PART ONE

YOUTH in a GLOBAL ECONOMY

GLOBAL TRENDS

Chapter 1

Global market forces are playing ***an increasingly important role in determining the prospects for poverty reduction, quality education, and decent work for all young people. Access to quality education, decent employment and a life without poverty is to a large extent determined by the ability of communities and countries to participate in the global economy. For this reason, youth development cannot be considered separately from the wider development picture.***

Globalization has an economic, social and cultural impact on all sectors of society. Poverty cannot be analysed without taking into account the effects of the growing interconnectedness and interaction within and between countries and regions. Some have clearly benefited from the increased interdependence; in East Asia, for example, significant economic growth lifted over 200 million people out of poverty in a single decade. However, there are many who remain outside the realm of global economic activity and are being left behind; within and between countries, the income gap is widening (World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, 2004). About 2 billion people are not benefiting from globalization, especially in parts of sub-Saharan Africa, Western Asia, and the former Soviet Union (World Bank, 2004). A number of countries in these regions have experienced declining economic growth, the loss of employment, and persistently low incomes, poor education, and inadequate health provision (United Nations, 2004b; Collier and Dollar, 2001).

Among the 15 areas of policy priority identified in the World Programme of Action for Youth and General Assembly resolution 58/133 of 2003, globalization, education, employment, and poverty and hunger relate to the globalized economy and are therefore addressed in part I of this publication. The characteristics of young people in hunger and poverty are explored in greater detail in chapters 2 and 3; the second chapter presents an in-depth analysis of the dimensions and policy implications of youth in extreme poverty, while the third chapter covers chronic and life-course poverty and the intergenerational transmission of poverty.

GLOBALIZATION

Young people have an ambiguous economic and cultural relationship with the globalizing world. They are relatively adaptable and therefore perhaps best able to make use of the new opportunities presented; they are the best-educated generation, particularly in areas relating to new information and communication technology (ICT); they benefit from economic growth; many travel around the globe for work, studies, exchange projects and vacations; and the telephone and Internet enable them to stay in touch with friends and relatives all over the world (Boswell and Crisp, 2004). There are still many young people, however, especially in developing countries, who lack the economic power to benefit from the opportunities globalization offers. They have been left out of the modernization process and remain on the other side of the digital divide, but are simultaneously finding their cultural identity and local traditions threatened.

The challenge for policymakers is to support youth with programmes and policies that provide them with ICT access and empower them to take advantage of the opportunities and benefits offered by globalization, but that also protect them from its negative

consequences. Some of the issues relevant to the lives of young people in this context, including the distribution of employment opportunities, migration, global consumerism, and participation in anti-globalization movements, are examined in greater detail below.

Globalization has brought about substantial changes in the job market to which young people, as newcomers, may be particularly vulnerable. New technologies have replaced manual labour in a number of industries, mainly affecting low-skill jobs in the manufacturing and service sectors. Even in China, which has experienced remarkable economic growth, unemployment is rising owing to the progressive shift from agriculture to less employment-intensive manufacturing and service industries, the reform of State-owned enterprises, and the reorganization of the public sector (World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, 2004; International Labour Organization, 2004b). Trade liberalization has forced companies to become more flexible and competitive. Many have grown increasingly dependent on low-cost, flexible labour, often employed on an irregular basis. Jobs ranging from semi-skilled work in call centres to sophisticated programming assignments are increasingly being transferred to low-wage countries; this represents perhaps the best-known example of the global shift in employment opportunities for young people (Chowdhury, 2002).

Young people have always constituted a significant proportion of migrant workers. Foreign investment often creates job opportunities in and around cities, inducing rural workers to move to urban areas. In 2003, 48 per cent of the global population lived in urban areas, and this figure is projected to rise to more than 50 per cent by 2007 (United Nations, 2004a). In 2002, there were 175 million international migrants. Most migration data are not disaggregated by age (International Labour Organization, 2004b); however, relevant statistics suggest that an estimated 26 million migrants, or around 15 per cent of the total, are youth.[1] Data on the inflows and outflows of young labour migrants would represent a useful contribution to analyses of the global youth employment situation.

Around the world, many young people nurse hopes of seeking their fortunes in richer countries, often motivated by inaccurate information and unrealistically high expectations. Every day, thousands of young people either willingly or unwillingly join the ranks of illegal migrants. A parallel industry of illicit travel agents, job brokers and middlemen has evolved to "assist" these migrants, many of whom are victims of human trafficking (International Organization for Migration, 1997). The past two decades have seen a dramatic increase in the trafficking of girls and young women, who are often lured into prostitution. Young women and girls who are impoverished and uneducated and who may be members of indigenous, ethnic minority, rural or refugee groups are most vulnerable to this form of exploitation (James and Atler, 2003).

In order to discourage youth migration with its attendant risks and disadvantages, Governments need to create viable employment alternatives for young people in their home countries. At a more fundamental level, action must be taken to address root causes such as poverty and thereby contribute to narrowing the inequalities between rich and poor nations (International Organization for Migration, 1997). Efforts are also required to ensure that young people are provided with sufficient education, training and skill development to gain the knowledge and confidence they need to become successful participants in their national labour markets.

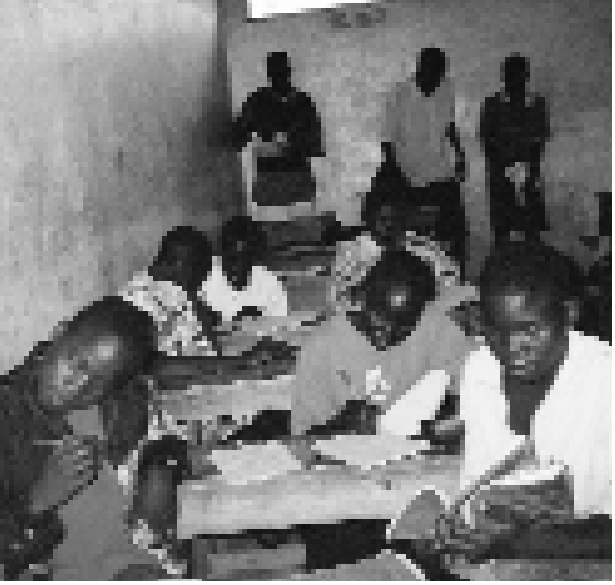
Global consumerism is another aspect of globalization that directly affects youth and has a number of implications for youth cultures. Television programmes, music videos and movies produced in Europe and North America comprise an increasingly dominant share of entertainment media content around the world. This is not necessarily leading to the evolution of a single or unified global youth culture, as young people tend to adopt and interpret global products on the basis of their own local cultures and experiences, thereby creating new hybrid cultural forms whose meanings vary according to local and national circumstances. However, globalization has raised hopes and expectations of increased material well-being. It is feared that constant exposure to images of Western lifestyles and role models may lead to tensions that are both culturally and socially divisive (World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, 2004). Part II of this publication provides a more in-depth look at the emerging global media-driven youth culture and what it means for today's young people.

Young people around the world are expressing their concerns about the negative consequences of globalization, including environmental degradation and the unequal distribution of income and wealth. The anti-globalization movement has expanded worldwide and comprises a heterogeneous collection of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), student groups, political organizations and civil rights activists. Many young people are not against globalization per se, but are simply appealing for a more equitable distribution of the opportunities and benefits deriving from globalization (United Nations, 2005). The movement has embraced a broad and eclectic range of issues, including global justice, fair trade, debt relief, and sustainable development.

EDUCATION

Primary school completion rates have continued to climb since 1995. Gross secondary enrolment has risen from 56 to 78 per cent over the past decade (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2004). Global tertiary enrolment increased from 69 million in 1990 to 88 million in 1997, with the most substantial growth achieved in developing countries (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2003a).[2] Some countries even doubled their net enrolment rates during the 1990s. As mentioned previously, today's young people comprise the most highly educated generation in human history.

Unfortunately, some countries have not been as successful as others in providing education for their young people. A few countries experienced declining enrolment during the 1990s and have registered only moderate increases in the past five years. Some of the transition economies have suffered a regression in primary education, suggesting that achieving basic education for all is tied to socio-economic circumstances. In spite of the overall progress achieved, 113 million primary-school-age children around the world were not in school in 2000 (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization/ Institute for Statistics, 2000). These children will become the next generation of illiterate youth, taking the place of the estimated 130 million illiterate youth of today as they enter adulthood and the job market — already at a serious disadvantage.



Poverty remains a major barrier to schooling, and gender discrimination is a factor as well. When poor parents need to make a choice about which of their children should receive an education, girls tend to be excluded first. The literacy gap between young men and young women appears to be widening in Africa and Asia; the greatest gender inequalities are found in North Africa and Western Asia, where educationally deprived girls outnumber the corresponding groups of boys by almost three to one.[3] Countries in East Asia and Pacific have come close to achieving gender parity in access to education, while in Latin America and the Caribbean there appears to be a slight bias against boys. In rural areas, young people have less access to education, the quality of education is poorer, and adult illiteracy rates are higher.

The most important challenge, apart from achieving education for all, is ensuring the provision of a quality education. Many countries have abolished school fees, and while such a move stimulates school enrolment, it can have negative implications for the quality of education. Experience in various sub-Saharan African countries has shown that without additional funding for qualified teachers and material resources, schools are unable to accommodate the larger numbers of students seeking an education. Teachers and trainers in many parts of the world lack sufficient training, resources, support, materials, and conducive conditions of service, which adversely affects young people's learning experience. In pursuing the goal of a quality education for all, the importance of teachers and trainers must be recognized. Attention should be given to their education, professional development, wages, working conditions, and career paths in order to make teaching a more attractive option.

New approaches are needed to respond to the evolving educational needs of youth, especially in the light of the ongoing technological revolution and the global inequalities it has engendered. Educational curricula are not always in line with the demands of the labour market, and young people may find themselves inadequately prepared for the world of work. It has been estimated that in developed countries, roughly 10 to 20 per cent of the general population's learning needs are not adequately met by the current formal learning systems (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2003b). Developing countries face major challenges in introducing new ICT in the education system. Urgent attention is needed to prevent the digital divide between developed and developing countries from widening in the next generation.

Education has long been regarded as one of the primary components of poverty reduction efforts and overall social development. The World Declaration on Education for All, adopted in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990, affirmed the international commitment to universalizing primary education and massively reducing illiteracy before the end of the decade. In the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, education is listed first among the 10 priority areas for youth development. The Dakar Framework for Action, adopted at the World Education Forum in 2000, identified six major goals for education, two of which became Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) later that year. The two Goals incorporate the following targets: (a) ensure that by 2015, all children will

be able to complete a full course of primary schooling; and (b) eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and at all levels of education by no later than 2015.

In a number of major international projects and activities, specific strategies are being employed to achieve the MDGs. The Millennium Project, launched by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, has task forces focusing on education. In 2002, the World Bank launched the Fast Track Initiative to provide immediate and incremental technical and financial support to countries that have appropriate educational policies but are not on track to achieve universal primary education by 2015. Nine flagship inter-agency programmes have been put in place by UNESCO. Although there have been some positive developments in financing basic education, both bilateral and multilateral aid to education decreased between 1998/99 and 2000/01 (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2003b). The current level of international assistance appears to be insufficient to achieve universal primary education by 2015.

Most countries guarantee the right to education in their constitutions. Ultimately, however, real progress will depend on the extent to which educational rights and commitments translate into enforceable legislation and well-conceived policies, plans and programmes. The Dakar Framework for Action requests States to develop or strengthen national action plans for education and to ensure that they are integrated into wider poverty reduction and development frameworks (World Education Forum, 2000). Many Governments are setting specific national education goals, including gender-related targets. Over the past decade, NGOs have increasingly campaigned for education and contributed to its delivery, benefiting millions of young people.

Various countries have integrated programmes in their educational curricula that address racism and violence, promote multicultural values and tolerance, and allow youth to be educated in their native languages.

In the past decade there has been a growing emphasis on "life competencies" within the education system. The rising popularity of alternative approaches and modalities such as non-formal learning, lifelong learning, distance education, e-learning, peer education and on-the-job training shows that the concept of education is increasingly expanding beyond the traditional classroom. It is important that efforts be made to reach youth and young adults who have dropped out of the formal education system before acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills and provide them with education or training that will enhance their employability. Governments are encouraged to establish systems to ensure the recognition, validation and accreditation of non-formal and informal learning for young people. Such a move would acknowledge the value of knowledge and experience gained outside of the traditional learning environment, and demonstrate the importance of integrating formal and non-formal learning in overall educational provision.

International efforts to promote education have mainly targeted girls and young women. Continuing efforts should be made to sustain the positive trend towards gender parity and equality in education and subsequently in employment. There is evidence that educated girls and young women are better able to make decisions that enhance their well-being and improve the lives of any children they may have. Public policy measures that

have proved successful and should be promoted include creating an enabling environment for advancing female education through legislative and policy reforms; redistributing resources to meet girls' specific educational needs; reforming curricula; providing incentives to families that make sending all children to school a worthwhile proposition; increasing the number of educational facilities in underserved areas; improving teacher training; confronting violence; working with parents; instituting school feeding programmes; increasing the presence of female teachers; separating sanitation facilities and providing privacy for girls; furnishing school-based health education; and raising the minimum legal age of marriage. Such interventions require a strong public commitment from the State, though the support of non-State actors is essential as well.

EMPLOYMENT

Labour force participation rates for young people decreased by almost four percentage points between 1993 and 2003, largely as a result of the increased numbers of young people attending school, the tendency of students to remain in the education system for a longer period, high overall unemployment rates, and the fact that some young people gave up any hope of finding work and dropped out of the labour market. Figures published by the International Labour Organization (ILO) indicate that global youth unemployment increased from 11.7 per cent in 1993 to an all-time high of 14.4 per cent (88 million) in 2003.[4] At the regional level, youth unemployment was highest in Western Asia and North Africa (25.6 per cent) and sub-Saharan Africa (21 per cent), and lowest in East Asia (7 per cent) and the industrialized economies (13.4 per cent). There is a general trend towards the convergence of male and female labour force participation rates, though unemployment rates are still higher for women than for men in all developing regions except East Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Thanks to the concerted efforts of Governments, civil society and the international community, child labour appears to be on the decline throughout the world.

The increase in the numbers of youth in secondary and tertiary education is a positive development; however, labour markets in many countries are presently unable to accommodate the expanding pools of skilled young graduates. In a number of settings this is partially attributable to the failure to coordinate education provision with labour market needs, but it is perhaps more fundamentally linked to the fact that large numbers of youth are now coming of age and are trying to find work. In the absence of opportunities in the formal labour market, many young people resort to "forced entrepreneurship" and self-employment in the informal economy, often working for low pay under hazardous conditions, with few prospects for the future. Together, these factors can cause disillusionment and alienation among younger workers. As mentioned previously, young people also constitute a significant proportion of the 175 million global migrants, which contributes to the brain drain in their home countries (United Nations, 2003).

There has been increasing concern among policymakers that the frustrations accompanying long-term unemployment among groups of urban young men may feed political and ideological unrest and provoke violence (Commission for Africa, 2005). Many countries have experienced "youth bulges", which occur when young people comprise at least 40 per cent of the population, and it has been argued that in such a context, the large

numbers of unemployed and idle youth may challenge the authority of the Government and endanger its stability (inter alia; Urdal, 2004; Cincotta, Engelman and Anastasion, 2003). The contention is that these disaffected individuals are more likely to participate in national and international conflicts. However, the fact is that only a very small number of people engage in such activities, and many are not members of the younger generation.

Over the past decade, the international community has strengthened its commitment to addressing youth employment. In 1995, Governments called for special attention to youth unemployment in the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development (United Nations, 1995). Six years later, youth organizations adopted the Dakar Youth Empowerment Strategy at the fourth session of the World Youth Forum of the United Nations System (Dakar Youth Empowerment Strategy, 2001). [5] The United Nations Millennium Declaration, adopted by the General Assembly in 2000, reflects the commitment of heads of State and Government to develop and implement strategies that give young people everywhere real opportunities to find decent and productive work. This objective was subsequently integrated into the MDGs (United Nations, 2000); the eighth Goal, which relates to developing a global partnership for development, explicitly refers to creating employment opportunities for young people. The Youth Employment Network (YEN), comprising the United Nations, ILO and World Bank as core partners, was established following the Millennium Summit to initiate action on the ground, with the result that the youth employment issue has gained momentum at the national level. Recommendations based on four global policy priorities — employability, entrepreneurship, equal opportunities for young women and men, and employment creation—were issued in 2001 by the High-Level Panel on Youth Employment, a team of experts appointed by the Secretary-General. The YEN is now supporting the efforts of 13 lead countries committed to the development and execution of strategies for youth employment, as well as those of a number of other countries currently at various stages in the planning or implementation of national action plans in this context.[6]

At the national level, several of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers[7] recently completed by developing countries have outlined youth employment strategies focusing on youth entrepreneurship training, microcredit schemes, the development of vocational training and career guidance services, youth leadership training, youth-targeted labour-intensive programmes, and the acquisition of ICT skills. In addition, several national human development reports have been devoted entirely to youth, and others have included sections dedicated to national youth employment initiatives and policies.

Although many Governments encourage entrepreneurship and self-employment among youth at the conceptual level, relatively few microfinancing initiatives specifically targeted at young people have emerged on the ground. Microfinancing schemes are usually implemented by NGOs or private banks. A number of NGOs have set up programmes to enhance life skills, provide job training, and develop entrepreneurial skills among youth. Many initiatives that have been undertaken are too small in terms of both scale and resources to address the full scope of the youth unemployment problem. There is a need, at both the national and international levels, to scale up the successful aspects of these initiatives if they are to have a real impact on poverty reduction. Therefore, it is essential that financial commitments to youth employment initiatives be substantially increased.

HUNGER AND POVERTY

It is generally agreed that poverty is multidimensional and should be measured not only by income, but also by access to public goods such as education, health care, a safe water supply, and adequate roads (Gordon and others, 2003; also see World Bank, 2004). This perspective should be applied in the formulation of youth development strategies, with steps taken to move beyond the limited focus on monetary indicators towards the adoption of a more comprehensive approach to addressing the full range of problems faced by poor young people. An integrated approach should reflect consideration of all the priority areas for youth development (identified in the World Programme of Action for Youth and General Assembly resolution 58/133 of 2003) that may be relevant to young people in their local and national contexts. Further, the youth component should form part of a broader national pro-poor growth strategy that includes infrastructure development and agricultural policy changes aimed at helping those in poverty (Hoddinott and Quisumbing, 2003).

Not much is known about the numbers of poor young people around the world and the ways they experience poverty. There are no specific references to youth in the targets or indicators of the MDG relating to hunger and poverty, and very little age-disaggregated poverty data are available. Few researchers have looked into the poverty characteristics of young people and their movement in and out of poverty. Most youth are relatively healthy, live with and receive support from their families, benefit from an extensive education, and do not yet have children to take care of. However, many young people have suffered deprivation during childhood, are affected by HIV/AIDS, have full responsibility for the care of their siblings, marry and have children before the age of 25, or are unemployed. All youth are in a transition period, moving towards independence and adulthood. During this stage of their lives, they face a multitude of challenges that tend to compound any other difficulties they may be experiencing. The capacity to make a successful transition to adulthood is shaped by the society in which a person lives and by a complex combination of factors such as gender, socio-economic background, family support, ethnicity, and race (Curtain, 2004). Governments need to identify the challenges faced by young people in their countries and to develop policies and programmes that help them make a smooth transition to adulthood.

In the *World Youth Report, 2003*, the observation was made that young people had been neglected in poverty reduction strategies, in part because there was little poverty research focused specifically on young people and a consequent lack of relevant data disaggregated by age. Some approximate figures were derived by the author based on different measures of poverty; it was estimated that 110.1 million young people were undernourished, 238 million were living on less than US$ 1 a day, and 462 million were living on less than US$ 2 a day (United Nations, 2004b). However, these calculations were based on the assumption that poverty in a country was evenly distributed among all age groups in the population. It was concluded that further quantitative and qualitative research on poverty alleviation among youth was needed to provide a better understanding of the poverty dynamics for this group. In the coming chapters, this argument is reiterated. Because the static definition of poverty provides only a limited picture, emphasis is given to the importance of longitudinal data studies that monitor poverty dynamics over time. This kind of data would provide a sounder basis for anti-poverty policy formulation than would reliance on poverty trend data alone.

Chapter 2 offers a deeper analysis of the dimensions and policy implications of extreme poverty among youth. It is argued that young people in poverty will not be given the attention they deserve in national poverty reduction strategies until their situation is formally acknowledged, they are consulted, and data are available on the nature and extent of their vulnerabilities. The methods and indicators currently used by international agencies and Governments to measure poverty are examined. It is noted that data on youth in poverty are scarce, there is no global measurement to assess youth development over time, and most countries do not involve young people in the design or implementation of poverty reduction strategies. New estimates of the numbers of young people living in poverty are provided, and suggestions are made regarding the development of pro-poor growth strategies that include young people as a focus group and as partners.

Chapter 3 focuses on the concepts of chronic poverty, life-course poverty and the intergenerational transmission of poverty as they relate to youth poverty. An intergenerational perspective adds a critical dimension in assessing and addressing global poverty. It is argued that the extent to which a young person is economically dependent, independent, or depended upon within the household can change extremely rapidly. This has significant implications for the present and long-term well-being of both young people and their families. Interventions in the areas of education, health and employment can break the poverty cycle; without such interventions, poverty tends to deepen with age and over successive generations.

[1] This estimate is based on the average age composition for the countries with the 10 highest rates of immigration; relevant data are available from the United Nations Statistics Division.

[2] The rate of entry into tertiary education increased by 50 per cent in developing countries between 1990 and 1997 (rising from 29 million to 43.4 million), while the increase in developed countries was much slower (rising by only 13 per cent, from 39.5 million to 44.8 million) during this period; 1997 is the last year for which worldwide data are available and comparable with earlier statistics. Since 1997, different categories for the International Standard Classification of Education have been used, affecting the comparability of statistics for secondary and tertiary education (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2003a, p. 68).

[3] The designation "severely educationally deprived" refers to children between the ages of 7 and 18 who have not had any primary or secondary education (those who have never attended school) (see Gordon and others, 2003).

[4] Unemployment rates take into account only those who are looking for work; they do not include those who are discouraged and have stopped looking or have not looked for work, or those who have voluntarily remained in education and training (International Labour Organization, 2004b, p. 12).

[5] Also see the letter of the Government of Senegal to the United Nations General Assembly conveying the results of the Fourth World Youth Forum, cited in A/C.3/56/2.

[6] The 13 countries include Azerbaijan, Brazil, Egypt, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mali, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sri Lanka, the Syrian Arab Republic and the United Kingdom.

[7] "Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) describe a country's macroeconomic, structural and social policies and programmes to promote growth and reduce poverty, as well as associated external financing needs. PRSPs are prepared by Governments through a participatory process involving civil society and development partners, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF)."

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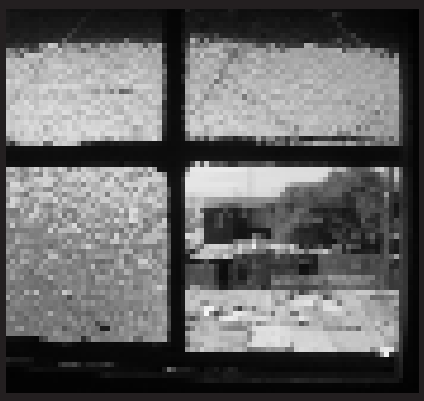
YOUNG PEOPLE IN POVERTY:



dimensions

and

policy implications

Chapter 2

***Many young people in the world** experience extreme poverty, though there is little published evidence to confirm this fact. The present chapter outlines the best ways, from the perspective of national public policy, to identify young people in poverty. It provides estimates of youth living on less than US$ 1 and US$ 2 a day in 2002. Because of the limitations associated with income-based measures of absolute poverty, estimates of the numbers of young people in hunger, based on 1999-2001 data, are also presented.*

Poverty in developing countries affects most residents in that it diminishes life chances. It is impossible to develop comprehensive national poverty reduction strategies without reliable information on the prevalence of poverty among groups such as young women or rural youth that have been excluded from the benefits of economic growth in the past. It is important to identify young people as a distinct group experiencing extreme poverty to ensure that issues of specific relevance to them are addressed in poverty reduction strategies. Access to reliable data also makes it much easier for young people to participate in formulating or refining national poverty reduction strategies.

Some politicians and analysts argue that a rising tide will float all boats, meaning that economic growth alone is sufficient to reduce poverty. However, this view is increasingly being challenged, as there is evidence that the relationship between economic growth and poverty reduction is neither simple nor direct. It is only when Governments and other stakeholders have made a concerted effort to direct resources to those identified as poorer than their peers that both economic growth and poverty reduction have been achieved (Pernia, 2003).

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Young People

Defining youth as those between the ages of 15 and 24 is a widely accepted statistical convention, and it is this group that constitutes the focus of the present chapter. It is much harder to specify a set age group when a sociological definition of young people is employed. The period of transition from childhood to adulthood varies greatly between societies and even within the same society. This critical stage in the life cycle may begin as early as age 10 (for street children, for example) and may in some cases continue into the mid- to late 30s. The Youth Policy Act in India, for instance, defines the group it addresses as ranging in age from 15 to 35 (Brown and Larson, 2002). This relatively wide age span suggests that the process of achieving an independent, sustaining livelihood can take a relatively long time, particularly in poor societies.

Measuring poverty

It is not possible to determine the extent of poverty among young people until a consensus is reached on how poverty should be measured. Such an exercise is fraught with difficulties. The first challenge is defining the concept of poverty itself. Is it merely a lack of income, or does it also reflect deficiencies in other dimensions of human survival and well-being such as access to adequate sanitation, health care and educational opportunities? If poverty is defined more broadly, what measures are appropriate to ensure access

to needed services? In relation to the poverty measures used, should the reference point be some absolute level, or is poverty a relative concept that needs to be defined based on the standard of living of the society in which the poor live?

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and targets resolve much of the ambivalence surrounding the measurement of poverty. The MDGs acknowledge the multi-dimensional nature of poverty and establish benchmarks not only for increasing income levels but also for improving access to food, basic education and literacy, educational opportunities for girls, quality health care, and adequate sanitation in the form of good drinking water. The Millennium Declaration and the MDGs reflect the international consensus on the importance of poverty eradication as a major development objective.

It is now widely accepted that income is not the only measure of poverty (Hulme and Shepherd, 2003). The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) prepared by the Government of Mozambique provides an illustrative example of the broader concept, noting that poverty encompasses not only income deficiency but also the lack of human capacities, manifested in "illiteracy, malnutrition, low life expectancy, poor maternal health, (and the) prevalence of preventable diseases", and is also reflected in indirect measures indicating a lack of access to the "goods, services and infrastructures necessary to achieve basic human capacities, (including) sanitation, clean drinking water, education, communications, (and) energy" (Mozambique, 2001, p. 11).

This broader view of poverty has evolved largely owing to the work of Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen, who contends that poverty is best understood as various forms of "unfreedom" that prevent people from realizing and expanding their capabilities. From this perspective, civil and political liberties and economic and social rights are viewed as primary goals of development and the principal means of progress (International Labour Organization, 2003).

The need for a dynamic view of poverty

It is implied, within this broader context, that poverty is both a static and a dynamic phenomenon. In other words, it is a state people experience that can change according to circumstances. The dynamic view of poverty is often particularly relevant to young people, given the obstacles most of them face in endeavouring to achieve independent adult status.The dynamic view of poverty starts from the premise that the "determining condition for poor people is uncertainty" (Wood, 2003). Young people's capacities to cope with uncertainties are shaped by a range of supports, including the legal rights, entitlements and support systems provided by Governments and employers. They are also influenced by personal attributes and achievements such as educational attainment and physical health (Wood, 2003). The best policy responses in such circumstances involve the provision of various forms of social protection to help the poor cope with the unexpected.

Young people and the Millennium Development Goals

Most of the MDGs relate to challenges young people are facing. Around 51 per cent of the combined population of developing and least developed countries are below the age of 25, and 20 per cent are 15 to 24 years of age (United Nations, 2005b). It is clear, given such age demographics, that if the specific needs of young people are not identified and addressed, the MDGs will not be met.

Young people per se do not appear to have a prominent place in the MDGs. However, on closer scrutiny, five of the Goals may be identified as referring directly to youth because they relate to issues primarily associated with young people, including educational attainment, gender balance in education, improved maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS and other diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis, and decent employment opportunities for youth (*see table 2.1*).

Greater investment in improving adolescent health and education will not only reduce poverty, but will also bring countries closer to achieving the targets for two other MDGs. Overall improvements in adolescent health will reduce the incidence of high-risk pregnancies among undernourished teenagers and thereby contribute significantly to reducing child mortality, the objective of Goal 4. Higher educational levels and improved nutrition among young mothers will help reduce the prevalence of underweight children below five years of age (one of the indicators for Goal 1), which will contribute substantially to the eradication of hunger, as called for in Goal 1.

Table 2.1
Millennium Development Goals, targets and indicators relating to young people

Goal	Target	Indicator
1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	1. Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than US$ 1 a day 2. Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger	1. Proportion of the population living on less than US$ 1 a day (1993 purchasing power parity) 4. Prevalence of underweight children under five years of age
2. Achieve universal primary education	3. Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling	8. Literacy rate of 15- to 24-year olds
3. Promote gender equality and empower women	4. Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015	9. Ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education 10. Ratio of literate women to men 15-24 years old
5. Improve maternal health	6. Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio	16. Maternal mortality ratio
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases	7. Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS	18. HIV prevalence among pregnant women aged 15-24 years
8. Develop a global partnership for development	16. In cooperation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth	45. Unemployment rate of young people aged 15-24 years, each sex and total

The prominence of young people in the MDGs is further confirmed by the fact that they constitute the explicit or implicit focus of seven targets and eight indicators (see table 2.1). Four of the performance indicators specifically refer to individuals between the ages of 15 and 24, and two others refer to circumstances that apply to many young people, namely secondary and tertiary education and motherhood.

The poverty measure used for Goal 1 is per capita income, but the relevant indicator does not include any reference to males and females separately. However, four performance indicators refer specifically to girls and young women. Goals 5 and 6 relate to sexual and reproductive health and implicitly target young people, as members of this age group are likely to benefit most from actions undertaken to achieve these Goals. In reference to Goal 5, young women under the age of 25 account for many of those who will benefit from increased investments in improving maternal health. In the least developed countries, for example, females under 20 years of age account for 17 per cent of all births (United Nations Population Fund, 2004). Young people are also potentially the main beneficiaries of actions taken to achieve Goal 6 (combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases) and one of its targets in particular (halting and beginning to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015), as nearly half of all new HIV infections worldwide occur among individuals between the ages of 15 and 24 (Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, 2004).

POVERTY AND PUBLIC POLICY

In a conscious effort to move away from narrow income measures of poverty and progress, the United Nations Development Programme has established a framework that includes country-level data on a wide range of social indicators such as life expectancy at birth, under-five mortality, literacy rates, access to clean water, and measures of equity or parity including male-female gaps in schooling and political participation (United Nations Development Programme, various years). These indicators are then converted into summary measures such as the human development index and the human poverty index for developing countries. The aim is to give policymakers comprehensive measures with which to assess their country's progress in terms of overall human well-being and to move away from exclusive reliance on per capita income as a measure of development.

Similarly, a youth development index may be used to assess a country's progress in addressing the social and economic challenges faced by young people. The UNESCO Office in Brazil has created such an index using various education, health and income indicators. The education indicators either comprise or derive from illiteracy rates, the numbers of youth attending secondary and tertiary institutions, and assessments of the quality of education offered to young people. The health indicators reflect mortality rates (deaths from both internal causes and violence). The remaining indicators focus on the per capita income of youth in the country's different federative units. In the data gathering and analysis, distinguishing factors such as place of residence (rural or urban), gender and race are taken into account (Waiselfisz, 2004). The youth development index served as the basis for the *Youth Development Report, 2003*, the first such publication issued by the UNESCO

Office in Brazil to monitor public policies on youth in the country's 27 states. The Government is currently drafting its first national youth policy and is using the findings in the youth development index in its deliberations. Consideration should be given to using the Brazilian index as a model for a global youth development index that could be adapted to reflect different national priorities for youth.

The need for pro-poor growth strategies to reduce poverty

As mentioned previously, the link between economic growth and poverty alleviation is neither simple nor straightforward. Higher income levels are important for reducing poverty, but income disparities do not by themselves account for the differences in poverty levels between countries. This indicates that the poor often do not benefit from economic growth to the same extent as the rest of the population. The connection between economic growth and poverty reduction is largely determined by key inputs such as the types of institutions and specific policies Governments have in place to ensure that the poor benefit more than the population as a whole. Pro-growth strategies need to be distinguished from pro-*poor* growth strategies, as it is only the latter that will bring about substantial reductions in poverty levels (Pernia, 2003).

Pro-poor growth strategies must incorporate a wide range of policies that facilitate comprehensive development. Policies that promote economic openness, a favourable investment climate, efficient resource acquisition and allocation, and appropriate labour market regulations are essential. Equally important, however, are policies that address institutional discrimination against the poor on the basis of gender, ethnicity, religion, or employment within the informal rather than the formal economy (Pernia, 2003; also see World Bank, 2004). Box 2.1 illustrates how Viet Nam has reduced poverty by applying a combination of economic and pro-poor growth strategies.

Box 2.1

PRO-POOR GROWTH STRATEGIES IN VIET NAM

According to a 2003 report by international donor agencies, the progress made by Viet Nam in reducing poverty has been "simply remarkable".[a] Figures for 2002 indicate that the proportion of the population living in poverty was reduced by half in less than a decade.[b] This achievement illustrates how effective pro-poor growth strategies can be. While some regions and population groups have benefited more than others—poverty seems to be persistent in many rural areas and among minority groups, as noted in chapter 3—Viet Nam continues to reduce poverty considerably faster than other countries at a similar level of development.

The vast improvement in the poverty situation in Viet Nam is the result of both targeted policies to reduce poverty and strong economic growth. Public policies have ensured that the poor are reached through targeted transfers, and the Government has also increased the non-monetary assets of the poor by facilitating higher levels of educational attainment and improved health status. These policies have been greatly reinforced by high rates of economic growth, second only to those of China and Ireland over the past decade. At the same time, challenges such as the country's determined fight against corruption remain on the agenda. It has been acknowledged that the "abuse of public office for private gain risks making everyday life miserable when it happens at low levels", and when it reaches a point where collective decision-making is affected, it can lead to resource misallocation and waste.[c] Improving governance at all levels reduces constraints on both poverty reduction and economic growth.

There are 16 million young people between the ages of 15 and 24 in Viet Nam,[d] approximately 2 million of which are poor. The recently completed Youth Development Strategy to 2010 identifies unemployment as the single greatest challenge currently facing Vietnamese youth, and efforts to address this problem are at the centre of the national fight against poverty. It is estimated that 5 per cent of young people are out of work, and 26 per cent are underemployed.[e] One policy change in Viet Nam that has benefited young people in particular relates to the starting and running of enterprises. Since the enactment of the Enterprise Law in 2000, almost 60,000 private companies have been created in the country, providing 1.3 million to 1.5 million new jobs. The Viet Nam Association of Young Entrepreneurs claims that young businesspeople set up three quarters of the private enterprises established between 2000 and 2002.[f] However, the new jobs are mostly to be found in the main urban centres, as the rural provinces have not benefited from the new Enterprise Law to the same extent. Other regulatory obstacles give State-owned enterprises an advantage over private firms.[g]

The capacity to scale up policies and programmes is an important prerequisite for achieving poverty reduction. "Absorptive capacity" refers to the human resources, managerial skills, monitoring and evaluation systems, and infrastructure available in a country; low absorptive capacity can impose major constraints on a country's ability to expand a successful programme and operate it on a much larger scale. Viet Nam, with its high rates of literacy and numeracy, long experience with mass organizations, and ability to mobilize people down to the village level, has sufficient absorptive capacity to continue moving forward in developing programmes and strategies for reducing poverty.

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[a] World Bank, *Viet Nam Development Report, 2004: Poverty* (Hanoi, World Bank, 2003), p. xi.

[b] Ibid. In 2002, 29 per cent of the population lived in poverty, compared with 37 per cent in 1998 and 58 per cent in 1993.

[c] Ibid., p. xii.

[d] All figures presented in this paragraph are taken from Vu Van Toan (Viet Nam Ministry of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs), "Policies and measures for young in poverty in Viet Nam", a PowerPoint presentation given at the Workshop on Youth in Poverty in Southeast Asia, organized by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, from 2 to 4 August 2004.

[e] United Nations Country Team in Viet Nam, "United Nations message on International Youth Day: tap the energies of youth" (Hanoi, United Nations Development Programme, 12 August 2003).

[f] Thu Ha, "Self-employed youth to tackle unemployment", Viet Nam Investment Review (11-17 August 2003), p. 19.

[g] Ibid.

As illustrated in the case of Viet Nam, pro-poor policies may be incorporated in national poverty reduction strategies. Such policies may include provisions for increased public spending for basic education, improved health and family planning services, easier access to microcredit, the promotion of small and medium-sized enterprises, or infrastructure investments in rural areas (Pernia, 2003).

The neglect of young people in national poverty reduction strategies

Many poor countries are still not giving the needs of young people sufficient priority, as indicated by a review of 31 PRSPs completed prior to August 2003. Although an increasing number of countries are making some reference to young people in their Papers, the initiatives proposed are often piecemeal and therefore limited in terms of scale, scope, and potential impact.

These country strategy papers and accompanying action plans are produced by Governments in heavily indebted countries as a requirement for debt relief. The aim of the PRSP process is to identify all groups experiencing poverty and to highlight cross-cutting issues that contribute to poverty in a country so that national policies can be developed to address these challenges. While the process is designed to produce tailor-made approaches to development, the PRSPs have been criticized for looking strikingly similar, even among countries that face very different challenges (Vandemoortele, 2004).

Most of the PRSPs have been prepared by African countries, though some have come from Asia (Cambodia, Kyrgyzstan, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan and Viet Nam), Europe (Albania and Moldova), and Latin America (Bolivia, Honduras and Nicaragua). While it appears that few Governments consulted young people in the PRSP drafting process or identified youth as a major group experiencing poverty, 17 of the 31 Papers completed between May 2002 and September 2003 do make some mention of youth in their action plans, mainly in relation to education and employment. However, closer scrutiny reveals that only a few of the action plans link youth-focused strategies to specific targets and budget outlays (Rosen, 2003).

There is little evidence that the youth situation is regarded as a major cross-cutting issue in the PRSPs. In only 16 per cent of the Papers are young people seen as a group requiring integrated interventions. This, arguably, is the most important indicator of whether a PRSP addresses youth issues in a comprehensive manner. Piecemeal or single programme interventions are not likely to deliver the range of benefits an integrated approach can. The failure of just under half of the Governments to make use of feedback from young people in the preparation of the PRSPs is one likely cause of the piecemeal nature of most of the policy options adopted. The absence of accounts of young people experiencing poverty is a telling indicator of the lack of priority attached to youth as a distinct group in this context. What all of this means is that concerted, multisectoral government efforts to address their situation are unlikely.

Why are young people overlooked in poverty assessments?

One reason young people are overlooked in poverty assessments is that they are not viewed by authorities as economic or social dependants in the same way children are. Another reason may have to do with how data on the poor are collected. The methodology for compiling data on poverty defined from a dynamic perspective is far more complex than that used to collect data on poverty as a static condition.[1] For Governments espousing the dynamic view of poverty, aggregate cross-sectional data are insufficient; information must also be accumulated over time about the same individuals' or same groups' experiences of poverty. Most poverty assessments, such as those used in the formulation of PRSPs, rely on household surveys to identify the poor. These surveys usually focus on easily enumerated households, with each household comprising a dwelling and a family. Young people in poverty are likely to be underrepresented in such a context if they have left the parental home and are in precarious circumstances, perhaps living in temporary accommodations or in no accommodations at all.

When addressing poverty as a dynamic phenomenon, it is useful to construct risk profiles for different groups of poor people by measuring vulnerabilities. As articulated in the United Nations *Report on the World Social Situation, 2003,* vulnerability and poverty reinforce each other in a vicious circle. No social group is inherently vulnerable, but all groups experience specific vulnerabilities as a consequence of economic, social and cultural barriers (United Nations, 2003). Measuring vulnerabilities requires more than observing households on a one-time basis. Quite often, only data collected over time can produce the basic information needed to quantify the "volatility and vulnerability that poor households say is so important" (World Bank, 2001). Single-observation survey data cannot be used to track people's movements in and out of poverty and therefore cannot be used to identify vulnerabilities; "the challenge is to find indicators of vulnerability that can identify at-risk households and populations beforehand" (World Bank, 2001, p. 19).

THE VALUE OF ESTIMATING POVERTY AMONG YOUTH AT A NATIONAL LEVEL

Why is it worthwhile to derive estimates of young people in poverty at the national level? Performance indicators are usually developed with a particular audience and political purpose in mind. The extent to which specific targets serve as spurs to action will depend on how well they are incorporated by Governments into current national poverty reduction strategies and adopted by government agencies and other stakeholders such as NGOs in their immediate-term action plans.

Broad estimates of the numbers of poor youth at the global level have some value, as they indicate to international agencies and donors that poverty does not merely afflict children, families and older persons. However, it is at the country level that the estimates of young people in extreme poverty have the greatest impact, because this is the level at which public policy is usually formulated. A focus on young people is especially important in situations in which a national poverty reduction strategy has been or is about to be put in place.

The first MDG has been criticized for its failure to define the specific reference group. The first target, which is to halve, by the year 2015, the proportion of the world's population whose income is less than US$ 1 a day, could apply at a national, regional or global level. For various reasons, the United Nations urges countries to interpret the MDGs as country-level goals (Pangestu and Sachs, 2004). One reason is that global measures do not guide policy. It is likely that the poverty target will be met on the basis of existing positive trends in China and India alone. However, to declare this a victory would be to disregard the millions of people living in extreme poverty in other parts of Asia and in Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa. Second, while a regional focus for the MDGs may highlight the needs of groups of countries with common characteristics, and may direct attention to the need for a coordinated response on the part of international agencies and donors, it may also prevent the performance of policymakers in individual countries from being scrutinized as closely as it should be. The third reason is that the country level represents "the greatest source of traction for poverty reduction. ... (C)ountries will only achieve the MDGs when national Governments are committed to making the necessary social investments in their citizens and when they receive adequate support to do so from the international system" (Pangestu and Sachs, 2004, p. 7).

The MDGs may seem ambitious for many of the poorest countries, but the fact is that every country in the world can achieve them within the next 10 years if intensive efforts are made by all parties (United Nations Millennium Project, 2005). The United Nations has encouraged countries to adopt and implement national development strategies "bold enough to meet the Millennium Development Goals targets for 2015" (United Nations, 2005a). Individual countries around the world have shown that it is possible, in a very short period of time, to dramatically reduce poverty while making enormous strides in advancing education, gender equality and other aspects of development. Official development assistance from the wealthier countries must be substantially increased, however, if the MDGs are to be achieved in the poorest countries (United Nations, 2005a).

For the reasons cited above, the following presentation of poverty data on young people focuses on individual countries. The value of such data is that they allow cross-country comparisons and raise questions about why some countries are doing better or worse than others. Unless the changing circumstances of young people in poverty are researched and the findings are presented in national forums, policymakers may continue to assign low priority to the specific needs of poor young people.

HEADCOUNT OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN EXTREME POVERTY

It is possible to use the widely accepted indicators of absolute income poverty to estimate the numbers of young people in extreme poverty. The proportion of people in a country living below the poverty line of US$ 1 or US$ 2 per person per day is adjusted based on the proportion of young people (aged 15-24 years) in the overall population; this simple calculation provides an indication of the number of youth who live below the poverty line.[2] Estimates of young people in poverty can be derived for countries for which there are no poverty measures by matching them with the closest country with an available poverty measure.[3]

Based on the most recent data available up to 2002, it is estimated that there are some 209 million young people living on less than US$ 1 a day and around 515 million young people living on less than US$ 2 a day (*see table 2.2*). These estimates have been derived from data provided in the World Bank's *World Development Indicators, 2004* on the proportions of people in each country living below the international poverty lines. The overall figures indicate that almost one in five young people (18 per cent of the 1,158 million 15- to 24-year olds worldwide) are living on less than US$ 1 per day,[4] while almost half (45 per cent) are living on less than US$ 2 per day.

Table 2.2
Regional estimates of young people* living in extreme poverty, 2002 (*Millions*)

Region	Numbers of young people living on less than US$ 1 per day	Numbers of young people living on less than US$ 2 per day
South Asia	84.1	206.1
East Asia and the Pacific	46.5	150.5
Sub-Saharan Africa	60.7	102.1
Latin America and the Caribbean	11.1	27.2
Europe and Central Asia	4.1	18.2
Middle East and North Africa	2.0	12.1
Total**	208.6	515.1

Source: The two sets of figures are calculated from data contained in the World Bank's World Development Indicators, 2004 on the proportion of people in each country living below the international poverty line (United Nations population estimates for 2000, derived from *World Population Prospects: The 2004 Revision, Population Database* (available from http://esa.un.org/unpp/)).

* Individuals between the ages of 15 and 24.

** Totals may not add precisely due to rounding.

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. Sub-Saharan Africa is home to 3 in 10 young people living on less than US$ 1 per day, and to 2 in 10 youth living on less than US$ 2 per day.

The 10 countries with the largest concentrations of young people living on less than US$ 1 a day are India (67.7 million), China (33.3 million), Nigeria (18.6 million), Bangladesh (9.9 million), Democratic Republic of the Congo (6.9 million), Pakistan (3.8 million), Sudan (3.7 million), Ethiopia (3.4 million), Indonesia (3.1 million) and Viet Nam (2.9 million). The list of countries with the largest concentrations of young people living on less than US$ 2 a day is the same, with one exception; Brazil replaces Sudan in tenth place. The ranking of countries is also slightly different, with Indonesia and Viet Nam moving up to the fifth and eighth positions respectively.

As noted earlier, sex-disaggregated indicators for per capita income are not available. However, the indicators used for other MDGs—relating to literacy, access to primary and secondary schooling, and access to health services—clearly show that girls and young women are much more likely than boys and young men to be disadvantaged (Curtain, 2004), though there may be significant intraregional variations. In South Asia, for example, the primary net enrolment ratio (females as a percentage of males enrolled in primary education) is lowest in Pakistan (55 per cent), followed by India (77 per cent) and Nepal (79 per cent), but Bangladesh and Sri Lanka have been able to achieve much better ratios (96 and 94 per cent respectively) (Curtain, 2004).

Changes over time?

The more recent global estimates of youth in extreme poverty can be compared with the estimates of 238 million and 462 million young people living on less than US$ 1 and US$ 2 a day, respectively, in the *World Youth Report, 2003.* The latter estimates were based on the international poverty lines reported in the World Development Indicators for 2000. The two sets of statistics suggest that the number of young people living on less than US$ 1 a day has decreased by nearly 30 million; it is likely, however, that a significant portion of this group has moved into the nominally better category of those living on less than US$ 2 per day, which has increased by 53 million.

Comparing estimates of young people in poverty over time is fraught with difficulties. The international poverty line measures are extrapolations from nationally representative household surveys, which constitute the primary sources of data. These surveys were undertaken in different years, and many are not recent. Some date from as far back as 1989 (Sierra Leone) and 1990/91 (Zimbabwe). Only two of the household surveys took place as recently as 2002 (Albania and Indonesia), and 10 include data for 2001 only. For the remaining 139 countries, the survey dates and periods of coverage fall between the early 1990s and the year 2000. As the source data used in the *World Development Indicators* are unlikely to change over a short time span for many countries, a meaningful comparison between two recent periods is difficult, if not impossible.

The use of poverty lines (such as the benchmark of US$ 1 a day) has been criticized in academic literature and policy discourse. One critique is that the poverty lines do not account for purchasing power differences between countries (Sala-i-Martin, 2002); a second is that the poverty lines are not based on the costing of the basic resource requirements; and a third relates to the uncertain baseline data on which the poverty estimates are based (Pogge and Reddy, 2003). Despite these observations, it may be argued that the current income poverty indicators do serve as an entry point for international comparisons of young people living in poverty.

National poverty lines

While the income poverty lines of US$ 1 and US$ 2 a day are useful for drawing international comparisons, nationally derived poverty measures are of much greater value for national policy purposes. National poverty estimates make it possible to derive subnational estimates, which are essential for targeting intracountry poverty reduction efforts. It is important to use national measures to determine the rates of poverty among young people; however, the substantial variation in household survey dates suggests that many countries are not undertaking regular surveys. In some cases this may be due to the lack of resources, though in other cases it may reflect a lack of political will to identify more specifically who the poor are and where young people stand in terms of national income distribution.

RURAL POVERTY

In many countries, poverty rates are substantially higher in rural areas than in urban areas. Some may argue that the rural-urban poverty gap is to some extent a statistical artefact—the result of shifts in urban boundaries as wealthier villages situated near towns are in time redefined as urban areas (Pogge and Reddy, 2003). Nonetheless, the fact remains that most poverty in developing countries occurs in rural areas and is especially prevalent among small farmers and landless families. Much of the poverty found in urban areas is a consequence of rural deprivation and rural economic decline, which trigger distress migration to the cities. In 1995, the United Nations General Assembly placed strong emphasis on rural development in the World Programme of Action for Youth, calling for actions focused on making farming more rewarding and life in rural areas more attractive for young people. Over the past 10 years, however, there has been a sharp decline in the national and international resources devoted to agricultural and rural development in developing countries (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2002; Majid, 2004). Poverty reduction efforts need to incorporate explicit agricultural growth strategies.

Rural youth should constitute a primary focus of interventions aimed at reducing poverty in order to stem the large-scale migration of young people to urban areas. Commitments made in the World Programme of Action for Youth in this regard should be implemented, supported by agricultural credit schemes for young people. Educational curricula should be adapted to address the needs of rural youth and enhance their skills. It should be noted, however, that these measures will meet with little success unless the agriculture sector undergoes a structural transformation at the global level, with particular attention given to facilitating market access and sharing new technologies.

YOUNG PEOPLE IN HUNGER

An alternative to the income measure of extreme poverty among young people is a measure based on levels of food energy intake. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) estimates the prevalence of undernourishment at the country level by calculating the amount of food available per person and the extent of inequality in access to food (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2003). The value of this approach is that it uses a common energy measure (kilocalorie intake) and is therefore potentially comparable across countries.

FAO has been criticized for basing its measure on country-level estimates of annual food supplies derived from data on production, imports, exports, changes in stock, and supply utilization summarized in food balance sheets. In contrast, the countries themselves derive estimates of dietary energy consumption from household expenditure surveys and/or household food consumption surveys (David, 2002).[5] FAO has defended its method as the "only way currently available to arrive at global and regional estimates of the prevalence of undernourishment" (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2003, p. 6). However, a 2002 symposium of experts called for efforts to improve both the data and the analytical approach used to derive these estimates (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2003).

Table 2.3 presents estimates of the numbers of undernourished young people in the major regions and worldwide. The figures are derived from FAO country estimates of undernourishment for the total population, averaged over the period 1999-2001. The estimated total of 160.1 million undernourished young people is lower than the income poverty estimate of 209 million young people living on less than US$ 1 per day.

The regional distributions in table 2.3 show that South Asia accounts for the largest number of undernourished young people, with the highest concentrations found in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan. Sub-Saharan Africa is next, with the highest national concentrations found in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria and South Africa. East Asia and the Pacific has the third-highest number of undernourished young people.

Table 2.3
Regional and global estimates of undernourished young people,* 1999-2001

Region	Number of young people undernourished (in millions)	Undernourished youth as a percentage of the global total
South Asia	57.8	36.1
Sub-Saharan Africa	39.9	24.9
East Asia and the Pacific	38.6	24.1
Latin America and the Caribbean	10.8	6.8
Middle East and North Africa	7.1	4.4
Europe and Central Asia	5.8	3.6
Total**	160.1	100

Sources: UNDP, *Human Development Report, 2004: Cultural Liberty in Today's Diverse World* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.04.III.B.1), table 7; and United Nations population estimates for 2000, derived from *World Population Prospects: The 2004 Revision, Population Database* (available from http://esa.un.org/unpp/)).

* Individuals between the ages of 15 and 24.

** Totals may not add precisely due to rounding.

POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES FOR POVERTY ALLEVIATION

There is no single recipe for alleviating poverty among youth. Poverty eradication measures are as numerous and varied as the causes of poverty. Successful country-level strategies reflect an integrated approach based on local, regional and national assessments of the range of problems poor young people face. This integrated approach should be applied in national pro-poor growth strategies, with specific provisions for infrastructure development and agricultural policy changes that will benefit the poor. Youth-focused strategies will be most effective if young people are involved in their design and implementation.

A paper entitled "Investing in children and youth for poverty reduction" outlines the various types of public investment that may be undertaken to reduce poverty among young people in the age group 12-25 (Hoddinott and Quisumbing, 2003). The suggested measures, listed separately according to whether the investments are directly or indirectly aimed at young people, are displayed in table 2.4.

Table 2.4
Suggested forms of public action aimed at improving the situation of adolescents and young people

Direct Measures	Indirect Measures
Employment/sporadic unemployment	Long-term unemployment
• Improved public provision of secondary education • Improved design and quality of education service delivery, measures for girls to continue to secondary school • Scholarship programmes for girls • Basic education and literacy training for adolescents • Conditional cash transfer programmes • Reproductive health-care and peer counselling • Programmes to reduce tobacco consumption • On-the-job training and work-study programmes • Tertiary education	• Time-saving infrastructure • Labour regulations that do not reduce employment • Macro policies conducive to employment and distribution-oriented growth • Infrastructure development to create a favourable business environment • Labour market laws that do not discriminate against women

Source: J. Hoddinott and A. Quisumbing, "Investing in children and youth for poverty reduction" (Washington, D.C., International Food Policy Research Institute, 24 June 2003), p. 24.

At both the national and international levels, the successful elements of relevant policies and programmes must be identified and scaled up if they are to have any real impact on poverty reduction (also see chapter 1, section 3). Many countries have youth policies and/or youth development programmes in place. Few of the existing youth programmes have been evaluated for their effectiveness, however, which means that

information about successful investments in youth is lacking. Where reliable indications of effectiveness exist, progress has been measured over too short a period to allow meaningful assessment (Curtain, 2004).

CONCLUSION

This chapter has advanced the argument that a reduction in absolute poverty should serve as the primary test of whether a country's growth strategy is successful. This line of reasoning requires that national poverty reduction strategies constitute an integral part of national development strategies. In developing national strategies for poverty reduction, special attention should be focused on the needs of particular groups of young people who have been excluded from opportunities to benefit from economic growth.

The income- and hunger-based estimates presented in this chapter highlight the regional and global magnitude of poverty among youth. Young people living in poverty will not be given the attention they deserve in national poverty reduction strategies until their situation is formally acknowledged, they are properly consulted, and appropriate information is obtained on the nature and extent of their vulnerabilities.

Although there is some dispute over the reliability and universal applicability of the international poverty line and the FAO methodology for estimating the number of undernourished people in the world, these income- and energy-based measures offer some indication of the vast numbers of young people affected. The global estimates presented in the chapter suggest that 160 million young people are experiencing extreme hunger, 209 million young people are living on less than US$ 1 a day, and 515 million young people are living on less than US$ 2 a day. It is also noted that poverty is most prevalent in rural areas.

The targets specified in the MDGs will not be met by 2015 unless countries adopt a broad range of public policies aimed at addressing all forms and aspects of poverty. Some policymakers continue to view economic growth as a panacaea for reducing poverty, with little attention given to the need for country-specific strategies that reflect a more dynamic view of poverty. The PRSP process represents an attempt to promote the development of tailor-made strategies for poverty reduction; however, the Papers that have been produced thus far have been criticized for appearing strikingly similar, even for countries that face very different challenges (Vandemoortele, 2004). It may be inferred that these national poverty reduction strategies are in many cases not genuinely "home-grown".

While little is known about the specific characteristics of young people in poverty, it has been possible in this chapter to make the case for targeted interventions aimed at youth development. Young people account for a large share of the population in most countries. Societies that fail to acknowledge the particular challenges facing youth and to involve them in devising solutions will find it difficult to achieve the MDGs, including sharp reductions in poverty levels, by 2015. Addressing the health, education and employment needs of young people can contribute to economic growth, generating additional income for both individuals and Governments that may, in turn, be used for human development. Investing in youth can therefore initiate a virtuous cycle of pro-poor development. The price that countries pay for not investing in youth development may be economic decline and rising poverty.

Young people in extreme poverty represent a special challenge for those tasked with developing home-grown poverty reduction strategies. Existing research may be overly focused on groups living in chronic poverty. Many young people are more likely to experience a less static form, moving in and out of poverty. The transition from childhood to adulthood involves confronting and overcoming a number of uncertainties. Young people may also experience a series of major changes during this period, compounding any difficulties they may face, including challenges relating to employment, living arrangements, personal relationships, or socio-economic status. Identifying the uncertainties and potential outcomes faced by young people or subgroups of young people is the first step in devising ways to improve levels of social protection. Sets of regularly updated indicators, presented in the form a youth development index, could prove useful in evaluating the social and economic circumstances of youth and the changes that occur over time.

Governments, donors and civil society organizations must be guided by a comprehensive national perspective in their efforts to address poverty among young people. A network of major stakeholders must be established to ensure the coordination of efforts across government departments and the donor community. Extensive, ongoing consultation with young people and their representative associations is required at all stages of the policy development and implementation process.

Direct primary information and evidence is a crucial input in the policymaking process, especially in relation to young people. Consideration must be given to the particular situations faced by specific groups of youth as a consequence of factors such as gender, race, rural or urban residence, and the stage of the life cycle. Finally, once the key elements of a national poverty reduction strategy (including youth-targeted policies and activities) have been identified, the challenge is to work out ways to scale up the essential features of successful initiatives so that they can have a major impact on poverty reduction.

[1] The World Bank's *World Development Report, 2000/2001* notes that "measuring vulnerability is especially difficult: since the concept is dynamic, it cannot be measured merely by observing households once. Only with household panel data—that is, household surveys that follow the same households over several years—can the basic information be gathered to capture and quantify the volatility and vulnerability that poor households say is so important. Moreover, people's movements in and out of poverty are informative about vulnerability only after the fact. The challenge is to find indicators of vulnerability that can identify at-risk households and populations beforehand." (World Bank, 2001, p. 19)

[2] The assumption is that young people are likely to experience poverty no less or no more than the population as a whole.

[3] This method is similar to the one used by Bourguignon and Morrisson (2002).

[4] Total population figures for young people are based on United Nations data (United Nations, 2005b).

[5] David also notes that "FAO's continued reliance on energy supply derived from national food balance sheets instead of energy consumption estimated from household sample surveys results in lack of coherence between the agency's estimates and those of the countries. Since there are no sub-national food balance sheets compilations in general, the FAO methodology cannot produce estimates at these levels. And the continued production of the FAO estimates in Rome does not engender the countries' collaboration or use of the indicators." (David, 2002, p. 17)

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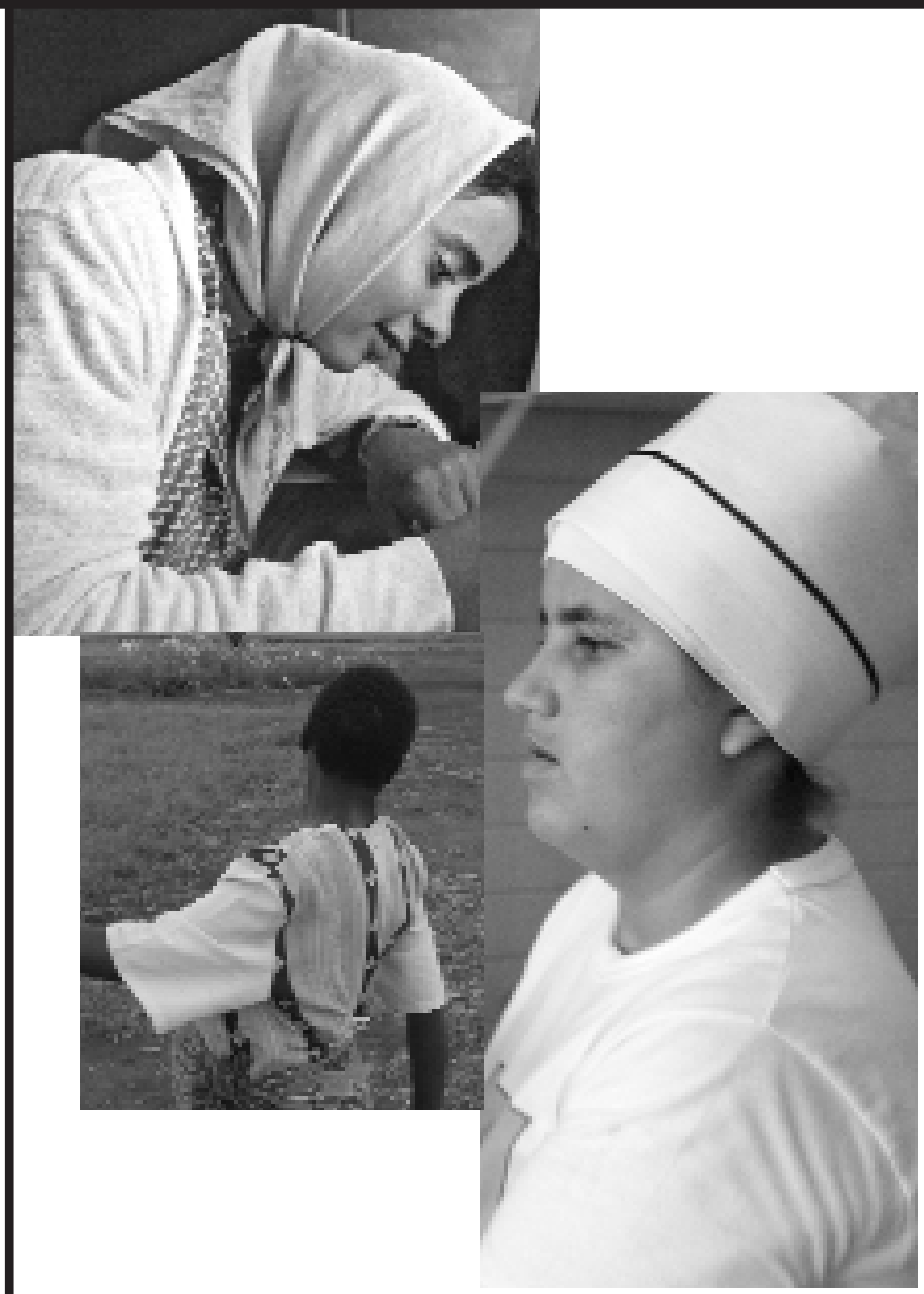


Chapter 3

Chronic,
life-course

&

intergenerational poverty

The present chapter comprises a review of the related concepts of chronic poverty, life-course poverty and intergenerational poverty, and argues that these concepts contribute to a better understanding of youth poverty. The argument is elucidated and further developed through empirical data.

In the first part of the chapter, this argument is supported by evidence showing that much youth poverty has its roots in childhood poverty, and that some childhood poverty has its roots in youth poverty. In reference to the first point, it has been shown that the poverty experienced by youth is often linked to childhood deprivation and parental[1] poverty; essentially, the older generation has been unable to provide the assets the younger generation requires to overcome the challenges arising during youth. These challenges may be both structural and idiosyncratic. As to the second point, like poverty in childhood or in old age, poverty during youth can have implications for both an individual's life course and that of his or her household. In many cases, children born to youth in poverty may be especially susceptible to persistent poverty.

Drawing on these two main points, the second part of the chapter presents estimates of youth in extreme poverty based on a new child-centred approach to estimating childhood deprivation.[2] The third part assesses the policy implications of the findings and conclusions highlighted in this chapter.

THE RELEVANCE OF CHRONIC, LIFE-COURSE AND INTERGENERATIONAL POVERTY TO YOUTH POVERTY

The chronic poor

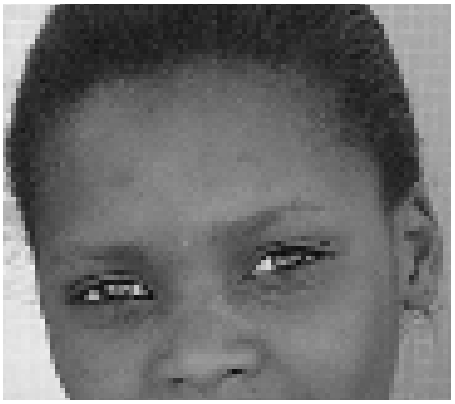
It is estimated that between 300 million and 420 million people are trapped in chronic, or persistent, poverty (Chronic Poverty Research Centre, 2004). Chronically poor people experience deprivation over many years, often over their entire lives, and sometimes pass poverty on to their children. Many of the chronically poor die prematurely from health problems that are easily preventable. This group experiences deprivation at multiple levels; chronic poverty is typically characterized not only by low income and assets, but also by hunger and undernutrition, illiteracy, the lack of access to basic necessities such as safe drinking water and health services, and social isolation and exploitation.

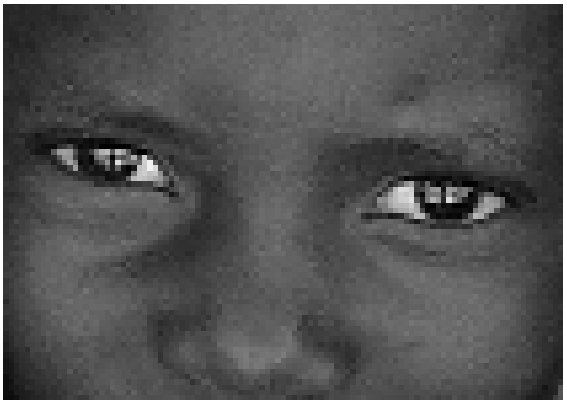
The chronically poor are not a distinct group but are typically those experiencing discrimination, stigmatization or "invisibility", including socially marginalized ethnic, religious, indigenous, nomadic and caste groups; migrants and bonded labourers; refugees and internally displaced persons; and people with disabilities and certain illnesses such as HIV/AIDS. In many contexts, poor women and girls, children, and older people (especially widows) are more likely to be trapped in poverty.

While chronically poor people are found in all parts of the world, the largest number (134 million to 188 million) live in South Asia. Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest prevalence, with 30 to 40 per cent of all those living on less than US$ 1 per day (an estimated 90 million to 120 million people) trapped in chronic poverty. East Asia has between 54 million and 85 million chronically poor people, most of whom live in China.

Within countries, chronic poverty tends to occur more frequently in certain geographical contexts. Higher concentrations of the chronically poor are often found in remote and low-potential rural settings, politically marginalized regions, and areas that are not well connected to markets, ports or urban centres—places that are often home to indigenous communities. There are also concentrations of chronically poor people in the slums of towns and cities, and millions are homeless.

The causes of chronic poverty are complex and highly variable. They may be the same as the causes of poverty, only more intense, widespread and lasting. In other cases, there is a qualitative difference between the causes of transitory poverty and the causes of chronic poverty. Rarely is there a single, clear cause. Chronic poverty usually derives from the confluence or overlap of multiple factors operating within contexts ranging from the household to the global milieu.[3] Some of these factors are "maintainers" of chronic poverty and serve to keep poor people poor. Others are "drivers" of chronic poverty; they push vulnerable non-poor and transitorily poor people into a deeper and more tenacious form of poverty from which they cannot escape. Not all chronically poor people are born into long-term deprivation. Many slide into chronic poverty after a shock or series of shocks from which they are unable to recover. Shocks experienced during particular periods in the life course of an individual or household, including adolescence or young adulthood, can be particularly damaging in this respect. Figure 3.1 outlines the key drivers of chronic poverty, with a focus on the implications of the different processes for youth.





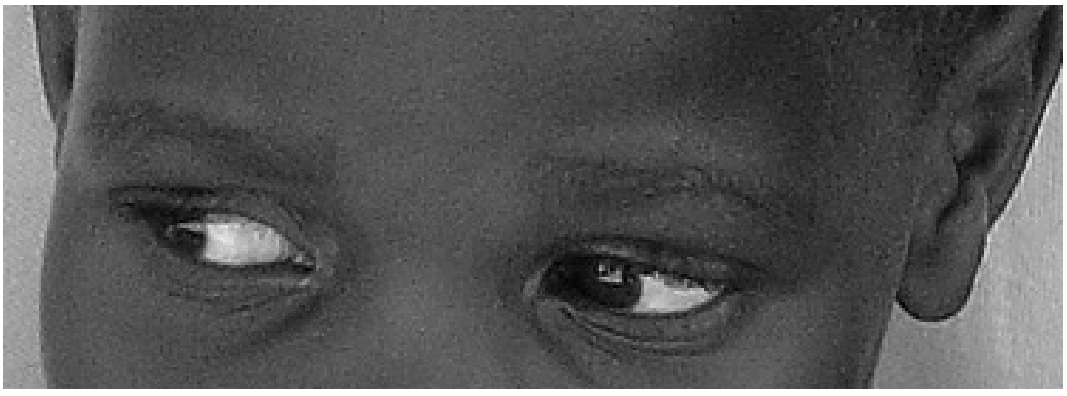
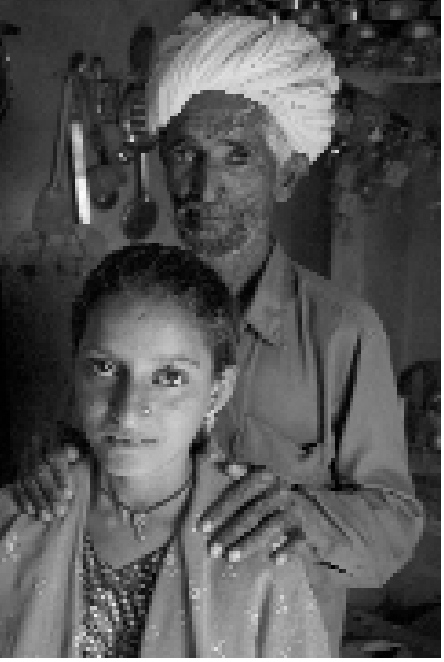


Figure 3.1
The main drivers of chronic poverty and their implications for young people

Key drivers of chronic poverty	Examples of implications for youth
Severe and/or repeated shocks • Ill health and injury • Environmental shocks and natural disasters • Market and economic collapse • Violence and conflict • Breakdown of law and order	
PLUS	
Few private or collective assets to fall back on • Limited physical, financial, social or human capital; highly susceptible to shocks	Young people are often in the early stages of physical and financial asset accumulation and may find it especially difficult to weather and bounce back from shocks.
PLUS	
Ineffective institutional support • The lack of effective social protection, public information, basic services, and conflict prevention and resolution	Young couples may deplete their assets or reduce their own consumption to ensure that their young children receive health care or education where these services are costly. Even in labour markets with social insurance and other protective mechanisms in place, young people generally have not built up the time or contributions to benefit.
PLUS	
Poverty occurring at certain points in an individual's or household's life course • For example, in utero; during childhood, old age or youth; or among young households (*see column 2*)	When a young person is forced to discontinue his or her studies before completing the full secondary, tertiary or vocational course, there are reduced returns on, or a complete loss of, the significant long-term time and resource investments in education made by the young person and his or her family. It becomes more difficult to find productive work and rebuild assets.

LIKELY TO TRAP PEOPLE IN POVERTY



Six key maintainers of chronic poverty have been identified as well:[4]

- *No, low or narrow-based economic growth* provides few opportunities for poor people to raise their incomes and accumulate assets. The employment effects of such growth scenarios appear to be most extreme for youth. In the majority of countries, young people are two to four times more likely than those over the age of 25 to be unemployed (International Labour Organization, 2004). This may be at least partially attributable to the real or perceived lower skill levels and more limited social capital networks among youth (Save the Children/Childhood Poverty Research and Policy Centre, 2004). Young people who have the requisite skills and education but are nonetheless unable to find or keep decent or productive work may experience disillusionment, disappointment and desperation, undermining their sense of well-being and making them more vulnerable to recruitment by militant groups or organized crime.[5]
- *The interaction of social exclusion and adverse incorporation* forces those who suffer discrimination and stigmatization to engage in economic activities and social relations that keep them poor. Such individuals often have low-paid jobs with no security, low and declining assets, and minimal access to social protection and basic services, and many are dependent on patrons. In a number of contexts, being young increases one's chances of experiencing discrimination, particularly in the labour market. Young people who also suffer other forms of discrimination based on gender, impairment or ethnic status, for example, will be particularly hard hit; such circumstances are not uncommon. Further, if young people have not had the opportunity to build their own networks, they will be entirely dependent on the social and political capital of their households and communities. Where the latter are weak or destructive, as is the case with client households and marginalized ethnic minority groups, the capacity of young people to build their own positive socio-political relationships may be limited.
- *The circumstances prevailing in disadvantaged geographical and agroecological regions* perpetuate chronic poverty. Poor natural resources, infrastructure and basic services; weak economic integration; and social exclusion and political marginality create "logjams of disadvantage". Youth are often particularly determined to escape remote, marginal, or economically stagnant areas, and some are able to migrate to urban areas and build better lives. However, limited skills and social networks, membership in an ethnic or linguistic minority, and a lack of access to information undermine the efforts of many young people to establish a sustaining urban livelihood. Those young people who are unable to migrate owing to factors such as gender, illness, impairment, family responsibilities and extreme deprivation can experience disappointment and desperation.

- *High and persistent capability deprivation*, especially during childhood—exemplified by poor nutrition, untreated illness, and the lack of access to education—diminishes human development in ways that are often irreversible. Pregnant women who suffered poor health and nutrition during their own childhood and adolescence face a higher risk of maternal and child mortality and morbidity, and early childbearing compounds the risk. It has been estimated that in 2004, 17 per cent of all births in least developed countries occurred among women aged 15-19 years. The babies born to these young mothers are at greater risk of ill-health. Unhealthy, poorly educated children can grow into young people with limited capacities for learning and working. However, adolescence and young adulthood, when individuals are learning how to function more independently, may constitute a window of opportunity. Improvements in skills, education, health and nutritional status during these periods may override earlier disadvantages (*also see figure 3.4 and the subsequent tex*t).

- *In weak, failing or failed States*, where economic opportunities are few and basic services and social protection are lacking, people can easily fall into desperate poverty, and the inadequacy of official support mechanisms and the powerlessness of the poor themselves make it unlikely that they will secure their rights and escape poverty.

- *Weak or failed international cooperation* can lead to a dramatic increase in the incidence of chronic poverty. In the 1980s and 1990s, structural adjustment policies and programmes and rapid economic liberalization negatively affected economic growth and employment, aid allocations, and trade opportunities for many countries with large numbers of chronically poor people, deepening poverty in many cases.

The knowledge now available about chronic poverty must be used to mobilize public action and reshape development strategies. While there are many policies that are potentially beneficial for both the poor and the chronically poor, many people living in chronic poverty are not "just like the poor, but (are) further down the poverty spectrum" (Chronic Poverty Research Centre, 2004). Overcoming chronic poverty requires policymakers to reorder their priorities and set their sights higher than the current policy consensus on poverty reduction. Development strategies need to move beyond the current emphasis on economic growth; hundreds of millions of people are born poor, live poor and die poor in the midst of increasing wealth. Chronically poor people need more than opportunities to improve their situation. They require targeted support and protection, as well as political action to deal with the problem of exclusion. If policymakers wish to open the door to genuine development for chronically poor people, they must first address the inequality, discrimination and exploitation that drive and maintain chronic poverty. Actions that may be taken to alleviate chronic, intergenerational and youth poverty will be detailed later in this chapter.

Poverty dynamics

Dealing with chronic poverty requires an understanding of poverty dynamics—the changes in well-being or ill-being that individuals and households experience over time. Falling into poverty, remaining stuck in poverty, and escaping poverty are the products of different combinations of structural and idiosyncratic factors operating at the individual, household, community, national and global levels. Life-course events, including transitions into adulthood and old age, marriage and having children, and the loss of a spouse, may seriously affect a person's vulnerability to poverty.

Conventional analysis is based on poverty trends, which reflect changes in poverty rates at the aggregate level. This approach offers no details about important processes and particular circumstances at the household level. Information on the progress achieved in Viet Nam can be used to illustrate this point. During the 1990s, the country experienced a remarkable reduction in poverty; from 1993 to 1998, rural and urban poverty rates fell by about 24 and 15 per cent respectively. However, these aggregate poverty trends provide no indication of what occurred among individual households. In rural areas, one third of the population remained poor, and another 5 per cent fell into poverty (*see figure 3.2a*). The urban picture is nowhere near as disheartening; about 7 per cent stayed in poverty, while only about 2 per cent moved into poverty (*see figure 3.2b*). Why did over half of the rural poor and more than one quarter of the urban poor fail to benefit from the country's pro-poor growth strategies? More detailed, focused data can provide a clearer picture-indicating, for example, that in the urban areas of Viet Nam the chronically poor are more likely to be wage workers, while in rural areas they rely on subsistence agriculture; and that children in chronically poor households are much more likely to be undernourished or malnourished and out of school.

Figure 3.2a
Poverty dynamics in rural Viet Nam, 1993-1998

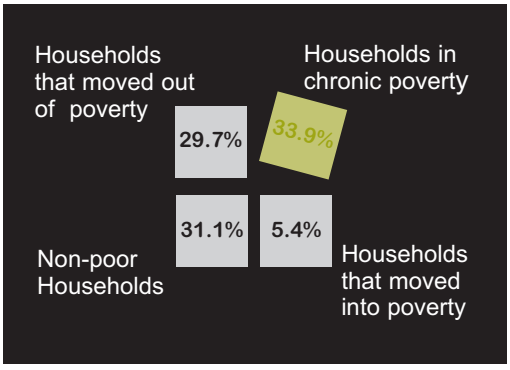
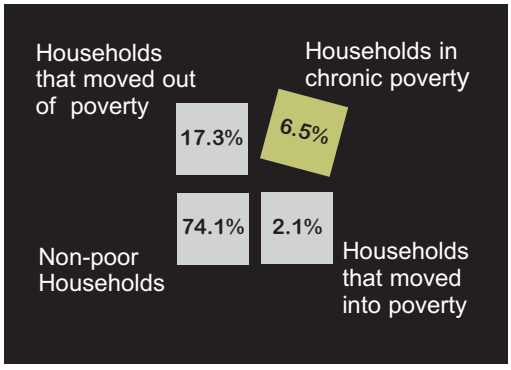


Figure 3.2b
Poverty dynamics in urban Viet Nam, 1993-1998



Source: B. Baulch, based on the Viet Nam Living Standards Survey panel, in the *Chronic Poverty Report, 2004-05* (Manchester, Institute for Development Policy and Management/Chronic Poverty Research Centre, 2004).

An understanding of poverty dynamics provides a sounder basis for anti-poverty policy formulation than reliance on poverty trends alone. Achieving a more nuanced understanding of poverty requires the collection of both panel data and standard cross-sectional household survey data. In cross-sectional household surveys, data are collected from a representative sample of households, but the same households are not necessarily included in each survey. In contrast, panel data are longitudinal data sets that track the same households over time. Ideally, panel data sets should be comprised of more than two waves of data collection so that households that are poor in every period (the chronically poor) can be distinguished from those that are poor in at least one but not all periods (the transitorily poor, who move in and out of poverty).

Conceptualizing and measuring poverty over the life course

The collection and analysis of panel data, as well as innovative qualitative inputs such as life histories, provide a clearer understanding of the ways in which the occurrence and experience of poverty can change across the life courses of individuals and households. At certain points or stages in the life course, poverty based on structural discrimination may be exacerbated and may become more deeply entrenched, and cross-sectional data do not provide much help in disentangling cohort effects from life-course effects.

This concept is best illustrated through an example that details the relevant data requirements and accompanying analytical processes. Data show, for instance, that women over the age of 65 are twice as likely to be living in poverty as adult women younger than 45 years of age. Using cross-sectional survey data alone, it would be difficult to determine whether this occurs primarily owing to a cohort effect, an example being that older women are less likely to be literate than their younger counterparts, who have grown up with different educational opportunities and gender roles; or to a life-course effect, based on the fact that women are more likely to be widowed, dependent and/or in ill-health as they age. As people get older, their roles, capacities and responsibilities change, as do the opportunities available to them. These shifts occur within the context of continuously evolving relationships and circumstances both within and outside the household. Changes in household composition (including size, dependency ratios[6] and headship) through marriage, divorce, abandonment, birth, illness, death, and migration have a differential impact on household members depending on their age, gender and health status; these are important considerations in assessing how poverty and well-being are experienced by individuals within such a context. Returning to the example, panel data can provide a better idea of whether education or other assets accumulated by younger cohorts will allow them to overcome the challenges thrown at them as they age.

In support of this argument, it is recommended to use panel data sets to measure the extent of youth poverty, as young people are more likely to be experiencing a more dynamic form of poverty due to the obstacles most face in seeking to achieve adult status (life-course effects) (United Nations Population Fund, 2005). It is intuitively understood that youth, however defined, are presented with an especially dynamic set of challenges and opportunities; as noted in the previous chapter, the transition from childhood to adulthood

is characterized by major changes and involves confronting and overcoming a number of difficulties and uncertainties, including obstacles relating to employment, living arrangements, personal relationships, and socio-economic status.

It is this dynamism that makes "youth" so difficult to define in functional terms. The extent to which a young person is economically dependent, independent, or depended upon can change extremely rapidly, with significant implications for his or her present and long-term well-being. This is demonstrated in an example featuring four 18-year-old women living in urban Asia:

- Anna lives with her parents and siblings. She is in full-time education and does not work.
- Meena lives alone in a women's hostel and works in a garment factory. She supports herself and sends money to her parents in the village for her siblings' education.
- Sonia lives alone with her husband. She is a nursery school teacher and also works at home.
- Tania lives with her husband and two small children, her in-laws, and her father-in-law's parents. She works at home.

None of these women is unusual, yet even from this thumbnail sketch it is apparent that each has a very different set of roles and responsibilities, as well as different opportunities and resources that can be tapped during a crisis. Furthermore, within a very short period of time—perhaps three years—Anna can "become" Meena, then Sonia, then Tania. Responsibility for a young woman's well-being may shift from her parents to herself to her husband and in-laws, and she may assume a certain amount of responsibility for the needs of her own children and those of some of her siblings. She may find a particular set of socio-economic circumstances more or less challenging depending on, for example, how many dependants she has, the extent of her available resources, and whether she is allowed or forced to work outside the home. Regardless of her situation, she will still belong to the group defined as "youth".

Longitudinal data can help analysts determine how, why and to what extent poverty status and other indicators of well-being are affected by the changes and circumstances occurring during the transition from childhood to youth, through youth into adulthood, and throughout the life course. Exemplifying this process is a recent study from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland that uses 10 waves of the British Household Panel Survey and combines longitudinal and cohort analysis of income trajectories for people at different stages of their lives to build a picture of income dynamics over the whole life cycle (Rigg and Sefton, 2004).

Importantly, the "life stages" identified in the study are not entirely age-dependent; in the model, having a partner and/or children of various ages makes a difference. While moving into, through or out of a specific life stage affects the likelihood of experiencing particular life events, age is not the only factor defining a particular stage. Furthermore, the

life stages are not sequential, can overlap, may not all be experienced by all people, or may be experienced more than once. Anna and Tania from the example above are the same age but at different stages in their lives, and this affects the likelihood of each young woman starting a job or becoming a widow, for example.

The study findings indicate that certain life events are closely associated with specific income trajectories in the United Kingdom; partnership formation and children becoming independent are associated with upward trajectories, while having children and retiring are associated with downward trajectories. However, there is considerable heterogeneity in income trajectories following these different events, and a downward trajectory does not equate to a slide into poverty. When age alone is considered, the results show that youth (older children and young adults aged 11-24 years) are relatively likely to experience an upward trajectory but also a higher proportion of unstable trajectories (Rigg and Sefton, 2004).

Long-term and well-analysed panel data sets are available for many high-income countries; however, panel data sets from low- and middle-income countries that allow analysis of poverty dynamics are few and far between. The nature and structure of longitudinal surveys are such that substantial funding is required for data collection and analysis over the long term, which tends to be incompatible with the budgetary cycles of government statistical offices or donor bodies. Those panels that do exist are often not nationally representative; they may be undertaken only in one region, or in rural but not urban areas, for example. All longitudinal data sets suffer from participant attrition and changes in definitions and topics of interest over time; this is especially true for cross-sectional household surveys that are later turned into panels. Furthermore, cross-country comparability is limited by the very different lengths of time between surveys, ranging from one to ten years. The majority of longitudinal studies span less than five years and/or include only two waves of data.[7] Most data sets are not accessible (or affordable) to researchers outside the host institutions.[8] Those sets with data sufficiently disaggregated to analyse poverty by age or life stage are even rarer.

Some recent developments indicate that the situation is beginning to change. There are currently two large-scale, child-focused longitudinal surveys under way in the developing world, one of which makes children's experiences of poverty the focus of analysis. Young Lives, initiated in 2001, is investigating changes in child poverty over a 15-year period in Ethiopia, India, Peru and Viet Nam. Birth to Twenty, initiated in 1990, explores the social, economic, political, demographic and nutrition-related transitions under way in urban South Africa and the impact of these changes on a cohort of children, adolescents and their families.

Several longitudinal survey projects have recently undertaken additional waves of data collection (for example, in Indonesia), while others are planning to do so (in Bangladesh and Mexico, for instance), and many intend to make the data sets publicly available within a reasonable amount of time.

In the previous chapter, it was argued that young people were less likely to be identified as a target group for poverty reduction in those countries in which a static view of poverty prevailed, given the tendency in such contexts to focus on persistent poverty among the long-term poor. Life-course factors are often not given adequate consideration in traditional poverty analysis; however, one could argue that while the features of youth poverty tend to be highly dynamic, young people can also experience chronic poverty. This is especially likely when youth poverty is grounded in parental and childhood poverty, and when it has implications for a youth's entire life course as well as that of his or her offspring. Longitudinal data are required to understand both aspects of youth poverty-the long-term causes and implications as well as the shorter-term fluctuations in opportunities, obstacles and well-being.[9]

The intergenerational transmission of poverty

A livelihood approach, focusing on transfers of assets or capital (or the absence thereof) in the context of social, institutional and policy environments, is useful for understanding the intergenerational transmission of poverty. There are two major factors contributing to this intergenerational dynamic: poverty may or may not be privately transmitted from older generations of individuals and families to younger generations (especially, but not exclusively, from parents to their children); and resources may or may not be publicly transferred from one generation to the next (an example is taxing the income of older generations to finance primary education). Transfers can be positive (cash assets, positive aspirations) or negative (bonded labour obligations, poor nutrition, gender discrimination). As shown in table 3.1, different kinds of assets may be transferred or not transferred through various modes and mechanisms, depending on the circumstances.

Source: Adapted from Karen Moore, "Frameworks for understanding the intergenerational transmission of poverty and well-being in developing countries", CPRC Working Paper No. 8 (Manchester, United Kingdom, Institute for Development Policy and Management/Chronic Poverty Research Centre, 2001).

* It is argued that '"cultures of poverty' exist based upon the ways in which the poor have adapted to and coped with poverty over years and generations. These values, beliefs and behaviours may have been useful and appropriate in the context of the structural impediments faced by earlier generations, but remain as obstacles to development among new generations although structures may have changed. The 'culture of poverty' becomes a poverty-related structure in itself." (O. Lewis, *Five Families: Mexican Case Studies in the Culture of Poverty* (NewYork, Basic Books, 1959), in K. Moore, "Frameworks for understanding the intergenerational transmission of poverty...", p. 14.)

Table 3.1
The livelihood approach to intergenerationally transmitted poverty

What is transmitted or not transmitted?	How is it transmitted or not transmitted?	Possible implications for youth
Financial, material and environmental capital		
• Cash • Land • Livestock • Housing, buildings • Other productive/non-productive physical assets • Common property resources • Debt	• Insurance, pensions • Inheritance, bequests, dispossession • Gifts, loans • Dowry, bride wealth • Environmental conservation/ degradation • Labour bondage	• Depending on the socio-legal context, young women or men may not be able to access, own or manage particular forms of assets, including inherited assets, leaving them dependent on older relatives. • Dowry demands can affect recently married young women and their families in particular.
Human capital		
• Educational qualifications, knowledge, skills, coping/ survival strategies • Good mental/physical health • Disease, impairment	• Socialization • Investment of time/capital in care; education/training; health/nutrition • Contagion, mother-to-child transmission • Genetic inheritance	• Youth are often expected to make a transition from full-time education to employment if they have not done so already, potentially affecting parental investment in education or training. • Youth and adults of working age account for a disproportionate share of those living with HIV/AIDS; this has negative short- and long-term implications for the sufferer, his or her household (especially children and older people), and the economy.
Social, cultural and political capital		
• Traditions, institutions, norms of entitlement, value systems • Position in the community • Access to key decision makers, patrons, organizations • "Cultures of poverty"?*	• Socialization and education • Kinship • Locality • Genetic inheritance	• Young people are often key targets for those attempting to build or maintain social, political or cultural movements. This can help determine what other forms of capital are available to them, as well as the livelihood choices they make.

Which factors affect transmission?	
• Norms of entitlement determining access to capital • Economic trends and shocks • Access to and nature of markets • Presence, quality and accessibility of public, private and community-based social services and safety nets • HIV/AIDS pandemic; other regionally endemic diseases; stigma	• Structure of household and family • Child fostering practices • Education and skill level of parent(s) • Intent/attitude of parent(s) and child(ren) • Nature of living space

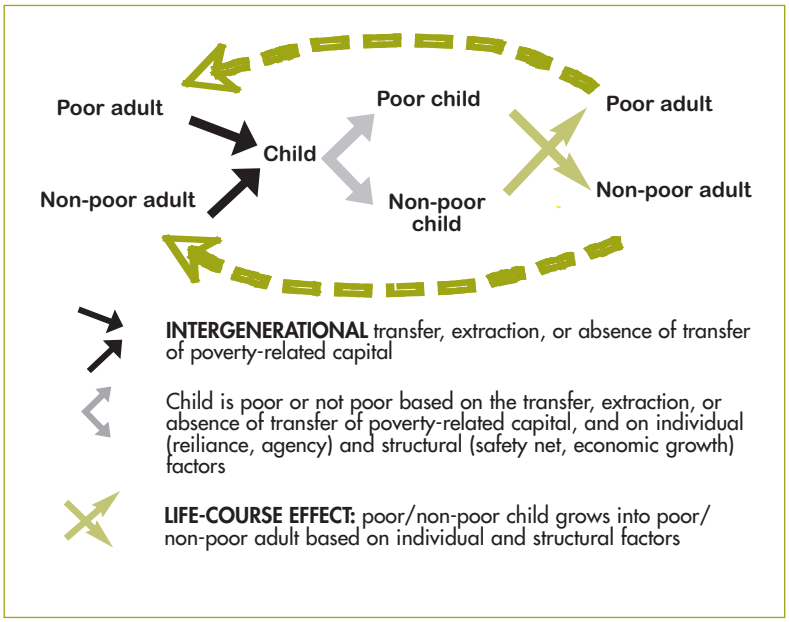
As indicated in table 3.1 and in box 3.1, below, intergenerational transfers are affected by the social, cultural, political, economic and institutional contexts in which they occur. While youth as a group face discrimination in many contexts, the extent to which poverty-related capital is transferred to a particular young person depends on the norms of entitlement associated with his or her gender, position among siblings and within the family, marital and parental status, and health status, as well as on behavioural factors such as parental and youth attitudes. Socially constructed norms of entitlement not only facilitate or constrain intergenerational transfers, but are often intergenerationally transferred themselves; discriminatory behaviour often endures across generations.

For both intergenerational poverty and life-course poverty,[10] processes are at work that may lead to or entrench poverty, as stylized in figure 3.3. Life-course poverty defines situations in which poor children or young people grow into poor, or even poorer, adults, while intergenerational poverty derives from transfers between individuals and households. Nonetheless, the processes occurring in connection with these two forms of poverty are often so closely related that distinctions can be difficult to make. For example, the inability of a parent to ensure that a child is provided with sufficient education may be said to reflect the intergenerational transmission of poverty, while an uneducated child growing into an unemployed adult may be interpreted as a consequence of life-course poverty. In practice, the processes work together.

Life-course poverty and intergenerational poverty can each be a cause, a characteristic, and an effect of chronic poverty. They constitute a cause in that certain types of deprivation, suffered to certain extents and experienced at particular points in the life course (especially, but not exclusively, during early childhood), can inflict damage that is difficult or even impossible to reverse later in life. They represent a characteristic in that the defining feature of chronic poverty is its persistence over time, so poverty that lasts throughout the life cycle and/or is passed on to the next generation is by definition chronic. Finally, they represent an effect based on evidence suggesting that the longer poverty lasts, the more difficult it becomes to escape. It is reported that in the United States of America, for example, people who have been in poverty for more than four years face a 90 per cent probability of remaining poor for the rest of their lives (Yaqub, 2000). If one or more of the assets (including income, social relationships and psychological resilience) of individuals or households fall below a "critical level",[11] it can become increasingly difficult for them to move from survival to improvement strategies.

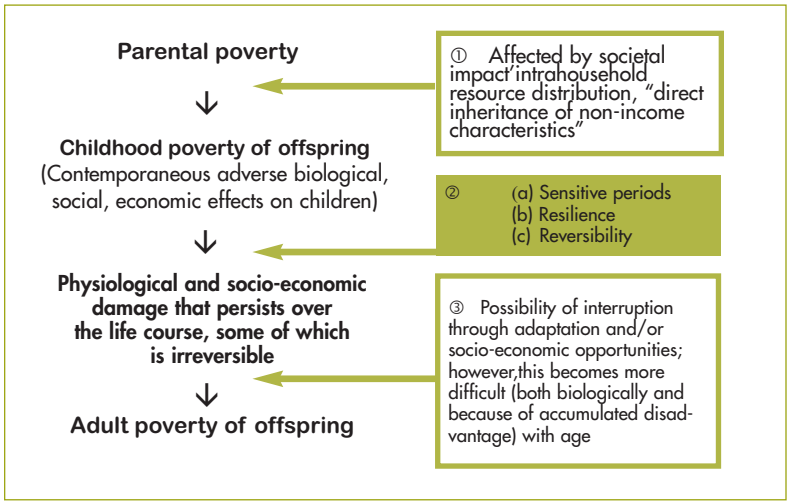
It is important to disaggregate poverty figures by age in order to determine the extent to which an additional year of poverty during infancy, childhood or youth, for example, has a greater or lesser effect on one's ability to escape poverty than does an additional year of poverty in adulthood. The timing of poverty spells—even those that are relatively short—also matters, as does the timing of interventions (Yaqub, 2002). Figure 3.4 illustrates this assertion.

Figure 3.3
Stylization of intergenerationally transmitted and life-course poverty



Source: "Frameworks for understanding the intergenerational transmission of poverty and well-being in developing countries", CPRC Working Paper No. 8 (Manchester, United Kingdom, Institute for Development Policy and Management/Chronic Poverty Research Centre, 2001).

Figure 3.4
Timing matters: an adaptation of Yaqub's "born poor, stay poor?" thesis



Source: Adapted from S. Yaqub, "Intertemporal welfare dynamics: extent and causes" (2000) (available from http://www.ceip.org/files/pdf/shahin_dynamics.pdf; accessed 1 October 2004); S. Yaqub, "At what age does poverty damage most? Exploring a hypothesis about 'timetabling' error in antipoverty", a paper presented at the Conference on Justice and Poverty: Examining Sen's Capability Approach, Cambridge, United Kingdom, 5-7 June 2001; and S. Yaqub, "Poor children grow into poor adults: harmful mechanisms or over-deterministic theory?", *Journal of International Development*, vol. 14, No. 8 (2002), pp. 1081-1093.

The distribution of resources and care

The extent to which parents transmit poverty to their children is influenced by the manner in which resources and care are distributed within the household and society (*see the section on factors affecting transmission in table 3.1 for further elaboration*). Parents' investments in their children — in terms of time and capital spent on education and training, health and nutrition, and general care — are strongly affected by available resources and localized norms of entitlement surrounding gender, age and birth order, among other factors.

A study of social mobility and adolescent schooling gaps[12] in Latin America illustrates this point. For most countries in the region there is a "reverse gender gap" in education; however, within individual households, gender as well as birth timing and birth order often make a difference (Andersen, 2001). Teenagers born to 30-year-old heads of household experience about a 7 per cent smaller schooling gap, on average, than those born to 20-year-old heads of household. At a time when they must make decisions about their children's education, young parents are likely to be earning a relatively low and erratic income, so they may elect to postpone, reduce or avoid the formal and transactional costs of schooling. Larger numbers of siblings increase the schooling gap for young people in a family, except in situations where there is an older sister, in which case resources seem to be diverted from her to her younger siblings. "Thus, in a hypothetical family who raised first a girl, then a boy, and then a girl, the oldest sister would have a 0.52 year (or 24 per cent) greater schooling gap than the younger sister. And this is not counting the life-cycle effect, which would further tend to increase the older sister's schooling gap compared to the younger sister's gap. The effects of siblings are larger in urban areas than rural areas." (Andersen, 2001, p. 30)

Box 3.1 provides an example of how some of these factors, including gendered norms of entitlement, family structure, parental education, and parental and child attitudes, interact to determine the level of investment in young people in the Philippines.

Inadequate education or training is often, though not always, a key factor constraining present and future livelihood opportunities. In a number of countries, the impact of women's education on the welfare of children (particularly that of girls in many cases) is much more significant than the impact of men's education. Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) data from the late 1990s suggest that in South-East Asia, where gender gaps in education are relatively low and education and literacy levels are relatively high (with the partial exceptions of Cambodia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic), economic and social factors limit the capacity of many young women to study beyond the primary level (ORC Macro, 2004). Overall, in the three countries for which relevant DHS data are available (Indonesia, the Philippines and Viet Nam), about 50 per cent of those women who left school at any time before completing higher education cited economic factors, and around 23 per cent cited marriage, pregnancy and/or childcare responsibilities, as the reasons for leaving. At the country level, just under two thirds of women in the Philippines cited economic factors, and more than 40 per cent of women in Indonesia cited marriage, as the reasons for discontinuing their education after completing secondary school.[13]

Box 3.1

HOW SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND PERCEPTIONS INFLUENCE INVESTMENTS IN YOUNG PEOPLE IN RURAL AREAS OF THE PHILIPPINES

Two studies investigating the determinants of parental and/or grandparental investments in children in rural areas of the Philippines suggest that the factors affecting the intergenerational transmission of poverty-related capital can be highly contextual and complex.

The findings of one study[a] indicate that resource constraints, concerns about equity and efficiency, and risk-diversification strategies all play a part in decisions about investments in children and grandchildren, as detailed in the following:

- *The pre-marriage wealth of both parents and grandparents affects children's completed schooling levels.*
- *Grandparent wealth does not affect the distribution of education between grandsons and granddaughters, though it does affect the allocation of land.*
- *The influence of grandparents on children's schooling appears to work through physical proximity rather than through wealth.*
- *Sons are clearly favoured in terms of land inheritance, while daughters generally receive more education.*
- *Better-educated fathers favour daughters in terms of education, while mothers with more land favour sons.*
- *While there is no gender gap in education in the present-day Philippines, Filipino men continue to bring more land and other assets to marriage; this affects intrahousehold bargaining power and investments in the next generation.*

The other study[b] relates how parents' decisions about education depend on their perceptions of their children's inherent attitudes:

- *Parents in the Philippines invest in the schooling of girls because they are seen as "more studious", "patient", "willing to sacrifice", and "interested in their studies".*
- *Boys are seen as more prone to vices (such as drinking), are fond of "roaming around" and "playing with their barkada [peer group]", and have to be "reminded" and "scolded" to do their schoolwork.*

While not particularly straightforward, these types of findings can have important implications for a range of policy interventions in fields as diverse as education, property law, taxation and media.

[a] *A. Quisumbing and K. Hallman, "Marriage in transition: evidence on age, education, and assets from six developing countries", Population Council/Policy Research Division, Working Paper No. 183 (December 2003).*

[b] *H.E. Bouis and others, "Gender equality and investments in adolescents in the rural Philippines", IFPRI Working Paper Series, Research Report No. 108 (Washington, D.C.: International Food Policy Research Institute, 1998).*

The particulars relating to women's limited educational attainment in four East Asian countries are summarized in the following:

- In Viet Nam, almost 30 per cent of women aged 20-24 years had only a primary education. Needing to help the family was the main reason girls stopped attending school before completing the primary cycle, and getting married was the strongest reason for leaving after finishing primary school.
- In the Philippines, almost 20 per cent of women aged 20-24 years had only a primary education. The inability to pay for school was the most important reason girls and young women stopped studying both after completing primary school and after completing secondary school.
- In Indonesia, the inability to pay for school was the most important reason girls and young women withdrew from education after completing primary school, and getting married was the strongest factor after completing secondary school.

- In Cambodia (in 2000), almost 80 per cent of women aged 20-24 years had only a primary education. No DHS data are available on the reasons for their leaving school.

National economic change can also have a significant impact on the intergenerational transmission of poverty-related capital. Analysis has been undertaken to determine the extent to which the liberalization process in Viet Nam during the 1990s affected socio-economic indicators of inequality, including disparities in child survival. The findings show that under-five mortality rates varied little for the different income quintiles in the early 1990s; however, by the late 1990s, the under-five mortality rate for the poorest quintile was more than twice that for the richest quintile. These changes have been traced to reductions among the poor (but not among the better-off) in the coverage of some health services and in women's educational attainment (Wagstaff and Nguyen, 2002).

Sensitivity to poverty

The extent to which the contemporaneous adverse biological, social and economic effects of parental poverty on a child lead to long-term functional physiological and socio-economic damage depends on when the person experienced poverty, how resilient that person and his or her environment are to the effects of poverty, and the extent to which the damage inflicted is functionally reversible (*also see figure 3.4*).

Human beings are most sensitive to the negative effects of poverty, manifested in inadequate health and nutrition, in the womb and during the first few years of life (Yaqub, 2002). Growth and development, especially of the brain and immune system, during these sensitive foetal and early childhood periods can lay the groundwork for future cognitive and physical capacity, and possibly for more socioculturally dependent qualities such as behaviour. The long-term effects of poor nutrition in utero and in early childhood on physical and cognitive development are considered to be largely irreversible.

Children born to low-income adolescent girls are often especially susceptible to persistent poverty,[14] which may become more deeply entrenched over generations. Girls who grow up stunted or anaemic are more likely to be underdeveloped for childbirth and therefore face higher risks of maternal and child mortality, and of low birth weight and stunting among their own children (Commission on Nutrition Challenges of the 21st Century, 2000). These risks are often compounded by the earlier childbearing among poorer women in comparison with their better-off counterparts. As mentioned previously, an estimated 17 per cent of births in least developed countries are among women below the age of 20, which translates into 14 million births worldwide each year (United Nations Population Fund, 2004). The babies of these young women generally have a lower birth weight and are less healthy than the babies of older and better nourished women, and are thus more likely to suffer the harmful long-term (and often cyclical) effects described earlier. In most developing countries, teenage pregnancy is higher in rural areas and among women with no education or only a primary education.[15]

Certain factors, including personality traits (such as resilience) and different forms of support offered within the larger environment (such as schooling geared towards people with learning disabilities), can help young people overcome early disadvantages and prevent physiological damage from becoming a functional impairment.

Foetal and childhood deprivation does not necessarily mean lifelong poverty, but interrupting life-course poverty requires adaptation as well as socio-economic opportunities. "Socio-economic attainments require a sound basis at each life stage" (Yaqub, 2002). However, avoiding or escaping poverty becomes more difficult with age, as both biological and socio-economic disadvantages accumulate. This highlights the central importance of adolescence and young adulthood—the period during which individuals begin to engage in most aspects of adult functioning, including sexual reproduction, labour market participation, and capital accumulation. In many contexts, after maternal and early childhood interventions are undertaken to prevent further harm, the provision of socio-economic opportunities and support for youth and young parents may be the most effective way to avert or interrupt intergenerational and life-course poverty. Actions that might be taken in this regard are outlined below in the section on policy implications.

CHILDHOOD DEPRIVATION AND ESTIMATES OF YOUTH POVERTY

In a recently released report financed by UNICEF, an innovative child-centred methodology has been used to measure the depth and extent of child poverty in developing regions (Gordon and others, 2003). An alternative measure of child poverty has been derived based on a set of indicators of severe deprivation of basic human needs, the argument being that it is not enough to base estimates of childhood poverty on household income, expenditure or consumption profiles alone, as poverty is also characterized by limited access to public goods such as safe drinking water and sanitation, roads, health care and education.

This approach is relevant to the discussion of youth poverty because (a) a proportion of those identified as "children" (individuals in the age group 15-18) may also be categorized as "youth"; (b) the remaining children will soon become youth; and (c) the authors have constructed their measure of childhood poverty to highlight aspects of deprivation that can be expected to have negative implications for well-being in both the short and long term.

The indicators of severe deprivation among children are as follows:

- *Severe food deprivation:* children whose height and weight for their age are more than three standard deviations below the median of the international reference population, signalling severe anthropometric failure (a failure to grow at a normal rate to a "normal" weight and height);
- *Severe water deprivation:* children who only have access to surface water (such as rivers) for drinking or who live in households where the nearest source of water is more than 15 minutes away (indicators of severe deprivation of water quality or quantity);
- *Severe deprivation of sanitation facilities:* children who have no access to sanitation facilities of any kind in the vicinity of their dwelling, that is, no private or communal toilets or latrines;

- *Severe health deprivation:* children who have not been immunized against any diseases or young children who have had a recent illness involving diarrhoea and did not receive any medical advice or treatment;
- *Severe shelter deprivation:* children in dwellings with more than five people per room (severe overcrowding) or with no flooring material (for example, a mud floor);
- *Severe educational deprivation:* children between the ages of 7 and 18 who have never been to school and are not currently attending school (no professional education of any kind);
- *Severe information deprivation:* children between the ages of 3 and 18 with no access to radio, television, telephone or newspapers at home;
- *Severe deprivation of access to basic services:* children living 20 kilometres (km) or more from any type of school or at least 50 km from any medical facility with doctors. (For the report financed by UNICEF, this information was available only for a few countries, so it was not possible to construct accurate regional estimates of severe deprivation of access to basic services.)

Survey data on nearly 1.2 million children in 46 countries, collected mainly during the late 1990s, were used for the UNICEF-sponsored report. The results of the analysis indicate that more than one half (over 1 billion) of the children in developing countries suffer from severe deprivation of at least one basic human need, and over one third (674 million) suffer from absolute poverty, signified by two or more severe deprivations. The highest rates of absolute poverty are found in sub-Saharan Africa (65 per cent, or 207 million children) and in South Asia (59 per cent, or 330 million children). The rates are lowest in Latin America and the Caribbean and in East Asia and the Pacific, at 17 and 7 per cent respectively. Rural children experience significantly higher levels of poverty than do urban children; rates of absolute poverty are 70 per cent or above in the rural areas of both South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Severe deprivation of shelter and sanitation facilities affects the highest proportion of children in the developing world-again, mainly in rural areas (Gordon and others, 2003).[16]

The report suggests that priority should be given to improving basic infrastructure and services for families with children, with particular attention focused on ensuring the availability of adequate shelter, sanitation and safe drinking water in rural areas. From a broader strategic perspective, it is emphasized that "in order to eradicate absolute poverty amongst children, policies will need to be targeted at the various problems they face. A single set of anti-poverty policies for the planet is not the most effective or efficient way to eradicate child poverty." (Gordon and others, 2003, p. 31)

These findings highlight the need for greater investment in efforts to achieve the child-focused Millennium Development Goals, as the young people of 2015 and beyond stand to benefit enormously. They also support the integration of policies for children and youth into national poverty reduction and overall development strategies-a step some countries have already taken.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Young people make up a significant proportion of the population in developing countries and, on grounds of equity alone, should constitute the focus for a significant proportion of national and global anti-poverty investments (Curtain, 2004). Moreover, in many contexts, youth may be disproportionately susceptible to poverty in comparison with other age groups, primarily owing to the extremely fluid nature of the challenges and opportunities they face during the transition to adulthood, particularly in relation to the labour market. This brief review of the interrelated concepts of chronic, life-course, intergenerational and youth poverty provides further justification for targeting youth in anti-poverty policies and programmes. Poverty experienced in youth not only has implications across the life course of a young person; it can also undermine that individual's capacity to bounce back from deprivation suffered in childhood and affect the long-term life chances of any dependants, especially the young person's own children.

The four-part action framework for confronting chronic poverty outlined in the *Chronic Poverty Report, 2004-05* is equally relevant to youth poverty (Chronic Poverty Research Centre, 2004, p. 50).

First is the need to prioritize livelihood security. Much greater emphasis should be placed on preventing and mitigating the shocks and insecurities that create and sustain chronic poverty. This involves not only providing recovery assistance but also giving chronically poor people a secure position from which to seize opportunities and demand their rights. For youth, for those on whom they depend, and for those who depend on them, three priorities must be set:

- Interrupt downward trajectories and allow opportunities to be pursued through the adoption of innovative social protection policies. Appropriate policy mechanisms and measures might include insurance systems and direct transfers, as well as non-contributory pensions (relevant for youth, who often have older dependants as well as their own future old age to consider). Youth-targeted social protection may include “hardship funds” that can be deployed to ensure that structural or atypical shocks do not push a young person out of secondary, tertiary or vocational education, or to support re-entry into the education system.
- Focus on preventing ill health and the descent into chronic poverty it can cause by, for example, providing preventive and curative services for breadwinners and caregivers. Universal free health care for mothers and young children can go a long way in protecting the lives and livelihoods of young people throughout the developing world.
- Focus on preventing and interrupting childhood poverty, primarily through interventions in nutrition, health, education and household security.

Second is the need to ensure that chronically poor people can take advantage of opportunities. It is argued that “pro-poor growth is the single most important measure for tackling youth unemployment” (Save the Children/Childhood Poverty Research and Policy Centre, 2004); however, growth of any kind (even pro-poor growth) is not enough to alleviate poverty in its most extreme and chronic forms. It is crucial both to promote broad-based growth and to facilitate the equitable redistribution of material and other assets so that chronically poor people can take up economic opportunities.

Making markets work for poor people, including making labour markets work for disadvantaged youth, is essential but difficult. In most contexts, efforts are needed to forge a closer link between educational provision and economic requirements. Priority should be given to increasing the quality and relevance of education and training, ensuring that young people stay in education long enough to develop the required skills, and combining training programmes with, for example, job search assistance, placement schemes, wage subsidies or access to credit, childcare or transportation (Save the Children/Childhood Poverty Research and Policy Centre, 2004).

Third is the need to take empowerment seriously. Policies must address the difficult political process of challenging the layers of discrimination that keep people trapped in poverty. For many youth, age-based discrimination adds to the discrimination they face because of their gender, ethnicity or poverty status. Young people can be effective agents of change within their communities. There is an urgent need to remove the political, legal and social barriers that work against vulnerable youth and other poor and chronically poor people in order to enhance their capacity to influence institutions that affect their lives.

Fourth is the need to recognize obligations to provide resources. Chronic poverty cannot be seriously reduced without real transfers of resources and sustained, predictable finance. Political indifference to fulfilling national and international poverty eradication commitments and obligations must be challenged and ways found to foster social solidarity across households, communities and countries. The need for policy change should not obscure the fact that it is the chronically poor themselves that are working hardest to overcome their poverty. Even now, when their existence is recognized, the chronically poor—and particularly poor children, youth, older people and persons with disabilities—are perceived in both policy circles and the popular imagination as dependent and passive. Nothing could be further from the truth. Most people in chronic poverty are striving to improve their livelihoods and prospects for their families under difficult circumstances not of their own choosing. They need real commitment at the highest levels, backed up by action and resources, to support their efforts to secure their rights and overcome the obstacles that trap them in poverty.

CONCLUSION

Youth poverty is a serious development problem, not least because of the large numbers of young people living in absolute poverty in developing countries; as indicated in the present and preceding chapters, this group includes about 674 million individuals under the age of 18 and around 209 million between the ages of 15 and 24. In many contexts, youth are more likely to experience poverty than those in other age groups because of the uncertainties and dynamism characterizing the transition from childhood to adulthood (particularly with regard to relationships and responsibilities), or owing to age-based discrimination, especially in labour markets.

As elaborated in this chapter, however, context matters, and the relative extent of youth poverty in a given community or country depends on the interaction of many different factors. In settings in which young people—or particular groups of youth such as young women, indigenous youth, or youth with disabilities—are disproportionately poor or vulnerable to poverty, understanding what has driven and maintained this poverty is

crucial for developing effective policy interventions. Falling into, becoming stuck in, or escaping from poverty during youth (or at any other stage of the life cycle) is based on variable combinations of structural and idiosyncratic factors and life-course events occurring in a multitude of contexts ranging from the individual to the global. After early childhood, adolescence and young adulthood may be the period in which anti-poverty interventions have the greatest potential to effect long-term positive change.

The related concepts of chronic poverty, life-course poverty and intergenerational poverty contribute to a better understanding of youth poverty. First, an analysis of the multiple and interacting causes of chronic poverty can help identify the relative positions of different groups of poor people, facilitating policy prioritization in contexts of resource scarcity. Second, life-course events and experiences such as leaving school, starting work, getting married and having children can seriously affect a person's vulnerability to poverty. These and other critical events are likely to occur at particular stages of the life cycle; as previously mentioned, these stages are not necessarily defined by age and are highly contextual. Third, it is important to adopt an intergenerational perspective because poverty experienced in youth is often linked to parental poverty (manifested in poor maternal nutrition or inadequate shelter, for example) and childhood deprivation (such as being forced to leave school early or engage in dangerous work); in addition, youth poverty—like poverty experienced in childhood or old age—can have implications across the life course of a young person and that of his or her household.

Qualitative and quantitative cross-sectional research has provided a deeper understanding of the dynamics of poverty during youth and other stages of the life course. The processes driving or maintaining poverty change over time, often very rapidly in the context of large-scale political or economic shocks. Ongoing construction and analysis of qualitative and quantitative panel data sets with information on poverty over the life course and across generations, particularly for developing countries, can provide an effective means of indicating to policymakers the types and timings of anti-poverty interventions required. ●

[1] For the sake of simplicity, the word "parents" in this chapter is used to signify older generations of individuals responsible for the well-being of children. The often significant role of grandparents, siblings and other relatives and non-relatives is duly acknowledged.

[2] This child-centred approach to estimating childhood deprivation has been described in *Child Poverty in the Developing World* (Gordon and others, 2003).

[3] In the *Chronic Poverty Report, 2004-05*, this is illustrated by the story of Maymana and Mofizul, who make up a household in rural Bangladesh; their chronic poverty is an outcome of ill-health, widowhood, a saturated rural labour market, disability, social injustice and poor governance, among other factors (Chronic Poverty Research Centre, 2004).

[4] Adapted from the Chronic Poverty Report, 2004-05 (Chronic Poverty Research Centre, 2004).

[5] For a discussion of how a stagnant economy along with widespread social exclusion of a large and educated youth population laid the groundwork for the emergence and maintenance of political conflict in Sri Lanka; see the "Economic roots of political conflict: the case of Sri Lanka" (Abeyratne, 2004).

[6] The ratio of economically active household members to those who are economically dependent. Children, older people, the ill and the disabled are generally considered dependants, although each may contribute directly or indirectly to household income and consumption.

[7] In contrast, the United States Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID) (http://psidonline.isr.umich.edu/) has collected data annually since 1968. By 2001, the original 4,800 households had grown to over 7,000. At the conclusion of the 2003 wave of data collection, the PSID will have collected information about more than 65,000 individuals spanning a period of up to 36 years of their lives. The British Household Panel Survey (http://iserwww.essex.ac.uk/ulsc/bhps/) has collected annual data over 13 years on 5,500 sample households, new members in those households, and "spin-off" households when individuals have left. Both panels are regularly supplemented with other large samples on topics of interest, such as child development.

[8] For further discussion of issues surrounding poverty-related longitudinal research, see "Urban Longitudinal Research Methodology: background paper written for the joint DPU-ODI-DFID-World Bank Workshop" (Moser, 2003).

[9] In chapter 2 of this publication, Curtain states that "existing research may be overly focused on groups living in chronic poverty". This is not strictly true. "Static" (cross-sectional) surveys measure whoever is poor at a particular moment, so both the temporarily and the chronically poor are measured, but there is no way of distinguishing between the two.

Consider a population with 10 households, two of which are "never poor", and two of which are "always poor". The remaining 60 per cent are transitorily poor; some fall into poverty every few years owing to an economic or climatic shock, while others face a lean season every year. The extent to which these households are captured by a cross-sectional survey completely depends on which year, season or month the survey is undertaken.

Curtain's point that "young people in poverty are likely to be underrepresented in (household surveys) if they have left the parental home and are in precarious circumstances, perhaps living in temporary accommodations or in no accommodations at all" is well-taken. This is not, however, an argument in favour of either cross-sectional or panel surveys, but an argument to do all surveys differently.

Further, in any given country, both the extent to which youth (defined as those aged 15-24 years) live in such situations, and the relative extent to which young people are disproportionately represented (compared with other mobile groups including migrant labourers), remain empirical questions.

[10] Life-course poverty is also sometimes referred to as intragenerational poverty, though this can also mean poverty-related transfers within a generational cohort (that is, between same-generation peers or family members).

[11] Other authors have referred to this "critical level" as "ratchets" (Chambers, 1983) and as "accumulated disadvantage" (Yaqub, 2001).

[12] An "adolescent schooling gap" is defined by L.E. Andersen (2001, p. 8) as the "disparity between the years of education that a teenager or young adult would have completed had she entered school at normal school starting age and advanced one grade each year, on one hand, and the actual years of education, on the other hand. Thus, the schooling gap measures years of missing education." Teenagers are here defined as those aged 13-19 years; only "those still living at home" are included in the analysis. The "reverse gender gap" in education describes the situation in most Latin American countries, where female teenagers have more education than their male counterparts. In the developing world as a whole, the situation is reversed. Andersen's analysis suggests that the overall reverse gender gap in education does not, however, appear to lead to the expected higher social mobility among female teenagers in comparison with male teenagers.

[13] In other countries for which there are relatively recent data on women who left school at any time before completing higher education, the proportions who cited economic factors as the reason for leaving ranged from only 7 per cent in Jordan (1997) and Turkey (1998) to 47 per cent in Bolivia (1998). Over one half of Bolivian and Nepali women cited economic factors as the reason for leaving before completing primary school. The proportions of women who cited marriage or children as the reason for leaving school ranged from only 5 per cent in Turkey to 58 per cent in Jordan. Over three quarters of Nepali and Jordanian women cited marriage or children as factors in their leaving after completing secondary school or, for Nepali women, before completing higher education.

[14] Also see Buvinic (1998).

[15] These differences are often extreme. For example, in Benin in 2001, teenage pregnancy was 2.5 times higher in rural than in urban areas, over twice as common among those with no education compared with those that had a primary education, and over 6.5 times as common among those with no education compared with those that had a secondary education or higher.

[16] Severe deprivation is defined as "those circumstances that are highly likely to have serious adverse consequences for the health, well-being and development of children. Severe deprivations are causally related to 'poor' developmental outcomes both long and short term" (Gordon and others, 2003). Indicators have been developed for severe deprivation based on the absence of food, water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education, information and access to basic services. A child is living in absolute poverty only if he or she suffers from two or more severe deprivations of basic human needs.

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