمة الوطنية المدنية الإلزامية ( الدعوة إلى الاعتراف بمساهمات الشباب في التنمية الوطنية والمحلية ):

إن نظام العونة والتطوع يعتبر من سمات المجتمع الفلسطيني، وهي قيمة تراجعت في مرحلة ما بعد إنشاء السلطة الوطنية الفلسطينية إضافة إلى الممارسات الخاطئة التي مارسها بعض مؤسسات المجتمع المدني التي أحالت العمل التطوعي إلى عمل مدفوع. تجري هذه الأيام في الأوساط الفلسطينية - وزارة الداخلية الفلسطينية وجهاز الحماية المدنية والهلال الأحمر الفلسطيني وغيرها - أهمية وجود خدمة إلزامية مدنية. لقد جاء في أحد استطلاعات الرأي الفلسطيني التي أجرتها مؤسسة بانوراما ( مرسسة أهلية فلسطينية ) إلى أن أكثر من 70% من الفلسطينيين يؤيدون وجود خدمة طوعية وتحديا لفئة الشباب. إن من المهم إنجاز مثل هذا المشروع وبما يعمق من مشاركة الشباب ويعزز من قدرات ومهارات الشباب ويؤهلهم للمشاركة الفاعلة في عملية التحرر والتنمية.

إن من الممكن أن يتم إنشاء بنك " التطوع الوطني " وإيجاد شبكة " المتطوعين الوطنيين " على شاكلة برنامج " متطوعي الأمم المتحدة ". من المؤكد القول أن فرص نجاح هذا البرنامج تتحسن وتزايد إذا ما تم إنجازه على مستوى الوطن العربي وبالشكل الذي يعزز من برامج التبادل

التطوعية الشبابية العربية. إن برنامج سفر يمثل أحد هذه البرامج البناءة والتي تتيح للشباب المشاركة كما أنها تتيح لهم الاطلاع على تجارب الآخرين والاحتكاك بثقافات أخرى، وهو ما يمثل تطبيقاً حقيقياً للحوار وتفهم الآخر.

أختم مداخلتي بتجربة كنت قد أشرفت عليها بحكم عملي كمديرة للبرامج في مؤسسة تعاون لحل الصراع، عندما قمنا بتنظيم برنامج لتبادل شبابي أوروبي متوسطي والذي جاء تحت عنوان: نشر التفاهم والاحترام في منطقة البحر المتوسط. إن مثل هذه الأنشطة تبين الاختلافات القائمة بين الدول الأوروبية والدول العربية .. بين كبار السن والشباب .. بين الرجال والنساء .. إن أهم درس تعلمته غي هذا المجال: إن الاستماع للآخر .. احترامه .. محاولة اكتشاف مخاوفه .. احتياجاته .. مصالحة .. هو الطريق الأقصر حتى يصبح "أعداء الأمس أصدقاء اليوم".

ثورات مدنية وديمقراطية  
«لا دينية، لا حزبية، ثورتنا  
ثورة مدنية»

الربيع العربي،  
حدث السنة الدولية للشباب

التحول الديمقراطي وتداعياته على أجندة الشباب العربي

خالد الوحيشي



## I. ملاحظات حول الأحداث الثورية في تونس ومصر

### ✧ إنتفاضات أساساً شبابية

- إنتفاضات عفوية غير مؤطرة تنظيمياً
- إنطلاقة أساساً شبابية ومن فئات مختلفة
- النقابات والأحزاب إلتحقت لاحقاً
- الجمهور العفوي مصرّ والمنظم متردد





## ★ أول ثورات تكنولوجية في العالم



- دور رئيسي لشباب Facebook, Twitter, YouTube
- نقل مباشر ومتواصل للأحداث
- تطوير متجدد لوسائل التواصل وتحديد المنع
- شباب من كل الفئات (الوسطى والعليا بالأخص)
- مواقع الإنترنت أصبحت المورد الرئيسي لتبادل المعلومات
- مواقع أصبحت تراودها الملايين ( 2 مليون متعامل يومياً في تونس و 6 مليون في مصر )





## إنتفاضات سلمية بسلوكيات عالية المدنية والتحضر

- إنتفاضات لم يستخدم فيها أي عنف من قبل الجمهور
- إصرار على التظاهر السلمي رغم مواجهتهم بالعنف والقتل بالرصاص الحي
- سلوكيات حضارية ومدنية :
  - لجان شعبية للدفاع عن الأملاك العامة والخاصة
  - حملات تنظيف وترميم



## رسالة المنتفضين، مدنية وديموقراطية

- حرية، عدالة، كرامة، ديمقراطية، تشغيل
- لم يحمل أي شعار ديني أو طائفي..
- التوافق الديني في ميدان التحرير
- مشاركة واسعة للفتيات



## II. لماذا كانت الإنتفاضة جماهيرية شبابية؟ إحتدام التباين بين ما يمثلّه الشباب ويتطلّع إليه وبين المتاح لهم

❖ نسبة بطالة هي الأعلى

❖ الشباب العربي هم الأكثر تعليمًا/ لكن الأكثر بطالة

- 25.6% هي النسبة الأعلى في العالم (14.4% المتوسط العالمي)
- تعادل 3.5 مرة نسبة البطالة بين الكبار
- وترتفع البطالة بين الشباب المتعلم وتبلغ في بعض الحالات 40%
- تحتاج المنطقة إلى خلق 54 مليون فرصة عمل عام 2020
- خفض البطالة بين الشباب في حدود 10% يرفع الدخل القومي بحدود 2%
- 71% من الشباب العربي يرغب في الهجرة

- تراجع الأمية بين الشباب 31% إلى 18.7% (1990 - 2005)
- إستيعاب كامل في الإبتدائي في غالب الدول العربية
- تقلص الفجوة بين الجنسين

مقابل

## • هم الأكثر حجماً والأقل تمثيلاً

بلغ الشباب أعلى أعدادهم ونسبهم ويكاد لا يوجد لهم تمثيل في البرلمانات والحكومات ومختلف الأجهزة السياسية والتشريعية والتنفيذية

## • هم الأكثر إطلاعاً على العالم الحر لكنهم يواجهون ضعف شديد في الحريات

نسبة الشباب العربي المنخرط في منظمات مجتمع مدني تتراوح بين 1% و 11%

منظمات الشباب محدودة عدداً وغالبها غير مستقلة وغير مدعومة

## • الأكثر كفاءة وقدرة على المشاركة والأقل إعترافاً بقدراتهم ومواطنتهم

## • هم الأكثر تعامل مع عوامل الحداثة والأكثر معاناة من التسلط الأبوي

(86% من الشباب العربي (7 دول) يتفاعلون يومياً مع الإنترنت – أصدقاء (2008)

## • قيم تشجع على الزواج المبكر وتمنع أي علاقات خارج الزوجية/ مقابل

عدم التمكن من الزواج

(تكلفة الزواج تصل إلى 60 راتب شهري، وإرتفع متوسط سن الزواج إلى 30 سنة في العديد من الدول العربية)

### III. تداعيات الحركة الشعبية الشبابية: حصيلة أولية

#### • تعزيز الحريات وفرص الديمقراطية

- عفو تشريعي عام وإطلاق المعتقلين السياسيين
- الاعتراف بعدد مهم من الأحزاب والمنظمات
- إنفتاح الإعلام على مختلف الآراء والقوي
- السماح بالتظاهر وتنظيم فعاليات للمعارضة
- إنشاء آليات للمحاسبة وتتبع التعديات
- إلغاء قانون الطوارئ
- إنشاء حكومات ائتلافية أو بمشاركة مهمة من مختلف الأطراف
- اعتماد الانتخابات الديمقراطية الحرة

#### • تعزيز المشاركة في العمل الاجتماعي وبروز أشكال أكثر مدنية

- إنشاء لجان شعبية محلية وفي الأحياء وعلى الصعيد الوطني
- تعزيز العمل المطلبي والنقابي والسياسي

## • تدعم المواطنة وتعزز الوعي السياسي بين الشباب

- تعبيرات فنية، أدبية، سياسية تعبر عن تعزز الانتماء والشعور بالمسؤولية والمواطنة
- نقلة مهمة من السلبية والرفض إلى الرغبة العالية في المشاركة السياسية بين الشباب



## بعض تداعيات «الربيع العربي» على الأجندة الشبابية عربياً ودولياً

- نحو إعطاء مكانة خاصة للحالة العربية في أجندة المؤتمر الشبابي الدولي
  - إعتبار كون المنطقة العربية الوحيدة التي تشهد إنفتاح النافذة الديموغرافية: كيف جعل منها الشباب فرصة
  - وإعتبار كون «الربيع العربي» أهم حدث شبابي عالمياً
- أولوية لفهم أفضل لإحتياجات وإتجاهات الشباب: إطلاق مبادرة لمسح دولي حول الشباب
- الحاجة غلى مراجعة الأجندة عربياً ودولياً في ضوء خاصة التحولات الحديثة

إنظروا نتائج المسح الإلكتروني حول “الشباب والتحول الديمقراطي 2011”  
لجنة الشباب الإستشارية

# ***Paul Tacon***

## **Youth in the ESCWA Region: Situation and Responses**

### **Demographic Situation**

The 14 countries of the region covered by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) are remarkable for the youthfulness of their populations. A consequence of a combination of rapidly-decreasing birth and infant mortality rates, 19.97 per cent of the ESCWA region's population was aged between 15 and 24 in 2010, compared to their global share of 17.6 per cent. Although declining gradually, projections from the United Nations Population Division suggest that it will remain higher than the global average until 2050.<sup>1</sup> This phenomenon of high youth population is spread across all countries of the region: while the country with the smallest proportion of its population being made up of youth is the United Arab Emirates with a youth population of 11.9 per cent, the median youth population of ESCWA countries is 20.05 with Yemen's youth population reaching 22.1 per cent. When considered as a proportion of the total working-age population, the percentages range from 14.9 per cent in the United Arab Emirates to 40.7 per cent in Yemen. With the exceptions of Egypt, the Sudan and Yemen, youth in ESCWA countries are concentrated in urban environments.<sup>2</sup>

Such a high proportion of youth among the population could be an advantage, representing a demographic "window of opportunity". As the members of this distinct socio-demographic group with high demographic density become economically-active producers of wealth with few dependants to support, more resources could be freed for investment and saving, producing a demographic dividend.<sup>3</sup> However, in order to make this transition successfully, youth require policies that support them across a range of areas, from education and employment through to health and participation in social and political life. This paper will set out to provide an outline of the current situation of youth in the ESCWA region, showing that the potential of youth in the region is not yet being fulfilled, before discussing how Governments have responded in the framework of the World Programme of Action on Youth (WPAY), and presenting ESCWA's work assist member countries in this area.

### **Youth in the Economy**

The ESCWA youth population shows a major improvement in literacy over recent years, with most countries achieving high levels of youth literacy among both young men and women; however, in some countries, there is a major gap between young men's and young women's levels of literacy (90.1% of young Egyptian men are literate, compared to 78.9% for Egyptian women; in Iraq, the figure is 88.9% for men and 80.5% for women; and in

---

<sup>1</sup> Own calculation based on United Nations Population Division, 2008b.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, 2010c.

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, 2009c.

the Sudan, 84.6% for men and 71.4% for women).<sup>4</sup> Arab youth are also increasingly making use of opportunities in tertiary education, with gross enrolment ratios reaching as high as 53 per cent in Lebanon, and averaging 30.4 per cent for the countries for which data were available in 2008. The participation of men and women differs across the region; however, with the exception of Yemen, women tend to outnumber men at this level of education, with 6 times as many women as men studying at university in Qatar.<sup>5</sup>

However, despite the fact that these statistics generally show a positive, upwards, trend in participation in education, tertiary education enrolment in the ESCWA region is low by global standards.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, there are concerns about the quality of the education that youth receive. The causes are varied, including the status afforded to teachers, the outdated nature of curricula in many countries, short hours of school, the absence of key subjects such as sociology and economics, and the emphasis placed in many curricula on rote learning rather than critical thinking skills.<sup>7</sup> The result is that educational outcomes are low: students from Arab countries perform poorly compared to counterparts in other regions of the world. According to the *Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study 2007*, none of the participating ESCWA countries<sup>8</sup> met the international scale average in mathematics or science.<sup>9</sup> Meanwhile, vocational education remains underdeveloped: it is carried out with little coordination with employers,<sup>10</sup> and is not well-regarded.<sup>11</sup>

These failings in education are seen as a partial explanation for another aspect of the Arab youth experience: the high levels of inactivity, unemployment, and underemployment that youth face.<sup>12</sup> Youth unemployment rates range from 3 to up to 22 times higher than adult unemployment rates in ESCWA countries.<sup>13</sup> Throughout the region, youth make up a significant proportion of the overall unemployed population: from 33 per cent in the United Arab Emirates, almost half of the unemployed population in Lebanon, 51 per cent in Saudi Arabia, 57 per cent in the Syrian Arab Republic, two-thirds of the unemployed population in Egypt, and 70 per cent in Qatar.<sup>14</sup> Where sex-disaggregated figures are available, they show that this is a problem which particularly affects young women: unemployment rates reach 27 per cent among young Bahraini women compared to 17 per cent among Bahraini men; 33 per cent among young Syrian women, compared to 16 per cent of young Syrian men; and 30 per cent of Qatari women, compared to 8 per cent of

---

<sup>4</sup> United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, 2010c.

<sup>5</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2010a, Annex Table 4.

<sup>6</sup> United Nations Development Programme and Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum Foundation, 2009, p. 108

<sup>7</sup> United Nations Development Programme and Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum Foundation, 2009, p. 108

<sup>8</sup> Lebanon, Jordan, Bahrain, Syrian Arab Republic, Egypt, Oman, Palestine, Kuwait and Qatar

<sup>9</sup> Michael O. Martin, Ina V. S. Mullis and Pierre Foy, 2008; Ina V.S. Mullis, Michael O. Martin and Pierre Foy, 2008.

<sup>10</sup> Navtej Dhillon, Djavad Salehi-Isfahani, Paul Dyer, Tarik Yousef, Amina Fahmy, Mary Kraetsch, 2009, p. 7

<sup>11</sup> United Nations Development Programme and Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum Foundation, 2009, p. 113

<sup>12</sup> United Nations and League of Arab States, 2007

<sup>13</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2010, Annex Table 8

<sup>14</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2010, Annex Table 8



Qatari men.<sup>15</sup> This unemployment often seems to strike those with relatively high levels of education particularly hard,<sup>16</sup> and is often long-term.<sup>17</sup>

Meanwhile, for those who cannot afford to stay unemployed, low-skill work in the informal sector is often the only solution.<sup>18</sup> While this is effective as a survival strategy, it does not provide decent work, opportunities for career development or social protection, and it deprives governments of the tax income that regular employment would provide.<sup>19</sup>

The causes of these labour market difficulties are various. As mentioned above, education systems in countries of the ESCWA region do not prepare young people for participation in the global economy; their education is geared towards preparation for specific tasks, rather than broader critical thinking skills. However, this is a partial explanation: even if young people were equipped with the appropriate skills, there would still not be enough jobs for them to take. Private sector employment growth across the region is weak, while public sector employment, which in some countries traditionally absorbed young people (and especially women) coming on to the labour market throughout the second half of the twentieth century, is shrinking. In addition, labour market rigidities in the private sector mean that, while older workers are protected, there are few incentives to create jobs for younger workers, and those which do are vulnerable to layoffs, especially in periods of economic crisis.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, the attitude of many youth, particularly in the GCC, is to prefer public sector employment, where wages and benefits are higher, and terms of employment more generous than the private sector.<sup>21</sup> Youth lack information on what jobs are available, with information about jobs coming through informal networks that exclude youth from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.<sup>22</sup> Young women face particular restrictions on their ability to work.<sup>23</sup> Finally, it should be noted that private sector employment is often low-paid, low-status work, which is unattractive to many young people and therefore, in GCC countries particularly, is often the reserve of migrant workers.

The social consequences of the difficulties youth face on entering the labour market include poverty, the growth of the informal sector, and significant costs to the government.<sup>24</sup> As these youth are not able to develop their skills and contribute to the economy, these difficulties also hold back development.

This lack of educational and job opportunities youth find in their countries also contributes to migration among youth. Accurate, up-to-date and age- and sex-disaggregated data are lacking for the exact number of young migrants from ESCWA countries residing outside

---

<sup>15</sup> *United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2010, Annex Table 8*

<sup>16</sup> *Dhillon, Salehi-Isfahani, Dyer, Yousef, Fahmy, Kraetsch, p. 8*

<sup>17</sup> *Dhillon, Salehi-Isfahani, Dyer, Yousef, Fahmy, Kraetsch, p. 8*

<sup>18</sup> *United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2007, p. 124*

<sup>19</sup> *Dhillon, Salehi-Isfahani, Dyer, Yousef, Fahmy, Kraetsch, pps. 9-10*

<sup>20</sup> *Dhillon, Salehi-Isfahani, Dyer, Yousef, Fahmy, Kraetsch, p. 22*

<sup>21</sup> *United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2007, p. 124*

<sup>22</sup> *Navtej Dhillon and Tarik Yousef, N.D., p. 14*

<sup>23</sup> *United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2007, pps. 128-132*

<sup>24</sup> *For example, the Dhillon, Salehi-Isfahani, Dyer, Yousef, Fahmy, Kraetsch, using a broader definition of youth, estimate that youth joblessness costs 2.74 per cent of GDP in Lebanon, 7.29 per cent in Egypt, and 9.09 per cent of GDP in the Syrian Arab Republic. Dhillon, Salehi-Isfahani, Dyer, Yousef, Fahmy, Kraetsch, p. 13*

their countries of birth; however, some indicative figures are suggestive of youth migration trends. Firstly, many young people in the ESCWA region show the desire to migrate: of the 12 ESCWA countries surveyed by Gallup in 2010, a median figure of 24 per cent of respondents said that, if given the chance, they would migrate.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, many young Arabs migrate for study: it is estimated that 206,549 of the almost 3 million internationally-mobile students in the world in 2008 came from Arab countries.<sup>26</sup> Finally, figures from Spain suggest that young people from ESCWA countries represented from 5 to over 10 per cent of the total number of migrants from that country.<sup>27</sup> Although these figures are not definitive, and with causes other than labour market outcomes driving migration, nonetheless it seems that poor education and labour market outcomes contribute to young people leaving ESCWA countries. In the absence of adequate policies to persuade these youth to contribute to development in their countries of origin, this can equate to a loss of the potential of these (often highly-educated) youth.

Another consequence of poor labour market outcomes is that young people's ability to participate in wider society is limited. This is particularly notable in relation to family formation, as the average age at which people marry has increased across the region. In Jordan, for example, the mean age at marriage has increased from 21.5 years of age for women and 25.9 for men in 1979 to 25.4 and 28.6 in 2004.<sup>28</sup> Insofar as this increase represents the effect of other, more positive factors that delay family formation, such as increased female education and participation in the workforce, this is not problematic, and can be beneficial in reducing the risk of adolescent pregnancy; however, it is also suggested that such delays are also to some extent involuntary, as young men (particularly) are unable to signify their eligibility for marriage, or to carry the high costs that marriage often implies. This limits young people's ability to take part in rites of passage to adulthood, preventing them from being considered as full adults.<sup>29</sup>

It is therefore clear that the socio-economic situation of youth in the ESCWA countries is poor, particularly in the countries of the Mashreq. Poor-quality education, gender imbalances and poor labour market outcomes mean that young people are finding few opportunities in their own countries and are adjusting their expectations to include emigration and delayed marriage and family formation. This situation prevents ESCWA countries from being able to benefit from the potential that well-educated youth employed in decent jobs would bring for socio-economic development.

### **Youth and their Well-Being**

Youth in the ESCWA region face a particular risk profile. Although they region face a relatively low prevalence of HIV, malaria and tuberculosis, youth in specific areas, and

---

<sup>25</sup> Silatech/Gallup, N.D.

<sup>26</sup> United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2010, Table 9. These figures are for the ESCWA countries of Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Yemen, and also include the non-ESCWA Arab countries of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia

<sup>27</sup> United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, 2009b, p. 3

<sup>28</sup> United Nations Population Division, 2008a.

<sup>29</sup> Dhillon, Salehi-Isfahani, Dyer, Yousef, Fahmy, Kraetsch, pps. 12-13.

particularly in the least-developed ESCWA countries, do face such risks.<sup>30</sup> Two major health risks faced by youth in the ESCWA region relate to smoking and road accidents. The median youth smoking rate in the region is 25.2 per cent for men, and 13.2 per cent for women.<sup>31</sup> Meanwhile, insofar as such data are available, it seems that the main causes of death of youth relate to road accidents.<sup>32</sup> Finally, youth's knowledge of and access to reproductive health information and care remains relatively limited,<sup>33</sup> and although the number of pregnant adolescent women is dropping, those that do undergo pregnancy face serious risks to their health.<sup>34</sup>

Other risks to youth well-being come from conflict. Five countries within the region are considered as countries affected by conflict,<sup>35</sup> with populations in these countries facing internal conflicts and foreign occupation, sometimes simultaneously. In addition to the direct risks to the lives and health of youth, these conflicts exacerbate youth's difficulties in accessing education and employment, as education infrastructure is destroyed or closed; young people face formal and informal restrictions on their mobility; and political priorities shift away from social and economic issues. Moreover, conflicts uproot youth, with young people being internally-displaced or becoming refugees, usually in neighbouring countries. It is estimated that the Sudan has the largest internally-displaced population (IDP) in the world, with potentially up to 5.2 million people being IDPs, while there are over 2.75 million Iraqi IDPs.<sup>36</sup> The Syrian Arab Republic, hosted a "population of concern" to UNHCR of over 1.3 million in 2009, of whom 37 per cent were under the age of 18,<sup>37</sup> to which should be added 4,766,760 Palestine refugees registered with UNRWA in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and in Palestine itself.<sup>38</sup> Although the situations of refugees vary, with some able to live in urban settings while others are confined to camps, nonetheless the refugee experience is rarely a positive one for youth. For example, a socio-economic survey of Palestine refugees in Lebanon found that youth accounted for 24 per cent of Palestinians in poverty in Lebanon, and 29.4 per cent of those in extreme poverty.<sup>39</sup> Youth are also involved in conflicts as combatants, exposing them to risk and violating their rights.<sup>40</sup>

Youths from minority or disadvantaged groups are at risk from multiple discrimination, as youths and members of disadvantaged groups. This is particularly clear in the case of young women, who have fewer legal protections and rights than men, and as such face wage discrimination compared to their male peers, discrimination in access to information

---

<sup>30</sup> *United Nations and League of Arab States, 2007.*

<sup>31</sup> *United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, 2010c,*

<sup>32</sup> *United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, 2010c.*

<sup>33</sup> *Population Reference Bureau, 2007.*

<sup>34</sup> *United Nations and League of Arab States, 2007, p. 58.*

<sup>35</sup> *Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine, Sudan and Yemen*

<sup>36</sup> *Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, N.D.*

<sup>37</sup> *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2009. Unfortunately, data for the specific youth segment of the population are unavailable*

<sup>38</sup> *United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, N.D.*

<sup>39</sup> *Jad Chaaban, Hala Ghattas, Rima Habib, Sari Hanafi, Nadine Sahyoun, Nisreen Salti, Karin Seyfert, Nadia Naamani, 2010, p. 32, table 3-5*

<sup>40</sup> *United Nations Development Programme, 2009, p. 92.*

and social services, cultural pressure to marry, as well as the risk of gender-based violence, female genital mutilation and honour killings.<sup>41</sup>

The youth of the ESCWA region therefore face particular risks which violate their rights and hinder their ability to engage in and benefit from development.

### **Youth in Civil Society**

Youth in the ESCWA region are often excluded from formal public life. For those countries who allow their citizens to vote, youth are generally permitted to vote, either at ages 18 or 21. However, only Bahrain, Qatar and the Sudan allow youth to stand at national elections; in other countries, the minimum age for candidacy range from 25-30, excluding youth from direct participation in formal national decision-making processes.<sup>42</sup> Other forums through which young people could participate, such as parliamentary committees, are meanwhile only tangentially related to youth, and tend to be of a lower status. Youth participation in civil society is also constrained, as the governing bodies of such organizations also tend to exclude youth.<sup>43</sup> Environmental initiatives, an area of particular pertinence and interest to youth, are not immune from this syndrome, often engaging youth as human resources rather than as partners.<sup>44</sup> As a result, youth participation in voluntary activities is low: in Egypt, for example, the Population Council found that 2 per cent of 15-17 year olds and 3.2 per cent of 18-24 year-olds were involved in any kind of voluntary activity.<sup>45</sup> This exclusion, coupled with the general lack of space for meaningful political participation in most ESCWA countries, means that young people often feel isolated from politics and frustrated: in Egypt, only 16% of eligible young people had voted in the 2005 election.<sup>46</sup>

Finally, and more positively, access to information and communication technology in the ESCWA region has grown massively since the year 2000, with some countries registering growth rates in the number of internet users of tens of thousands of percent. The United Arab Emirates is the most-connected country, with 65.2 internet users per 100 people, although the median figure for ESCWA countries is 21.25 internet users per 100 people.<sup>47</sup> Unfortunately data are not available as to the demographic make-up of these users; however, analysis of the usage of the social networking site facebook suggest that 75 per cent of its users are between the ages of 15 and 29, suggesting that youth are engaging in online activities.<sup>48</sup> Finally, in relation to the connection of educational institutions to the internet, there is a wide variation between countries, with Bahrain having connected almost all its schools to the internet, with Saudi Arabia and Jordan also above the global median of 77 per cent of schools connected, but at the lower end of the

---

<sup>41</sup> *United Nations and League of Arab States, 2007.*

<sup>42</sup> *Inter-Parliamentary Union, N.D.*

<sup>43</sup> *United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, 2009a, p. 20*

<sup>44</sup> *United Nations and League of Arab States, 2007, p. 118.*

<sup>45</sup> *Egyptian Cabinet Information and Decision Support Center and Population Council, 2010, Table 1.1*

<sup>46</sup> *Egyptian Cabinet Information and Decision Support Center and Population Council, 2010, p. 18.*

<sup>47</sup> *United Nations Development Programme, 2010, table 17*

<sup>48</sup> *Arab Social Media Report, 2011.*

scale, poorer and conflict-affected countries had only connected 20-25 per cent of schools.<sup>49</sup>

Much therefore remains to be done in enabling youth to participate actively in civil society in the ESCWA region, although it would seem that in relation to use of ICT tools, young people are at the forefront of developments in the region.

## **Conclusion**

The youth of the ESCWA region face many challenges. This is particularly concerning as this may hold back longer-term development: the wide range of transitions and experiences youth undergo are essential for determining future outcomes; when they are difficult, they risk spreading disadvantages encountered at youth ages along the life course. For example, youth whose first job is in the informal sector find it hard to break out of this sector. Moreover, these challenges prevent societies from benefiting from the transitions youth undergo: in relation to employment, the large growth in the number of young people, coupled with the relatively-low number of children and dependants, means that youth who successfully transition to decent work would be able to contribute to increasing output and building up savings and providing money for investment, thus boosting development.<sup>50</sup> In addition, youth are a source of creativity and innovation; enabling them to act on their ideas in business and civil society would enable ESCWA countries to “keep pace with global developments and meet the ambitions of the peoples of the region” in terms of technology and ideas.<sup>51</sup> Governments therefore need to implement policies across a wide range of sectors in order to ensure that youth transitions happen under the best-possible circumstances, in order to ensure accelerated and sustained long-term development.

It is in recognition of this that the United Nations developed the World Programme of Action on Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond (WPAY) in 1995. This Programme sets out 15 priority areas grouped into three clusters, covering topics ranging from education, health, employment, participation, fighting drug abuse, and ensuring gender equality, with the aim of providing a coherent, multi-sectoral framework for enabling youth to participate in and benefit from development and ensuring that their special needs and vulnerabilities are addressed. The WPAY in particular calls on governments to implement multi-sectoral national youth policies, able to address the specific and multi-faceted situation of youths in their countries. The next section will therefore consider how governments have reacted to issues of youth within this framework.

## **Government Reactions**

In general, the response to the WPAY in the ESCWA region has been inadequate. An ESCWA survey carried out in late 2008 found that policymakers, although interested in the subject of youth, lacked the capacities, information and understanding of the key

---

<sup>49</sup> *International Telecommunications Union, 2010, Chart 2.4.,*

<sup>50</sup> *United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, 2008.*

<sup>51</sup> *United Nations Development Programme and Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum Foundation, 2009, p. 173*

concepts of youth development to develop and implement policies that would properly integrate youth into development processes. In general, there is a lack of data, research and analysis that would enable policymakers to identify the situation of youth in their countries, as well as a lack of political will to engage with the subject. Development is rather dealt with sectorally, without regard for the distinct needs and potentials of different socio-demographic groups, particularly youth.<sup>52</sup> As a result, most countries still deal with youth through projects of limited duration, focus, geographical reach and sustainability. Only five countries in the ESCWA region (Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Palestine and Yemen) have national youth policies, although another five (Iraq, Lebanon, Qatar, the Syrian Arab Republic and the United Arab Emirates) are in the process of developing them.

Of the countries which do have national youth policies, the following issues can be identified:

Few countries have action plans for the implementation of their policies; definitions of youth vary, with only Bahrain, Palestine, and Yemen's policies fitting the definition of the WPAY; some youth may have been involved in the formulation of the policy, but are rarely considered as actors in the development process; data on the exact situation of youth and the many youth sub-groups (for example urban and rural, national and non-national, male and female) are lacking; many national youth policies are neither costed nor allocated specific budgets; the policies are not linked to other development programmes; and targets for measuring progress are not available.<sup>53</sup>

Therefore, although it is useful that these countries have begun in the process of integrating youth into their development programmes, areas requiring progress remain. Until youth are fully-integrated through multi-sectoral, costed national youth policies backed up by action plans and political commitment, ESCWA countries will continue to suffer from a lack of youth involvement in development, with negative effects on youth and society as a whole.

#### *ESCWA's Response*

As part of its mandate to “foster comprehensive, equitable, integrated and sustainable development” in the region, the Population and Social Development Section (PSDS) of ESCWA assists member countries to enhance their capacity to “address the implications of demographic changes with particular emphasis on the youth bulge ... and to adopt relevant policies”.<sup>54</sup>

In particular, PSDS undertakes the following activities:

- (1) Advocating for the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth

<sup>52</sup> United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, 2010a

<sup>53</sup> United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, 2009a,

<sup>54</sup> United Nations General Assembly, 2009.

- (WPAY) and encouraging national governments to formulate national youth policies.
- (2) Strengthening the individual and institutional capacities of Member States to help them formulate national youth policies and related plans of actions.
  - (3) Monitoring countries' responses to the WPAY and their progress towards achieving goals and targets on youth development.
  - (4) Conducting research and analysis on the situation of youth in education, employment, health and participation in public life. This will help in identifying the problems and challenges they are facing and in formulating appropriate youth policies that target them as a distinct socio-demographic group.

Since 2008, PSDS has undertaken a range of different activities to assist member countries to integrate youth into development. ESCWA's role in the process of integrating youth into development was recognized in the 26<sup>th</sup> ministerial session and reinforced, as the member countries of the ESCWA region emphasized its comparative advantage "in undertaking a leading role in coordinating efforts of regional organizations and country bureaux of United Nations organizations with regard to the implementation of WPAY"<sup>55</sup>

Within this framework, PSDS has:

Held a workshop in 2008 on "Reinforcing National Capacities in Responding to WPAY: National Reports and Systematic Documentation of Accomplishments" and an Expert Group Meeting in 2009 on "Reinforcing Social Equity: Integrating Youth into the Development Process". A further Expert Group Meeting on "Follow up to the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond" in the Arab region is planned for the end of March 2011;

Begun implementation of a project under the United Nations Development Account on "Strengthening capacities of policy makers in the ESCWA region to formulate national youth policies and plans of action: Responding to the World Programme of Action for Youth". This project was requested by ESCWA member countries as an outcome of the 2009 Expert Group Meeting, and will assist Iraq, Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Palestine and Yemen to develop and operationalize their national youth strategies. In addition, PSDS is implementing a project with the Arab Labour Organization on "Developing a regional initiative on youth employment";

Provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Youth and Sports on the process of writing national youth reports, building their capacity to monitor the situation of youth in Palestine. It is able to provide any technical assistance to member countries on youth issues upon request.

PSDS will continue this work as a core feature of its workplan, and is ready to work with governments and other partners to achieve the implementation and operationalization of the WPAY throughout the ESCWA region.

---

<sup>55</sup> United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, 2010b.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

It is therefore clear that the youthfulness of the ESCWA region gives it a major potential for achieving a demographic dividend, accelerating the process of social and economic development and spreading benefits along the life course. However, until now, the policies in place across the region are not unlocking the potential of youth, causing youth themselves to suffer problems of unemployment, risks to their health and exclusion from social and political participation, and limiting the potential demographic dividend for development that this youth population represents.

In order to counter such problems and unlock the potential of youth for development, ESCWA member countries should adopt the World Programme of Action on Youth as a framework for their youth-based interventions, and in particular, draft and implement multi-sectoral national youth strategies, linked to broader development strategies. The Population and Social Development Section of ESCWA stands ready to further assist governments in this process through its research and analysis, capacity building projects, and technical assistance.

## **Bibliography**

Dubai School of Government, 2011, Facebook Usage: Factors and Analysis. *Arab Social Media Report, 1(1)*

Egyptian Cabinet Information and Decision Support Center and Population Council, 2010, *Survey of Young People in Egypt. Preliminary Report, February 2010*. Cairo: Population Council

Ina V.S. Mullis, Michael O. Martin and Pierre Foy, 2008, *Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study 2007 International Mathematics Report: Findings from IEA's Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study at Fourth and Eighth Grades*. Chestnut Hill: TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center

Inter-Parliamentary Union, N.D. *Parline Database on National Parliaments*, Geneva: IPU

Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, N.D., *Global Statistics*, [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpPages\)/22FB1D4E2B196DAA802570BB005E787C?OpenDocument](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpPages)/22FB1D4E2B196DAA802570BB005E787C?OpenDocument). Geneva: IDMC. Accessed 18 March 2011

International Telecommunications Union, 2010 *World Telecommunication/ICT Development Report 2010, Monitoring the WSIS Targets: A mid-term review*, Geneva: ITU

Jad Chaaban, Hala Ghattas, Rima Habib, Sari Hanafi, Nadine Sahyoun, Nisreen Salti, Karin Seyfert, Nadia Naamani, 2010, *Socio-Economic Survey of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon* Beirut: American University of Beirut



Michael O. Martin, Ina V. S. Mullis and Pierre Foy, 2008, *Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study 2007 International Science Report: Findings from IEA's Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study at Fourth and Eighth Grades*. Chestnut Hill: TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center

Navtej Dhillon, Djavad Salehi-Isfahani, Paul Dyer, Tarik Yousef, Amina Fahmy, Mary Kraetsch, 2009, *Missed by the Boom, Hurt by the Bust: Making Markets Work for Young People in the Middle East*. Washington D. C. and Dubai: Wolfensohn Center for Development and Dubai School of Government

Population Reference Bureau, 2007, *Young People's Sexual and Reproductive Health in the Middle East and North Africa*. Washington D.C.: Population Reference Bureau.

Silatech/Gallup, N.D. *The Silatech Index: Voices of Young People: Fall 2010*. Doha: Silatech.

United Nations and League of Arab States, *The Millennium Development Goals in the Arab Region 2007: A Youth Lens*. New York and Geneva: United Nations.

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2007, *World Youth Report 2007: Young People's Transitions to Adulthood*. New York and Geneva: United Nations.

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2010, *World Youth Report 2010: Youth and Climate Change*. New York and Geneva: United Nations.

United Nations Development Programme, 2009, *Arab Human Development Report 2009: Challenges to Human Security in the Arab Countries*. New York: UNDP.

United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 2010. The Real Wealth of Nations: Pathways to Human Development*. New York: UNDP.

United Nations Development Programme and Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum Foundation, 2009, *Arab Knowledge Report 2009: Towards Productive Intercommunication for Knowledge*. New York: UNDP.

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, 2008, *Demographic Transition in Arab Countries: Preparing for the Future* (E/ESCWA/SDD/2008/Technical Paper.6). New York and Geneva: United Nations.

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, 2009a, *Population and Development Report, Issue No.4. Youth in the ESCWA Region: Situation Analysis and Implications for Development Policies* (E/ESCWA/SDD/2009/6). New York and Geneva: United Nations.

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, 2009b, *Social Policy Brief: International Migration of Youth in Arab Countries*, (E/ESCWA/SDD/2009/Technical Paper.7). New York and Geneva: United Nations.

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, 2009c, *The Demographic Profiles of the Arab Countries* (E/ESCWA/SDD/2009/Technical Paper.9). New York and Geneva: United Nations.

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, 2010a, *Policy Issues in the ESCWA Region: National Youth Policies Within the Framework of the World Programme of Action on Youth (WPAY)*, (E/ESCWA/26/4(Part I)). New York and Geneva: United Nations.

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, 2010, *Report of the Commission on its twenty-sixth session* (E/ESCWA/26/9/Report). New York and Geneva: United Nations.

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, 2010c, *Youth Development in the ESCWA Region: Statistical Profiles, National Strategies and Success Stories* (E/ESCWA/SDD/2010/Booklet.1). New York and Geneva: United Nations.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2010, *Global Education Digest 2010: Comparing Education Statistics Across the World*. Montréal: UNESCO

United Nations General Assembly, 2009, *Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011\**. Part V. Regional cooperation for development. Section 21: Economic and social development in Western Asia (A/64/6 (Sect. 21)). New York and Geneva: United Nations.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2009, *2009 Global Trends: Refugees, Asylum-seekers, Returnees, Internally Displaced and Stateless Persons*. Geneva: UNHCR.

United Nations Population Division, 2008a, *World Marriage Data 2008* (POP/DB/Marr/Rev2008). New York and Geneva: United Nations.

United Nations Population Division, 2008b, *World Population Prospects: the 2008 Revision*. New York and Geneva: United Nations.

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, N.D., *UNRWA In Figures*, <http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/20100628261.pdf>. Gaza: UNRWA. Accessed 16 March, 2011

### نحو مقارنة بديلة لتطوير السياسات الوطنية للشباب

يحظى الوطن العربي بفرصة استثنائية تتمثل بنسبة الشباب المرتفعة في نسيجه السكاني والتي تمثل بدورها إمكاناً تنموياً هائلاً إن أحسن استثمارها بالسياسات الصحيحة القادرة على إحداث نقلة تنموية. ولا يوجد أفضل من تجربة النمر الأسوياء للتدليل على واقعية وجدوى توظيف هذه الطاقة الشبابية في مشروع تنموي شامل يحقق النقلة المنشودة لوطننا العربي على مختلف الصعد. وإن كان الوطن العربي قد حظي بالطاقة النفطية التي وفرت أداة هامة لتحقيق النمو في العديد من البلدان العربية تجاوزت من خلالها تحدي إنجاز البنى التحتية أوائل القرن المنصرم، فإن "الطاقة" الشبابية المتوفرة هي الطاقة ورأسمال الحقيقيين الذين نمتلكهما الآن لبناء البنية التحتية التنموية للعقول العربية الشابة المتمثلة بالإدارات ووضع السياسات السليمة للإستثمار بالقوى البشرية في مشروع تنموي نهضوي.

ورغم ان العديد من البلدان العربية تحت الخطى باتجاه الإستثمار في الشباب وإيلاء عناية أكبر لهذا القطاع الحيوي. إلا أن التغيرات المتسارعة والتحولات الدولية بفعل تداعيات العولمة والتغيرات الإقليمية والاقتصادية والسياسية تفرض جملة من التحديات التي تواجه الشباب العربي. إن هذه المداخله تهدف الى مشاركتكم جملة قضايا تتعلق بواقع مشاركة الشباب في المنظمات الشبابية الأهلية والرسمية في المنطقة العربية ومدى مساهمتهم في صياغة الخطط والمشاريع والسياسات المتعلقة بأدوارهم على الصعيدين الوطني والمحلي بمقاربة تحاول درس الفرص القائمة لمشاركة الشباب والعقبات التي تحول دون تطوير صيغ مؤسسية تقوم على شراكة حقيقية مع الشباب. كما ترمي هذه المداخله باتجاه تسليط الضوء على قصص نجاح ودروس يكمن الإستفادة منها في تحقيق شراكة حقيقية بين الشباب والمؤسسات التي تعنى بالتعاطي مع الشأن الشبابي إضافة الى التمهيد لرؤية بديلة لموضوع السياسات والإستراتيجيات الوطنية للشباب في مقارنة تحاول البناء على تجربة البلدان التي صاغت سياسات وطنية للشباب وكيفية تحسين أداءها، منطلقاً من القناعة بأهمية ملكية الشباب أنفسهم لمحاور وخطط وآليات عمل السياسات الوطنية للشباب بوصفها وسيلة فاعلة لتقوية الحضور الأهلي والقدراتي للمؤسسات الشبابية في الوطن العربي.

### الشباب والمشاركة: بين التنظيم و المؤسسية!

بعيداً عن الغوص في تعريفات ودلالات تعبير شائع كالشباب والمشاركة، فإنه من الضروري الإشارة الى ان تعبيرات من طراز "مشاركة الشباب" "إشراك الشباب" "دمج الشباب" "الشراكة مع الشباب" "إعطاء الفرصة للشباب" "الإستماع للشباب" "تمثيل الشباب" تستخدم غالباً للإشارة الى معنى متشابه يختلط على المستمع. مروحة التعبيرات تلك في الحقيقة ليست متشابهة البتة في جوهرها، فكل منها يدل على مستوى مختلف من المشاركة. وسلم مشاركة الشباب يمنح الأفضلية للحالة التي يكون فيها الشباب قد بادر وخطط

وشارك قراره للكبار وهي حالة تفترض مشاركة حقيقية في السلطة (Power) والإدارة. على أن صور استخدام الشباب كواجهة أو التلاعب بهم والتحدث باسمهم أو تحفيظهم الدور الذي يجب ان يقوموا به كلها صور لا تعكس مفهوم "المشاركة" بأية حال. ولأن ما علق بتعبير الشباب والمشاركة انطلى في كثير من الأحيان على مشاهد سلبية تقوم من خلالها الإدارات والمؤسسات العاملة مع الشباب بممارسات بعيدة في حقيقتها عن اهداف ووسائل تحقيق مشاركة الشباب الحقيقية. فإنه ينبغي التأكيد عليه أن تعبیر الشباب والمشاركة يعني في حقيقة الأمر اهمية:

- امتلاك الشباب للحق والوسائل والقدرات للمساهمة في صنع القرار القرار وإشراكهم في السلطة (المشاركة في السلطة بمفهومها الأوسع من الأسرة الى المدرسة والجامعة والجمعية... الخ).
- وجود الآليات والفرص التي تتيح المشاركة في تنفيذ وتطوير البرامج المتنوعة بما يضمن شراكة حقيقية من الشباب في التنفيذ كأداة وغاية للتنمية المجتمعية.
- مشاركة الشباب في تقييم ومراجعة البرامج وطرق مشاركتهم بما يضمن مرونة هذه الوسائل للتطورات والمتغيرات المتسارعة في الجسم الشبابي.

لقد شهدت الآونة الأخيرة تطورات ملحوظة على صعيد الحواضن المجتمعية لمشاركة الشباب، فظهر بوضوح أكبر مؤسسات مجتمع مدني تعنى بالأساس بالشأن الشبابي وهي ما يطلق عليه عادة "المؤسسات الشبابية" ويقصد بها المؤسسات المتعاملة مع الشباب أو المتعاطية مع الشأن الشبابي والتي يشارك بها الشباب كمنفذين ومستفيدين من البرامج التي تقدمها. وتمثل هذه المؤسسات إضافة الى نظيراتها الحكومية الحواضن الأبرز للعمل الشبابي وممارسته ولقياس مشاركة الشباب ونتائجها.

إلا ان الأمر لا يقف عند هذا الإطار فقط، ففي كثير من الأحيان أسهم غياب او عدم نضج مجتمع مدني حقيقي أو ضعف الثقة في المؤسسات الموجودة او/و رغبة الشباب في الالتقاء خارج الأطر الرسمية واحجامهم في بعض الأحيان عن الإنضمام الى المؤسسات الحكومية أو الأهلية العاملة مع الشباب للعديد من الأسباب، كل ذلك من عوامل أسهمت وما زالت في نزوح الشباب الى طرائق ووسائل مبتكرة في المشاركة حيث ينشط الشباب في اعمال خيرية او ملتقيات الكترونية او أنشطة متنوعة بعيدة عن التوجيه المؤسسي. هذه الأطر يطلق عليها اسم مجموعات شبابية وهي أحد المظاهر المهمة للعمل الشبابي وإن كانت لم تحظى بنصيبها بعد من الإهتمام والدراسة. فهي في الغالب مجموعات تتشكل من عدد محدود من الشباب ولا تهدف بالضرورة الى إضفاء صيغة مؤسسية على عملها. وهذا ما يدعني الى التأكيد على عدم اهمال مثل هذه المجموعات من قبل المشتغلين بالشأن الشبابي، فهي وإن كانت لا تبرز بوصفها مؤسسات ذات هوية محددة، إلا ان لها قدرة كبيرة على جذب الشباب لسهولة العمل من خلالها وعدم وجود تبعات سلبية للمشاركة فيها خصوصاً إذا ما علمنا أن 22% و 17.3% من أسباب عزوف الشباب عن المشاركة يعود الى مناخات الإحباط وكثرة المشكلات على التوالي وفق دراسة أعدتها إدارة السياسات السكانية والهجرة في جامعة الدول العربية.

## سياسات أم استراتيجية وطنية للشباب .. على المستوى الوطني أم على مستوى المناطق!

إذا كان الهدف الأسمى للسياسات الوطنية للشباب هو دعم جهود تمكين الشباب في بلد ما وتنسيق الجهود الوطنية للعمل مع الشباب من جانب، ورسم الوجهة التي يتطلع اليها من خلال شبابه الى الوصول اليها من جهة أخرى، فإن تجربة العديد من البلدان التي صاغت سياسات أو/و استراتيجيات وطنية للشباب تشير الى ان الكثير منها واجهت صعوبات جمة في مراحل صياغتها وتحديات وجيهة أثناء تطبيقها. فقد اصطدمت العديد من الإستراتيجيات التي تم صياغتها بتحدي عدم القدرة على تفعيل مشاركة حقيقية للشباب تتجاوز الأطر التقليدية التي كانت تحكم عمل المؤسسات العاملة مع الشباب قبلها. وفي بعض الحالات ما كانت السياسات الشبابية الى إعادة جدولة وبرمجة لذات البرامج العتيقة التي استهلكت محلياً اللهم إلا بعد تغيير الغلاف الخارجي لها فهي في السابق كانت تتم دون "استراتيجية" ولكنها الآن باتت تشكل بتظايرها "استراتيجية للشباب"!! وهي حال من إعادة انتاج الذات وهي بكل حال بعيدة كل البعد عن ديناميكية الوسط الشبابي.

ما سبق ليس هجاءاً للتجارب الموجودة ولكن دعوة للتأمل لم لم تحقق ما هو منشود منها. فقد عانت مشاريع بناء إستراتيجيات وطنية للشباب في البلدان العربية من الكثير من العقبات منها:

1. البدء مباشرة بالعمل على تطوير استراتيجيات قبل العمل على تطوير سياسة للشباب ترسم الخطوط العريضة للسياسة الدولة للعمل مع الشباب والوجهة التي تذهب إليها الدولة بالتوازي مع باقي خططها الإستراتيجية (Strategy Vs. Policy)
2. ضعف الهياكل وكفاءة الكوادر العاملة في الوزارات المعنية بالعمل مع الشباب وأهمها وزارات الشباب على حمل البرامج التي تحتويها الإستراتيجية.
3. جمود برامج العمل المتضمنة بالإستراتيجية الوطنية للشباب والتي يذهب بعضها الى حد تحديد الأنشطة الواجب تنفيذها على مدى ثلاث وفي أحيان أخرى خمس سنوات. برامج بهذا الطول والجمود ضارة جداً في الإستراتيجية لكونها لا تتماشى مع حجم التغير والتطور السريع الذي نشهده إضافة الى أنها تضيف شعوراً بالملل لدى الشباب فالبرامج باتت معروفة ومكررة في كثير من الأحيان.
4. غياب نوافذ تمويلية في العديد من الإستراتيجيات التي تستهدف الشباب وعدم تفعيل حضور المجتمع المدني في الشراكة والتنفيذ ترك شعوراً بأن المشاركين والمشاركات لا يمثلون أكثر من "كومبارس" في الأعداد المطلوبة لكل نشاط ولا يسهم بخلق حراك مدني شبابي يعزز مفهوم العمل التطوعي والمشاركة والمواطنة. فعلى الدولة واجب يجب ان تأديه لشبابها ولكن هذا الدور يتعدى المفهوم الأبوي للرعاية، فالمقصود هنا هو واجب الدولة على خلق ظروف مساهمة لمشاركة الشباب وتمكينه، وبما يحتويه ذلك من مشاركة الشباب في الإدارة.

5. تطوير وتنفيذ الإستراتيجية بمركزية والإخفاق في ملائمة الحاجات الملحة للشباب على مستوياتهم المحلية أو مراعاة الاختلافات في موارد وطبيعة المناطق المختلفة.

لعل هذه الأخيرة تمثل تحدياً ماثلاً أمام الإستراتيجيات الشبابية على المستوى الوطني. فالتحدي يكمن في مدى قدرتها على مخاطبة حاجات الشباب ورغباتهم المتنوعة (Thematically) وفي الآن نفسه مراعاة التباعد الجغرافي بين المدن والمحافظات المتباعدة (Geographically). إن هذه العقبة سببت في العديد من الحالات نزوحاً مركزياً نحو العاصمة والمدن الكبيرة لمعظم البرامج والنشاطات النوعية بما ينتج ذلك من إقصاء ضمني للشباب في المحافظات البعيدة تبعاً لصعوبة التنقل ولعوامل أخرى.

ولكن هل يعني هذا عدم الحاجة سياسات واستراتيجيات للشباب؟ الجواب قطعاً لا، فالحاجة ملحة الى وجود هذه السياسات والإستراتيجيات. فلننظر الى تجارب دول كفرنسا واليوسنة سلوفينيا، وأنا أحاول هنا رصد المقاربة التي استخدمتها هذه البلدان والتي تؤكد على أهمية وجود إستراتيجيات للشباب ولكن التحفظ هو على كونها إستراتيجيات وطنية بمحيط عملها! دعونا ننظر الى الأمر من زاوية أخرى، فإذا استقرينا على ان القصد من وراء مشاريع الإستراتيجيات هي لتفعيل مشاركة الشباب وتمكينهم ولتقديم رؤية واضحة لنماء الشباب في بلد ما ما لتوفير إطار لكافة الجهود في ميدان العمل مع الشباب وتنسيق هذه الجهود وتعظيم أثرها. أقول هنا إن كانت هذه هي المعاني الرئيسية خلف الحماسة لتطوير إستراتيجيات وطنية للشباب. فالدعوة هنا هي الى أهمية ان تكون هذه الإستراتيجيات على مستوى مناطق محلي لا وطني وذلك لتجاوز ما تقدم من عقبات وسقطات واجهة صياغة وتنفيذ إستراتيجيات وطنية للشباب. بالمعنى نفسه نؤكد على أهمية تطوير "سياسات" للشباب على المستوى الوطني تشير الى الخطوط العريضة والإتجاهات الأساسية في الدولة ولكن على ان يتم تفعيل "الإستراتيجيات" على المستوى المحلي ومسوغات ذلك:

1. إن حاجات الشباب في المناطق الجغرافية المتقاربة يغلب عليها التشابه مما يجعل من صياغة برامج على الأطر المحلية أكثر ملائمة واستجابة الى شباب المنطقة ذاتها ومميزاتها الفريدة. إن العمل على المستوى المحلي من شأنه أن يضمن تجاوز عقبة التوزيع الجغرافي والنوعي للنشاطات.

2. لتحقيق عدالة في توزيع الأنشطة والبرامج الشبابية في الدولة.

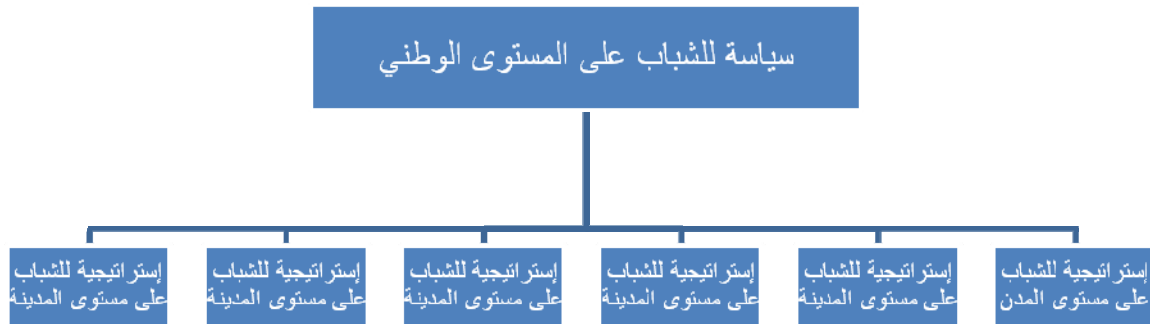
3. توسيع قاعدة المشاركة وشمولها لكافة شباب الدولة عبر تفاعلهم ومشاركتهم في تفاصيل حياتهم اليومية والقرارات المحلية.

4. لتقوية المجتمع المدني على المستوى المحلي وتحفيز تشكيل مجموعات ومؤسسات شبابية بما يعزز حضور المجتمع المدني كقناة مهمة لمشاركة كافة المواطنين والمواطنات. فوجود مجتمع مدني قوي ضمانه لنمو وتقوية جميع حلقات المشاركة حتي بعد عمر الشباب.

5. لتجاوز عقبة التنقل وحركة الشباب للمشاركة في الأنشطة الإعتيادية التي ينبغي ان لا تتطلب مجهود وتكلفة في التنقل للمشاركة بها.

6. تحفيز الشباب والإستفادة من إضافتهم الفريدة للمشاركة في صياغة وتنفيذ الأجندة التنموية المحلية في المدينة او المحافظة.

7. تحقيق فاعلية أكبر لحضور الشباب في مدنها عبر تمكين حقيقي لهم وخوضهم غمار تجربة العمل العام والمشاركة بأطر تضمن لهم شراكة حقيقية في صنع القرار وتنفيذه ومراقبته.



إن صياغة سياسة شبابية على المستوى الوطني كخطوة ارتكازية لتطوير استراتيجيات شبابية يلزمه وجود إرادة سياسية حقيقية تضمن الدعم المطلوب لتطوير وتنفيذ المشروع وما يتبعها من ضرورة تحقيق شراكة حقيقية بين مؤسسات الإدارة والحكم المحلي (البلديات، مديريات الوزارات على المستوى المحلي، مؤسسات المجتمع المدني... الخ) في تطوير الإستراتيجية المحلية للشباب في ضوء السياسة الوطنية للشباب المتفق عليها وطنياً وبشراكة كاملة مع الشباب.

إن السياسة العامة للشباب يجب ان تصاغ بحوار وطني شبابي جامع يأخذ بالإعتبار رسم الخطوط العريضة لما ترنو الدولة لتحقيقه من نهضة شبابية شاملة وأن تتضمن مؤشرات لقياس ورصد الأداء. ومن الضروري ان تأتي السياسة الوطنية للشباب كنتويج عبر قطاعي ينسق فيما بين الإستراتيجيات الموجودة في مختلف القطاعات ويسلط الضوء على الإستثمار في الشباب في كافة البرامج الوطنية الأخرى، فمن نافل القول هنا ان نذكر بأن الشأن الشبابي لا يمكن أن تضطلع به جهة واحدة أياً كانت، فالحاجة هي لتنسيق الجهود المختلفة بقلب واحد يضمن تناسق العمل.

## عشرة عناصر لنجاح الإستراتيجيات الشبابية على المستوى المحلي:

إن كان في الحقيقة لا يوجد وصفة واحدة لضمان نجاح الإستراتيجيات المحلية فهي معتمدة على عوامل تختلف باختلاف الدولة، إلا انه يمكنني أن أذكر عشرة عناصر من شأنها تقدم نموذج عصري متماسك لمشاركة الشباب في إستراتيجيات على مستوى مدنها:

1. الإستراتيجية الشبابية هي مشروع وعليه فالحاجة لوجود مدير/ة مشروع وفريق يتولى الإجراءات الإدارية تمثل وصفاً فعالة لضمانة انسيابية العمل واستمرارية التنسيق.
2. هيئة استشارية شبابية تعمل بالتوازي مع المجلس المحلي ولديها ممثلين يشاركون المجلس المحلي صياغة القرارات ويعكس رؤية الشباب للقضايا المختلفة خصوصاً القضايا التي تمسهم.
3. تعاون عبر قطاعي بين الجهات المختلفة في المدينة (بافتراض وجود مجلس بلدي يضم إضافة الى الممثلين المنتخبين عن المدينة مدراء ومسؤولي الدوائر المختلفة الحكومية والأهلية) وهو ما يسمى في بعض البلدان المجلس الاستشاري للمحافظة.
4. خطة عمل من إدارة الشباب في المدينة تبنى بناءً على دراسة وافية لحاجات الشباب في المدينة. وفي هذا الإطار فمن الممكن البدء بمسح عام يعطي حقائق رقمية لإتجاهات الشباب في المدينة وواقعة ويمهد لتحليل نوعي لفهم أعمق لخصائص الشباب وممارساته والتحديات التي يواجهها. نتيجة هذا البحث يجب أن ينتج عنها برنامج عمل مدروس يتضمن برامج وأنشطة استجابة لواقع شباب المنطقة حيث يجب ان يبنى برنامج العمل بتوافق وتوزيع أدوار ومسؤوليات بين الجهات الشريكة.
5. نافذة تمويلية لمشاريع الشباب المقدمة من المؤسسات الشبابية او المجموعات الشبابية الناشطة وأن لا تقتصر البرامج والأنشطة على ما هو وارد في النقطة (4). فأهمية مبادرة الشباب والمؤسسات الشبابية الى تنفيذ مشاريع وإمكانية تمويل هذه المشاريع من مخصصات ترصد تحت باب "نافذة تمويلية لمشاريع الشباب" من شأنه أن يضيء بعداً مهماً وديناميكياً للإستراتيجية ويضمن تحقيق ملكية جماعية من المجتمع لاستدامتها وتنفيذها.
6. بنية تحتية ملائمة للعمل الشبابي ولتنفيذ الأنشطة والبرامج الشبابية تستطيع استيعاب الحراك الشبابي الناشئ وتوفير الحاضن للبرامج والأنشطة المتنوعة.
7. الترويج الإعلامي للإستراتيجية على المستوى المحلي وتوفير المعلومات المتعلقة بكيفية مشاركة الشباب من خلال حملات تضمن التواصل مع الشباب باستخدام وسائل متنوعة وبتوظيف سليم للفرص التي يقدمها التطور التكنولوجي السريع على شبكة الإنترنت.
8. بحوث ودراسات عن الشباب تعطي صورة بحثية عن اتجاهات الشباب لما لها من أهمية في تحقيق وعي علمي مدروس يمنح الفرصة لصانع القرار والعاملين مع الشباب على صياغة برامج قريبة من واقع وتطلعات الشباب.
9. شراكة كاملة مع مؤسسات المجتمع المدني في التخطيط والتنفيذ والمراقبة. فالمجتمع المدني هو أحد وسائل وغايات التنمية المرجوة من السياسات والإستراتيجيات الشبابية.
10. تشجيع برامج التبادلات الشبابية على المستوى الوطني والأقليمي والدولي. وتكمن أهمية ذلك في توفير فرصة للتعلم واكتشاف الآخر والتعرف على الثقافات المتنوعة لما من ذلك من أثر إيجابي على شخصية الشباب وإدراكه ونمائه.



ولضمان تحقيق السياسة الوطنية للشباب أهدافها، فإنها ينبغي أن تقدم مجموعة برامج وطنية الطابع في الوقت ذاته. فإذا كانت هذه المقاربة في النظر الى السياسات الوطنية للشباب تولى تركيزاً لتطوير القدرات المحلية عبر إستراتيجيات محلية للشباب يشرف عليها وينفذها الشباب أنفسهم، إلا أنها في الوقت ذاته تشدد على أهمية وجود برامج وطنية للشباب تستهدف مجالات متنوعة تتكامل بدورها مع الإنجاز المتحقق في المدن والمحافظات لتضمن تكامل أكبر في التنمية الشبابية على المستوى الوطني.

إن هذه المداخلة توصي بالحاجة الى ضرورة إيجاد وصفا عربية لإيجاد برنامج عمل للشباب العربي في ضوء برنامج العمل العالمي للشباب ولكن مع إيلاء عناية أكبر لخصوصية المنطقة العربية وحاجاتها الملحة. وعليه فينبغي تطوير دليل عربي لتطوير سياسات وإستراتيجيات شبابية يراعي النموذج المقدم أعلاه بما لذلك من أهمية في تنمية الشباب والمجتمع المدني وإستثمار للنافذة الديمغرافية التي نعبر بها. ولكون موضوع الاجتماع يركز على برنامج العمل العالمي للشباب فينبغي التذكير هنا ان أحد الجوانب التي ما زلنا نلاحظها عند الحديث عن الاهداف الانمائية الالفية او برنامج العمل العالمي للشباب هو عدم ملامستها المباشرة لطبيعة التحديات العربية! اذ ان هنالك شعور عام ان هذه الاهداف والمؤشرات تصلح لكسب التأييد في إفريقيا وفي أماكن أخرى بالعالم التي تشكل فيها قضايا الجوع والفقر أشكال بالغة في الحدة بينما أن المنطقة العربية تأخذ فيها تحديات البطالة والتشغيل والمشاركة لشريحة الشباب شكلاً آخر يمثل إحتقناً مجتمعياً عبر عنه شباب مصر وتونس وليبيا مؤخراً بلغة جديدة ستلمي علينا دراستها ملياً وإعادة ترتيب خططنا. فالآن بالتحديد أصبح علينا كباحثين ومعنيين بهذا الشأن أن نتعلم بسرعة وأن نستجيب بسرعة أيضاً لكيفية الاستثمار في التحولات الكبرى التي يقودها الشباب العربي والسعي الى فرضها على أجندة وأدبيات العمل الشبابي الدولي.

وأختم بالتأكيد أن الضامن الوحيد والعنصر الاساس الذي من شأنه إنجاح العمل الشبابي والبرامج الشبابية التي تهدف الى تمكين الشباب هو إيجاد مناخ من الحرية والعدالة الإجتماعية فبدونها سيبقى المحيط العام للعمل الشبابي والتنموي قاصراً عن تحقيق اهدافه.

# ***Maha Fayyad Mohamed***

## **Creating Synergy for Youth Empowerment**

### **Summary**

We live in an era where youth plays a vital role in the world, whether it's a positive or negative role we are, in this paper the main factors that lead young people to contribute to the development and positive impact of the nations through creating a synergized ecosystem that will allow youngsters to utilize the resources and their own potentials for the rise of their nations.

Through a synergetic social, economic, governmental and cultural mechanism that is necessary to be built in order to reach the maximum potential and performance of youngsters and their contribution to sustainable development.

### **Creating Synergy for Youth Empowerment**

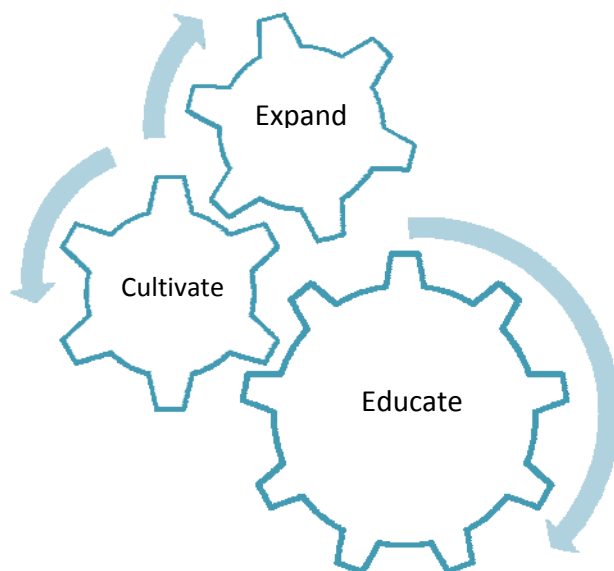
At this day and age youth play a vital role in development of nations, we are looking at youth as the prime mover of revolutions that swept ruling systems and they are the inventors of virtual communities that encompasses millions of people. I believe today's youth are the leaders not for tomorrow but for today, countries and societies are moving and tending to take youth perspectives and opinions on decision making processes, for now this movement is not fully equipped in our side of the world, the region needs to understand the needs of the current generation to be able to predict the upcoming generations most famous trends, hence cater to their needs, and this is where the essence of sustainability comes from.

Currently in Qatar, there are many institutions big and small that support many youth endeavors, through leadership development, education, community awareness and many more. Government and non-government initiatives are there to support youth. However the main concern is that these we lack synergy in all of these initiatives and between the institutions the develop them.

In a recent seminar that was organized by the GSDP, UNDP and Qatar University, discussion where the main highlight was the lack of synergy between the local government, corporate and non-corporate sectors in their quest to support youth, which create confusion, miss direction and lack of awareness in most cases.

All sectors, initiatives and opportunities need to be made in sync in order to create a sort of ecosystem to support the young individual, the ecosystem will be defined as the set of

individuals, factors, entities and instruments that are all formulated and designed to serve, support, encourage and challenge young people. The mechanism needs grooming but for the time being it will have the following purposes:



### **Educate**

The current education system need to be improved, we all know there are a lot of endeavor to evolve the education system, however, it should be compatible with the abilities and expectation of the current generation. Nowadays, teachers are competing with social network, HD visual technology, animation and all sorts of cutting edge technologies. Moreover, education institutions are not only to conduct lectures or classes but are there to groom one's skills and equip him/her with the necessary set of knowledge and competencies through a different approaches in education. One of the effective ways is open space which is what youth need at the moment, a space where they can share, discuss and most importantly innovate what they is relevant to them. These platforms can be in a form of university's clubs, communities or youth run organizations.

### **Cultivate**

Furthermore, the open space is considered a high priority because this generation is more to thinking outside the box and wants to explore his capabilities, therefore the current environment, starting from the government should engage youth in decision making as part of the sustainability aspect, when it comes to making relevant decisions, members of the young generation should be invited to be part of committees that set national strategies and policies, in order to consolidate the wide spectrum of opinions, backgrounds and age groups in the process.

Another important aspect is, there should be a defined government body or entity that should voice out young people's concerns and challenges along a side to that, gather all youth

initiative under its umbrella where young people can approach and relate to for their matters. This body or entity will act as an overview watchman for youth issues, as well as a provider for all development opportunities for youth throughout the different entities that work under it and as an incubator for talent to grow according to the countries needs and national direction of the country.

### **Expand**

The world has become a small village as people used to say, right now this is no longer the case, I can bring the whole world to my living room or class room or my work station, and by that virtual space is getting smaller and more challenges are coming in but as well more opportunities arising. I come from a multicultural environment, in AIESEC there is about more than 111 countries around the world and one of our strongest attributes is the strength of our network. This space allowed me interact and understand the different cultures, mind sets and believes all around me, it truly opened my eyes to new horizons and new perspectives, it made me realize our culture is not the only culture and our believes are not the only one in this planet, which is fascinating to not only know it but live it in a young age. Hence, allowing this generation to interact across culture is a massive part of the ecosystem. In this region traveling or studying abroad from many youngsters is impossible because of their family's approval of the idea and it goes back to culture. Families are more supportive to boys traveling than girls due to culture and traditions. On the other hand, culture or traditions should not act as a gag rather it should act as a guide to formulate or add the uniqueness to our identity, after all culture and tradition is what makes us different. However, it should not be a reason to not share it with the rest of the world, in early Islam era people used to travel all around the world for education and knowledge sharing and by this approach; we had the best scientist the world ever had. Parents should be educated and told of the importance of connecting with the world around us; moreover, institutions should be able to provide the right opportunities for this connection to happen. There is several institution that offer opportunities to young people to travel whether to study or work or promote cultural understanding, these projects should be monitored for quality and supported by the government to ensure the current generation is exposed to the right environment.

All in all, Qatar is a small country in size but massive in magnitude, all sectors should be linked together and synergize their activities and the opportunities they give to youth in order to obtain to develop a strong and cohesive ecosystem that result in the maximum impact and performance by youth and from youth. Further studies and efforts should be conducted by the strategy making bodies, experienced youth organization and relevant entities of the countries to activate this ecosystem to its ultimate power, and it should be NOW.

# ***Samah Hadid***

## **Intercultural and Intergenerational dialogue from an Asia Pacific Perspective**

### **Introduction**

Using the UN framework approach for the International Year of Youth the discussion paper will explore regional frameworks for intercultural and intergenerational dialogue; outline the gaps, challenges and opportunities for initiatives in the Asia Pacific region in particular and internationally.

The aim of this discussion paper is to outline regional experiences of successful youth participation models and intercultural dialogue frameworks. These can be used for future design of youth participation policies and programs.

### **Challenges**

- Present challenges facing young people can be broad ranging and common across the age group, while other challenges are particular to certain categories of young people. Issues of poverty, youth unemployment, marginalization and lack of youth participation opportunities are widespread and yet also severely felt by young people in developing countries. These challenges include:
- Demographic changes, i.e. aging societies , lower birth rates, family structures have impacted on the social , economic and cultural conditions underpinning young people's lives.
- 85 per cent of young people live in developing countries, with 60 per cent of these in Asia. The largest proportion of the world's poorest youth can be found in South Asia, which accounts for 4 out of every 10 young people living on less than US\$ 1 or US\$ 2 a day.<sup>i</sup>
- Youth unemployment stood at 13 percent globally at the end of 2009, equaling 81 million young people. More than 36.4 million of this 15-24 year-olds were in Asia Pacific. The youth unemployment rate in South – East Asia and the Pacific is projected to peak to 14.6 per cent in 2011<sup>ii</sup>.
- The lack of institutional avenues and spaces for young people limit their participation. This is reflected on a regional level in Asia Pacific in its lack of regional institutional mechanisms fostering youth participation.
- A clear challenge within the process of youth participation and development is reaching young people from vulnerable backgrounds and communities. These groups

can include but are not limited to minority, indigenous, rural and migrant youth among others. Areas of vulnerability vary from country to country.

### **Intergenerational dialogue**

Adult- youth partnerships need to encompass different modes of attitudes and behavior. This would mean breaking down traditional communication barriers and power dynamics.

Youth-Adult Partnership can be defined in various ways, involving different principles including:

- Sharing decision making power equally
- Youth along with adults engage in planning, implementing, and evaluating work and programs related to present and future challenges
- Combines skills and insights of young people with experience and knowledge of adults
- Adult and youth partnerships meet the development needs of young people while investing in their leadership skills, equipping them for future leadership roles.
- It allows for meaningful dialogue between adults and young people
- An effective and meaningful adult – youth partnership requires investment in the skills and development of young people. This involves mentorship and training provided to young people.

### **Intercultural dialogue**

Intercultural dialogue occurs between and within cultures, faiths and ethnic communities. The meaningful exchange of ideas and attitudes has social benefits including sustaining cohesive and harmonious societies, and is an important step in conflict prevention.

Young people seem to be leading initiatives based on intercultural learning and dialogue. This is supported by research that indicates young people are far more accommodating of cultural diversity and different cultural ideas and beliefs <sup>iii</sup> However challenges of racism and xenophobia still cripple social and racial relations in numerous countries to varying degrees. This occurs and has effects across generations.

As it is reflected in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action national and international dialogue amongst youth is crucial in building intercultural respect and understanding<sup>iv</sup>. Building networks among young people and different youth groups is also key in the elimination of racism, xenophobia and intolerance.

Information communication technology (ICT) has opened up new opportunities for intercultural and even intergenerational dialogue. The possibilities for non traditional forms of communication and global connectivity are very apparent. This can be tapped into by

organizations in reaching young people that are otherwise difficult to engage due to geography or separation from mainstream communities.

ICT has created a digital culture that encompasses dialogue on politics, social commentary, arts, music and plethora of other interests.

Social networking and media is a significant part of the ICT phenomenon. One does run the risk however of over estimating the role that social networking and media plays in creating positive change. It is however important to acknowledge that these spaces have become a frequent and important site of youth engagement and participation. It also has to be highlighted that a significant byproduct of social networking is dialogue created across cultures and in part across generations.

### **Regional frameworks for intercultural & intergenerational dialogue**

Various examples exist of relevant effective partnerships aimed at promoting intercultural dialogue among young people. These examples can be replicated across regions and explored when designing youth participation models.

- Oxfam International's Youth Partnerships program is an effective model of youth engagement. It has created linkages across developing and developed countries alike. This Australian funded program brings together 300 young people from 98 countries over a three year period promoting participation in annual forums, meeting groups and projects. Throughout the three year cycle, the OIYP program focuses on building skills and knowledge, supporting action and facilitating networking. In addition to networks amongst Action Partners, members of OIYP are given opportunities to network and form partnerships with many other organizations and communities around the world to support them in their work.
- Strong regional frameworks for intercultural and intergenerational dialogue exist for the European region. Intercultural dialogue is a cross cutting theme for the Council of Europe and the European Commission. An effective framework is the Council of Europe – European Union Youth Partnership Programme on Euro-Mediterranean co-operation, Human Rights Education and Intercultural Dialogue.<sup>v</sup>
  - Part of this framework is the important partnership with the Anna Lindh Foundation. The Anna Lindh Foundation supports the activities of the Euro-Mediterranean Region , the primary focus in is in fields human and social dialogue: Education and Youth; Culture and Arts; Peace and Co-existence; Values, Religion and Spirituality; Cities and Migration; Media.
- European Youth forum is a regional body of national youth councils and International Youth Organizations from across Europe. The EYF works with European Institutions, the Council of Europe and the United Nations in advocating on the needs and interests of young people.

When exploring the Asia-Pacific region, there appears a gap in regional frameworks fostering youth participation, intercultural and inter-generational dialogue. On a regional level in Asia and the Pacific there are various individual and ad hoc bodies working in part on intercultural dialogue across generations and youth participation. These programs exist within regional multilateral bodies on a formal or informal basis. They include:

### **ASEAN Youth**

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations promotes regional peace and stability, as well as active collaboration and mutual assistance on matters of common interest in the economic, social, cultural, technical, scientific and administrative fields. It has over the years promoted youth participation in institutional settings. Through Youth@ASEAN, an online portal for youth of ASEAN, young people in the region can interact and exchange information and knowledge. The primary purpose of Youth@ASEAN is to create meaningful networks and partnerships.

### **ASEM Youth Dialogue**

The Asia-Europe Foundation promotes greater mutual understanding between Asia and Europe through intellectual, cultural and people-to-people exchanges. Through ASEF, civil society concerns are included as a vital component of deliberations of the ASEM.

The annual ASEM Youth Dialogue provides a valuable channel through which youth in Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) countries can exchange perspectives on priority themes in the ASEM agenda. The focus is on the role and participatory nature of youth in the ASEM process, particularly with regard to providing solutions to identified common challenges.<sup>vi</sup> ASEM Dialogues create and foster networks among young people by encouraging a common vision.

### **Commonwealth Youth Programme**

CYP works to engage and empower young people (ages 15-29) to enhance their contribution to development in commonwealth countries. They do this by creating partnerships with young people, governments and other key stakeholders. It sits within The Commonwealth, a voluntary association of 54 countries that work together towards for shared goals in democracy and development. The Commonwealth Youth Caucus leads a network of young people which spreads across all 53 countries of the Commonwealth. There are five members of this caucus - the Pan-Commonwealth Youth Representative and representatives from the regions of Africa, the Caribbean, Asia and the South Pacific.



### **Case study - Indigenous youth: intercultural and intergenerational dialogue in practice**

Indigenous youth represent 50 to 70% of global indigenous populations; they play an important role in cultural identity formation and sustainability of cultural practices and traditions in indigenous communities.

Successful cross -generational partnerships and dialogue can exist in certain indigenous communities. In the case of Native Americans in the United States and in Latin America there exist effective examples of inter-generational communication that could provide a model for other cultural contexts and international decision making processes concerning adult – youth partnerships.

In Australia the National Indigenous Representative Body is a decision making body for indigenous Australians. It plays a critical role in supporting inter-generational dialogue among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. One of its principles is building a shared journey and vision between generations to ensure that a future plan is developed. It also aims to nurture future Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership. It promotes dialogue and active participation and investment of young people in the body. The goal of this kind of intergenerational dialogue is to ensure a lasting legacy for future generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The United Nations Global forum of indigenous peoples and the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues promote the active participation of indigenous young people. They have provided platforms and spaces for intergenerational dialogue and partnerships. Indigenous youth participate actively in many regional and international forums with their input ranging widely from human rights mechanisms, climate change mitigation and adaptation processes, to cultural preservation consultations. The United Nations Indigenous Youth Caucus has been actively contributing to the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues with their youth perspective and clear and tangible recommendations. The IYC comprises indigenous young people from various states, organizations, and socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.

However, the number of indigenous youth representatives present in international occasion is still limited. The barriers include financial limitations or limited seats, where youth representatives are often not given the priority. Other barriers include the denial of entry visas due political interference. Many indigenous youth are excluded from international conferences, especially those hosted by or in the United Nations Headquarters, due to their nationality or political orientation.

Access to information is a key factor determining indigenous youth's participation in decision-making. Rights education is another key area of improvement. Policies related to indigenous young people, such as education, vocational training, cultural survival and

environmental protection are often made by senior officers without input from indigenous youth for their opinions.

The indigenous youth participation example does however provide insight into best practice initiatives in the way of intergenerational and intercultural dialogue. This may warrant further research into indigenous practices in these countries. The approaches of indigenous youth participation in the UN system can always be improved but it does provide for a good practice model of youth participation that can be replicated in other areas of the UN system.

### **Recommendations**

**These recommendations apply to the United Nations system, civil society organizations and research institutes:**

#### **In the area of youth participation:**

- Organizations are encouraged to ensure representation of minority and marginalized young people in decisions about our issues, including through supporting representative bodies
- UN system to encourage youth participation in regional and international fora and processes, as well as capacity-building and training programs hosted by UN agencies
- Encourage member states to assist and implement youth parliaments within their countries
- Encourage youth sector and organizations to create greater regional coordination of youth groups and bodies
- Organizations should incorporate ICT's in youth participation programs and strategies. Allow young people to actively participate in the design for digital spaces that meet their needs and interests.

#### **In the area of intercultural dialogue :**

- Greater support and investment in intercultural and inter – generational dialogue is required for the Asia and the Pacific region
  - Investing in stronger institutional frameworks in existing organizations and bodies across the region is needed
- Support existing youth led and driven initiatives aimed at intercultural understanding and
- dialogue on regional and international levels
- Greater coordination of existing intercultural programs and youth based groups is needed on a regional level across the globe.

- UN system should encourage education systems and institutions to explore ways of incorporating intercultural learning into curricula, in pre-school, school and tertiary curricula, including out-of-school and non-formal education programmes
- Strengthening non formal education programmes and their commitment to human rights principles, intercultural learning and dialogue
- Youth organizations to support and implement public formal and non-formal education programs designed to promote respect for cultural diversity
- Seek youth participation in the development of regional and international strategies and frameworks aimed at eliminating racism, xenophobia and intolerance
- Support research and academic inquiry into identity formation and intercultural dialogue models for young people in the 21<sup>st</sup> century context
- Support arts projects and community cultural development which allow for the joint participation of adult and young people.

**In the area of intergenerational dialogue organizations are encouraged to:**

- Develop consultative mechanisms, advisory bodies including both young people and adults. These advisory bodies allow adults and young people to work together in planning, implementing, and evaluating relevant work and programs
- Encourage spaces and programs that are aimed at skills sharing and skills transfer between adults and young people in relevant areas of work
- Encourage mentorship programs that allow adults to support young people in professional endeavours, community and or volunteer work

**In the area of youth unemployment member states are encouraged to**

- Promote the entrepreneurial spirit amongst youth in society including encouraging financial and governmental institutions to provide long-term loans for young people to establish small and medium businesses that develop the economy on the long-run.
- Provide more support to the on-going training programs, and establish similar approaches in countries where training programs do not exist.
- Ensure that youth employment measures and successes are positive and efficient in the long-term and that jobs created and targeted at youth are in line with principles for sustainable development.
- Ensure the active participation and consultation of young people in design and implementation of employment strategies.

- i <http://www.unfpa.org/public/lang/en/home/adolescents> [http://www.ilo.org/asia/info/public/pr/lang--en/WCMS\\_143339/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/asia/info/public/pr/lang--en/WCMS_143339/index.htm) [www.interculturaldialogue.eu/web/files/67/en/CP-Neisse-d02.doc](http://www.interculturaldialogue.eu/web/files/67/en/CP-Neisse-d02.doc)
- ii <http://www.un.org/durbanreview2009/ddpa.shtml> [http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-](http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/euromed/index)
- iii [partnership/euromed/index](http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/euromed/index)
- iv [http://www.unfpa.org/webdav/site/global/shared/documents/publications/2007/framework\\_youth.pdf](http://www.unfpa.org/webdav/site/global/shared/documents/publications/2007/framework_youth.pdf)
- v [http://www.asef.org/index.php?option=com\\_programme&task=view&id=29&Itemid=162](http://www.asef.org/index.php?option=com_programme&task=view&id=29&Itemid=162)
- vi

# *Leng Leng Thang*

## **Promoting intergenerational understanding between the young and old: the case of Singapore**

### **Introduction**

Ask a youth what comes to your mind when you think of the old and young generations, chances are the term 'generation gap' will be one common association. There is little doubt that generational segregation has increasingly become a norm in today's modern industrialized societies. The social structuring of age has contributed to an extent the gap among generations. One important dimension of age segregation is 'institutional age segregation' where different age groups are isolated from the socially constructed division according to chronological age, such as the channeling of the young into day care and schools and expecting seniors to live separately in age-homogenous retirement communities. Among the various social institutions, the family is probably the only institution that is 'truly age integrated' (Hagestad and Uhlenber, 2005, 2006), however, the advent of nuclear families, more instances of divorces, singlehood, migration and so forth have increasingly limited the capacity of the family to provide cross-age understanding and connections.

In fact, we can no more assume that strong bonding will certainly exist between the generations even when three generations live under the same roof. With different pace of life and activities, it is common for different generations to live in so-called 'separate islands of activity' even when they are living in the same household. Grandparents who are alone the whole day may feel isolated in a three-generational household; even when their children and grandchildren are at home in the evening, they are likely to be tucked away in their own rooms facing their own TVs and computer screens.

Age segregation has various undesirable consequences, besides producing ageism which leads to the discrimination of young people against the old, it also reinforces the negative stereotype of the young among the old. Further more, social support network within the family as well as society is expected to weaken when horizontal connections between the same age peers are not enriched and extended by vertical connections across different ages. As the intergenerational equity conflicts of the 1980s and the 1990s in the U.S. have shown, generation gap threatens social cohesion and will lead to tensions emphasizing competition of the generations for limited resources and the fear of an intergenerational war. The gulf between the generations fear deepening with changing social patterns and demographic trends and imply an urgent need for deliberate program and policy efforts to address the disengagements of the generations.

How then, can intergenerational understanding be promoted to bridge the generation gap and enhance generational re-engagement in the family, community and the wider society? The concept of intergenerational programs as deliberate attempts to connect the old and young through program activities have shown to produce desirable outcome and increasingly recognized as an effective tool to close the generation gap (Newman et.al., 1997). This paper will discuss issues of intergenerational understanding and dialogue through the intergenerational initiatives with a focus on Singapore - an economically advanced city-state located in Southeast Asia confronted with rapid demographic transition and significant changes in household and social patterns. With a family-centric policy, the national and community efforts to promote intergenerational connection in Singapore show relevance for the discussion of policies and practice in the area. In the following, I will begin with a brief discussion on changing family trends in Singapore before moving on to delineate the development of efforts to promote intergenerational understanding on the national level. Then a discussion of some of the intergenerational initiatives from the educational institutions will follow before the paper concludes with policy recommendations for mutual understanding across generations on the local and national levels.

### **Changing family trends in Singapore**

As a country with strong emphasis on the family as the basic building block of society and the family as the first line of care and support for its members, families in Singapore remain strong, with 96% of those surveyed agreeing that they have a closely-knitted family<sup>i</sup>. However, demographic and social changes are affecting family trends in Singapore. Although Singapore has expanded its population rapidly to 5 million in 2010, up from 4 million in 2000, much of the growth has occurred due to migration influx. Like most advanced countries and economically advancing nations, Singapore is also faced with aging demography attributed by an increase in longevity and a drastic fall in birth rate. Singapore is one of the countries with the fastest rate of aging, while the proportion of those 65 years and above reached 8 percent only in 1998, it is expected to increase to about 19 percent by 2030, recording a phenomenal growth rate of 3.1 percent (DOS 2002). In 2010, as life expectancy has risen to a high of 83.7 for female and 79 for male, birth rate has fallen to a new low of 1.16<sup>ii</sup>. Delay in marriages and a rise in singlehood continue to be two important factors affecting birth rate; with the percentage of Singaporeans remaining single between 40-44 years old rising from 11% in 1990 to 17% in 2005 for men and 10% to 15% for women.

The changing demographic trends have intersected with changes in household and social patterns to affect family trends. With the norm in nuclear households, the number of members per household has shrunk from 4.9 in 1980 to 3.5 in 2010. An increasing proportion of households have members who are at least 65 years old, a rise from 21% in 2000 to 24% in 2010; and households comprising only of older members have increased

from 2.7% to 4.6% in the same period<sup>iii</sup> The trends in household size and composition imply that although the older generation has increased in number over the years, less younger members are living together with their grandparents, coupled with institutional segregation, the young are connecting less with the older population.

### **National efforts to promote intergenerational bonding**

With the family as the 'only truly integrated' social institution, it is inevitable for efforts to promote intergenerational bonding to bring focus on intergenerational relations within the familial context. In Singapore, the setting up of the taskforce to promote grandparenting and intergenerational bonding in July 2002 by the Singapore Ministry of Community Development (now expanded as the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports) could be regarded as the starting point of state effort to promote intergenerational initiatives in Singapore. However, to be more concise, developments in initiatives to promote intergenerational bonding have begun earlier as evidenced through various ground-up initiatives, as well as state policies and measures in promoting and ensuring three-generational mutual support.

In the four years where the taskforce was in existence, it has played instrumental role in raising awareness of the needs and benefits of promoting intergenerational bonding in the family and community. With the aim of strengthening intergenerational relationships in the family, it has promoted the widespread celebration of Grandparents' Day slated on every fourth Sunday of November dedicated to recognize the contributions of grandparents in the family. In 2005, it adopting the theme "Bonding Generations, Binding Families" in the National Family Week, and organized a Gen3 Fund Inter-School Competition as part of the activities of the National Family Week. The Gen3 Fund provided funding to the proposed intergenerational projects selected for implementation and judged according to the extent they had achieve the objectives of bonding generations and binding families. The taskforce also provided funding to promote intergenerational activities in the community and has attracted a diverse variety of intergenerational programs which promoted intergenerational understanding through learning and fun activities.

By 2005, the state appeared ready to move on to an expanded platform in intergenerational bonding as the taskforce was restructured and renamed as "G-Connect: Strengthening the intergenerational bond" in the hope to appeal to the wider younger generations in fostering generational cohesion. On the ground, the intergenerational perspective has gradually gained recognition across services, for example, RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program) initiated the RSVP Intergenerational Strategy Committee in 2003 and gathered key leaders from children, youth and aging services to explore the intergenerational strategy in Singapore society, and the Association of Early Childhood Educators has also taken on the theme of developing an inclusive society during its 2005 annual seminar, in which the workshop to promote intergenerational programs in pre-school settings had received

enthusiastic attention. However, from 2006, state interest to further intergenerational initiatives on a wider platform changed to be subsumed under the rubric of active aging, and avenues for funding of intergenerational initiatives instead became available largely under the newly set up Golden Opportunities Fund (GO! Fund) for the promoting of active aging. The fund came to be under the management of the Council for Third Age (C3A) when the Council was set up in 2007. For youth interested in initiating community projects that may be intergenerational in nature, funding support could be obtained from National Youth Council.

The C3A soon recognizes the significance of intergenerational solidarity in active aging and became the main co-organizer of the Fourth International Conference of the Consortium for Intergenerational Programs (ICIP) in April 2010. The conference opened up new areas of intergenerational practice by including the dimension of workplace - on top of family and community - in intergenerational solidarity; this further expanded the scope of the intergenerational perspective and alerted corporations to realize the need to seriously work towards an intergenerational workforce in an aging society. The ICIP4 conference in 2010 has set the stage for new ideas and scope in intergenerational initiatives in the country to challenge the generation gap.

### **Generational bonding initiatives**

To effectively promote mutual understanding across generations, it is important to create opportunities for the generations to meet and interact. Generally, such initiatives are classified according to the direction of the service (McCrea and Smith, 1997:81) such as the following that exist in Singapore:

- initiatives from the young where youth/children provide a service for the elderly, such as school visits to old folks' homes to serve as volunteers and provide companionship to the older residents, and intergenerational projects for school children and youth to initiate understanding of the older generation.
- initiatives from older persons, such as projects by the RSVP to provide mentoring program to latchkey children after school and host programs for young international students, and intergenerational table tennis program initiated by SAGE (Singapore Action Group of Elders) (Ng, 2005).
- age-integrated centers of which the two notable age-integrated centers in Singapore are the Ayer Rajah Day Care Centre in operation since 1986 offering child care and day services for elderly, and the Tampines 3-in-1 Family Center set up since 1995 where childcare, after school care and day care service for elderly are purposefully co-located within close proximity to enhance intergenerational contacts (Fong-Chong, 2003). The co-location of services is regarded as an effective model of intergenerational initiatives as



it creates opportunities for more spontaneous interaction resembling intergenerational relations within the family (Thang, 2001; Hayer, 2003).

Another way of classifications is to categorize them according to Kaplan's (2002) "depth of engagement scale. The framework consists of a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 refers to very limited contact, and usually no actual meeting of generations. The highest level of 7 is where intergenerational engagement takes places as a function of the way community settings are planned and established. Such a site, community or society reflects values of intergenerational reciprocity and interdependence through social norms, institutional policies and priorities (Kaplan, 2002). This framework helps towards evaluating whether a program has achieved its goal of age integration, this means that co-location of services are important as the first step towards creating opportunities for interaction, but the policy of the institutions, intergenerational programs organized for the centres and the values and goals set by the institutions will all need to be aligned for a deeper level of intergenerational engagement to occur.

Among the social institutions, educational institutions where young people spend most of their time outside the family are appropriate sites for intergenerational initiatives. However, compared to the U.S., Europe, Japan and other countries where examples of multi-purpose schools providing for both the young and the old are available, such attempts are considerably rare in Singapore schools, except for those which have connected with RSVP which organizes mentoring program as a part of after-school care. The following two examples of intergenerational initiatives from/for the youth are organized through educational institutions are examples of some existing efforts to promote cross-generational understanding.

#### *Enhancing intergenerational understanding through Community Involvement Program (CIP)*

For many youth, Community Involvement Program (CIP) established since 1978 by the Ministry of Education aiming to nurture a sense of social responsibility and inculcate among the youth a volunteer spirit to better the lives of community is significant as a first introduction to community work and volunteering. Community service at old age institutions is one common activity, however, the extent to which intergenerational understanding is fostered through such activities depends on how well the activity is organized beforehand. Some have criticized the few numbers of required hours (only six hours a year) which may reinforce the negative stereotypes of old age instead of closing the generation gap.

Nevertheless, there are examples of CIP which have yielded desirable outcomes. One promising project is the SPHERE project, acronym for "Students, Singapore Pools and HDB Enriching and Reaching out to the Elderly", a community project began since 2002, supported by Singapore Pools<sup>iv</sup>, the Housing Development Board (HDB) and the Ministry of

Education. The SPHERE project promotes intergenerational interaction with its objective of developing the volunteerism spirit among the younger generation through care for the elderly; encourages community bonding and to bridge the gap between young and old Singaporeans through social activities to promote better understanding and sharing of experience among them. Fifty four schools participated in the project by sending their students to organize community activities for older residents living in selected HDB rental apartments and Studio apartment blocks<sup>v</sup>.

My observation of a SPHERE project in a rental apartment block for low income persons reveals the problems and potential of intergenerational interaction in the context of Singapore. First, as the student participants (14-15 years old) in the particular project were typical of youths from middle-class, most could not speak Chinese dialects and found difficulty in communicating with the older residents.<sup>vi</sup> Many also experienced “culture shock” during their first visit to the homes of low-income older residents and it was common for their first meeting to be happening silence without any conversation due to the language barriers. As the project requires each student to visit the older residents at least three times in the semester, after the first awkward meeting, students decided to organize activities for the group of residents instead. Consequently, through the fun activities organized for the residents and frequent contacts, friendship has developed among some of them even when they could not communicate fully. In addition to the fostering of cross-generational friendship and developing of the volunteer spirit, the intergenerational contact promotes intergenerational ties within the family as contacts with older persons have aroused the students’ curiosity with their own grandparents and the willingness to communicate more with them. For many of these students, they might had little prior communication with their own grandparents nor any interest to know more about them, especially when most live in nuclear family environment.

*Strengthening intergenerational family relationships through an intergenerational service learning module among college students*

In the recent years, the universities in Singapore have begun to offer service learning as a module for students. This section examines through one such service learning elective module which adopted the intergenerational perspective. Through observations, small scale survey and analysis of the texts, including reflection journals and assignments, students revealed how they have changed in their understanding of the older generations as a result of the learning experience.

The module titled “Community Service and Social Action” offered in semester 1 (August to December) 2008 is an elective course offered at a local university popular among the students and is often fully subscribed. In emphasizing intergenerational service-learning in the course for that particular semester, I incorporated an examination of service learning in a life-course perspective and a study of the development and theoretical frameworks of the

intergenerational field internationally and locally. Field visits to a community service agency and an age-integrated institution were included as part of the learning outside the classroom. As part of the assessment, students had to complete a team project which included the development of a proposal of intergenerational project, project design, execution of the project, evaluation and a final report.

For the team projects, the 31 students ranging from 19 to 24 years old were divided into seven project groups. Participants in the team projects varied in their combination of the generations, the younger generations consisted of pre-school children, primary or secondary students in different projects; and older persons came from one of the following category depending on the projects: grandparents of the pre-school children, older persons from the community, residents from old-age home, healthy seniors from RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program) or parents. Almost all the projects succeeded in promoting intergenerational understanding among the older and younger participants by the end of the project. An exceptionally successful project is one titled 'Three days with Molly' where a group of 8 twelve year old students spent three days with 5 older volunteers and embarked on common activities jointly, such as art and craft projects, a skit on student lives in the past and present, discussing about things both generations like as youth, and the students teaching the older volunteers to use online social media. All the participants came away with the satisfaction of mutual learning and understanding.

In terms of the impact of the project on intergenerational understanding and family relationships, the study shows the course to have influenced students to constantly reflect upon their familial relationships with their grandparents as well as their past experience in community work involving older persons. Many discovered with regrets that they had not noticed the significance of their grandparents in their own life, and had taken them for granted. They found the need for intergenerational relationship within the family to change for the better.

Some are more proactive, such as a Chinese female student who "began to develop ideas on how I may best overcome family barriers and on how to bind my family together in a more cohesive spirit. "... I started to act out my ideas on family cohesiveness by embarking on a project to pen a book about my grandfather's life... this will allow me to be a medium in which I can transmit my grandfather's values and beliefs to the rest of my family and to our future generations. I am also compelled to be a more filial granddaughter." Another Chinese female student wrote that during the execution of the project "A day with Grans" where grandparents joined their grandchildren in daily kindergarten activities for a few days, she recalled the time when she was in kindergarten. Like many other children, she was looked after by her grandmother at that time but she found that even with that close contact, she was actually not so close to her. She realized the need for both generations to change the form of interaction, where the connection should not be limited to fulfilling daily needs, such as to define grandparents' roles as functional in feeding the grandchildren and brining her to

school, but they also the need to have fun together. The student's reflection upon her relationship with her grandmother highlighted the over reliance on grandparents for instrumental roles in Singapore families, while neglecting the fostering of relationships for deeper intergenerational understanding through other activities such as to have leisure and fun time together.

With the program, the students also found that they have changed to form more positive perceptions on older persons, and many felt a sense of victory over breaking their perceived distance with older persons through the field trip where they visited and interact with older residents living in an old-age home. One Chinese female student interacted with an older men and was delighted that although he seemed reluctant to talk at first, he soon opened up to tell her about his younger life, and even "began to share with me his favorite songs and movie stars." Another Chinese female student confessed that she was afraid to approach the older persons at first, "I felt reluctant to even just stand beside them." She finally picked up the courage to converse with them, and as she was able to speak the Cantonese dialect, she was soon chatting with older persons who could speak Cantonese easily and learnt about their life stories.

Students in the course shows that although they may have come to the course with little understanding and awareness of the older generations around them, intergenerational understanding could be fostered with opportunities to interact and awareness through learning about the older generations. Consequently, many felt that as a result of the experience, they have 'discovered' the existence of the older generation around them, this includes a renewed interest about their own grandparents and the desire to understand them, a more realistic perception of old age, and an awareness on life course perspective, where the elderly represents picture of themselves in the future.

### **Conclusion: Summary discussion and Recommendations**

As the case examples on intergenerational initiatives in educational setting have shown, for intergenerational dialogue to happen, it is crucial to create opportunities for intergenerational interaction. Recently, more intergenerational activities have been organized specifically to promote grandparent-grandchildren bonding, such as the inter-generational interest groups set up by the People's Association since 2008. These interest groups cater to the mutual interests of three generations, and thus far have included groups such as parings of grandparent-grandchildren in a team to cook and share recipes, and a family yoga club where grandparents learn yoga together with link parents and grandchildren (The Straits Times, 26 October 2009). The National Library Board's project to promote intergenerational understanding - consisting the "Letters from grandma and grandpa" and "Letters to my grandpa/grandma" invited entries of heartwarming letters to foster a better appreciation of each other. The selected letters were published into books with four languages<sup>vii</sup>. Although not all intergenerational initiatives may achieve the goal of intergenerational understanding

and dialogue, but the opportunities to connect coupled with deliberate efforts through good planning will bear positive outcome.

Even when such activities may not bring together their own grandparents, they play a role in prompting young people to re-think about their relationships with their grandparents and other older relatives, and encourage them to turn their attention to building family bonding and understanding. These intergenerational activities also show that in Singapore, although many young people could recount that they were taken care of by their grandparents usually before they entered primary school, a relatively common childcare arrangement with the norm of dual working couples, grandparents are emphasized for providing instrumental role in caring, bathing and providing food for their grandchildren, and to a lesser extent on communication between generations. The overwhelm focus on instrumental care may be due to the fact that this generation of grandparents are still lesser educated on the whole, many may still be speaking only in Chinese dialects (in the case of Chinese grandparents), they also reflect the need for families to create opportunities for intergenerational understanding.

In the recent years, in attempts to resolve the problem of language barriers faced in intergenerational interaction, there are already in place various initiatives in community services for senior volunteers who are bilingual in English/Mandarin and dialects to provide basic dialect training to youths from schools and institutions. Youths have also shown to express their creativity in exploring ways for mutual understanding, for examples, the annual Youth service– learning awards often have entries which feature intergenerational engagements as an objective.

The 2009 Gold Award under the Secondary level won by Raffles Institution featured creative use of the new media to bridge the generation gap where youth captured the true life stories of elderly on video clips, thereby promoting an in depth understanding on aging and aged from the eyes of youth<sup>viii</sup>.

The following are some recommendations to promote intergenerational understanding on local/national levels:

- To include courses on understanding across the life course in school curriculum at all levels so as to increase awareness of the need for generational understanding and bonding among the youth.
- To create opportunities for intergenerational engagement through intergenerational initiatives that promotes mutual understanding. This includes encouraging schools to open up for interaction with other generations in the community, enhance the teachers' knowledge on connecting youth with other generations for intergenerational understanding through the incorporation of an intergenerational perspective in teachers' training, and include intergenerational service learning in the curriculum.

- To create intergenerational interactive space in the public domain, such as to design playgrounds alongside exercising grounds for older adults so that different ends of generations have opportunity to meet in the community.
- To provide incentives for private spaces, such as retirement community, nursing homes, childcare centres to attract other generations to its compound. This may include building a children's library inside a retirement community, a playground in the open compound of nursing home, and regular visits from seniors clubs to childcare centres for concerts, joint handicraft activities and others. The older persons should be recognized for their potential in bridging the generations through their volunteer efforts, such as mentoring.
- Community services among youth to older generations should include presentations about youth culture and perceptions to enhance understanding of differences and similarities across age.

For intergenerational dialogue to flow more readily, we should work towards a holistic approach to promote an environment that the generations can integrate seamlessly. For example, there must be space conducive for engagements, design that integrate and not segregate different generations in the same space, and programs and policies that aim at breaking institutional isolation in favor of dialogues across the generations. These efforts should synergize and move in concerted direction towards an age-integrated society where intergenerational interaction is natural across the domains of family, community and the workplace.

## **References**

- Department of Statistics (DOS) (2002a). *Singapore 2005 Statistical highlights*, Singapore: Department of Statistics.
- Fong-Chong, A. (2003). Tampines 3-in-1 Family Centre, Singapore. *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships* 1:1 (169-172).
- Hagestad, G. O. and Uhlenberg, P. (2005). The Social Separation of Old and Young: A Root of Ageism. *Journal of Social Issues* 61:2 (343-360).
- Hagestad, G. O. and Uhlenberg, P. (2006). Should We Be Concerned About Age Segregation? Some Theoretical and Empirical Explorations. *Research on Aging* 28:6 (638-653).
- Hayes, C.L. (2003). An observational study in developing an intergenerational shared site program: Challenges and insights. *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships* 1:1 (113-132).

Kaplan, M. (2002). Intergenerational programs in schools: Considerations of form and function. *International Review of Education* 48:4 (305-334).

McCrea, J.M. and Smith, T.B. (1997). Types and models of intergenerational programs. In Newman, S., Ward, C.R., Smith, T.B., & Wilson, J. (1997). *Intergenerational programs: past, present and future*. Bristol, PA: Taylor & Francis.

Ng, Jarain. (2005). Promoting Intergenerational Relationships through Table Tennis. *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships* 3:1 (89-92).

Thang, L.L. (2001). *Generations in touch: Linking the old and young in a Tokyo neighborhood*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

The Straits Times. (2009). Getting young and old to bond. 26 October 2009,

---

<sup>i</sup> Unless otherwise stated, data cited in this section are taken from "State of the Family Report" published by Family Policy Unit, Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports  
<http://www.nfc.org.sg/pdf/State%20of%20the%20Family%20in%20Singapore.pdf> (accessed 20 Feb 2011)

<sup>ii</sup> <http://www.singstat.gov.sg/stats/keyind.html> (accessed 20 Feb 2011)

<sup>iii</sup> Singapore Census 2010 finds senior population increasing. [www.thegovmonitor.com/.../singapore-census-2010-finds-senior-population-increasing-46509.html](http://www.thegovmonitor.com/.../singapore-census-2010-finds-senior-population-increasing-46509.html) (accessed 20 Feb 2011)

<sup>iv</sup> Singapore Pools is a legal lottery operator incorporated by the Singapore government in 1968. It sponsors community projects with surpluses from gaming operations (<http://www.Singaporepools.com.sg>) and has committed S\$1 million to sponsor the SPHERE project (<http://www.hdb.gov.sg>).

<sup>v</sup> HDB (Housing Development Board) builds and manages the public housing in Singapore, which houses over 80% of the population. It has built six blocks of 30-year lease studio apartments for older persons 55 years and above. It also leases out rental units primarily to the low-income families.

<sup>vi</sup> In Singapore, the speak mandarin campaign started since 1978 has replaced different types of Chinese dialects with Mandarin Chinese. However, many older persons still speak their own Chinese dialects and experience difficulties in communication with the younger population who has grown up speaking only Mandarin Chinese. <sup>vii</sup> See [http://www.dearsingapore.sg/?page\\_id=253](http://www.dearsingapore.sg/?page_id=253)

<sup>viii</sup> See <http://www.nyc.gov.sg/sl/projects.htm>

# ***Donna M. Butts***

## **Existing framework for dialogue and mutual understanding across generations: family, community, educational institutions and workplace**

### **Focus**

Countries, communities and our world face unprecedented changes in demographics challenging the ways in which people of all generations interact with each other, in families and the broader community, and their ability to contribute throughout their lives. Many developed countries grapple with ageing societies while developing countries are more likely to have large younger populations restless for opportunities. This paper will explore three areas outlined by the organizers of the Expert Group Meeting on Dialogue and Mutual Understanding across Generations. These are young people, communities and educational institutions and the roles they may play in enhancing intergenerational dialogue and mutual understanding. The work place and changing family structures will be touched upon briefly. Given the bulk of my work is in the USA, the paper will reflect that limitation although I have tried to include examples learned through my work with the International Consortium for Intergenerational Programmes or ICIP.

### **Relevance**

Society is aging but our policies and institutions remain for the most part, segregated by age. Intergenerational dialogue can promote cross generational understanding and mutual respect. Young people, communities and educational institutions have been instrumental in supporting the compact between generations. Yet each can be more intentional working towards a world that values and engages all generations ultimately maximizing the use of our most precious commodity, human capital.

Young people are sometimes overlooked. However their contributions can be and are significant. Take for example the area of technology. While older adults are embracing technology at a rapid rate younger generations have never known a world without technology. A study by The Pew Charitable Trusts found that between April 2009 and May 2010, adults in the USA age 65 and over increased their use of social networking by 100%. Still this only meant growth from 13% to 26% as compared to young people age 18 to 29 who increased their use by 13% from 76% to 86%. Whether for entertainment, mobilization or socialization, young people tend to engage electronically without a second thought. They can play a vital role in mentoring and teaching elders about how to use technology helping to keep elder's skills up to date, build social cohesion and encourage dialogue.



Communities are critical in the lives of young and old. Often the middle generations have broader work and social spheres while the lives of the bookend generations, our older and younger, are more likely to be limited geographically to a narrower area or neighborhood. Communities and the social institutions within them can be welcoming to all generations when they are accessible, safe and stimulating.

Educational institutions, often thought of as the domain of the young, can establish programs that engage older adults as volunteer and are open to older, lifelong learners. Use of educational facilities by multiple generations will for the most part mean greater use of a community's physical assets and provide a natural gathering place supporting dialogue between generations.

### **Quantitative and Qualitative Evidence**

Intergenerational interaction can result in positive outcomes for all generations. While intergenerational program research and evaluation in the USA is somewhat limited by the size and scope of many of the programs, the documented outcomes are quite positive. For example:

- Children in intergenerational programs had higher personal/social developmental scores (by 11 months) than children in non-intergenerational programs.<sup>i</sup>
- Youth involved in intergenerational mentoring relationships showed increases in school attendance, positive changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors regarding substance use, as well as improvement in related life skills.<sup>ii</sup>
- Over a single school year, students with older adult tutors made over 60% more progress in learning two critical reading skills – sounding out new words and reading comprehension – than similar students without the tutors.<sup>iii</sup>
- Older adults who regularly volunteer with children burned 20% more calories per week, experienced fewer falls, were less reliant on canes and performed better on memory tests than their peers.<sup>iv</sup>
- Older adults with dementia or other cognitive impairments experience more positive affect during interactions with children than they did during non-intergenerational activities.<sup>v</sup>
- While 68% of volunteers agree that volunteering made them feel physically better<sup>vi</sup>, older adults are most likely to receive the greatest health benefits from volunteering.<sup>vii</sup>

At the same time young people in the USA are engaging in their communities and volunteering at unprecedented rates. Positive youth development has provided a framework for engaging youth as resources and true partners in civic life. More opportunities are being created for them to exercise and demonstrate their leadership abilities. Such opportunities support young people as they develop a range of skills, including critical thinking, writing, public speaking, planning and group dynamics.<sup>viii</sup> The Coalition of Community Foundations for Youth found that youth involved in philanthropic programs continue to volunteer their time, contribute money to charitable causes and serve in leadership positions at higher rates than the general population. Further, two-thirds of today's adult volunteers report they began volunteering when they were young.<sup>ix</sup>

The intergenerational use of facilities including educational institutions also shows promise. Anecdotally, long running shared adult and child care centers are reporting children returning as adults to work as staff in the facilities. They do not seem as likely to view older adults through the lens of ageism but rather see them as a population they enjoy. As one 16 year old young man said,

"I began volunteering when I was six months old. My mom would take me on visits to nursing homes and let the older residents hold me. Now I drive myself."

Given the projected need for caregivers, connecting young to old while they are young could bode well for an aging world. Additionally, the shared use of space appears to hold financial promise as well. While research is again limited, one study found that programs that share space save money in two key areas-facility rental and staffing.<sup>x</sup> Limited resources drive "economies of scope" that is those approaches that spread the cost of a service over a larger number of people. A facility or program that is used by multiple generations insures greater reach with fewer resources than a single age construct.

Intergenerational Dialogues have demonstrated positive results. These techniques have been employed in the USA as well as other countries. At West Valley High School in Spokane, Washington, students and coaches met regularly to explore redesign challenges the school was facing. After a year-long effort they agreed on the need for an intergenerational vision team. They concluded the intergenerational dialogue experience transforms participants, supports relationships in community, promotes divergent thinking, demands a balance of power among participants, and transforms society.<sup>xi</sup>

Governments and NGOs have confirmed the importance of intergenerational connections. The European Union has declared 2012 the European Year of Active Ageing and Intergenerational Solidarity. The goal is to not waste the potential of age or youth. A part

of the EU strategy for youth involves investments and empowerment to promote youth volunteer work to encourage dialogues and intergenerational solidarity.

Europe is host to a collaborative network working together to support Intergenerational Learning (IL) across Europe which they believe is a way that people of all ages can learn together. IL is an important part of Lifelong Learning, where the generations work together to gain skills, values and knowledge. It has been suggested that IL is a process of addressing some of the significant demographic changes in society and as a way of enhancing intergenerational solidarity. They have created a 'European Map of Intergenerational Learning' (EMIL) which provides a general overview of the role and status of IL by developing a more sustainable method for collecting, exchanging, and distributing ideas and resources in the field. Representing numerous European organizations, from over 25 European countries, the goal is to collectively have the ability to influence the intergenerational practice debate.<sup>xii</sup>

In Singapore, the Council of the Third Age hosts an annual intergenerational bonding contest to encourage organizations to develop intergenerational bonding opportunities. The national contest is focused on family relations and has recognized programs that range from family cooking contests to outdoor adventures.

Still polls conducted in the EU and USA have shown people do not believe their governments are doing enough to support connections across generations. A 2010 study conducted by Harris Interactive reported the large majority (78%) of people in the United States want their policymakers to facilitate intergenerational interaction, however a disturbingly low number (61%) said they interact regularly with members of other generations.<sup>xiii</sup>

Some governments are trying to encourage interaction between generations. For more than ten years, Pamela Smith has championed intergenerational practices which positioned San Diego County as an incubator for innovative programs. As the director of the San Diego Area Agency on Aging, the Human Services Agency's Aging and Independence Services, Ms. Smith has led the formation of many partnerships with community-based programs leading to the creation of nationally recognized programs that have served large numbers of youth and older adults. Under her leadership, an intergenerational coordinator position was created to support the development of intergenerational programs in the county. She undertook the complex development of two unique intergenerational programs; San Pasqual Academy Neighbors, which houses older adults in homes co-located with group housing for foster youth, and Seniors on Broadway, a senior apartment building that opened on the grounds of a charter school. The county also provided seed grants for 30 start-up intergenerational programs and developed a country wide directory of programs. The county has hosted a number of intergenerational

dialogues most notably following the attacks on September 11<sup>th</sup>. Dialogues were conducted between retired members of the military and high school students and helped provide context for the young people many of whom had never lived through events such as they experienced in 2001.

## **Roles of Social Institutions**

### **Communities**

Communities and the social institutions found within them offer a key venue for encouraging dialogue and mutual understanding across generations. Magic Me is the largest intergenerational arts program in the United Kingdom. It provides an outstanding example of intergenerational programming that bridges cultural as well as age divides through the arts and dialogue. For 21 years the organization and its founder, Susan Langford, have been committed to improving human lives by enabling people to do more, feel better and live longer. They understand the importance of preparing members of each generation carefully before they participate in intergenerational discussions and programs. One project takes place at the Mulberry School for Girls where 98% of the girls are Bangladeshi in an older, white neighborhood. For four months, women ages 14 to 80 years explore topics such as utopia, protests and beauty. The project's aims and objectives are:

- To extend the boundaries of the participants' learning by working intergenerationally.
- Opportunities to build on existing skills and to learn new ones.
- Contribute to an increased quality of life by building relationships across the community.

For 16 years, the project has proven to be effective. As one young participant said “This project really changed my view of older people. I loved the freedom it gave us to be creative.”<sup>xiv</sup>

When committing to become an intergenerational community, the city of Falcon Heights Minnesota benefited by working with Dr. James Gambone, intergenerational proponent and author of the 2002 book, *Together for Tomorrow*. Mayor Sue Gehrz and the city council made intergenerational interaction a high priority. The mayor gathered a diverse group of eighty-seven people from the ages of 12-88 to participate in a dialogue in response to the tragedy of September 11, 2001. The group, representing all faiths, ethnicities and nationalities, developed 126 action steps to improve safety in the community and prepare for future acts of terrorism and naturally occurring disasters like

tornadoes and hurricanes. The city created the Intergenerational Commission on Homeland Security. This group laid the foundation for the Neighborhood Commission now one of four permanent Commissions or advisory groups that help to guide city government in Falcon Heights. Every effort is made to incorporate the voices and concerns of all generations into policy decisions that are made by the mayor. This is done in part by creating formal structures within city government that facilitate communication and decision-making by all generations. Intergenerational participation is encouraged in all Falcon Heights' activities and programs as well as in private events held in public spaces. Specifically, the city requires that: intergenerational interaction is a public policy goal of the City Council; policy proposals must incorporate the ideas and concerns of multiple generations; there is intergenerational participation on city advisory boards; and use of city facilities is free to intergenerational groups.

The Non-Profit Center in Milwaukee Wisconsin sponsored an intergenerational dialogue in 2008 to address growing concerns about racial divisions. A steering committee resulted with the charge to work to enact recommendations such as increased opportunities for social interaction and planned intergenerational dialogues.

The Somali Initiative for Dialogue and Democracy in London convened an intergenerational dialogue in August of 2010 entitled "Peace Begins at Home" amid growing concern that an intergenerational divide was causing conflict, break up and division within families. They concluded that dialogue begins in the home and is important to keeping young and old united. One senior participant said "What has happened today is something brilliant for the Somali community. It is a young person who has thought of the concept of this workshop and young people have important perspectives which we would never have heard before a workshop like this." <sup>xv</sup>

Virtual communities can also support intergenerational dialogue and understanding. One Facebook group, Intergenerational Voices, exists to connect baby boomers with millennials for on line dialogue. It has 95 members. UNESCO established a Facebook group entitled Global Intergenerational Human Rights Forum which boasts 405 members and is designed to continue dialogue and exchange ideas.

Finally in April 2010, Leeds City Council in the UK launched 'Bringing Generations Together: Leeds' Intergenerational Approach' and released a document by the same name. Their stated hope is that the document will raise the profile of the effectiveness of intergenerational approaches, providing examples that identify how intergenerational practice can meet key existing objectives, targets and priorities for both local and national, and highlight the benefits of intergenerational work across Leeds.

### Educational Institutions

Educational institutions and advocates of lifelong learning have an important role to play in connecting generations and providing opportunities for dialogue among generations. In Europe, Cyprus' Ministry of Education and Culture supports a national program that facilitates older adults returning to primary and secondary schools. The young students learn about the aging process and benefit by having older people as students alongside them in their classrooms. These elders provide personal accounts of what life was like in earlier decades and share stories that make history come alive.<sup>xvi</sup> In the USA, state and local education policies have broadened to encourage older adults to continue their education and keep their minds active. The state of Kentucky, for example, allows anyone over the age of 65 to audit classes at no cost at state colleges and universities. Several universities have opened their campuses or nearby locations for the development of senior housing. Older adults are invited to join campus life and take classes for free or low tuition.

Educational facilities themselves can be designed and planned to encourage intergenerational exchange. The city of Swampscott, Massachusetts faced a serious financial decision. Two of the community's assets, both about one hundred years old, needed to be replaced. Would the town council chose to build a new high school or would they lean towards their older citizens and replace the senior center? With strong leadership, creativity and much dialogue, the city decided to combine the two in to an intergenerational shared site and built the Swampscott High School and Senior Center. The resulting "green" building is larger and has more amenities than a single age focused facility would have encompassed. As the programs mature, the informal interactions between generations are enhanced by planned, intentional opportunities. For example when filming a history of the high school, the students interviewed seniors who had gone to the school in its early years. When the library was threatened with closure two days a week because of a budget shortage, the older adults stepped up, received training and organized themselves to keep staff the library and keep it open.

In 2008 Black Hill University in Spearfish, South Dakota held an intergenerational dialogue with the intent to make the university more intergenerationally friendly. Twenty-four 18 to 80 year olds participated and at the end made recommendations including conducting additional dialogues, establishing an oral history program, encouraging groups of young and old to attend college events together and holding an intergenerational dance.

Older adults in educational institutions can make a difference as illustrated by the following two examples. First, the Swedish Granddad Program has grown from 2002 to 2010 to include 1000 granddads that work full time in the schools and receive a salary. The program has a national association as well as regional associations. The older adults

report they continue to learn and feel needed. Young people are found to be on better behavior and value their interactions with the granddads.

The second is a national program in the USA, Experience Corps, which engages people over 55 in improving early reading and literacy skills. The program has recruited over 2,000 members to tutor and mentor elementary school students, help teachers in the classroom, and lead after-school enrichment activities. Research conducted by Washington University in St. Louis and Johns Hopkins University shows that Experience Corps boosts student academic performance, helps schools and youth-serving organizations become more successful, and enhances the well-being of older adults in the process.

### *Young People*

Youth-led efforts can be powerful mechanisms in increasing opportunities to connect across generations, engage in dialogue and build mutual understanding. One example is ManaTEEN, founded by Laura Lockwood in 1994, when she was 12 years old. Bored, she tried to volunteer with a senior meal delivery program in Florida but was told she was too young. She went on to recruit other young people and to develop volunteer programs, many of which are elder serving and involve dialogue. ManaTEEN is now the largest locally based teen volunteer initiative in the USA, boasting thousands of teens who volunteer more than 1.7 million hours of service each year. Pet Awareness for Seniors (PAWS), Home Safety Inspections for Seniors, Adopt a Grandparent, and Nosey Neighbours are all programs that engage young people, ages 8 to 21, in the lives of elders, increasing solidarity across generations.

Partnerships developed between young and old can result in valuable outcomes. The process of planning and creating together may be the most important element of the program. Atlas Senior Center in Chicago Illinois partnered with a local youth advocacy project that targets disadvantaged young people to plan and produce an intergenerational conference in November 2010. A group of young and old worked together for six months to plan the event developing deep connections and new understanding. The conference itself was a success attracting 125 people who engaged in dialogues about intergenerational relationships, youth violence and community strengthening. They participated in a well-received poetry slam and a dance off. The intergenerational conference was so well received the city of Chicago decided to include the event in its annual budget.

Working through social studies, science, economics, philosophy, special education and gifted classes, students in the 9th grade and higher in Dade County Public Schools in

Miami Florida were recruited for in-depth study of the issues surrounding Social Security reform. At the same time, older Americans were invited to participate through Senior Centers, state AARP offices and Area Agencies on Aging. Studying individually and as a group, the multi-aged students learned about the history and current status of Social Security as well as the pros and cons of the various proposals for change. All participants in each community then meet during a one day forum of 100 to 200 people to hear additional expert speakers and have a dialogue. The program demonstrated that students and older adults were very interested in learning about the topic of discussion when they were actively engaged in the conversation.

Public Agenda, in partnership with Generations United and two higher education institutions, successfully conducted intergenerational dialogues about Social Security, health care, and other issues relating to America's fiscal future in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania in early April 2009. Each half-day session brought together 40-50 college-age and older Americans for a four hour dialogue. The participants rated the dialogues highly. One student said "We can't have two generations put up against each other; we need to promote generations working together."

### **Changing Family Structure**

In the US, the number of grandparent and other relative raising children households has increased. More than 6.7 million children live in families headed by grandparents or other relatives, and 2.5 million grandparents report that they are responsible for their grandchildren living with them.<sup>xvii</sup>

The reasons for the increase are as varied as the families themselves but include substance abuse, military deployment, poverty, death of a parent and economic necessity. Grandparents and other relatives raising children, also known as grandfamilies, play an invaluable role helping to raise stronger children the second or even third time around. As the Senegalese proverb says "The things that grandmothers can see while sitting on the ground, younger people cannot see even if they climb to the top of a tree."

Multigenerational households have also seen a sharp increase. While reasons cited above may also play a role in the formation of these families, more recently in the USA the economic downturn, housing bubble burst and high unemployment have exacerbated the numbers. Families that live under one roof may do so temporarily or permanently. Sharing resources provides a bigger pool for all either to support household expenses or enhance savings. While the financial benefits may be motivating for some, others decide to co-locate because it helps address caregiving across the generations. Family members benefit from oral history, storytelling, cultural transmission and a sense of purpose in their lives.



## **Workplace Opportunities**

As our world ages, the opportunities for younger and older workers condense. Young people seek to enter the workforce and many older people seek to remain. In the USA, there is broad recognition that there are now four generations in the workplace. Much effort has been pinpointed on identifying the differences between generations at work and recognizing their diversity. Attention to multigenerational workplaces abounds but little focus has been given to intergenerational workplaces, that is how to capitalize on the strengths of different generations and maximize their ability to work across generational lines. The MetLife Mature Market Institute took the first step when they created a Tool Kit for Engaging the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Multi-Generational Workforce. Included was a workbook with an assessment tool and activities to encourage working “inter” rather than “multi” generationally.<sup>xviii</sup>

## **Summary**

Opportunities for people of different generations to mix and mingle have decreased. Approaching our communities, educational institutions and policy making with a holistic intergenerational lens can encourage dialogue and mutual understanding across generations. In an aging society, engaging generations in each other’s lives will increase social cohesion, understanding and cooperation. Each sector has a vital role in providing the venues and mechanisms to encourage generations coming together as a family, not a fight, as a community not a competition.

## **Policy Recommendations**

Leaders and policymakers will better serve their constituencies by viewing policies and decisions through an intergenerational interdependency lens to promote and enhance ways in which people of all generations can live, work and play together, depending on and supporting each other. Intergenerational dialogues play an important role among initiatives that promote intergenerational understanding, reciprocity and interdependence which ultimately results in a more mutually respectful population. The following specific recommendations are put forward for discussion and review.

- **A Conference on the Generations** championed by governments at all levels calling for advocates and leaders across the ages to come together to jointly plan coordinated policies and programs to support their country’s ability to capitalize on its greatest asset, people of all ages. This could begin with a one day invitational meeting with the aim of using intergenerational dialogue to address one narrow topic of current interest.

- **Intergenerational Councils** formed by neighborhoods, local governing bodies and school boards could provide a platform for dialogue and input among and between all generations on an ongoing basis.
- **Secretary/Minister** level position could be created with titles such as Secretary for Intergenerational Interdependence or Minister for All Generations or Ambassador for Intergenerational Understanding charged with reviewing country wide policy to ensure people of all generations are viewed and engaged as resources and have opportunities to fully participate in society and that family life is protected.
- **Countrywide Intergenerational Centers or Networks** such as the Centre for Intergenerational Practice in the United Kingdom or Generations United or The Intergenerational Center at Temple University both in the USA. The UK's centre aims to support those seeking to develop more cohesive communities by promoting intergenerational practice as an effective mechanism to improve the understanding and relationships between people of different generations and cultures. Generations United is focused solely on improving the lives of children, youth and older people through intergenerational strategies, programs and public policies while acting as a catalyst for stimulating collaboration while celebrating the richness of each generation. Temple's Center is focuses on strengthening communities by bringing generations together to address critical concerns and creating opportunities for lifelong civic engagement.
- **Gross Generational Interdependence Product = GGIP** or Generational Impact Statements would create a set of measures and provide a framework for releasing a regularly scheduled report on the state of intergenerational understanding and interdependence.
- **Intergenerational Principles** for policy makers and other leaders to help create a framework for reviewing potential public policies and for use in other decision making recognizing how different generations can and should be engaged as resources to each other.
- **Year of Intergenerational Solidarity** such as the 2012 European Year of Active Ageing and Intergenerational Solidarity planned by the European Union.
- **Work Place Policies** that promote flexibility across the working life to allow people to enter and exit the workforce to further enhance education and skills, caregiving and retirement. Job sharing, time banks, up and down mentoring and intergenerational project teams are among the strategies that can be employed to increase engagement and flexibility.

- **Shared use of facilities and space** promotes the opportunity for formal and informal dialogue across generations. Encourage new development or retrofitting of existing buildings and outdoor space that is friendly and accessible to people of all ages and abilities. Encourage educational institutions to be available to people of all generations whether in the classroom or by building senior housing in close proximity on school grounds.
- **Social insurance programs**, such retirement, disability, and survivors, should be interwoven so the value to all generations is evident and therefore, more likely to be protected and strengthened.
- **United Nations and NGO** coordinated effort between ageing and youth divisions including conducting a Year for All Ages. Encourage intergenerational planning teams and promote intergenerational dialogue to encourage social inclusion when addressing issues of global significance.
- **Issue public statements** that clearly state that intergenerational relationship take place within the family but also within the larger community and world. Intergenerational dialogue and mutual understanding are the responsibility of every citizen.

- i. Rosebrook, V. "Research Indicates: Intergenerational Interactions Enhance Young Children's Personal/Social Skills." *Together: The Generations United Magazine*. Vol. 11, Number 2 (2006.) p5
- ii. LoSciuto, L., Townsend, T., Rajala, A., & Taylor, A, (1996). *An outcome evaluation of Across Ages: An intergenerational mentoring approach to drug prevention*. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 11(1), 116-129.
- iii. Morrow-Howell, Nancy, Melissa Jonson-Reid, Stacey McCrary, YungSoo Lee, and Ed Spitznagel. "Evaluation of Experience Corps: Student Reading Outcomes." St. Louis, MO: The Center for Social Development at Washington University in St. Louis, June 2009. Accessed on 3 November 2010 at <<http://csd.wustl.edu/publications/documents/rp09-01.pdf>>.
- iv. Fried, Linda P. et al. "A Social Model for Health Promotion for an Aging Population: Initial Evidence on the Experience Corps Model." *Journal of Urban Health* Vol 81, No.1 (March 2004) p. 64-78.
- v. Jarrott, Shannon. & Kelly Bruno. "Intergenerational activities involving person with dementia: An observational assessment." *American Journal of Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementias*. Vol 18, No. 1 (2003) p. 31-37.
- vi. *Family Matters: Public Policy and the Interdependence of Generations*. Generations United. Washington, DC. 2010
- vii. *Family Matters: Public Policy and the Interdependence of Generations*. Generations United. Washington, DC. 2010
- viii. Mohamed, I.A. and Wheeler, W. *Broadening the Bounds of Youth Development: Youth at Engaged Citizens*. New York: Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development and the Ford Foundation. 2001
- ix. Garza, P. and Stevens, P. *Best Practices in Youth Philanthropy*. Basehor, Kan.: Coalition of Community Foundations for Youth, 2002.
- x. Jarrott, S.E., Schroeder, A., & Perkins, O. *Intergenerational Shared Sites: Saving Dollars While Making Sense An Analysis Comparing Operational Costs of Intergenerational Shared Site Facilities*. 2008. Generations United. Washington, DC.
- xi. *Small Schools Project – Winter 2004*. [http://www.smallschoolsproject.org/PDFS/effect\\_sscc.pdf](http://www.smallschoolsproject.org/PDFS/effect_sscc.pdf) accessed 2 19 2011
- xii. <http://www.emil-network.eu/> accessed 2 13.2011
- xiii. *Family Matters: Public Policy and the Interdependence of Generations*. Generations United. Washington, DC. 2010
- xiv. <http://www.magicme.co.uk/> accessed 2 20 2011
- xv. <http://www.uk.iofc.org/node/49276> accessed 2 13 2011
- xvi. Mercken, C. (2004). *Education in an ageing society: European trends in senior citizens' education*. Odyssee. The Netherlands.
- xvii. U.S. Census Bureau 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates, Detailed Tables B09006 and B10002 and Subject Table S1002
- xviii. *Tool Kit for Engaging the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Multi-Generational Workforce*. MetLife Mature Market Institute. New York. 2009.

# *Pat Dolan*

## **Introduction**

Whereas Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) respectfully and appropriately highlights the value of participation of young people in society, very often the key issue of ‘youth involvement for what purpose?’ is overlooked. This paper outlines and explores how, through their civic engagement and intergenerational activities, youth can be enabled to be dialogue donors rather than just recipients and afforded real meaning to their involvement and participation in societies around the world.

This paper is one of a series of contributions to the United Nations and Doha International Institute for Family Studies and Development international colloquium, held in Qatar in March 2011. Through a pragmatic illustration, it seeks to connect these key issues for young people in a grounded ‘non-jargonised’ real world fashion while still retaining attention to social scientific rigour. Following a brief description of youth civic engagement and action, the associated core benefits of better enlisted social support and capacity for youth to be resilient are highlighted. Three contexts and programme examples are then briefly illustrated. This is then connected to the purpose and process of intergenerational activity, dialogue and youth involvement. Finally and most importantly, we rear youth not just to their benefit or for us as their family memberships. We need to value young people today and not just for tomorrow because of the wider benefits they bring to civic society. This in sum is the core message of the paper.

## **Social Justice, Rights and Wellbeing through Youth Civic Engagement/Action**

Achievement of social justice in civic society requires that the voices of those absent or under-represented are amplified so that their concerns and rights as citizens are taken into account in policies and practices that impact on their quality of life and their ability to achieve their potential. This principle applies equally to youth as to adults. In Ireland and internationally voices of young people are under-represented in public discourse (Dolan, 2010; Flanagan, 2004). Moreover, young people are frequently misrepresented, particularly within media coverage, for example, sometimes being stereotyped as anti-social and a threat to community safety and stability. This is amplified in the case of young people who are marginalised and

therefore have been failed or underserved by systems and society and whose access to opportunity and appropriate supports is limited. This is stated not as a counterbalance to the simple fact that like adults, young people do and should have civic responsibilities.

Many factors contribute to the wellbeing and development of youth. Youth civic action is one of these, and is increasingly recognised as key in that it offers youth positive opportunities for their participation in local communities and wider society. Positive benefits which potentially can accrue from such engagement and action by youth include better resilience, enlisted social support, self-efficacy, confidence and practical skill development. As has been recently stressed “*youth civic engagement programs empower young people to play an active role in their communities’ development, while gaining the experience, knowledge, values and life skills necessary for success in careers, education and community life*” (Innovations in Civic Participation, 2010: pg. iii).

In addition, civic action provides young people with opportunities to practice altruism, to develop awareness of their own strengths and potential, and to learn skills including planning and problem solving. To date intergenerational civic activity by youth has generally been untapped, for example, the potential of older people as mentors to youth and conveyors of wisdom and conversely youth as providers of practical help and protectors of their elders. Furthermore, civic engagement of youth enables personal gains for young people and for society in a holistic process including providing personal skill building opportunities for young people to practice civic action in real-time and access to a network of peers (Zaff et al., 2002). This has currency for youth and societies alike within and across countries.

### **Benefits of Civic Action: Social Support and Resilience Building for Youth**

Two key benefits towards cross-generational dialogue and involvement accrue from specific positive civic actions by youth either through altruism (acts of ‘good’ to others’) to meet social need or through a rights-based social justice peaceful quest for the betterment of self and others. Natural social support is key to a positive transition from adolescence to adulthood (acts of ‘justice’ for others). Sources of help in terms of who youth turn to for assistance, the types of practical and emotional assistance on offer and the quality of their networks are essential to young people in this process, and this assists their wellbeing (Coterell, 1996; Dolan, 2010). We all turn to family friends and neighbours as the first natural line of defence and we do so ahead of professionals - youth are no different to adults in this regard (Frydenberg and Lewis, 2000). This being the case, the civic engagement of young people ranging from community based charity work to youth club activity or social justice/cause led

action, enables new friendships and alliances often across the generations with which youth reciprocate social support. This is found internationally and across cultures to lead to better wellbeing and improved mental and physical health (Brugha, 1995).

Similarly and more practically, a capacity to be or become resilient in adolescence is in part founded on having personal protective factors such as strong family ties; reliable and close friendships and success in school or leisure and hobby activities as well as defined purpose and self-efficacy (Ungar, 2008). This said, social or political civic activity by youth can enable these protective factors to be present and positive factors can outweigh personal risk factors. So in sum, youth civic action can enable a connection for youth with family and community as well as bringing better social support and resilience. The following list captures this potential:

**For young people as individuals and their families:**

- Better enlisted social support to and from others which has a known connection to better wellbeing and mental health;
- Increased capacity to be resilient to stress by enabling existing or new protective factors;
- A young person's sense of self-efficacy enhanced and enabling their personal mastery, sense of belonging to others, fostered independence and capacity to be altruistic, focusing away from problems of self to the needs of others.

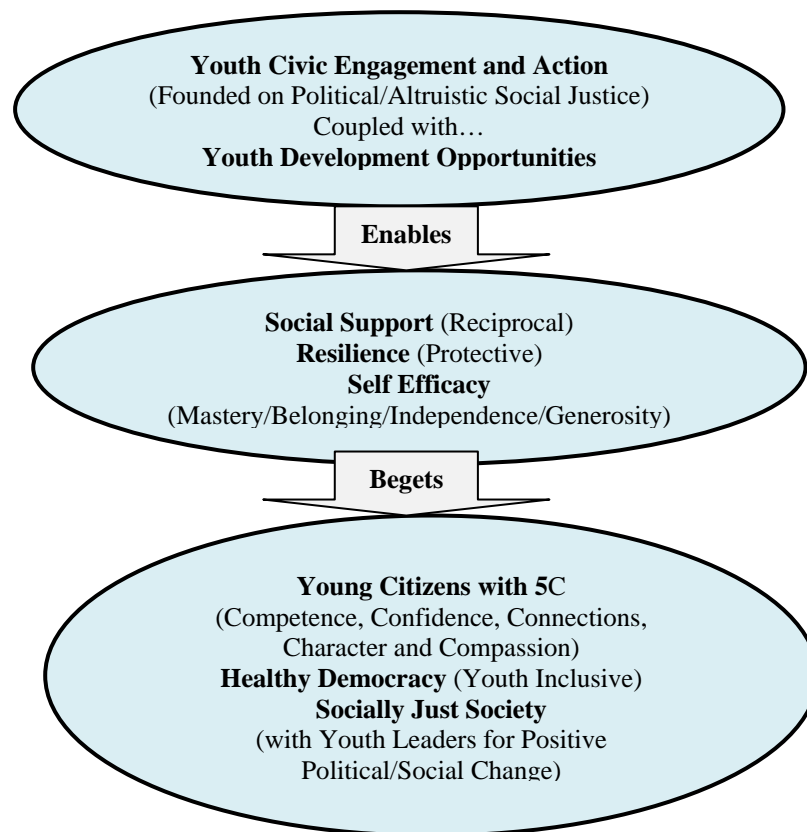
**Benefit for Communities and Civic Society**

Apart from personal benefit to young people, civic action can ultimately lead to benefit democracies in terms of both human and economic social capital, these include:

- Youth who contribute through verbal and action based dialogue to their local community in terms of meeting need;
- Young citizens who are creative, peace enablers, confident and caring helping to enable stronger democracies, which in turn can feed positive policy creation;
- Contributing to an incremental generational build up on positive change in society in part resultant from the inclusivity of youth and based on a model of social justice.

This is presented conceptually as a connect model in figure 1 below.

**Figure 1**



### **Portals Programmes and Evidence Based Criteria**

In order to build such coping capacity in youth and enable contributions from them, their having space to thrive in familial, school and/or community and society settings, are key. Such conditions include everything from connectedness to family, education systems and community organisations, to youth seeing themselves as inclusive and non-patronised members and real participants across generations. Three robust or very promising youth initiatives comprising a range of programmes that attest to this possibility and contain intergenerational components are briefly described as:

#### **1. Youth Mentoring**

Youth mentoring programmes have been in existence for over one hundred years and are well proven as low cost but effective support interventions to young people (Tierney et. al, 1995). Typically they include an adult who lives locally, is safe and reliable befriending a youth who is in need and through joint social or educational activities they exchange support. Programmes are either community or school based, mostly include volunteers from the local community, but can extend to family



mentors for examples aunts or uncles, and often take the form of peer mentoring particularly in school settings. On the basis of connecting generations youth mentoring has strong value and is associated with benefits such as better education outcomes, lower risk taking behaviours among young people and the creation of hopefulness in youth and adults. However, it should be noted that mentoring programmes often seek differing outcomes for youth in different countries which in itself raises questions for policy and practice.

## **2. Youth Leadership Programmes**

Youth leadership programmes, which include service to community and other citizenship initiatives, have been found to have strong resonance for young people and the younger and older generations they connect with (Innovations in Civic Participation, 2010). Typically youth leadership include common goals and principles for youth such as engaging them to address crucial social needs, while also providing them with ways to build personal leadership skills, learn how to take better responsibility and make decisions. Furthermore, leadership programmes are associated with guiding youth towards self-management and associated techniques for team-building. Importantly such interventions enable youth to have better negotiation and cooperation skills (Flanagan 2004). From the perspective of intergenerational connectivity, youth leadership programmes are key as they positively expose youth to other generations in their community which are often non-familial contacts and reciprocally enable a more positive and realistic perception of youth and their contribution to other local citizens. It is argued here that youth leadership programmes act as key enablers and ‘lynchpins’ to ensuring youth dialogue and act as a core ‘vehicle’ for their involvement with other generations through the life course in their community and country. Importantly, in many communities youth are having less contact with older familial contacts such as grandparents, and intergenerational youth leadership programmes help retain this important connection for both generations.

## **3. Young Journalists (Youth as Researchers)**

By its nature adolescence is a time of experimentation and inquisitiveness (Coleman and Hendry, 2009) and although sometimes the teenage process contains ‘storm and stress’ for youth themselves and their parents or community, overall this inquisitiveness can and should be harnessed as human social capital with strong potential. Over recent years, the prospect of training and enabling youth as researchers and or as young journalists has been found to be positive not just in terms of having more robust research on youth by youth (Cammarota and Fine, in press) but also as an innovative new form of employment. In terms of enabling dialogue, it ensures that rather than having adults interpret the voice of youth – youth can do so

for and by themselves. Youth researchers uncover best ways to advance youth voice and participation and can from their distinct point of view distil ‘must know’ messages for adults (see for example the work of the Young Foundation in the UK, or Foróige in Ireland).

Such potential goes way beyond dialogue promotion and greater involvement of young people as core citizens. Just as youth have been found to be quick to act and support in a crisis such as 9/11, Hurricane Katrina, the Tsunami and the earthquake in Haiti, their potential as researchers and young journalists to offer solutions to global problems for example the world economic recession can be strong if listened to (UNESCO, 2009). The key concern is not their potential to engage in dialogue and participate as young researchers, but the speed of adult society (and sometimes researchers) to support them in doing so (Dolan, in press).

### **Intergenerational Youth Leadership – A Caveat to Consider**

It is not necessary for young people to be part of structured youth programmes to be civically involved in society. Our own research Centre recently undertook research on young carers in Ireland – a young carer being a child or young person under the age of 18 who provides or helps care for a family or household member (Fives et al., 2010). It is considered that 3% of the population aged between 0-17 in Ireland are young carers, which is reflective of the percentage of young carers in the UK, Australia and the United States (Becker, 2010). The percentage of young carers in countries in conflict and post conflict, and in countries with high levels of HIV/Aids is undoubtedly higher. These young people often forgo their time to socialise with their friends, join clubs, to take part in sports and extra curricular activities. At times they also miss periods in school to care for a family or household member with a care need, such as an illness or disability, or to take care of their siblings in a situation where their parents cannot do so. The civic involvement of their caring role is mostly overlooked. Yet their contribution to society is invaluable, albeit at times inappropriate, where the negative impacts on the young carer outweigh the positive. A recent paper by Kennan et al. (in press) examines the ‘hidden and overlooked’ nature of this caring role by youth.

### **Balancing Youth Programmes with Family Support and Cultural Connectivity and the Risks of Proven Models**

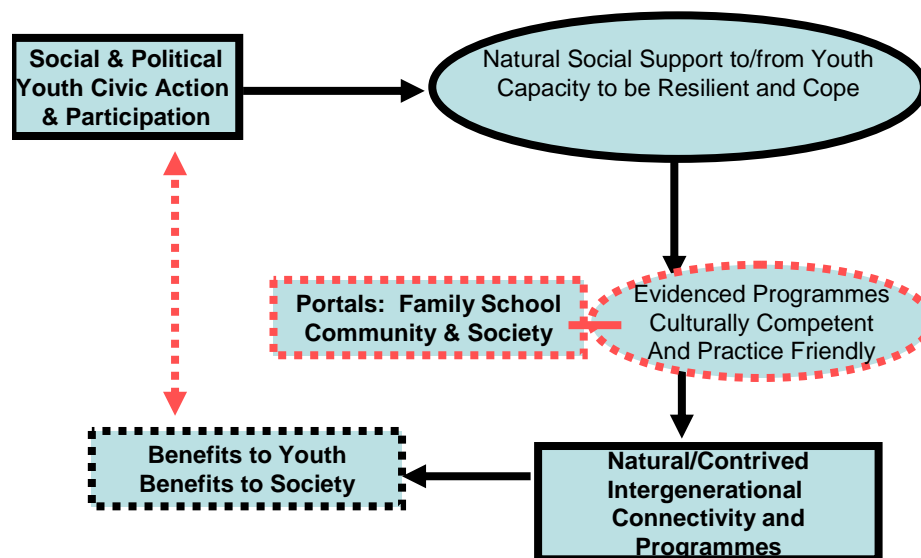
Finally, while the positive potential of youth programmes which enable dialogue and involvement of youth such as intergenerational civic action activities are key, inevitably they need more resourcing. Apart from capacity needs, three clear caveats need to remain in the minds of politicians, policymakers and service deliverers alike.

Firstly, youth civic action programmes have to be culturally competent, what works in one country is not necessarily transferable to another given the cultural nuances and norms which prevail. Secondly, the need to stick to fidelity in programme delivery in order to ensure they are provable needs to be challenged, as well as balanced by the need to remember that relationships between youth themselves across generations and those who work with and for them are key (Canavan et al., 2009). Natural and good organic practices in youth work are the ‘bread and butter’ of successful relationships and go before programmatic menus. Finally, retaining connectedness to the voice of youth in terms of what they hold as key, coupled with core family and community relationships are essential to successful naturally occurring adolescent transitions including aspects of dialogue. Just like a good diet for physical health, these factors need to be retained for emotional health and wellbeing in youth.

### **Connecting Concepts and Ten Key Take Home Messages**

Finally, these elements that contribute to the task of enabling dialogue and better understanding and enhancement of youth are connected and presented graphically in Figure 2 below. It should also be stressed that these factors of civic action, social support, resilience through natural occurrence or contrived programmes are not the exhaustive list for assisting youth dialogue and intergenerational involvement, but they are in my view important.

**Figure 2**



## **Ten Key Messages**

1. Civic engagement of youth is key to enabling their dialogue and involvement in civic Society.
2. Youth civic action helps young people to be more resilient and assists them to cope as well as offering greater social support and wellbeing.
3. There are many untapped opportunities for connecting youth across generations, either through natural familial and community contacts or through formal programmes.
4. Regulated programmes for youth dialogue and involvement are plentiful and even for those that are evidence based they need to be counterbalanced to ensure they are young person led and practitioner friendly.
5. Youth Leadership, Mentoring and Youth as Researchers represent three useful portals to enable youth dialogue and participation, but are not the only ones.
6. It is essential that nuances of culture competency and contexts for civic engagement are considered in the internationalisation of methods to enable youth dialogue and involvement.
7. Youth dialogue and involvement across generations needs to be youth led and fit for purpose.
8. Youth are proven civic actors and willing to initiate, thus they can offer solutions to societal problems.
9. Youth dialogue and participation is not just a future investment – young people should be valued in their own right now, not as a prospective investment or as “adults in waiting”.
10. More specific contextualised programmes for intergenerational activities between youth and adults need to be developed, for example post-conflict rebuilding of communities; those that reciprocate wisdom and protection in localities; youth employment, and internships guided by adults with a range of modalities for youth as contributors to political and/or social good.

## **References**

- Becker, S., (2010) *The Carers Association National Conference, Under the Radar – A Focus on Young Carers*. Croke Park, Dublin, 7 May 2010.
- Brugha, T.S. (1995) Social Support and Psychiatric disorder: Recommendations for Clinical Practice and Research, in Brugha, T.S. (eds). *Social Support and Psychiatric Disorder, Research Findings and Guidelines for Clinical Practice*. Cambridge Univ. Press. Ch 14, pp. 295-334.
- Cammarota, J. and Fine, M. (eds) (in press) *Revolutionizing Education: Youth Participatory Action Research in Motion*. New York: Routledge Publishers.
- Canavan, J., Coen, L., Dolan, P. and Whyte, L (2009) Privileging Practice: Facing the Challenge of Integrated Working for Outcomes for Children, *Children & Society*, Volume 23, pp. 377-388.
- Coleman, J. C. & Hendry, L. B. (2009) *The nature of adolescence*, London; New York: Routledge, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition.
- Cotterell, J. (1996). *Social Networks and Social Influences in Adolescence*, London: Routledge.
- Dolan P. (2010) 'Youth Civic Engagement and Support: Promoting Wellbeing with the Assistance of a UNESCO Agenda in Child Well-Being – Towards a Better Understanding of Children's Lives', in C. McAuley and W Rose (eds.), *Child Well-Being*, Chapter 5. Jessica Kingsley Publishers: UK.
- Dolan, P (in press) 'Travelling Through Social Support and Youth Civic Action on a Journey Towards Resilience' in M. Ungar (ed) *Social Ecology of Resilience* Part Six: Ch. 27, Sage.
- Flanagan, C.A. (2004) 'Volunteerism, leadership, political socialization, and civic engagement' in R.M. Lerner & L. Steinberg (eds.), *Handbook of Adolescent Psychology*, Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, pp.721–746.
- Frydenberg, E. and R. Lewis (2000). "Teaching coping to adolescents: When and to whom?" *American Educational Research Journal* 37(3): 727-745.

Fives, A., Kennan, D., Canavan, J., Brady, B. and Cairns, D. (2010) *"If I can make their life a little easier, then I'm happy": Study of Young Carers in the Irish Population* (Main Report), Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Kennan, D., Fives, A. and Canavan, J. (in press) Accessing a Hard to Reach Population: Reflections on Research with Young Carers in Ireland, *Child and Family Social Work*.

Innovations in Civic Participation (2010) *Youth Civic Participation in Action: Meeting Community and Youth Needs Worldwide*, Innovations in Civic Participation Publication, Washington, USA.

Tierney, J., Grossman, J. and Resch, N. (1995) *Making a Difference: An Impact Study of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America* Public Private Ventures, Phil. USA.

Ungar, M. (2008). Resilience across cultures. *British Journal of Social Work*, 38(2), 218-235.

UNESCO (2009) *Report of the Sixth UNESCO Global Youth Forum* UNESCO Headquarters Paris October 2009, UNESCO Publications, Paris, France.

Zaff, J.F. & Michelsen, E. (2002) *Encouraging Civic Engagement: How Teens Are (Or Are Not) Becoming Responsible Citizens*. Child Trends Research Brief Washington DC: Child Trends. USA

# *Paola Silva*

## **Intergenerational Dialogue as a Way to Diagnose and Prevent Violence**

According to the last report on youth and development published by the World Bank, there are 1.3 billion young people now living in the developing world, and it is considered -the largest-ever youth group in the history. However, there is not a consensus in regard to Latin America' youth population. Nevertheless, the last research performed by the World Bank (WB)<sup>1</sup>, the Iberoamerican Youth Organisation (OIJ), and the Economic Commission for Latin America and Caribbean<sup>2</sup> (ECLAC), have expressed a concern regarding to the dimension of the young population of the continent: Latin America and the Caribbean have an estimate of 140 to 180 million of young people.

An important percentage of this population lives under the line of poverty and exclusion. According to the OIJ and ECLAC's report, around 58 million of young people live on poverty, and among those, around 21.2 million live under extreme poverty. This situation is reflected on the increased rates of violence on several capital cities. The reality of this, for instance, is represented by the vastly known as *favelas* in Brazil, the *maras* in El Salvador, or the hired *assassins* in Colombia. Those are the top of the iceberg that have shown not only lack of access to basic services but also, lack of control from the government. As a result, gangs with a close connection with other type of criminal activities have taken control over the regular activities of the communities.

In Latin America, as it happens in other continents, there is a paradox as regards the youth situation. Even though the rates of illiteracy have decreased during the past years and the new generations have had more access to public education, there is a continuous lack of job and educational opportunities to stimulate personal development. This situation may increase the risk for young people to use illegal means which puts away the possibility to stop the vicious cycle of poverty and violence.

On the other hand, the intercultural dialogue has been considered on several meetings as one way to promote the sharing of experiences between older and younger. Also intercultural dialogue is a tool to improve living conditions of the people under unfavorable conditions. Indeed the dialogue across generations can be used as a way to decrease the level of violence by using the knowledge and experience of previous generations to create awareness and to promote long term solutions for the risks faced by the community.

---

<sup>1</sup> WDR 2007: Development and the Next Generation. [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org).

<sup>2</sup> La juventud en Iberoamérica: Tendencias y urgencias. [http://www.eclac.org/publicaciones/xml/6/20266/CEPAL\\_OIJ.pdf](http://www.eclac.org/publicaciones/xml/6/20266/CEPAL_OIJ.pdf)

## **DIALOGUE ACROSS GENERATIONS IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES: A case study in Colombia.**

Colombia has a high rate of violence and according to different studies; youngsters are the biggest population at risk to become involved to this bloodshed, either because they are hired as assassins or because they are victims within the cycle of violence. The pilot project implemented in Bogota (Colombia) to prevent the recruitment of children and youngster by the illegal armed groups have shown that the dialogue across generations is a key tool to prevent violence, in addition, dialogue may contribute to make society stronger, to promote social integration, and to foster youth participation to achieve social development.

To the pilot project implemented the participation of the representatives of the whole community on the diagnostic of the current situation of violence on the territories where they live is the way to start a common commitment from all the members of the communities to improve the particular situation. It is important to get involved all generations in order to make a common diagnosis of the situation. Young and old people have the knowledge to understand the local risks that can affect them. Young people face every day the aggression coming from their social environment and therefore, they can certainly, on perspective identify the most important causes of the hostility. On the other hand, older people can not only to bring their knowledge and experience on what has been done in the past to avoid this violent behavior, but also to promote common social values within their community.

With the specific aim to generate common strategies against violence, all actors were convened to present ideas about what they considered as the best way to stop the incorporation of children to illegal groups and therefore their participation on the cycle of violence and poverty. As a result, all of them presented possible solutions that were the beginning of public policies to be applied by the government.

For both scenarios, the one to work on the diagnosis, and the one to create common solutions with all members of the community, there was the need to create specific methodologies that could bring them together or have separate workshops. The challenge was always to be able to linkage the perspectives and ways to read realities that came from both old and young people of the community

As the result of this dialogue between generations the following risks were identified, not only as a threat for the young people but also for the whole community:

1. Presence of organized crime groups connected with illegal armed groups. Although, there is no certainty about the presence of illegal armed groups, it is well known their links with the “local” crime groups.



2. Domestic abuse. There are high rates of family violence (child abuse and sexual abuse), child prostitution (soon as at the age of 7 and 8 y), broken homes, and lack of parental control over their children. Families are the first scenario where children and youngsters have the opportunity to understand the meaning of being “part of something”, but also to get the knowledge from the experience of the elder people. In this case, and due to the high rates of domestic abuse, there is a gap on this process that affects in the long term perspective the linkage of the young people with the community needs.
3. School dropout. There are high rates of school desertion, and there is a lack of following up of the school attendance from the parents. Schools are the scenario where the children and young people increase their levels of exchange with the society and therefore the lack of follow-up on the educational process along with the personal development of capacities can be a potential opportunity for the organized crime groups to gather the attention of the youngsters and get them involved on common objectives. Nevertheless, in many cases teachers could spend more time with youngsters than their own parents. This can be a good opportunity to positively influence them and enroll them in projects related to legal activities.
4. Child work. The high levels of child vulnerability and the lack of opportunities for the old people have created the “need” of the child work. The lack of economic resources leads parents to find non-formal jobs for children and youngsters to support the gross family’s income.
5. Misuse of the leisure time. One of the challenges that are facing the younger generations is how to use the leisure time. In the case of the community that was part of the study, this problem was attributed to deficiencies of the government to provide different opportunities to young people.
6. Lack of social recognition of the role of youth. Social structures of the communities not always recognize the value of the work done by youngsters. This situation can be an obstacle between generations due to the fact that this behavior goes against the efforts done by youth organizations to promote peaceful conflict resolution, and can create the exclusion of the young people of the community.

Taking as starting point all the risks mentioned above, the community moved forward to design possible ways to deal with them. The workshops took into account the knowledge and information that all actors were able to bring to the possible solutions. These are some ways to face the already mentioned risks:

1. To create, through the participation of the older and younger members of the community, common diagnostics and common solutions related to the problematic issue that was identified.

2. To promote participation of young people on the process of building the paths ways to solve problems. In addition, to create methodologies that are appropriate for young people to that allow them to share their experience and knowledge about the problematic issue, but also about the possible and creative solutions.
3. Family values have to be strengthened, either the nuclear or the wider. There is a need to fortify the family roles and networks to prevent risk environments giving the parents specific guides and tools that recognizes de voice of children and youth on the common family path.
4. Schools have to be attentive to the general situation of the students. As part of their commitment with the community, school boards and teachers have to be aware of the risks that can end up with aggressions. Schools should allow some activities that can help to prevent the violence. These activities that can be performed at schools should count with the standpoint of young people and cannot leave out the interest and languages of the targeted audiences.
5. Promote a public recognition of the role that every generation has on the improvement of the quality of life for each member of the community. The role of youth and youth participation should be highlighted because it creates a sense of identity that brings the young people to a place where they can build up their life plan, and also make stronger their identity, and at the same time keep all members contributing to the community development.

The mentioned experience brought up many learned lessons that can become recommendations to public policy when it comes to the intergenerational dialogue.

1. Dialogue across generations plus youth participation is the more effective tool to create common diagnosis and solutions to the problems of the communities. This approach has to be a guide to create and promote public policies, because it can transform the culture.
2. It is a matter of high importance to create methodologies that recognizes the differences between languages of older and younger people. Not with the interest to create a gap among them, but to create proper approaches that can take advantages of the inputs given by all generations in the community.
3. Families have to be in the eye of the public policies either if it has a nuclear composition or a extended one. Those families have to be strengthened with tools that allow them to create a real sense of solidarity and common life projects in order to become a real link among children, youngster, elder and society.
4. The role of young people and youth organizations on the social processes should be highlighted and recognized for the members of the community, but also for the

local authorities in order to avoid the exclusion of this initiatives and projects of the current process of development of each community.

5. Schools are also a good scenario where the dialogue across generations can be developed and therefore cannot be excluded of the integration and dialogue among generations.

This situation of violence cannot be ignored by policy makers in the region. The challenge is to create policies based on the common perspectives of young and old people that are part of the communities. The next step is to promote and implement policies that create opportunities for the young people, taking advantage of the window that is opened by the high levels of education and the lower rate of dependants. In that matter, it is important to focus on those policies that bring basic services to people, and on those that facilitate intergenerational dialogue and youth participation as those are the ones that can give long term sustainability to the common solutions identified and agreed.

Nevertheless, to build a long lasting effect of those policies, it is required to combine the implementation of several policies with a cultural change approach that can include in the core of the society the value of the intergenerational dialogue. That approach shall be focused on the transformation of cultural practices, the encouragement of the legality principle, the respect of the rule of law, and the use of pacific means to claim rights as a save path to achieve prosperity and peace.

# *Simone Cecchini*

## **Platform for a Generational Dialogue on the Future of Latin America: A Window on the Future**

**Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)<sup>1</sup>**

### **Politics**

#### **Thesis**

Young people in Latin America are inventing new ways to participate. They have grown alongside the imagery of democracy and human rights, and their generation is, more than any other, aware of environmental issues and the historical grievances of minorities. These qualities put them in a position to shoulder new political challenges, both in their own countries and worldwide, where pressing issues of multiculturalism, ecology, democracy and rights all vie for attention. But these same qualities are not reflected in access to or participation in politics, and the ability of young people to reshape the political system is at stake, thus fanning –instead of stifling– their interest in public affairs. This is seen in local spaces, in virtual networks, in mobilization around new agendas and in resourceful joint action. Politics is being rethought, not rejected. And young people are spearheading many of these initiatives.

### **Questions**

1. What kind of intergenerational dialogue is needed, and with what players, to better bridge the divides between the political system and the aspirations of young people, between politics as usual and the way that young people approach collective needs and aspirations, and between institutionalized political culture and the emerging collective cultures of young people?
2. To what extent are young people more concerned about the political system (power structures in institutions that affect their daily lives) and less concerned about politics (party membership, support for lawmaking, representative voting)? And how, then, to go about reconciling the political system with politics?

---

<sup>1</sup> This document was prepared by Martín Hopenhayn, Director, Social Development Division. Translation was supported by the ECLAC-SIDA Cooperation Programme 2010-2011, "Social protection and social inclusion in Latin America and the Caribbean."

3. What actions should political institutions take, and what goals should they set, so that young people trust them more and get involved? In other words, what would legitimize democratic political institutions in the eyes of young people?
4. What spaces need to be opened or are in need of improvement so that young people become political players with a higher profile in public spaces, deliberative bodies and representation mechanisms?

## **Citizenship**

### **Thesis**

Politics and the State have viewed young people in many ways: as a human resource on hold (a stage in the life cycle devoted to preparing for the future, above all by means of education); as a threat to society, a violent, revolutionary or out-of-control generation (from the viewpoint of national security or citizens' safety); as a vulnerable, at-risk group (from the viewpoint of social protection); and, more recently, as subjects of rights and of new identities, and as protagonists of structural change (from the viewpoint of the new politics of youth, justice and culture). In this heterogeneous environment, public institutions, legislation and information systems devoted to youth have emerged, including the Ibero-American Convention on Youth Rights. Much has been accomplished, but progress has been uneven and at times contradictory. It is still not clear where youth institutionality and policies fit in. Intergenerational dialogue should help on this front, focusing on policies that see young people as protagonists, with their own identities, sense of belonging and capacities for the future.

### **Questions**

1. How to change the policy approach to young people, from "a resource on hold" or a "risk group" to "young citizens"? What would this involve, exactly?
2. If belonging to a Nation, as an imagined community, is still valid for different generations, is it worthwhile to foster an intergenerational dialogue to share visions of what Nation –Nation as a work in progress– means? What ideas can they contribute? How to work together to project the concept of Nation into the future? How to tap the new generations to redefine the links between territory and identity, history and the future, and continuity and change?
3. Policies targeting young people as citizens: Do they have a defined profile as to topic, sector of activity, the way they approach young people? Or is this an issue

that cuts across institutions and the way they affect the daily lives of young people? How to keep policies aimed at full citizenship, citizenship rights and a culture of citizenship for young people from being just empty words?

## **Education**

### **Thesis**

Education is the principal avenue to more equal opportunities, to building human capital for vaulting into a more productive society and to forming active citizens who are respectful of rights. So education should also prepare subjects to rise to any challenge, adapt to productive changes throughout their life cycle, engage in active dialogue with decision makers, be able to manage and use strategic information, promote and respect cultural diversity and human rights and protect the environment. The challenges in this sphere are equity in attainment and learning among different groups of young people, relevance in educational contents in order to open more doors to social inclusion and to building more just and sustainable societies and quality reflected in effective learning.

### **Questions**

1. How to redirect spending on education and public efforts so as to narrow educational attainment gaps between groups of young people (who may differ in socio-economic background, ethnic or cultural identity or place of origin) and, at least, achieve universal completion of secondary school, which is seen as key to overcoming the intergenerational transmission of poverty and inequality?
2. What major changes are needed for public education to meet future challenges in productive skills, citizen competencies, environmental sustainability and multicultural coexistence?
3. How to address quality in education and reshape the dynamics of learning so that young people learn what they need?

## **Employment**

### **Thesis**

Young people have higher levels of education, have more connectivity and are more at ease with more flexible organizational structures. All of this should help them access the labour market and lead the transition to new productive paradigms. But these very

same young people suffer higher rates of unemployment and job precariousness than do adults. Access to the labour market for young people is markedly segmented along lines of socio-economic background, gender and educational attainment.

### **Questions**

1. To facilitate access to a young person's first job, should youth labour policies be made more flexible to facilitate initial entry into the world of work, subsidize employers, set quotas for young people, establish better systems for certifying skills and post job opportunities for young people online? Which of these measures should be regarded as more important than others?
2. How to reverse gender inequality and discrimination in an environment in which even among young people women earn less and have more precarious employment conditions than men? What kinds of services are required to strike a better balance between work and family?
3. Might a comprehensive, viable solution consist of promoting youth entrepreneurship, i.e., investing in training, equipment and funding for youth entrepreneurs? Could such an approach be on a broad scale?
4. Might a comprehensive, viable solution consist of moving towards training and skills certification systems outside formal education, as an alternative that would substantially improve job prospects for young people in the productive stages of the life cycle and level the playing field among young people with different levels of educational attainment?

### **Connectivity and the information society**

#### **Thesis**

Young people in the region enjoy greater connectivity and are more in tune with new information and communications technologies (ICTs). This makes them the generation with the potential to move towards the information society and bring greater intellectual value added to the productive structure. With longer exposure to educational circuits and greater familiarity with interactive systems for communicating and for retrieving and processing information, young people are set to harness knowledge and communication as the main channels for social integration –both productive and political– in the future.

## **Questions**

1. How to work towards more egalitarian access to ICTs among young people from different socio-economic backgrounds, locations and cultures?
2. What policies would enable young people to take advantage of their mastery of ICTs so as to raise their profile in the public discourse, in the representative system and in policymaking, to extend that “virtual public voice” to social sectors of young people that have historically gone unseen and unheard?
3. How to incorporate ICTs into the way young people are taught, both in the formal education system and in other training venues, so that young people (particularly those from a low-income background) can gain better access to useful information and knowledge for the world of work and improve their ICT skills as an asset for participating in the labour market?
4. Is it appropriate to intervene with policies to enhance young people’s greater connectivity by promoting social networks and social capital so that ICTs can be used to build capacities for managing resources, capitalizing on networked institutions and boosting entrepreneurship? Or will that happen spontaneously?

## **Family**

### **Thesis**

The family is still at the core of social reproduction in our societies. But family structure and composition, as well as family life, are undergoing vast, swift change. Family arrangements are increasingly diverse (two-parent and single-parent nuclear families, blended families, single-person families, extended families, unformalized families, growing percentage of children born outside formal marriage, and families with same-sex partners). This changes the family economy because it decreases the dependency rate (fewer small children and greater labour participation of women). It changes the composition of families, too. Families are smaller, with a greater proportion of adolescents than young children. In medium- and high-income sectors, children take longer to attain economic independence. Authority relationships within the family are changing, with young people negotiating decisions and declaring early moral independence. All of these changes call for a dialogue between generations as to the future of the family.



## **Questions**

1. How to match these changes with new institutional arrangements and legislation that guarantee equal rights for young people living in different family arrangements?
2. What should the State provide to help young people achieve greater material independence and, when it is time and without gender discrimination, leave their household of origin and form their own household?
3. How to shape education and social communication to halt the intergenerational reproduction of gender stereotypes (rigid functions assigned to women in families and households) and to ensure that the young people of today have more flexible roles in their future living arrangements and share both paid work and the care economy?

## **Reproductive rights and teenage motherhood**

### **Thesis**

Overall fertility in Latin America has declined sharply since the 1970s, driven by socio-economic change (more education and urbanization), cultural change (more reproductive information, secularization, new lifestyles), changing gender roles and greater access to contraceptive methods. But the opposite is true of teenage motherhood, which is not declining. In higher-income socio-economic groups, less than 5% of young women were mothers by age 17. In lower-income groups, the rate ranges from 20% to 35%, depending on the country. In women up to age 19, motherhood is often undesired and poses more risks to reproductive health than for women who are older. It also generates vicious circles of exclusion from one generation to the next because most teenage mothers are poor, have little education and are highly likely to form single-parent households without access to networks for social protection or promotion.

### **Questions**

1. How to approach reproductive rights for teenage women that include timely information, prevention and care so they can fully plan for sexual rights and maternity decisions?
2. To what extent does this require a consensus on the need to resolve entrenched value differences? How are these differences to be addressed?

3. How to effectively disseminate shared responsibility between genders as to full exercise of reproductive rights for young people, not just promoting but legislating on the matter in order to halt the reproduction of sexism and male irresponsibility in this area?
4. What is the role of the schools, family policy and health systems in empowering adolescent women to exercise their reproductive rights?

## **International migration**

### **Thesis**

Many are the reasons that make young people more inclined to migrate than the rest of the population. They are less risk-averse at this time in life; they are forming new households and are more able to make their own decisions. Some are entering university or starting to work and so move from one place to another in order to seek opportunities elsewhere or take advantage of skills that cannot be put to use in their place of origin. For others, migration has a darker side, with young people facing traumatic obstacles that endanger their rights just when they are entering the labour market far from their place of origin. Those at the most risk are young migrants with low levels of education, those who belong to ethnic minorities or are undocumented and those who get sucked into trafficking networks or fall prey to human trafficking.

### **Questions**

1. For young people: What kind of interventions would best make juvenile migration safer and improve the prospects for young migrants? Cooperation agreements between countries of origin and destination, reciprocity agreements, entry facilitation, access to schooling, jobs, and citizens' rights?
2. What can public policy do to encourage migrants to return and to contribute their human capital to national development?
3. Is international migration something to encourage young people to do as one of their training, labour or life experience options? Or should efforts focus on improving opportunities in the country, so that young people will have fewer reasons to migrate?

# *Ignacio Socías*

## **Trends that Affect Parents and Children in Our Present World**

1. The recent Report of the Secretary-General of UN on the 'Follow-up to the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family and beyond' states that "the importance of the family in social development deserves to be placed high on the agenda of the Commission for Social Development, especially as it relates to the achievement of the three pillars of the Copenhagen Conference: reduction of poverty, full employment and decent work and social integration". Looking ahead to the work that should be done in the next years, it also proposes "to that end the following major themes [...] to guide the preparations for the observance of the twentieth anniversary:
  - Confronting family poverty and social exclusion;
  - Ensuring work-family balance;
  - Advancing social integration and intergenerational solidarity within families and the communities"<sup>1</sup>.
2. A study published in *Social Forces* by Shelley Clark and Catherine Kenney, which explores the implications of the divorce revolution on parental financial support of adult children, provides more evidence on the correlation between those topics in the context of intergenerational relationship between parents and children<sup>2</sup>.
3. During the last decades, society has witnessed in many parts of the world changes that have affected relationships between parents and children remarkably and modified the way those three topics should be approached. As Clark and Kenney put it, "among the most notable trends are a prolonged financial dependence of adult children on their parents, a dramatic rise in the rate of divorce and remarriage and a steady increase in women's labor force participation and control over assets and wealth".

### **Increasing stage of 'adulthood'**

4. Much recent scholarly and media attention has been given to what is sometimes dubbed the emerging stage of 'adulthood' or 'boomerang kids.' It is becoming increasingly common for children older than 18 to remain at home, supported at least

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Follow-up to the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family and beyond - Report of the Secretary-General' (29 November 2010).

<sup>2</sup> Shelley Clark and Catherine Kenney, 'Is the United States Experiencing a "Matrilineal Tilt"? Gender, Family Structures and Financial Transfers to Adult Children' (*Social Forces*, Volume 88, Number 4, June 2010, pp. 1753-1776).

partially by their parents, particularly while they are completing schooling<sup>3</sup>. In fact, never have so many members of younger generations been so dependent on their parents and grandparents for so long. In the US, for example, “41 percent of so-called ‘sandwich generation’ parents continue to provide at least some financial support to their young adult children”, according to the 2010 Families & Money Survey<sup>4</sup>. The survey polled adults who have at least one child between the ages of 23-28, as well as at least one living parent. In Europe, a study sponsored by Eurostat found that in 2008, about 51 million young adults (45.6%), i.e. 33 million persons aged 18-24 and 17.5 million people aged 25-34, lived in the same dwelling as their parent(s) for some reason. Countries can be grouped into clusters, with, on the one hand, the northern Members States, where young adults tend to leave the parental home earlier, and on the other hand, a group of countries composed of most southern countries, as well as some new Member States, where young adults tend to stay longer with their parent(s)<sup>5</sup>.”

5. Beyond the economic realities, there are some complicated psychological bonds that keep able-bodied college graduates on their parents’ payroll. Unlike the ‘Woodstock generation’, this generation aren’t building their adult identity in reaction to their parents’ way of life. Just as in the 1960s young men and women crowed about not trusting anyone over 30, these days they can’t live without “the same hyper involved parents who got minivan fatigue from ferrying their kids to extracurricular activities and turned college admission into a competitive sport”, as psychiatrist Alvin Rosenfeld says<sup>6</sup>. “They’ve convinced themselves they know how to lead a good life, and they want to get that for their kids, no matter what”. And, by the time those children reach their 20s, says market researcher Neil Howe, “their desires for the future are often indistinguishable from the desires of their parents. The ‘Me Generation’ has simply turned into the ‘Mini-Me Generation’<sup>7</sup>.”

### **Increasing rates of divorce and remarriage**

6. In the US, three out of four divorced people legally remarry, and they usually do so less than four years after divorce. Consequently, almost one-half of the marriages include a remarriage for at least one of the spouses. It will most likely be a second marriage, but it could also be a third, fourth, or more. And one important change in remarriage rates between the 80s and the 90s has been observed —a decrease in rates of legal marriage and a concomitant increase in rates of cohabitation. Further, most remar-

---

<sup>3</sup> Fussell and Furstenberg, *‘On the Frontier of Adulthood: Theory, Research, and Public Policy’* (University of Chicago Press, 2005).

<sup>4</sup> Lieberman Research Worldwide, *‘The 2010 Families & Money survey’* (Charles Schwab & Co., Inc., February 2010).

<sup>5</sup> Marta Choroszewicz, Pascal Wolff, *‘Population and social conditions’* (Eurostat, Statistics in Focus, 50/2010).

<sup>6</sup> Alvin Rosenfeld, *‘The Over-Scheduled Child: Avoiding the Hyper-Parenting Trap’*.

<sup>7</sup> Neil Howe et al., *‘Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation’* (Vintage, 2000).

rying couples cohabit prior to legal marriage, and the length of cohabitation ranges from a few days to many years.

7. Internationally, research focuses on rates of remarriage after divorce. In general, reports from Western countries show remarriage trends that are similar to the US. However, in some Asian countries divorced and remarried families experience more stigma than in Western cultures, making it difficult to collect accurate statistics on step families, who can present themselves as a first-married, nuclear family in many situations. In Nigeria, where marital unions are relatively stable, and fertility is high, men and women remarry very quickly and at high rates after death or divorce. The traditional Muslim Hausa society of northern Nigeria has one of the highest rates of divorce and remarriage in the world. Apparently this is due to wives' fleeing oppressive family situations within a society that expects them to be married. Reports from the Dominican Republic explain that marriage and remarriage rates have decreased in the 1990s for economic reasons; women are choosing single parenting over marriage to men who are increasingly finding themselves unemployed due to a worsening job market. In much of the world, very little is known about divorce and remarriage patterns or about any other types of marital transitions<sup>8</sup>.
8. Consequently, many of the biological parents of today's children are no longer married to each other and have acquired new spouses. The introduction of step parents, who may or may not have previous biological children of their own, undoubtedly complicates intergenerational dialogue between parents and children. Who gets what assistance and who makes these decisions can be a touchy issue, especially when norms about stepparent and stepchild relationships are not clearly defined<sup>9</sup>. Step parents often put immense pressure on themselves to love and get on well with their new partner's children. But in reality, it may be impossible to ever love a step child as if it were your own. This can leave many new step parents feeling guilty and inadequate. Accepting the reality of the relationship can help both you and the children to allow time for feelings to develop.
9. Research also suggests that step mothers tend to have a more difficult time in their role than step fathers. And for 'step mums' who don't already have kids of their own, the new responsibilities can feel overwhelming, while many step fathers take on a lot of responsibility —emotionally, practically and financially— but may feel they have no power and aren't appreciated. And if they have children of their own, they may spend less time with them than with their step children, which can lead to feelings of guilt

---

<sup>8</sup> Cfr. *Remarriage - Factors Affecting Likelihood of Remarriage after Divorce or Death of Spouse, Marital Relationships, Remarriage In Later Life* ('*The Marriage and Family Encyclopedia*').

<sup>9</sup> Cherlin, A. J and Furstenberg, F. F., Jr., 'Step families in the United States: A reconsideration' (*Annual Review of Sociology*, 20, 359-381, 1994).

and resentment, while divorced mothers enjoy far greater contact with, and support from, their adult biological children than do divorced fathers<sup>10</sup>.

10. The bulk of the literature focuses on the impact of divorce and remarriage on upward transfers of emotional support, social contact and care from children to their parents. Both the reciprocity and the solidarity perspective would predict that divorce and remarriage would weaken upward transfers, particularly to fathers. Specifically, if the divorce occurred before the child left the home, there will be reduced contact with, and support from, non-custodial parents (primarily fathers) resulting in a diminished sense of obligation (reciprocity) as well as reduced closeness (solidarity).
11. When using marital satisfaction and fairness toward the respondent as indicators, we find that at low levels of marital quality, there is indeed a smaller increase in depressive symptoms after divorce than at higher levels of quality. Even in poor marriages, however, the effect on depressive symptoms is positive, showing that people do not improve their well-being after divorce. Kalmijn finds that remarriage further weakens ties between parents and their adult children, with this effect being stronger for fathers than mothers. He interprets these findings through the lens of intergenerational solidarity and argues that women in their role as “kin keepers” are primarily responsible for maintaining family ties<sup>11</sup>.
12. Divorce tends to reduce household wealth, especially for women, while remarriage increases it. Research shows that a person who marries—and stays married—accumulates nearly twice as much personal wealth as a person who is single or divorced. And for those who divorce, it’s a bit more expensive than giving up half of everything they own. They lose, on average, three-fourths of their personal net worth<sup>12</sup>.
13. Clark and Kenney suggest that men’s behaviors are consistent with a ‘mating strategy,’ while women are more likely to follow a ‘parental investment strategy’<sup>13</sup>. While step fathers may to some extent compete for mothers’ attention and resources, step fathers appear to augment the amount of money mothers give to their biological children. Much less is known about step mothers’ willingness to support the biological children of their husbands. It appears, however, that women’s dominant parental investment strategy provides relatively little motivation for investing in stepchildren either at young or at older ages<sup>14</sup>.

---

<sup>10</sup> Judith P. M. Soons and Matthijs Kalmijn, ‘Is Marriage More Than Cohabitation? Well-Being Differences in 30 European Countries’ (*Journal of Marriage and Family* 71, December 2009, 1141 – 1157).

<sup>11</sup> Kalmijn, M. and C. Monden, ‘Are the effects of divorce on well-being dependent on marital quality?’ (*Journal of Marriage and Family* 68, 1197-1213, 2006).

<sup>12</sup> Jay L. Zagorsky, ‘Marriage and divorce’s impact on wealth’ (*Journal of Sociology*, vol. 41 no. 4, 406-424, 2005).

<sup>13</sup> Shelley Clark and Catherine Kenney, *op. cit.*

<sup>14</sup> Hofferth, S. & K. Anderson, ‘Biological and Stepfather Investment in Children.’ (*Annual meetings of the American Sociological Association*, August 2001).

14. Considerable research finds that mothers' stronger ties to their biological children facilitate far greater upward transmissions of emotional support and contact with mothers than with fathers<sup>15</sup>. Building on these studies, we find that women may not only influence upward transfers, but also direct downward cash flows, which provides more evidence that as marriage breaks down, we are seeing what sociologist Frank Furstenberg has called a "matrilineal tilt"<sup>16</sup>. That is, as Bradford Wilcox puts it, "children who experience divorce or single parenthood typically end up relying much more on mom than dad. In this case, the adult children of divorce generally can depend more on mom than dad when they need a financial helping hand"<sup>17</sup>.

### **Increasing participation of women in labor force**

15. This topic leads us to considering work-family reconciliation, as it has considerable implications in demography, equality and well-being issues. Chinchilla et al. point out that "initial research in this field focused on analyzing the role of work-family conflict. Today's researchers are focusing on work-family enrichment. Researchers who study conflict argue that having a lot of responsibilities in several different life areas (such as family, work, sports, and politics) can lead to negative behavior and foster stress and anxiety. Research findings tell us that there are several healthy work-related benefits for the employee who is playing an active role at work and in the family. Being an active parent as well as a productive worker facilitates the development of competencies and pleasurable experiences. Evidence suggests that the benefits of being involved in family responsibilities and activities can be gratifying and increase self-esteem, which might in turn strengthen the person's performance and commitment to their job. Therefore, involvement in more than one role at the same time —e.g., family and work— creates positive experiences that carry over from one sphere to another. Organizations should encourage employees to engage in family activities, because they will be energized and more productive"<sup>18</sup>.
16. But multi-tasking is not always easy and sometimes even detrimental. From the experience in Sweden, Himmestrand warns that "we know today from attachment psychology and neurobiology that early separation of infants from parents can, in some children, create chronically low thresholds for stress. This can lower the threshold for anxiety for the rest of the child's life. Early separation would be expected to lead to a less resilient future generation. Medical technology today can actually measure stress

---

<sup>15</sup> Kalmijn, M., 'Gender Differences in the Effects of Divorce, Widowhood, and Remarriage on Intergenerational Support: Does Marriage Protect Fathers?' (*Social Forces* 85, 1079-1104, March 2007).

<sup>16</sup> Frank F. Furstenberg Jr., "On a New Schedule: Transitions to Adulthood and Family Change" (*Transition to Adulthood Volume 20 Number 1 Spring 2010*).

<sup>17</sup> Bradford Wilcox, "The Matrilineal Tilt in the Support of Adult Children" (*Family Scholars*, 2010).

<sup>18</sup> Chinchilla et al., 'Balancing Work-family: no matter where you are' (HRD Press, Massachusetts 2010).

levels in the saliva easily and clearly, making stress research easy to perform, also in small children. We also know today that early exposure to large groups of peers leads to peer orientation, which has detrimental results on psychological maturation, learning, and the transference of culture between generations<sup>19</sup>.” From Canada, Neufeld has explored in detail the causal connections in these phenomena, showing that peer orientation is the root of bullying, teen age gangs, promiscuity and the flat-lining of culture which are all visible to various extent in most western countries<sup>20</sup>.

17. Fogli and Veldkamp propose to overcome it with a model of ‘learning and belief’. The labor force participation of mothers with young children, suggest the economists, is strongly influenced by mothers’ beliefs about the effects of that participation on their children, which are shaped by observing the children of their peers in the labor force. This interaction of action and belief —each informing the other— underlies an economic model that helps explain much about the trends in work patterns and attitudes of women. They contend that after women learn through observation about the impact on children of mothers taking jobs, they modify prior beliefs and use the new ones to guide their decisions about whether to take jobs. As more women join the labor force, more information about child outcomes becomes available, exerting a stronger influence on other mothers, and accelerating participation trends.
18. Added to this mix is women’s increasing control over individual and household resources, through both their increased participation in the labor force and their rising levels of wealth. Parental investment is generally defined as a contribution toward a particular offspring’s survival that entails some cost to the parent, in terms of resources, time, energy and the parent’s ability to make investments in other offspring. This principle is consistent with men’s supposed reluctance to “raise other men’s children” and related insecurities about the paternity of the children they are raising<sup>21</sup>.

### **Conclusions: Increasing research?**

19. Richter et al. have pointed out that today “fathering is as much a sociocultural as a biological construct, and most children experience more than one type of a very wide range of fathering relationships. The continuum encompasses co-residential biological fathers who are present for the entire period of childhood at one end, as well as concerned teachers and other mentors who may take a keen interest in children and encourage them over long periods of their lives, on the other. For this reason, the term social fatherhood has emerged to describe the many ways in which children can be connected to men who take responsibility for a child’s wellbeing.” Therefore, “this

---

<sup>19</sup> Jonas Himmelstrand, *Shared Responsibility Family & Society - The Question of Choice* (2011).

<sup>20</sup> Gordon Neufeld, *Hold On to Your Kids: Why Parents Need to Matter More Than Peers* (Ballantine Books, 2006).

<sup>21</sup> Wilson, M., and Daly, M., ‘Risk of maltreatment of children living with step parents’ (Lancaster, Hawthorne, NY, 1987).



state of affairs requires a fairly dramatic readjustment of our perception of fatherhood and how fathers may be involved in the lives of children. The increasing diversity of fatherhood, and the fact that fatherhood is frequently evaluated against a 'maternal template' (that is what mothers usually do for children), complicate research on the effects of fatherhood on children's development. What is clear, however, is that fathers can have both direct and indirect or mediated effects on children<sup>22</sup>." There is no doubt that we need more research to be done in order to help children by helping parents to fulfil their role in whatever circumstances they have to face.

20. One of the elements that should be taken into account is that, if the primary job of a parent is to prepare their children for how things really work, they should teach them that in the real world you don't always get what you want. If parenting is about transmitting the knowledge and skills necessary to become independent adults, self-sufficient and upstanding members of society, parents should set limits to the behaviour of their children. Too many young adults today have unrealistic expectations when they initially go out on their own, primarily because their parents failed to do so. Many feel they are entitled to immediately live a middle-class life style or better, because that's what they're used to, and because they haven't learned that there is a difference between helping and enabling. As a result, they can easily get frustrated or demotivated or unmotivated when they realize that is not the case. As Taylor Gatto puts it, "our official assumptions about the nature of modern childhood are dead wrong. Children allowed to take responsibility and given a serious part in the larger world are always superior to those merely permitted to play and be passive. At the age of twelve, Admiral Farragut got his first command. I was in fifth grade when I learned of this. Had Farragut gone to my school he would have been in seventh. You might remember that as a rough index of how far our maturity has been retarded<sup>23</sup>."
21. How intergenerational exchange is affected by the distribution of resources in the larger society also requires more investigation, in order to make transition into adulthood a more comprehensive path. "Moving out of the natal household has become precarious for those with limited means. Unlike the not-so-distant past, when marriage provided an easy (though not always a successful) route out, fewer young adults today are willing to commit to a permanent union, in part because they lack the resources and the mindset to settle down and in part because they lack confidence that marriage provides the security that it once did. These conditions help to explain why parenthood now often precedes marriage for many young adults growing up in disadvantaged households. By contrast, for youth from advantaged families who are able to complete college, the extended period of growing up brings few costs and many benefits. The longer educational process provides greater opportunities for self-exploration, includ-

---

<sup>22</sup> *Men in Families and Family Policy in a Changing World*, Division for Social Policy and Development – DESA (United Nations).

<sup>23</sup> John Taylor Gatto, 'Underground History of American Education' (The Oxford Village Press & The Odysseus Group, 2003).

ing the search for stable life partners. Delaying marriage and parenthood, it appears, results in wiser marriage choices and consequently more stable family situations and more positive environments for childbearing and childrearing<sup>24</sup>.”

22. Consequently, we believe that the upcoming anniversary of the International Year of the Family presents an opportunity not only to draw attention to challenges faced by families in different parts of the world, but also to promote the necessary research about each one of the proposed major themes, and we suggest taking into account the previous considerations for it.

February 2011.

---

<sup>24</sup> *Fussell and Furstenberg, op. cit.*

# *Antonio Monserrat*

## **Existing frameworks for dialogue and mutual understanding across generations: family, community, educational institutions and workplace**

Good Morning, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am here as a representative of the International Federation for Family Development (IFFD), which was founded in Orlando (USA) in 1998, as a successor of the International Family Foundation (Fondation Internationale De La Famille), founded in Rome in 1978. IFFD has the consultative status with ECOSOC (Special by now, waiting for the General, as it has been unanimously recommended by the ECOSOC NGO Committee). We are active in family enrichment in more than 60 countries around the world, and have celebrated up to now 18 International Congresses including participants of the five continents.

I will concentrate my intervention on three of the proposed questions:

1. Role of the family in promoting dialogue and understanding
2. Impact of parenting on youth development
3. Role of educational institutions in promoting dialogue and mutual understanding

with special incidence on the relationships among parents and adolescents. I will continue saying *adolescents* as far as *teenagers* are now insufficient to cover the complexities of the period between youth and adulthood. The critical phase between adolescence and maturity is now, in many countries, especially in those most developed, much longer and much more complicated than in previous times.

This intervention is in line with the goals of the International Year of Youth( IYY), that we are celebrating under the title *Dialogue and mutual understanding*, especially in what refers to *promote the ideals of peace, respect for human rights and freedoms, and solidarity*. These ideals are universal values, that is to say, fundamental human rights. In that sense, the family is the *place* for the human rights, something we will mention after.

We will also keep in mind the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY), as long as it concerns a *healthy lifestyle, especially during transitional periods, such as youth to adulthood*.

There is a widespread agreement on the matter that *the family unit continues to be the primary and best structure for developing healthy, correct, natural and loving relationships across generations*. Consequently, in the transitional phase from childhood to adulthood, the interac-

tion within the family structure is particularly important. When young people are growing up, they generally take over the cultural norms and values of their parents and grandparents, and project them onto the outside world. Therefore, the family atmosphere is of particular importance in the socialization process of the young people, affecting the well being of the entire society.

The family is also the place where Human Rights are taught and transmitted.

Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights”.

Who is not capable of seeing that this statement is especially true in families where children, siblings, grandchildren... are born and remain free and equal in dignity and rights just because they are human beings and they live in a community characterized by love and respect? What child is not considered as custodian and holder of fundamental rights since the very moment his or her conception is known by their parents, mother and father? What brother or sister does not see his brothers and sisters as equals, equally loved by their parents?

In particular, in the family, fundamental human values of life, marriage, freedom of religion and education are lived the best friendly way possible, —“*user-friendly*” we could say in terms of current technology—.

In this environment of love, dignity and joy (we refer to ordinary families, not to not-structured families) the human being learns to recognize, enjoy and be able to transmit through his or her own family, the human rights.

The United Nations on the occasion of the declaration of 1994 as International Year of the Family, in a very important document that in my opinion has not been sufficiently developed yet, announced the programme for the mentioned International Year of the Family, and under the slogan “Families as agents for the protection of human values, cultural identity and historical continuity,” recognized that “families are important vehicles for the preservation and transmission of cultural values.” It also proclaimed that “families offer valuable influence for crime and delinquency prevention” and, in conclusion, that “family keeps on being a primary source and conduit for the transmission of values, culture and information, particularly to children and young people”.

After these important statements, the UN document also recognized, although without having had excessive practical consequences so far, that “family should therefore be supported and encouraged to fulfill these important tasks for the benefit of all society”.

However, it is also clear that there is a conviction, no less generalized, regarding the sometimes extreme difficulties experienced in the communication between parents and adolescents, which frequently is not just difficult, but non-existent. Rather than “*dialogue and mutual un-*

*derstanding across generations”, it would be more appropriate, in these cases to talk about an “intergenerational void between parents and teenagers”.*

In this speech, I will analyze and suggest possible solutions to this grave problem. Personally, I believe that, first and foremost, it is vital that adults – particularly parents, but also educators, teachers, politicians, police men and women, etc – have a clear understanding of what adolescence is, and what it means. Secondly, we will look at active and passive communication techniques for adolescents. And lastly, I will make some recommendations, in response to the request by the organizers of this conference “*to provide policy recommendations*” given that “*an emphasis will be placed on policy actions, whether at the local, national, regional or international levels*”.

## **Child rearing challenges in adolescence**

### **The initial surprise**

Normally, adolescence starts abruptly – at least for the parents. Their previously polite, obedient and well-behaved child suddenly adopts a clearly *rebellious* attitude.

This is the beginning of a long process which will last at least several years, or, in some cases, a whole lifetime: affective immaturity can even give rise to certain legal causes for marriage annulment, or continued professional and/or emotional instability, including problems with drugs, gambling, alcohol, etc.

### **Some basic concepts**

**Adolescence is a completely normal and necessary period of time:**

Whereas infancy is a period of organization,

adolescence is a period of disorganization,

and adulthood a period of reorganization.

We have to be prepared: **it’s going to happen whether we like it or not!**

It’s even been said, quite graphically, that a teenager who doesn’t *act* like a schizophrenic, *is* a schizophrenic.

**So, what is adolescence exactly?**

Adolescence is a period which is characterized by **instability** – particularly emotional – and **constant conflict**, primarily between the teenager and him or herself, but also with the envi-

ronment that they have been surrounded by until then. The conflict may particularly be with the parents, but can also extend to school, religious and political beliefs, etc. Up until this point, the young person has been subject to the influences of parents and educators without questioning them too much. However, as man is a rational and free being, he must adopt the convictions and attitudes which will shape his life in his own way. This is the origin of the apparent *rebellion* which characterizes this whole period.

The task faced by the adolescent is not an easy one. **They make their loved ones and the people around them suffer, but they also have a very hard time themselves.** Furthermore, today's society is even more complex, more changeable, more insecure, more confused, more manipulative... But it's also freer and more informed, it provides more opportunities, and we are more aware of injustices.

At this point, it's not even a question of "generational conflict", but rather "parallel worlds":

The *young person's* world, with its corresponding values, vocabulary, nocturnal schedules, fashions, motorbikes, piercings, etc.

And, on the other hand, the *adult* world with its social conventions, vocabulary, values, songs, music, cars, etc.

**Adolescents don't know what they want; they only know what they think they *don't* want.**

**Lack of sense of reality:** Another typical characteristic of the adolescent is the lack of realism. **They have no sense of time, for example.** They feel that everything they need or want is *really urgent*. However, they keep putting off dealing with things that they don't feel like doing; for example, they think they've got all the time in the world to study a subject that doesn't interest them, even if the exam is right around the corner.

In short, adolescence is a period of *crisis*. However, a "crisis" doesn't necessarily have to be negative. Its definition, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, is:

"A turning point in the progress of anything; also, a state of affairs in which a decisive change for better or worse is imminent".

### **The rules of the game**

1. As we saw earlier, **we need to be prepared:** this is something that is going to happen whether we like it or not.
2. The most important thing is to **stay calm.**
3. It's also possible that this period **lasts quite a lot longer than we expected or imagined.**

4. We have to establish **some ground rules that should be few, but firm**. Here, the principle “*non multa, sed multum*”, which also applies to knowledge, is relevant. Basically, it means that it’s quality not quantity that counts. Or, in other words, we should try to achieve a lot with only a few rules. Obviously, it’s important to avoid arbitrariness. Teenagers are very sensitive to injustice, not to mention incoherence. “Don’t shout”, says the parent to the teenager, invariably shouting themselves; “Don’t be lazy”, while the parents themselves are wasting time; “You need to study”, as the parents sit around watching television; etc.

5. **Respect their privacy**. We must be demanding of adolescents, whilst respecting their privacy at all times. It goes without saying that we should never go through their drawers, or read their diary, etc. Parents need to learn to control their own curiosity.

6. **Respect their freedom**. The aim of education is to achieve freedom. Everything we do for our children is covered by one of these three stages: **GIVE THEM LIFE, TEACH THEM HOW TO LIVE, and LET THEM LIVE THEIR OWN LIFE**.

7. It’s important to remember that, despite appearances, **adolescents *do* progress** and we need to try not to be overly affected by apparent setbacks. The education and progress of the personality develop in a *spiral* which means that even if the teenager is at the bottom of a loop, they are still progressing.

8. We have to be **optimists**; in fact, parents and educators have to be blind optimists, but we shouldn’t forget that, “*in this field, good intentions and love itself aren’t enough. Parents and educators need to acquire certain knowledge and skills (or “savoir faire”)*”. [1].

General principles which can help us to get through this stage include:

**Accepting that adolescents are the way they are**, with all their good and bad points. All parents, particularly mothers, get carried away imagining their child’s future: they imagine a profession, an “ideal” boyfriend or girlfriend, etc. However, these images of are frequently contradicted by reality; we have to accept this reality and adapt ourselves to it.

We have to accept our children the way they are and appreciate them despite any “defects” they may have. The following **errors** are very common:

- **Wanting our children to achieve more than we did**
- **Wanting our children to achieve what we couldn’t**
- **Wanting our children to be the same as us**

**Respecting their freedom:**

In this respect, there are **two extremes: excessive permissiveness and authoritarianism**.

**Excessive permissiveness** stems from the concept that children are good by nature, and we should let them follow all their desires, instincts and leanings, and that it is society, with all its rules, that makes them bad. This is exactly what ROUSSEAU said, but by doing so we effectively produce *good savages*.

The other extreme is **authoritarianism**. Giving orders for the sake of it, without giving reasons or explanations... “Because I’m your father”, “Because I say so”, etc.

**The first option, permissiveness, destroys responsibility; the second, authoritarianism, destroys freedom.**

These days, there is another, very negative, factor which exacerbates the innate difficulties of adolescence. This is the “**ideologies**”, or their remains, which corrupt the sense of freedom. We don’t have time to go into detail on this point right now, so we’ll just make a note of it.

Typical reactions include: “A normal process, with few results.”

What are the most common reactions from parents faced with the *offensives* of their adolescent children? GINOTT, quoted by Ana María Navarro [2], describes them as:

“First of all, severe; if this fails, they turn friendly; when that doesn’t work, they try to reason; and then, feeling ridiculous, they try correction; and, finally, end up going back to threats and punishment.”

In other words, the cycle is:

**Severe**

**Friendly**

**Reasoning**

**Corrective**

**Threatening**

**Punishing**

**Friendly**

**And so on...**

As you can see, this is a perfect example of a vicious circle, completely frustrating and, above all, totally useless, if not counterproductive.



### **What we do... And what we should do**

**Are parents also schizophrenic?** We've talked about the schizophrenia of adolescents, but we mustn't forget that parents can also be schizophrenic. We sometimes see parents who are *completely authoritarian* regarding things like studying (and particularly school results), profession, clothing, the choice of boyfriend or girlfriend, etc, yet are *completely permissive or guiltily ignorant* when it comes to reading matter, excursions, travel, study trips abroad, going out at night, alcohol, cannabis, etc.

**Are we realists?** Parents also have to be *realists*. When a child isn't as smart, or as hard-working, or as good as the parents hoped or dreamed, it's time to be realistic and adjust the goals that have been set so that the child can achieve them. This is especially important when it comes to matters such as **love** ("I wish he or she had fallen in love with X or Y") and **professional career**: University, professional training, etc. This is particularly important in the case of parents who shine professionally. They need to be **humble**, and learn to love and accept their child just the way they are, above all, never showing their disappointment, humiliating their child, giving up on them or ignoring them.

**Overprotection is a very common – and very dangerous – defect.** Overprotection, in the short term, avoids problems with the child or adolescent; however, in the medium and, above all, long term, this can create problems that will be very difficult to resolve later on: shyness, withdrawal, complexes, selfishness, inability to relate to people of the opposite sex, or, at the opposite extreme, rebellion, bad manners, verbal and physical violence and even, in some cases, leaving home.

### **Use your sense of humor**

Teenagers are extremely sensitive to ridicule and they detect it immediately. For this reason, it's important to see the funny side of the matter in hand, as long as it's the right moment. The following – real – conversation between mother and daughter illustrates this:

“– I want you to accept me for who I am.

– So who are you then, darling? If you don't know, how am I supposed to?

### **The “Don't” method of child rearing**

Many parents base their method of child rearing on the adverb **“Don't”**: Don't do this, don't do that, don't get earrings, don't get a piercing, don't have long hair, don't be late, etc. On this matter, Miralbell says:

“How effective can an child rearing method based on “Don’t” and “No” be for adolescents when **their heart is begging them for “Yes’s”**? What a bitter contrast for many teenagers to hear only “Don’t” and “No” at home when in other, often more undesirable, places people are stimulating their hopes and dreams, their desire to deliver and their minor vanities!” [3].

### **Educational aims: “Educate for freedom”**

What is the objective of the education we give our children? Frequently – particularly these days – it is the parents who, either consciously or unconsciously, decide the future that they and their children will fight to achieve: the *social and economic position*, the *prestige*, the *money*, and it is all too common that genuine transcendental human values – happiness, responsibility, emotional well-being, generosity, etc – are forgotten. What we are actually doing is confusing *personality* – which is an attribute of our ‘being’ – with *money*, *fame* or *prestige* – which are attributes of what we have or what we do. And our children see this perfectly.

### **Some important issues:**

I’m sure you will all agree that adolescence is a very broad subject matter, so we are going to focus on a few points of particular relevance:

#### **“Everyone else does it”:**

We all know that this is one of the teenager’s favorite arguments. It has different variations:

- a) “*Everyone else has one.*”
- b) “*Everyone else wears them.*”
- c) “*Everyone else is allowed to.*”
- d) “*You’re so old-fashioned. You’re completely out of touch.*”
- e) “*But Sally’s mum let’s her.*” (Always using the friend with the strictest, most old-fashioned parents as an example.)

What can we do when faced with this atomic argument?

The fact that everyone does something can only be a justification for good or neutral behavior, never for bad.

It is very likely that Sally’s mother is listening to the exact same argument, but this time it’s you who’s the parent being used as an example. Watch out for teenage conspiracies – they’re masters in this area!

It's important that from an early age children see that their parents don't do "what everyone else does" if those things are immoral or hurtful.

It helps our children a lot if we spend time with other families who don't do "what everyone else does," but instead do the same things as our own family; for example, attend church services, go on healthy excursions, see fun films, etc. In short, *instead of complaining about our environment, we need to create our own healthy environments.*

### **School performance.**

It's normal for adolescents to experience a decline in their performance at school: they are "invaded by idleness"; they are experiencing physical and physiological changes; their interests and goals are changing; and they are suffering excessive sentimentalism and fantasization, amongst other things. In other words, they're not just being lazy!

Faced with this decline, as parents, we have to help our children increase their motivation and commitment to study, encouraging curiosity and helping our children see that studying will help them to satisfy it. Parents should encourage their children to read from an early age and read along with them to explain what's happening when necessary. Above all, we have to **value the effort more than the result.**

If a child makes an effort, but gets bad results, the parents will have to help him or her improve their way of working, ensuring an appropriate environment for effective studying and offering them extra classes, if needed. However, it's important not to overwhelm them, and to surround them with the atmosphere of *sympathetic kindness* that we've been talking about.

In the same way, just because a child gets good results, it doesn't mean we can let our guard down. Some children get very good grades without making an effort and we should try to expand their fields of interest, but without stressing them out by pushing them to the limit. We don't want to run the risk of *burnout*.

Furthermore, as parents, we have to examine our own **motivations**:

Do we mainly work to make money?

Do we value work that makes more money over work that does something useful for others?

Do we habitually complain about our work: that it's dull, that we have too much, that we're not appreciated, etc?

Our attitudes and motivations have a big influence on our teenagers, who are our most ruthless critics.

In any case, a decline in school performance is normally a temporary situation. The habits and values acquired in the pre-adolescent period are of vital importance and will shine through sooner rather than later.

The study environment at home is very important: be careful to avoid distractions from television, radio, shouting, etc.

It's also essential to have close collaboration with our children's teachers and educators, especially as it is becoming increasingly common to find teachers and parents on opposite sides of the fence.

### **Our children's friends.**

This is another very important area which can be divided into two groups:

A) **Unsuitable friends:** First of all, it's important to carefully judge if the friend is suitable or not, always focusing on the child himself, not on his parents. We mustn't get carried away by our own prejudices, or our own self-respect. If we're sure that the friend isn't suitable, it's best not to attack the issue head on; it's more effective to use a circular maneuver, for example:

Ask your child some careful questions to help them start to question for themselves whether or not their friend is a good person.

Always using this same indirect method, help them start to see the negative side of the friend's behavior.

As an *atomic bomb*, some people suggest inviting the friend to stay for a few days – either over the weekend or in the holidays. They are likely to quickly start to show their true colors and your child will see for themselves – or with the help of their brothers and sisters, particularly if they are also adolescents – what that person is really like.

B) **Suitable friends:** In the case of suitable friends, we should encourage our children to invite them over to our house and vice versa, allow them to attend educational, cultural and sporting events together, and make an effort to get to

know their parents and become friends with them. However, we should never directly show our interest in encouraging the friendship, as it could lead to the child breaking it off just to avoid doing what his parents want him to do.

## **The big secret: Parental Love**

Parental love which remains constant through all kinds of situations, big and small, leads to friendship with our children.

Being friends with our children means spending time with them. Some people claim that this should be “quality–time” because they don’t have “quantity–time”. Whilst they may have a point, I believe that it’s enough just to have “time–time”. And as time flies, each stage in our children’s development goes by so quickly that it would be a shame to waste it.

## **Some Specific Policy Recommendations**

Policies regarding adolescents have to respond to the main problems that affect them, going beyond the family sphere and into the social environment.

These problems include: drugs; alcohol; gambling; school failure; irresponsible sexual behavior; a lack of professional skills which allow the teenager to earn an honest living; a lack of appreciation of what we have when we have too much (a common problem in well–off societies); etc.

It’s no good to have a policy that is solely negative, repressive or punitive. Or, at least, it’s not enough. We need to have clearly positive policies that will serve to motivate our teenagers. Positive policies could include:

A sports policy which encourages and rewards sporting efforts and achievements. Sports men and women can easily become *idols* for young people and it’s natural that they want to imitate them. A classic example is Rafael Nadal, a country–man of mine, who is currently the top tennis player worldwide, and who is able to overcome the many physical problems that affect him thanks to his effort and willpower.

A policy that encourages associations for young people – and the family in general – which organize excursions, competitions, clubs where young people can get together with the discreet supervision of adults, etc.

*Ad hoc* cultural policies, including, for example, one which promotes theater plays performed by and/or organized by young people; literary, poetry or music competitions; newspapers or magazines aimed at and edited by young people; etc.

Education policies aimed specifically at young people, offering them professional and/or university–level education and training.

Basic sex education policies which emphasize the potential negative consequences of irresponsible sexual behavior, respecting human dignity, the right to life and the legitimate rights of the parents, who are the primary and principal educators.

In general, policies which encourage and reward genuine values of freedom, effort, loyalty, patriotism (in its positive sense), solidarity, offering icons of merit and ability without discrimination based on gender, race, social or economic position, religion or culture.

Young people are, by nature, optimists, and so should we be.

Thank you very much.

---

[1] John Paul II: *Address to the III International Family Congress*, Rome, 30 October 1978.

[2] *Algunas cuestiones entre los padres y los adolescentes*, University of Navarre, OF-83, Pamplona, 1977, p. 3.

[3] *¿Entiendes a tu hijo adolescente?*, Fert, Barcelona, 1982, p. 63.

# *Annexes*

## Annotated Agenda

<b>8 March 2010</b>	
8:00-9:00	<b>Registration</b>
9:00-9:15	<b>Welcome by</b> H.E Abdulla Bin Nasser Al khalifa, Chair of the Board of the Doha International Institute.
9:15-9:30	<b>Opening Statement by</b> H.E Noor Al Malki, SG of Supreme Council for family affairs.
9:30-9:45	<b>Objectives and expected outcomes of the meeting</b> Ms. Renata Kaczmarek, Focal Point, Programme on the Family, Social Integration Branch, Division for Social Policy and Development (DSPD), UN/DESA
10:00-10:30	<b>Break</b>
10:30-12:15	<p><b>Session I: The Framework of the International Year of Youth and best ways to achieve it</b></p> <p><u>Moderator:</u> Professor Pat Dolan</p> <p><u>Introductory remarks:</u> Mr. Falko Mohrs, Ms. Nicola Shepherd</p> <p><u>Questions for discussion:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How do we raise awareness of youth issues and increase the involvement of all stakeholders?</li> <li>○ How can we mobilize, engage and increase youth participation and partnership?</li> <li>○ By what ways and means can we connect and build bridges among youth to increase intercultural dialogue?</li> <li>○ What institutional arrangements are needed to promote the objectives of the Year?</li> </ul> <p><i>Roundtable discussion</i></p>
12:15-13:45	<b>Lunch Break</b>
13:45-15:15	<b>Session II: Priority areas of the World Programme of Action for Youth and their relevance to the objectives of the International Year</b>



	<p><b>of Youth.</b></p> <p><u>Moderator:</u> Mr. Ahmad Alhindawi</p> <p><u>Introductory remarks:</u> Ms. Jacqueline Koroi, Professor Rami Khouri, Mr. Ahmad Younis, Ms. Gihan Abouzeid</p> <p><u>Issues for discussion:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Youth education</li> <li>○ Youth employment</li> <li>○ Youth participation</li> <li>○ Girls and young women's involvement</li> <li>○ Intergenerational relations</li> </ul> <p><i>Roundtable discussion</i></p>
15:15-15:45	<b>Break</b>
15:45-17:45	<p><b>Session III: Intergenerational Relations</b></p> <p><u>Moderator:</u> Ms Donna Butts</p> <p><u>Introductory remarks:</u> Professor Makiwane Monde, Professor Ana, Maria Goldani, Professor Jenny Gierveld, Rasha Fityan</p> <p><u>Issues for discussion</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Transitions to adulthood</li> <li>○ Challenges of ageing</li> <li>○ Intergenerational solidarity</li> <li>○ Other issues</li> </ul> <p><i>Roundtable discussion</i></p>
17:45-18:00	Wrap-up by the Rapporteur of day one

<b>9 March 2011</b>	
9:00-10:45	<p><b>Session IV: Overview of youth and family related issues at regional levels.</b></p> <p><u>Moderator:</u> Mr. Rami Khouri</p> <p><u>Introductory remarks:</u> Mr. Khaled Louhichi, Mr. Paul Tacon, Mr. Ahmad Alhindawi, Ms. Maha Fayyad</p>

	<p><u>Questions for discussion:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What inter-generational issues are of particular concern in the regions?</li> <li>○ What national/regional initiatives have been taken to promote intergenerational, intercultural dialogue and understanding?</li> </ul> <p><i>Presentation of national case studies and discussion</i></p>
10:45-11.00	<b>Break</b>
11:00-12:30	<p><b>Session V: Existing frameworks for dialogue and mutual understanding across generations: family, community, educational institutions and workplace.</b></p> <p><u>Moderator:</u> Mr. Falko Mohrs</p> <p><u>Introductory remarks:</u> Ms. Samah Hadid, Professor Thang Leng Leng, Ms. Donna Butts</p> <p><u>Questions for discussion:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What is the role of the family in promoting dialogue and mutual understanding across generations?</li> <li>○ How do changing family trends influence cross-generational communication? (Demographic changes, living arrangements, labour and market trends, migration, etc.)</li> <li>○ What is the impact of parenting on youth development?</li> <li>○ What is the impact of extended families vs. nuclear families on intergenerational communication and solidarity?</li> <li>○ What role can young people play in promoting inter-generational dialogue within their communities/family/education?</li> <li>○ What is the role of communities in shaping intergenerational dialogue?</li> <li>○ What is the role of educational institutions in promoting dialogue and mutual understanding across generations?</li> <li>○ What are the measures that could be taken in work place to support intergenerational understanding?</li> <li>○ What work-life balance strategies can be used to positively influence intergenerational interactions?</li> </ul> <p><i>Roundtable discussion</i></p>
12:30-14:00	<b>Lunch break</b>

14:00-15:30	<p><b>Session VI: Lessons learnt from existing approaches to promote dialogue and understanding and enhance youth involvement.</b></p> <p><u>Moderator:</u> Ms Gihan Abouzeid</p> <p><u>Introductory remarks:</u> Professor Pat Dolan, Ms Paola Silva, Marwa Jabou</p> <p><u>Questions for discussion:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What socio-economic policies and practices can facilitate intergenerational dialogue?</li> <li>• What are the impediments of such policies of such policies in specific country circumstances?</li> <li>• How can youth be involved in the development, monitoring, assessment and implementation of policies an programmes promoting dialogue and mutual understanding?</li> <li>• What frameworks should be created to engage youth?</li> </ul> <p><i>Roundtable discussion</i></p>
15:30-16:00	<b>Break</b>
16:00-17:45	<p><b>Session VII: Distillation of findings and finalization of recommendations</b></p> <p>Ms Amina Mesdoua, DIIFSD</p> <p>Ms Nicola Shepherd, UN/DESA</p>
17:45-18:00	<b>Adoption of the recommendations</b>
18:00 -18:15	<p><b>Concluding remarks, farewell and closing</b></p> <p>Dr Richard Wilkins, DIIFSD</p> <p>Ms. Renata Kaczmarska, UN/DESA</p>

## **List of Participants**

### **EXPERTS**

#### **Donna Butts**

Executive Director  
Generations United/USA

#### **Monde Makiwane**

Human Sciences Research Council  
Pretoria  
South Africa

#### **Pat Dolan**

UNESCO Chair and Director  
Child and Family Research Centre  
School of Political Science and Sociology  
NUI Galway

#### **Khaled Louhichi**

Director - Population Policy and Migration Department  
Director youth and sport department /League of Arab States

#### **Rami G. Khouri**

Director  
Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs  
American University of Beirut/lebanon

#### **Jenny Gierveld**

Prof em. Faculty of Social Sciences, VU University Amsterdam  
Member of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences  
Honorary Fellow Nederland's Interdisciplinary Demographics Institute (NIDI)

#### **Thang Leng Leng**

Department of Japanese Studies  
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences  
National University of Singapore

**Ana Maria Goldani**

Associate Research Professor (Department of Sociology and Office of Population Research)  
Princeton University, USA.

**Gihan Abouzeid**

Senior Researcher in Human Rights Studies  
Cairo, Egypt

**Ahmed Younis**

Director of Strategic Partnerships & Communications  
Silatech/Qatar

**Paul Tacon**

Associate Social Affairs Officer  
Population and Social Development Section  
Social Development Division  
UN-ESCWA

**YOUTH REPRESENTATIVES**

**Samah Hadid**

Australian Youth Representative to the United Nations

**Ahmad Alhindawi**

Expert- Directorate of Youth and Sport  
League of Arab States

**Falko Mohrs**

Board Member  
European Youth Forum

**Rasha R. Fityan**

Capacity Building Department Manager  
Ta'awon: Conflict Resolution Institute  
Member of the Youth Advisory Committee / League of Arab States.

**Maha Fayyad Mohamed**

President  
AIESEC in Qatar – Expansion

**Paola Ximena Silva Cortés**

Former President, International Federation of Liberal Youth, IFLRY  
Colombia

**Jacque Koroi**

Board Member  
Pacific Youth Council

**Marwa Jabou**

Youth representative  
Tunisia

**OBSERVERS**

**Simone Cecchini**

Social Affairs Officer  
Social Development Division Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean  
(ECLAC)  
United Nations  
Santiago de Chile

**Lara Hussein**

Chief, Child Protection  
UNICEF Gulf Area Office /Abu Dhabi

**Hassan Musa Yousif**

UNECA/ACGSD  
Human and Social Development Section.  
Addis Ababa  
Ethiopia

**Ignacio Socías**

Director General  
The Family Watch  
Madrid ,spain

**M. Antonio Montserrat**

High Court Judge  
Member of the Spanish General Council of the Judiciary  
IFFD Representative.

## **UNDESA**

### **Renata Kaczmarska-Photakis**

Focal Point

UN Programme on the Family

Division for Social Policy and Development Department of Economic

### **Nicola Shepherd**

UN Focal Point on Youth

United Nations Programme on Youth

### **Elizabeth Niland**

Associate Social Affairs Officer

United Nations Programme on youth

## **DIIFSD**

### **Richard G Wilkins**

Executive Director

Doha International Institute for Family Studies & Development

### **Amina Mesdoua**

Director, Family Policy

Doha International Institute for Family Studies & Development

### **Nada Frangieh**

Asst. Director, Family Policy

Doha international Institute for Family Studies & Development





الهيئة العامة  
للإدارة  
القطرية  
للدراسات  
والبحوث  
والشؤون  
الاجتماعية  
والثقافية  
والفنية  
والاعلامية  
والرياضية  
والفنية  
والاعلامية  
والرياضية

Qatar Foundation  
for Family Studies and Development



United Nations  
Department of Economic and Social Affairs  
Division for Social Policy and Development

# “Dialogue and Mutual Understanding across Generations”

## 8-9 March 2011, Doha-Qatar

