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Youth unemployment and violence

Rapid Literature Review
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About this report

This rapid literature review addresses the following questions:

What evidence is available of a connection between youth unemployment and violence (in particular crime, gang violence, domestic violence) in 'stable' developing countries? What interventions have development agencies carried out to address this issue, and what lessons can be learned from these? In what areas is further research needed?

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Overview

This literature review looks at the evidence for a causal link between youth unemployment and violence in stable developing countries, focusing on crime, gang violence and domestic violence. It also looks at the effectiveness of donor programming to address this issue, and identifies areas where further research is needed.

Perceived link between youth unemployment and violence

The literature shows a strong acceptance of the assumption that youth unemployment is a factor leading to violence – both criminality and youth participation in political violence and armed groups. The hypothesis is that, without jobs, young people are prone to violence and pose a threat to society. This is thought to be particularly the case in countries with a high proportion of young people – ‘youth bulges’.

A search for empirical evidence to back up this hypothesis reveals two critical points: **1) a lack of consistency about terminology and definitions;** and **2) a lack of data.** Youth is defined differently in different countries/regions and by different agencies: whereas the UN defines youth as the age group from 15 to 24 years old, it can include someone as young as 12 or as old as 35. There also tends to be an assumption that youth in the context of unemployment and violence refers only to young males, not females. Moreover, there is ambiguity about whether it is unemployment or under-employment and the quality of work young people have that is relevant. Finding accurate, up-to-date, comprehensive, gender- and age-disaggregated data on youth in developing countries is a major challenge. This is arguably even more the case in relation to unemployment and violence than in ‘traditional’ development sectors such as education and health.

Evidence

What *do* the data and literature tell us?

First, it is clear there has been **massive growth in youth populations** across the globe, particularly in developing countries. Young people (aged 15–24 years) now make up around one fifth of the world’s population, and the overwhelming majority (over 90 percent) are in developing countries. Second, **youth unemployment is a huge and growing problem**: the global youth unemployment rate was 13 percent in 2014, with wide regional variations – the highest rates being in the Middle East and North Africa. With 1 billion youth expected to enter the job market in the next decade, around 600 million jobs need to be created just to keep unemployment rates constant. Youth unemployment rates are consistently higher (on average three times as high) as the adult rate. Young people are also disproportionately represented in low-paid work and in the informal economy.

The review found that, **while numerous reports and papers claim youth unemployment is a factor in youth participation in violence, few, if any, studies provide concrete proof** of this. Research reveals either a weak link between them or that unemployment rates are associated with only some forms of criminality, for example petty theft. Other studies that focus on youth participation in political violence suggest unemployment *per se* is not the most important factor determining this. One analysis identifies corruption, injustice, discrimination, humiliation and experience of violence by young people as more important driving factors. These findings would appear to be confirmed by the Arab Spring of 2011, in which there were several contributory factors in addition to youth unemployment, including anger at corrupt regimes and weak governance.

Given the lack of data and studies on youth unemployment and violence, the review also looked for evidence of related links between violence and youth bulges, unemployment and economic crisis. Limited evidence was found of a link between youth bulges and violence, and between general (not specifically

youth) unemployment and violence. **Evidence was strongest for economic crisis leading to increased crime, including increased juvenile crime.**

Regional and country analysis: Latin America and the Caribbean and Nigeria

The review also looked for evidence of a link between youth unemployment and violence in two regions, Latin America and the Caribbean, and in Nigeria. Youth unemployment in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) was 14.3 percent in 2011 – about three times the rate for adults; of those who were employed, over half worked in the informal economy. Youth unemployment rates in a number of Caribbean countries have stayed above global averages for several years. Moreover, youth unemployment in the Caribbean has increased – in some cases significantly – since 2007.

Statistics for crime and violence in both regions, particularly Latin America, are even more alarming: eight of the 10 most violent countries in the world, and 40 of the world's 50 most dangerous cities, are in LAC. There are an estimated 73,000–90,000 firearms deaths each year in Latin America, three times the world average. Young men in Latin America are particularly and disproportionately affected by lethal violence: the homicide rate among young people is more than double that of the general population. Statistics for crime in the Caribbean are equally dire, with young people involved both as victims and as perpetrators. Studies point to high levels of violent crime committed by young people, and suggest that this proportion is increasing. In Jamaica, for example, youth under the age of 25 were responsible for 51 percent of all murders and 56 percent of all major crimes in 2000.

What is the evidence of a connection between the high youth unemployment rates in LAC and their high crime rates?

A number of reports cite youth unemployment as a factor in **Latin America's** high crime rates, but some studies point to the kind of work people do and the opportunities it offers as being more significant. The literature also points to the gap between income generated from crime and income generated from legal activities as an incentive for young people to engage in the former. The strongest correlation between youth unemployment and violence comes from a report on Latin America's so-called *ninis* (young people who are neither in school nor working). Analysis of data on *ninis* and crime (homicide) in Mexico found a definite correlation between these in the period 2008-2013, when murder rates tripled (this period was the apex of the country's drug war). As in Latin America, various reports and studies on **the Caribbean** identify youth unemployment as a risk factor contributing to the prevalence of youth violence, but no study provides evidence of a direct link.

The literature review found a number of reports relating to youth unemployment and crime in **Nigeria**. These paint a picture of very high – and rising – youth unemployment rates in the country. Average youth unemployment in 2012 was 46.5 percent, up from 35.2 percent in 2010. Available figures show high youth involvement in crime: for example, in 2008, 92.5 percent of convicted prisoners were aged 16–35 years. All the papers and reports reviewed attribute high and rising levels of criminality in the country to high levels of youth unemployment. However, they fail to provide hard data to back up these assertions.

Gender, youth unemployment and violence

What is the role of gender issues in youth unemployment and violence?

Gender-disaggregated data on youth unemployment in developing countries are limited, despite female youth unemployment rates often exceeding those of males. Gender differentials in youth unemployment rates are small at the global level and in most regions, but very high in the Middle East and North Africa. The gap in the male and female employment-to-population ratio (the share of the working-age population that is employed) in South Asia is even higher, reaching 29.6 percentage points in 2014. Women are also more likely than men to be employed in the informal sector, and in low-paid work: 86–88 percent of women in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and the Middle East and North Africa were self-

employed. Factors restricting employment opportunities for young women include household responsibilities, lack of access to education and health services, child marriage, social norms and lack of public safety.

The literature review uncovered very little data or research on gender aspects of the links between youth unemployment and violence/criminality. The general data challenges faced in developing countries are even more true for gender-disaggregated data; other reasons are a frequent assumption that youth unemployment and violence is essentially a male issue; and, in the context of domestic violence in particular, reluctance in many cultures to report this and/or to take it seriously on the part of the authorities.

The review found **some evidence of a link between economic crisis and domestic violence**. It found some evidence of increased vulnerability of women and girls to prostitution and to trafficking in times of economic hardship. It also found **some limited evidence that young women were disproportionately at risk of domestic violence**. A regional survey of victims of violence in the Caribbean, for example, found that 48 percent of adolescent girls' sexual initiation was 'forced' or 'somewhat forced' in nine Caribbean countries. One effect of rampant gang violence and drug turf wars seen in parts of Central America – notably El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala – is girls marrying or coupling with gang members and older men as a form of protection. The overwhelming **majority of victims of youth homicide are males**. Worldwide, some 200,000 homicides occurred among youth (defined as aged 10–29 years) (representing 43 percent of total homicides globally); 83 percent of these involved male victims. This global gender gap tends to be bigger in countries with high rates of homicide.

The review was able to find no data specifically on women's participation in violence/criminality in the context of youth unemployment. However, there is evidence of young females joining armed groups both because of their economic situation and as a means of empowerment.

In sum...

There is a widely presumed causal link between youth unemployment and violence, but solid evidence to prove this is lacking. A major factor in this is the lack of data full stop on youth in developing countries – in other words, it is not that available data *disprove* the link but rather that there are **insufficient data to establish a link**. However, some studies throw doubt on the presumed link by indicating that youth unemployment is only one of a **mix of factors** contributing to violence. Others could be weak governance, strong leadership offered by armed groups, availability of weapons, widespread drug use, dysfunctional family relationships and a culture of acceptance of violence.

Interventions to tackle youth unemployment and violence

Youth-focused programming by donors has been growing in recent years. It is motivated by both 'negative' factors – the perceived threat posed by 'youth bulges', high levels of youth unemployment and high youth involvement in violence (crime), extremism and armed conflict – and the positive potential of 'demographic dividends' and recognition that youth can contribute to growth and development. Evidence of this comes from the Sustainable Development Goals, which explicitly target youth to a far greater extent than did the Millennium Development Goals, and the growing number of donors with specific youth policies/strategies. Youth programming by donors covers a range of areas, notably education, health, social protection, peace-building, youth participation and voice, youth rights and youth employment. This review looks only at youth employment programmes.

The **objectives** of youth employment programmes vary: in some, the goal is to promote overall development and poverty reduction; in others, it is specifically to reduce armed violence. Youth employment also features in violence (crime) prevention programmes, though often as just one element in a much wider range. Irrespective of the goal, interventions under youth employment programmes are similar: skills development and vocational training, education, entrepreneurship promotion, changes in

legislation/regulations to encourage youth employment, engagement with the private sector and public works schemes.

The literature review looked at various **assessments of donor youth employment programmes**. Some common issues emerge from these:

- There is a gap between donors' rhetorical commitment to youth programming and actual practice. Youth programming tends to be carried out piecemeal under diverse sectors rather than in a comprehensive and holistic way. Donors recognise this problem, but as yet have made limited improvement to implementation.
- Programmes are based on an assumption that youth employment will reduce violence, but do not articulate the precise pathways through which this works.
- There is a lack of situational analysis underlying programme design.
- There is a lack of detailed information on, and particularly evaluation of, donor youth employment programmes and their long-term impact.
- Donors focus on supply-side measures and tend to neglect the demand side. This can lead to problems if supply-side interventions raise expectations that can then not be met.
- Donors tend to focus on the formal economy and neglect the informal economy.
- Youth employment interventions that achieve the best results are part of a wider effort also tackling other issues such as youth rights and psychosocial needs.
- There is recognition of the distinct needs of adolescent girls and young women, but this is not reflected in youth employment programming.
- Constraints are imposed by the nature of development programming, such as fixed programme windows of three or five years, lack of flexibility and pressure on donors to disburse funds.

Recommendations for further research

A key finding of this review is the *lack* of data and research on all aspects of youth unemployment and violence. Research and analysis is needed in the following areas:

- The scale and characteristics of youth unemployment in developing countries, with gender- and age-disaggregated data;
- The scale and characteristics of youth violence in developing countries, with gender- and age-disaggregated data;
- Links between youth unemployment and violence/criminality – whether, through which pathways and to what extent the former impacts the latter;
- Other factors that work alongside unemployment in promoting violence/criminality, and factors that prevent youth violence/criminality (some societies have high youth unemployment but not high youth violence);
- The specific effects of youth unemployment and youth violence on young women;
- Situation diagnostics in each context to inform the design of donor programmes tackling youth unemployment and violence, with specific attention to the needs of young women;
- Rigorous evaluation of donor youth employment programmes and violence prevention programmes to identify lessons and effective approaches;
- Cross-country comparisons of youth unemployment–violence data and donor programming.

1. Introduction

1.1 Perceived link between youth unemployment and violence

The notion of unemployment, specifically youth unemployment, as a factor promoting violence is relatively common in the literature. Paul Collier identified the economic growth rate as ‘the single most (statistically) influential variable in determining whether a country returns to war within a few years of a peace settlement’ and saw unemployment as the likely route through which growth could affect violence (Collier, 2000, cited in Cramer, 2015: 1). He argued that unemployment was a source of grievance – providing a motive alongside greed – while the opportunity cost for unemployed young men to engage in violence and join armed groups was low (Collier, 2000, cited in Stewart, 2015: 4). Cincotta et al. (2003), Heinsohn (2003) and Urdal (2004) (cited in Cramer, 2010) echo the view that youth unemployment is a key cause of insurgency or civil war. ‘It is believed that unemployment triggers participation in insurgencies, prompts people to join violent gangs, drives people to extremism, and that it is the primary reason behind domestic violence’ (Cramer, 2015: 1). Similarly, in relation to crime: ‘Disaffected young people who lack the economic opportunities to raise themselves out of poverty are more vulnerable than adults to participation in armed violence, crime, gangs, drug trafficking and other illicit activities’ (Ali, 2014).

In assessing *how* youth unemployment leads to violence, a dominant theme in the literature is that it stalls the transition to adulthood: ‘the structural exclusion and lack of opportunities faced by young people effectively block or prolong their transition to adulthood and can lead to frustration, disillusionment and, in some cases, their engagement in violence’ (McLean Hilker & Fraser, 2009). Un- and under-employment and lack of livelihood opportunities are identified as stalling factors:

Without access to employment or livelihood opportunities, most young people cannot afford a house or a dowry, cannot marry and their transition to adulthood is effectively blocked. Menial jobs with little prospect for advancement may also be a cause of youth frustration, embarrassment and social separation... *[This]* can cause conflict or lead to youth involvement in criminal activities... that offer livelihood opportunities. (ibid.)

Charlotte Spinks notes with particular reference to Africa:

For many young Africans, ‘youth’ is not serving as a transitional phase to a more established social status, but is an enduring limbo. This is a source of tremendous frustration. Instead of leaving youth behind and entering adulthood by marrying and establishing independent households, an increasing proportion of this ‘lost generation’... are unable to attain any social status. (cited in UNDP, 2006: 23).

The link between youth unemployment and violence is seen in the literature as exacerbated by ‘youth bulges’ in developing countries. The proportion of young people (aged 15–24 years) in the global population is higher than at any time in history (McLean Hilker, 2009) – and growing. While some view this as offering opportunities for a ‘demographic dividend’ (large numbers of working-age people and few dependents), in the absence of education and employment opportunities – a common situation in many developing countries – youth bulges are seen as posing a threat to peace and stability. A House of Commons report on jobs and livelihoods warns 600 million young people will enter the job market in the next decade, with only 200 million jobs awaiting them (House of Commons, 2015: 61). The same report cites the Zambian Finance Minister, Alexander Chikwanda, who called youth unemployment ‘a ticking time bomb for all of us’ (ibid.).

Development agencies widely share this perception of crisis – the feeling that it is vital to address youth unemployment in order to prevent social unrest and other problems. A 2005 report by the UN Office for West Africa also asserted, ‘current levels of youth unemployment among young men and women in West Africa are a ticking time bomb for the region and beyond’ (cited in Stewart, 2015: 4). A 2007 report by the

UN Development Programme (UNDP) titled *Youth of Africa: A threat for peace or force for good?* asserted that:

The likelihood of a violent onset is believed to be particularly acute in contexts where a large population of young people are coming of age in the face of unstable governments, insecurity and development challenges... In countries at war this often translates into young people being more susceptible to recruitment into armed rebel groups, either by personal choice or are coercively forced to join. Even in countries that are not formally in conflict, many young people, in particular young men, are drawn into gang activity and predatory activity, partly in response to a sense of marginalisation and social and economic exclusion.

Outlining the broad framework for collective security and the UN's role in the 21st century, the Report by the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change points to youth as a threat to security. In particular, it identifies youth unemployment as both a cause of violence and a consequence of failed post-conflict peace-building, potentially leading to further violence (cited in UNDP, 2006: 32). This depiction of unemployed young people as a condition and a cause of conflict is also evident in the overarching agenda for conflict prevention contained in the Secretary-General's Report on the Prevention of Armed Conflict (ibid.):

Young people with limited education and few employment opportunities often provide fertile recruiting ground for parties to a conflict. Their lack of hope for the future can fuel disaffection with society and make them susceptible to the blandishments of those who advocate armed conflict. This problem can be especially acute in countries that have a 'youth bulge', a population comprised of a large number of youth compared to other age groups... Addressing the needs and aspirations of adolescence is therefore an important aspect of long-term prevention strategy.

Elsewhere, the UN has stated that 'large numbers of unemployed youth are a potential source of insecurity given their vulnerability to recruitment into criminal and violent activities' (House of Commons, 2015: 61). An International Labour Organization (ILO) report warns, 'Continuation or exacerbation of the current youth unemployment crisis...raises the spectre of pervasive social and political tensions that could reshape the entire social fabric and economic system in unpredictable and unwelcome ways' (2012a: 3-4). A 2015 report by Mercy Corps found, 'An "economics of terrorism" narrative suggests that idle youth, lacking licit opportunities to earn a living, are a ready pool of recruits for the likes of the IEA [Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (Taliban)], al-Shabab or Colombia's constellation of armed groups. Political violence is job seeking by another name.'

The assumptions made about youth and violence are clear in these reports: without jobs, young people are prone to engage in violence, 'they possess their own culture of violence', they are a threat to society. Section 3 discusses donors' translation of this acceptance of a link between youth unemployment and violence into donor programming.

1.2 About this literature review: objectives, concepts and outline

Objectives

As seen, the 'connection' between youth unemployment and violence is prevalent in the literature and accepted by many donors. This literature review aims to:

- Assess whether there is evidence of an actual causal link (as opposed to a perceived one) between youth unemployment and violence;
- Assess the scale of female youth unemployment, and how unemployment impacts women, either as victims of violence or as perpetrators of violence;
- Identify and assess the effectiveness of donor interventions to reduce violence by promoting youth employment, and the lessons learned from these;

- Identify areas where further research is needed.

This review does not look at the causes of youth unemployment, nor does it look at how violence or conflict affects youth unemployment. Its focus is strictly on whether, how and to what extent youth unemployment leads to violence. The review draws on academic and grey literature.

Terminology

The main terms/concepts the review examined are youth, unemployment and violence. These are clarified below:

Youth: Youth is defined in the literature as both an age group and a social construct. As an age group, youth is positioned across the boundaries of childhood and adulthood. The UN General Assembly has defined youth as aged between 15 and 24 years. However, this definition varies across organisations and countries. In Jordan, for example, the lowest age range for youth is 12, whereas in a number of African countries, including Sierra Leone and Rwanda, the upper age range is 35. The World Health Organization (WHO) and the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) follow the UN definition of youth as aged 15–24 but consider adolescents as aged 10–19 and young people as aged 10–24. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) defines a child as everyone under the age of 18. In sum, there is no single agreed definition of the youth age category.

Youth is better understood as a transition stage between childhood and adulthood, rather than as a specific age group. The World Bank describes this as a period of semi-autonomy, when youth experiment with adult roles but do not fully commit to them (McLean Hilker & Fraser, 2009: 9). However, again, what it means to be an adult can be very different in different cultural contexts. Common markers for the achievement of adulthood include achieving economic independence, leaving the parental home, getting married and having children (ibid.). Inability of youth to find employment can prevent them achieving these goals, and thus ‘stall’ their transition to adulthood – potentially causing frustration and anger. Conversely, there will be factors that accelerate the transition to adulthood, such as conflict/economic crisis necessitating young people to generate income.

A final point to note in relation to youth in the literature is that this often refers to young men only. ‘Young women can be invisible and doubly disadvantaged, and are left out of many youth-focused interventions, in part because they are not perceived to represent a threat. In some cultures, female youth as a category scarcely exists, for example in Darfur females become women when they menstruate, before which point they are considered girls’ (McLean Hilker & Fraser, 2009: 9).

This review follows the UN definition of youth as aged 15–24 years; where evidence presented is based on differing definitions this is clarified.

Unemployment: This review seeks to assess the link between youth unemployment and violence. However, as noted earlier, in the absence of social protection programmes (e.g. unemployment benefits) in many developing countries, being out of work is not actually an option for many people. Nevertheless, the quantity and quality of work they have could fall far short of their expectations, leading to frustration and anger. Hence this review is not confined to young people who have no work at all but takes a wider perspective, looking at the links between unemployment, under-employment and employment in low-paid, unsatisfying work, and violence.

Violence: With regard to violence, the review focuses on violence in the form of criminal activity; gang membership and gang violence; and domestic (inter-personal) violence. While there is much literature on the link between unemployment and extremism/recruitment by terrorist or extremist groups, this is not a focus area of the review. Similarly, the review focuses on *stable, developing* countries rather than countries in conflict situations or fragile states (though, given the limited evidence available on stable developing countries, some evidence from fragile/conflict-affected states is included), and does not look at the effects of youth unemployment in developed countries.

Outline

The remainder of this section details the scale and characteristics of youth unemployment.

Section 2 then examines evidence for a link between youth unemployment and violence. It begins by reviewing findings from generic reports and then looks for evidence of such a link in two regions, Latin America and the Caribbean, and in one African country, Nigeria. These were chosen partly on the basis of available literature and partly for geographic spread, but also because all are characterised by both high rates of youth unemployment and high rates of violence. Section 2 also addresses the gender issue, detailing the scale and nature of female youth unemployment and presenting evidence on how unemployment affects young women – either as victims of violence or as perpetrators of violence.

Section 3 of the report looks at donor programmes to tackle youth unemployment and violence. It examines available assessments of such donor programmes to identify the main challenges and issues faced, and the lessons learned. The Annex maps the youth policies and strategies of key international and bilateral donor agencies, including – where available – their policies in relation to youth unemployment and youth violence.

The review ends by identifying the main areas where additional research is needed. Section 4 contains an annotated bibliography of key documents, which is followed by a full list of references.

1.3 Youth unemployment: The scale of the problem

Available data points to 1) a growing share of young people in the world; 2) rising youth unemployment – and this being higher than unemployment in the general population; 3) both youth and youth unemployment being concentrated in developing countries; and 4) young people being disproportionately represented in low-paid work and in the informal economy.

According to ILO (2012a: 7), almost one person in five is aged between 15 and 24 years, with a total of over 1.2 billion youth in the world. The overwhelming majority of these – about 90 percent – are in developing countries (60 percent in Asia, 17 percent in Africa). Based on a definition of youth as aged between 15 and 29 years, they make up roughly a quarter of the world's population and in many countries, especially in Africa and South Asia, they make up nearly a third of the population (S4YE, 2015: 9). 'The current population of young people in developing countries is the largest the world has ever seen – around 1 billion. It will reach a maximum of 1.1 billion in 2060 and gradually decline thereafter' (ILO, 2012a: 7).

Turning to how many of these young people are unemployed, ILO puts the figure at about 73.3 million in 2014, down from 76.6 million at the peak of global economic crisis in 2009 (ILO, 2015: 1). The global youth unemployment rate rose rapidly between 2007 and 2010, but then settled at 13.0 percent for the period 2012 to 2014, still far higher than the pre-crisis rate of 11.7 percent in 2007 (*ibid.*). There are wide regional variations in youth unemployment rates: in 2014, youth unemployment was highest in the Middle East (28.2 percent) and North Africa (30.5 percent) and lowest in South Asia (9.9 percent) and East Asia (10.6 percent) (*ibid.*). Over the next decade, around 1 billion youth are expected to enter the job market, with only 40 percent expected to be able to enter jobs that currently exist. This means the global economy will have to generate 600 million jobs over the next 10 years – 5 million each month – simply to keep unemployment rates constant (S4YE, 2015: 10).

ILO (2015) notes that, while the challenge in developed countries is to create jobs, in developing countries there is a further challenge of finding decent jobs for young people who are under-employed and working in the informal economy. In 2014, across the globe, about 500 million youth were unemployed, under-employed or working in insecure jobs (S4YE, 2015: 9). Roughly a third of youth worldwide – 621 million – are classified as NEETs – that is, not in employment, education or training (*ibid.*). The UN Population Fund (UNFPA) reports that, in 18 out of 60 countries where data are available,

the proportion of youth between 15 and 24 who have no job and are not in school is greater than 20 percent (UNFPA, 2014: 34). The situation for young workers is grim (ILO, 2013):

- Six out of 10 young workers lack a stable employment contract.
- Five in 10 young workers are undereducated or overeducated.
- Six out of 10 young workers receive below average wages.
- Eight out of 10 young workers are in informal employment.

Youth unemployment levels are far higher than unemployment among the general population. 'Over the last two decades, youth unemployment on average has remained at three times that of adult unemployment and, in some regions, this proportion is now as high as five times the adult rate' (ILO, 2012a: 1). Young people are also disproportionately represented in low-paid work (defined by ILO as work that pays less than two thirds of the median wage).

For example, in Brazil in 2009, 30.5 percent of workers aged 15–24 were in low-paid work, whereas the corresponding figure for workers aged 25–49 was 18.5 percent. Similarly, in the Philippines (2008) and South Africa (2007), 28.8 and 41.2 percent respectively of young workers were in low-paid jobs, whereas the corresponding figures for all workers were 14.6 and 32.5 percent (ILO, 2012a: 14–15).

Finally, young people are over-represented in the informal economy: studies on informal employment in LAC show a negative correlation with age: 'the younger the worker, the more likely he or she is to be informally employed' (ILO, 2012a: 15). Average rate of informal employment among adult workers in a number of South American countries (Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama and Peru) was 50.2 percent for adult workers, compared with 82.4 percent for youth (ibid.). Corresponding figures in Africa are even higher: 96.2 percent of young workers in Democratic Republic of Congo are informally employed, 88.6 percent in Cameroon and 99 percent in Zambia (ibid.: 16). Many jobs in the informal sector are also hazardous and dangerous (UNFPA, 2014: 34).

2. Evidence of links between youth unemployment and violence

2.1 General findings from the literature: lack of data on youth unemployment and violence

A key point to emerge from the literature is the lack of evidence/data on both youth unemployment in developing countries, and youth participation in violence. McLean Hilker and Fraser (2009) highlight the 'lack of large-scale statistical analyses linking levels of un-under-employment to the risk of violence'. Cramer (2010) makes a detailed critique of labour market data in developing countries. His key points include:

- Few developing countries (e.g. in sub-Saharan Africa) have regular labour force surveys and population censuses, meaning data are often unreliable and out of date.
- Categories of employment and unemployment are often ambiguous in most poor countries, wage employment in agriculture in poor countries is invisible in most conventional databases and rural non-farm employment is neglected in many national datasets.
- Evidence on youth unemployment is even more sparse.
- Data availability across countries is extremely uneven, tending to be concentrated in countries recently affected by conflict; this makes comparison across a wide range of countries over time extremely difficult.

In sum, Cramer asserts there is barely any reliable evidence on youth unemployment for any developing country (2010: 1). A report by the Solutions for Youth Employment (S4YE) Coalition lists the challenges faced in relation to data on youth (S4YE, 2015: 13):

There is variety among countries in how they statistically define youth. Moreover, the capacity for data collection is often weak in low-income countries. Further, data is not always collected on youth, nor necessarily disaggregated by age cohorts to allow a youth analysis. Most comparative global datasets are inadequately disaggregated by multiple factors to allow deeper analysis of the situation of segments of youth to ensure inclusion. For example, data may be available for youth vs. other age groups, and for male vs. female, but not necessarily for female youth vs. male youth, or rural male youth vs. urban male youth.

This lack of data in itself makes it difficult to make definitive assertions about a causal link between youth unemployment and violence.

2.2 Evidence of link between youth unemployment and violence/crime

So what evidence is there in the literature of a connection between *youth* unemployment and violence/crime?

There are many who claim such a link. Sommers (2007b, cited in McLean Hilker, 2009) describes how many of the thousands of urban youth who rioted in Liberia in 2004 were frustrated, unemployed ex-combatants (the youth unemployment rate in Liberia is 88 percent). In another example, De Jong (also cited in McLean Hilker, 2009) suggests the regional uprising in Casamance (Senegal) could be traced back to youth disaffection and unemployment, caused by structural adjustment and the downsizing of the Senegalese state. A US Agency for International Development (USAID) report on youth and conflict identified unemployment as a risk factor for young people, asserting that, 'Young people often participate in violence because membership in extremist organisations provides immediate economic benefits, because violence itself offers opportunities for economic gain through direct payment or looting, or because conflict promises to open up longer term economic options, for example, through patronage if "their" ethnic or religious group captures power' (2005: 4).

Rodgers (2005: 3, cited in McLean Hilker & Fraser, 2009: 23) suggests that,

In a context of widespread youth exclusion from paid employment, *a minority of young people take the opportunity to make a livelihood by becoming involved in criminal activities*, such as the local drugs trade, armed groups and other illegal trade. For example, youth gangs in Nicaragua are argued to be a form of ‘social sovereignty’ providing localised frameworks of order that allow for the coherent articulation of livelihood strategies in poor urban neighbourhoods within a wider context of failing state sovereignty.

An Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) guide to reducing youth involvement in armed violence finds ‘close examination of the evidence suggests that the underlying psychological factors that influence voluntary youth participation in different types of violent groups are similar, despite the different contexts in which youth participate. For example, youth living in Latin America may be motivated to join a gang for the same reasons that youth in Africa join armed groups as child soldiers’ (2011: 16). Among the ‘push’ factors listed in the guide is lack of employment or livelihood opportunities (ibid.: 18).

Few studies examine the link between unemployment and crime specifically among young people. Cantor and Laub (1985, cited in CDB, 2015: 39) posited two ways in which unemployment could lead to crime: 1) by altering criminal motivation – as economic conditions worsen, so there is greater motivation to take up criminal activity; and 2) by changing opportunities for crime – in periods of high unemployment general spending falls, reducing the availability of criminal targets (attractive items to steal). Research since then ‘has revealed either a weak relationship between the two variables, or has found that rates of unemployment are associated only with some forms of criminality’ (CDB, 2015: 40). However, while those studies primarily used aggregate data, studies using individual-level micro data – and therefore able to target specific sub-populations such as the socially excluded – ‘although limited in number and producing somewhat mixed results... [provide] the best support for a link between unemployment and crime among youth’ (ibid.).

Other studies that focus on youth participation in political violence suggest unemployment *per se* is not the most important factor determining this. Mercy Corps conducted youth surveys in Somalia and found no link between job status and support for or willingness to participate in political violence. In Afghanistan, it found increasing employment and income did not lead to significant changes in young people’s support for armed opposition groups. Moreover, economic factors inciting people to resort to violence/join armed groups appeared to be rare. ‘While unemployment is often emblematic of systemic sources of frustration and marginalisation, employment status alone does not appear to determine whether a young person is likely to join an insurgency. Violence makes people poor, but poverty doesn’t appear to make them violent’ (Mercy Corps, 2015: 16–17). Mercy Corps also carried out an analysis of Afrobarometer surveys in 13 sub-Saharan African countries and similarly did not find unemployment led to violence: ‘We only find unemployment to be positively correlated with actual participation in violence in one country (Liberia) and with support for violence in two countries (Benin and Sierra Leone)’ (Mercy Corps, 2014: 4).

What factors do contribute to young people’s resort to violence? Mercy Corps (2015: 23) identifies corruption, injustice, discrimination, humiliation and experience of violence as being more important driving factors: ‘Rarely is the choice to take up arms simply an economic one. Ideas and experiences appear to be more important. Dignity matters, not dollars. From El Salvador to Southeast Asia, studies find that a far more consistent predictor of political violence is injustice.’ The report notes that fragile states ‘are places of routine injustice’ where most young people scramble to survive. ‘The most marginalised describe being routinely cheated by unsavoury employers or harassed by police, with no avenues for appeal’ (ibid.).

Underlying all this is weak governance. The Mercy Corps analysis of Afrobarometer surveys in sub-Saharan Africa found poor governance to be a consistent driver of violence (Mercy Corps, 2014). A 12-country consultation with youth by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) also found

governance was the most important issue overall for participants, particularly in Colombia and Africa. 'Young people want to see effective governments that are held to account, and governance structures where young people have access to decision making processes' (DFID, 2013: 14).

These findings would appear to be confirmed by the Arab Spring of 2011, in which youth unemployment was identified as a major contributory factor. This was part of a surge in significant youth-led political and social protest movements across the world, with young people clamouring for 'jobs, freedom and social justice' (ILO, 2012a: 1). The Arab Spring was ignited in Tunisia, by grievances of young people over high unemployment and authoritarian rule. Young people were also prominent in the mass occupation of Tahrir Square in Cairo that precipitated the downfall of the regime in Egypt. Lack of productive employment opportunities, coupled with aspirations for political freedom, social justice and a better economic future, were important factors that fuelled the protests (ibid: 2). Improvements in education levels across the region contributed to raised expectations among young people – and frustration when public sector jobs were no longer available and those in the private sector were low-paid or unsuited to their skills (Gardner, 2003; UN ESCWA, 2014). But anger at corrupt regimes and weak governance were also major causal factors in the Arab Spring.

2.3 Evidence of related links

Given the above highlighted lack of data and studies on youth unemployment and violence, the review also looked for evidence of related links: between youth bulges and violence, between unemployment in general (not specifically youth) and violence, between economic crisis and violence/crime, between economic crisis and youth violence. While not establishing a connection between youth unemployment and violence, evidence of such links would at least be indicative of whether this connection exists. Note that this was not a focus area of the review and hence an in-depth search for material was not undertaken.

On a possible link between youth bulges and violence, one study that examined post-Cold War civil conflicts around the world found that a country with over 40 percent of its population aged between 15 and 29 was 2.3 times more likely to face civil strife than one with lower proportions of youth (Ali, 2014). Urdal (2006, cited in McLean Hilker, 2009) tested the claim that youth bulges potentially increase both opportunities and motives for political violence through a time-series cross-national statistical model for internal armed conflict for the period 1950–2000, and for event data for terrorism and rioting for the years 1984–1995. He concluded that youth bulges increased the risk of low-intensity political violence (internal armed conflict, terrorism and rioting).

On the link between unemployment in the general population and violence, a paper by Cramer on this for the World Bank 'argues that there are no grounds empirically for the commonly made claims that there is a strong, automatic causal connection from unemployment, under-employment, or low productivity employment to violence and war' (2010: 1-2). Cramer finds that specific variables, such as unemployment, typically have rather complex implications for violent outcomes. The implications are that labour market and economic policy, if they are to be a part of efforts to reduce violence, cannot be reduced to policies designed simply to maximise the number of work opportunities available. Above all, Cramer finds that too little is known empirically, let alone theoretically, about the relationships between labour market participation, institutions and relations and violence.

Some evidence was found of a link between economic crisis and violence. For example, during the deep economic and financial crisis of 2003–2004 in the Dominican Republic, extreme poverty doubled from 7 to 14 percent: violent crimes also rose dramatically between 2002 and 2005, and the rate of violent death nearly doubled, from 14.5 to 26.4 per 100,000 residents (Marcus & Gavrilovic, 2010: 44). Similarly, a study of Jamaican crime rates between 1950 and 1984 found high crime rates were associated with periods of low economic growth, as well as unemployment and a large cohort aged 14–24 years (ibid.). It concluded that 'increases in crime in Jamaica could largely be explained as the consequence of economic decline'.

A cross-country study by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) looked at the effects of economic stress on crime, drawing on police-recorded crime data from 15 country or city contexts across the world, and examining in particular the period of the global financial crisis in 2008/09. The countries involved were Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Italy, Jamaica, Latvia, Mauritius, Mexico, Philippines, Poland, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay; and the cities Buenos Aires, Montevideo, Sao Paolo and Rio de Janeiro – that is, predominantly developing world contexts. The study found economic data from 11 countries pointed to a period of economic crisis; in 8 of these 11 ‘crisis’ countries,

... changes in economic factors were associated with changes in crime, leading to identifiable crime ‘peaks’ during the time of crisis. Violent property crime types such as robbery appeared most affected during times of crisis, with up to two-fold increases in some contexts during a period of economic stress. However, in some contexts, increases in homicide and motor vehicle theft were also observed.

The study concluded that the findings were consistent with criminal motivation theory, ‘which suggests that economic stress may increase the incentive for individuals to engage in illicit behaviours’ (UNODC, 2014: 4).

Evidence was also found of a link between economic crisis and youth violence. The Asian financial crisis of 1997/98 led to a 20 percent increase in juvenile crime in South Korea (before the crisis it had been rising at 10 percent per year); in Malaysia, juvenile crime – in particular, petty theft, vehicle theft and house break-ins – increased 13 percent (Marcus & Gavrilovic, 2010: 43). Conversely, economic recovery in Romania in the late 1990s was associated with a drop in youth crime: juvenile convictions fell from 49.76 per 100,000 in 1998 to 39.1 in 1999 and 30.08 in 2000 (ibid.).

An Overseas Development Institute (ODI) study of the effects of economic crisis on youth (Marcus & Gavrilovic, 2010) found this was an important factor leading to rising youth crime and overall crime rates. ‘Increased poverty can create incentives for theft and robbery; increased youth unemployment means many young people with time on their hands; and alienation from a society that provides limited opportunities for youth can lead to resentment of inequalities. These, in turn, may be expressed directly through crime or can lead to substance abuse, which itself often propels criminal activity’ (p.ix). The study found most crimes committed by young offenders (under 18) were petty crimes such as small-scale thefts (ibid.: 43). But in some countries, typically those facing prolonged periods of economic crisis with significant increases in poverty, inequality and social dislocation, there was a substantial increase in young people carrying out violent crimes.

An interesting finding of the study was that the impact of economic crisis on family and social support for young people could be more critical in determining their involvement in crime than the immediate effects of poverty and unemployment. ‘Economic crisis often leads to greater pressure on families, family stress and break-up and less parental supervision of young people, as parents become occupied with trying to make ends meet’ (Marcus & Gavrilovic, 2010: 43). In such circumstances, gangs can provide another source of social and material support, and thus become more attractive to young people. Evidence to support the importance of family and social support in preventing youth crime comes from a comparison of crime rates in the Czech Republic and Poland between 1989 and 1998. The Czech Republic, with only modest youth unemployment, saw youth crime rise by over 60 percent; by contrast, youth crime in Poland – which suffered a much greater increase in poverty and youth unemployment – rose by 30 percent. ‘The suggestion is that strong familial networks may have limited the rise in youth crime in Poland’ (ibid.).

2.4 Regional and country analysis

Latin America

Latin America is a very relevant region to look at in the context of youth unemployment and violence because it is characterised by high levels of both.

Youth unemployment in LAC rose from 13.7 percent in 2008 to 15.6 percent in 2009 as a result of the global economic crisis. It subsequently dropped to 14.3 percent in 2011 – still above pre-crisis levels, and still an extremely high rate (ILO, 2012b: 14). Moreover, this rate is about three times the rate for adults. The second point to stress is that, of those who are employed, over half work in the informal economy. The lack of decent work opportunities for young people leads many to give up and not even seek work. One study of youth in LAC argues that, 'Joblessness, a term that includes both the unemployed and the inactive, who are not in school, is the most analytically useful way to characterise the problem faced by LAC youth' (Cunningham et al., 2008). Based on this approach, the rate goes up to one in four young people (ibid.).

A study by the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) of 14 Latin American countries found only 12.8 percent of workers between the ages of 16 and 24 were entrepreneurs. Moreover, many of these businesses were 'fragile and driven mostly by necessity'. Among the major obstacles facing young entrepreneurs in Latin America, the study listed 'less capital in the form of skills, knowledge, experience, savings, and access to credit. In addition, they have limited business networks and less access to information about job vacancies. Banks and financial institutions regard them as high risk' (ILO, 2012b: 25).

Statistics for crime and violence in Latin America are even more alarming. The UNDP Regional Human Development Report 2013/14 found the murder rate in the region grew by 11 percent between 2000 and 2010, in contrast with in most other regions in the world, where it fell or stabilised. Eight of the top 10 most violent countries in the world, and 40 of the world's 50 most dangerous cities, are found in LAC. Just four countries in Latin America – Brazil, Colombia, Mexico and Venezuela – account for one in four violent killings around the world each year (Muggah, 2015). WHO estimates there are 73,000–90,000 firearms deaths each year in Latin America, three times the world average (Cohen & Rubio, 2007: 1).

The level and type of violence is not uniform across the region. In some countries, the biggest problem is lethal violence; in others, murder rates are relatively low but there has been a sharp increase in crimes against property (UNDP, 2013). Similarly, within countries the situation can vary greatly from one locality to another, with 'some municipalities, states or departments showing indicators comparable to those of European nations, and others where lethal violence is even greater than in countries at war' (ibid.).

Looking specifically at young people, the data show young men are particularly and disproportionately affected by lethal violence: the homicide rate among young people is more than double that of the general population (UNDP, 2013). 'Violence is the leading cause of deaths among Latin Americans between the ages of 15 and 44' (Cohen & Rubio, 2007: 1). Often, it is young people who are also the perpetrators of crimes. 'Criminal court records in Uruguay indicate that youth crime increased 180 percent between 1997 and 2010. In 2010, minors aged 13-17 comprised roughly 8 percent of the total population, but accounted for 15 percent of total offences, 26 percent of the homicides and more than 40 percent of all robberies in the country' (Munyo, 2013: 7).

It should be noted that, in this regard, data are difficult to come by. One reason is that relatively few offences result in arrests – or, indeed, are even reported to the police. 'To make matters worse, reporting and clearance rates decline as violence increases: victims rely less on the formal justice system which therefore becomes even less effective' (Cohen & Rubio, 2007: 2).

What is the evidence of a connection between Latin America's high youth unemployment and its high crime rates?

A number of reports cite youth unemployment as a factor in Latin America's high crime rates. Soares and Naritomi (2010) list youth unemployment as well as inequality as important in understanding the continent's high levels of crime. The UNODC study of 2014, which included South American countries, finds a correlation between economic crisis and some types of crime. Cohen and Rubio (2007) identify high levels of youth unemployment as one of the common root causes of gang membership in Latin America, others being lack of educational opportunity, inadequate justice systems, ready availability of guns, dysfunctional families and high levels of domestic violence. They also find that, 'Contrary to common perception, poverty per se is not a sufficient risk factor, except among school drop-outs.'

The UNDP Regional Human Development Report 2013/14 echoes this, suggesting it is not employment or even poverty that drives crime: 'more significant is the kind of work people do and the opportunities it offers' (UNDP, 2013). It cites surveys conducted among prison inmates in the region, which found that most (60 percent in Chile, 70 percent in Brazil and Argentina and 84 percent or more in other countries) were working and at the same time committing crime. Moreover, on average they started working before the age of 15. The UNDP report concludes, 'we may argue that low quality jobs and low salaries drove them to supplement their income by illegal means, such as robbery' (UNDP, 2013: 8).

The literature also points to the gap between income generated from crime and that from legal activities as an incentive for young people to engage in the former. 'The average wage of favela residents is around R\$400 (USD200) a month. Working for the gangs, young men can earn that amount in a week' (UNOCHA & UN-Habitat, 2007). A Brookings report on youth violence in Latin America notes that 'legal activities have become less profitable for an increasing fraction of the young population' (Munyo, 2013). Pointing to divergent growth paths of expected returns from criminal activities and legal activities, it attributes 35 percent of the increase in crime levels between 1997 and 2010 to the financial rewards of crime being greater than those of legal work (ibid.).

The strongest correlation between youth unemployment and violence comes from a report on Latin America's so-called *ninis* (young people who are neither in school nor working). A World Bank study looked at data for Mexico on *ninis* and crime (homicide) covering the period 1995–2013 (de Hoyos et al., Székely, 2016). While the rate of male *ninis* aged 19–24 was uncorrelated with homicide rates over the period as a whole, there was a definite correlation between 2008 and 2013, when murder rates in Mexico tripled (this period was the apex of the country's drug war). Moreover, the authors found this correlation grew stronger when only Mexican border states were considered – areas afflicted by both organised crime and the effects of the 2008/09 global economic crisis. 'A 1 percentage point increase in the share of *ninis* in a border state during a period characterised by a massive increase in violence is correlated with an increase of 2.59 in the homicide rate per 100,000 inhabitants' (ibid.: 5). They attribute the link between *ninis* and violence in Mexico to three factors, one of which was lack of employment opportunities for youth.¹

One analyst interpreted the findings of the study on *ninis* – against the context that Mexico actually has a lower unemployment rate than the US, Canada and Spain – to the fact that 'job opportunities for Mexico's poor do not carry the promise of economic mobility that ambitious young people seek' (Veridiane Rios cited in Gagne, 2016). In other words, it is not lack of work but the poor quality of work available that is significant. As a result 'assertive young people who find themselves at the lower end of the economic spectrum are more likely to turn to drug trafficking, where potential earnings are nearly limitless' (ibid.).

¹ The other factors are a growing share of male *ninis*, and changes in external conditions that increased the size of the illegal market and fuelled criminal demand for youth labour (de Hoyos et al., 2016: 5).

The Caribbean

Like Latin America, the Caribbean is a region characterised by both high youth (and general) unemployment and high levels of crime. Indeed, youth unemployment is even higher in the Caribbean than it is in Latin America.

World Bank (2014a) found that, among Caribbean countries, the highest youth unemployment rates were found in Barbados (27.6 percent compared with 11.1 percent for the general population), Trinidad and Tobago (12 percent compared with 4.8 percent), Jamaica (30.1 percent compared with 12.7 percent) and Barbados (18.9 percent compared with 7.9 percent) (p.10). Other countries in the region show the same high levels of youth unemployment and the same pattern of unemployment among youth being far higher than in the general population.

Globally, youth unemployment tends to be higher than unemployment in the general population. However, the Caribbean differs in having both higher rates of youth unemployment and a higher gap between youth unemployment and that of the general population. Out of eight Caribbean countries reviewed in a 2015 report, in the overwhelming majority the youth unemployment rate was above the world average (only Trinidad and Tobago fell below the global average between 2006 and 2010, and between 1991 and 2012) (CDB, 2015: xv). The regional countries with the highest persistent youth unemployment were Guyana and Suriname, which, since 2000, were consistently above 30 percent, with the rate in Guyana hovering around 40 percent (*ibid.*). The global average is for youth unemployment to be 2.2 times higher than general unemployment. As seen this figure is higher in the Caribbean: in the case of Antigua and Barbuda youth unemployment is over three times that of the adult population. The 2015 report found that the only countries in the region with a ratio below the world average were Barbados, The Bahamas, Guyana and Belize.²

A further characteristic of youth unemployment in the Caribbean is that in many countries it has increased – in some cases significantly – since 2007, for example The Bahamas (53 percent increase between 2007/08 and 2011), Barbados (57 percent increase between 2007/08 and 2012) and Belize (53 percent increase between 2007/08 and 2009) (*ibid.*; Forbes, 2015). Alongside unemployment, under-employment of youth is a major concern. One analyst writing about Jamaica warned, ‘This country is increasingly unable to compete because the culture of work is foreign to so many of her citizens. Youth unemployment and underemployment are cancers that eat away at the psychological well-being of Caribbean youth’ (Forbes, 2015).

Statistics for crime in the Caribbean are equally dire, with young people involved both as victims and as perpetrators of crime.

A 2007 regional study by UNODC and the World Bank found high levels of violent crimes committed by young people and that this proportion was increasing:

In 2005, young Dominicans aged 11-30 accounted for 46 percent of homicide victims, yet only represented 38 percent of the general population. In Jamaica, youth under the age of 25 were responsible for 51 percent of all murders and 56 percent of all major crimes in 2000. In the Dominican Republic, arrests for homicides by minors under the age of 18 rose over the period 1995-2004 from 2 to 113, with over 95 percent male. Similar trends occurred in St. Kitts and Nevis, where in 1990 only 1.2 percent of all crimes were committed by juveniles, yet by 1998, this had increased to 17 percent. A worrisome consequence of these trends is that evidence points to the fact that violent behaviour in youth has a strong tendency to continue into adulthood.

² These data do not necessarily indicate that these countries are performing well generally, simply that the disparity between the youth and the adult rates is not as severe as in other countries.

World Bank (2014a), on unemployment in the Caribbean, presents a more mixed picture: 'the rates per 100,000 juveniles (aged 17 years old and under) brought into formal contact with the police or the criminal justice system show relatively high prevalence of youth crime in 2010: 454.1 in The Bahamas, 2,193.1 in Grenada, 125.2 in Trinidad and Tobago (2009), 308.6 in Belize, and 20.4 Guyana' (p.15).

Youth also feature disproportionately as victims of violent crime in the Caribbean. While the global average for homicide rate of men between the ages of 15 and 29 was 19.4 per 100,000, the rate in LAC was over three times greater, at 68.6 per 100,000 (World Bank & UNODC, 2007). In the Dominican Republic in 2002, the adjusted homicide rate was 19.7 (per 100,000) for young Dominicans aged 15–29, compared with 10.2 for all Dominicans (*ibid.*). Moreover, homicide deaths for youth have been growing consistently since 2000, particularly in the 18–29 age range. In 2005, homicides of those aged 11–30 accounted for approximately 46 percent of total homicide deaths.

The UNODC/World Bank report highlights the limitations of data availability in the Caribbean, particularly in relation to youth. General crime and violence data are often difficult to obtain and incomplete. These problems are made worse for youth, stemming from

... a lack of common and comparable definitions of youth when it comes to crime and violence, as well as weak systems for surveillance and monitoring across what are considered minor (under 18) and adult (18 and older) age ranges. In particular, when attempting to compare data across countries, there are very few indicators beyond homicides that are disaggregated by comparable ages, and the Caribbean has particularly weak data compared with much of the rest of Latin America.

Moreover, the UNODC/World Bank study found that, in areas with higher crime rates in Jamaica, a lower percentage of crimes were reported to the police. As well as pointing to lack of trust and confidence in the police in such areas, it also suggests 'that official police data distort the true geographic profile of crime, because official data are biased downwards for higher crime areas'.

Having established that the Caribbean is characterised by both high youth unemployment and high crime rates involving youth, what evidence is there of a link between the two?

As in the case of Latin America, various reports and studies identify youth unemployment as a risk factor contributing to the prevalence of youth violence (in the case of the Caribbean, other risk factors include poverty, large-scale migration to urban areas, drug trafficking, a weak education system, ineffective policing and the presence of organised gangs) (UNODC & World Bank, 2007). UNDP's Regional Human Development Report 2013/14 lists high levels of youth unemployment as one of the main factors creating a climate conducive to the perpetration of crime in the region. However, investigation into the reasons why youth join gangs in Trinidad and Tobago found 42 percent joined for friendship, 29 percent were looking for protection and safety and only 8 percent joined because they were interested in making money (World Bank, 2014a).

The 2015 Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) report presents data on youth unemployment and crime in the region but explains 'we are unable to make a clear distinction as to whether these youth involved in crime are employed or unemployed'. Citing a World Bank study that indicated that drug sellers in Jamaica were 'more likely to be school dropouts/unemployed', it continued, 'The assumption in the discussion is youth unemployment plays a significant role in the crime statistics noted.'

A UNICEF-commissioned study in the Eastern Caribbean on perceptions of juvenile offending sought, among other things, to identify the causes of juvenile offending (UNICEF, 2012). The study covered Barbados, Dominica and St Lucia. The main causes poll respondents cited for serious juvenile offending were peer pressure, materialism, lack of parental control, unemployment, drug abuse and the absence of (positive) role models. In St Lucia the major factors were thought to be illegal drugs and gang activity, as well as lack of good parenting (dysfunctional families); related issues were poverty and illiteracy. The latter were also considered significant in Barbados, along with poor socialisation of young people, lack of values and an out-dated education system. Respondents in Dominica 'felt that anger and frustration as a

result of the home environment, as well as living in a vulnerable community' factored heavily in gang association and juvenile offending.

Nigeria

The literature review found a number of reports relating to youth unemployment and crime in Nigeria. These paint a picture of very high – and rising – youth unemployment rates in the country. One report stated that, in the period 2003–2011, with the exception of 2014, youth unemployment was over 30 percent (Alabi, 2014: 303). Moreover, youth unemployment was consistently about three times higher than unemployment for the general population (*ibid.*). A more recent paper, citing later data by the Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics, found the average youth unemployment rate in 2012 was 46.5 percent (Onwuka, 2015: 388–9). The trend of rising youth unemployment is clear from the fact that the 2001 rate was 30.7 percent and that for 2010 35.2 percent (Alabi, 2014: 304).

Available figures show high youth involvement in crime. In 2006, 49.8 percent of convicted prisoners were aged 16–35 years; by 2008 this had shot up to 92.5 percent (Olukayode, 2016: 39). A 2012 report found that over 70 percent of Nigerian prisoners were young people, the majority of them youths (Ogbebor, cited in *ibid.*). Furthermore, of the 16,925 robbery suspects arrested by police between 2005 and 2009, the majority were youths, and 'observations indicated that violent crimes committed in Nigerian societies in contemporary times involve the youth in most cases' (Olukayode, 2016: 39).

Various papers and reports on Nigeria all attribute high and rising levels of criminality in the country to high levels of youth unemployment. 'Unemployment accounts for most of the social crimes perpetrated by youth in the Nigerian society today. The accelerating level of prostitution, armed robbery, rape and all facets of violence can largely be attributed to the incidence of unemployment' (Eze, 2012, cited in Onwuka, 2015: 392).

It is strongly perceived that youth unemployment has given rise to different forms of criminality which has badly affected the economy of the nation. Local businesses have in the wake of violent crime committed by the unemployed youth, resorted to hiring of armed guards for the security of their lives and property thereby incurring extra costs in the running of the business (Onwuka, 2015: 389).

However, these papers fail to provide hard data to back up these assertions. Only Oluyakode (2016) makes some reference to data: 'an analysis of most of the apprehended criminals in the country shows that a large chunk of the young people that engage in criminal activities are those without gainful employment' (p.39).

Ajaegbu (2012, cited in Oluyakode, 2016: 39) accounts for the link between youth unemployment and crime in terms of thwarted expectations: 'society already has expectations for individuals and established means of achieving them. However, when the means are limited as the youth unemployment is 46.5 percent in 2011, people are forced to achieve the goals through illegal means to fulfil societal expectations'. He adds that, as the period of joblessness increases – and feelings of frustration intensify – 'there is a greater probability that the individual or people will resort to illegitimate activities in order to actualise their expectations in the society' (*ibid.*).

While youth unemployment is linked with criminality in Nigeria, in Zimbabwe, for example, it is associated with political violence. A study of youth unemployment and political violence in Zimbabwe (Mude, 2014) attributes the latter to high levels of youth unemployment, particularly among urban youth – over 80 percent of whom are unemployed. 'Youths out of employment have been the agents of political violence in the country. Unemployed youth are often recruited by political parties... to operate as youth militia members. They have been and are responsible for torturing, intimidating and killing civilians who do not share their political affiliations.' The author adds 'it is not that urban unemployed youths are violent by nature' but they are being made that way through the manipulation of political leaders.

2.5 Role of gender in youth unemployment and violence

Female youth unemployment

Gender-disaggregated data on youth unemployment in developing countries are limited, despite female youth unemployment rates often exceeding those of males. The 2016 World Bank report on *ninis* in Latin America (de Hoyos et al., 2016) highlights the large number of young women included in this category: 12 million women out of a total of 18 million *ninis*. It notes that two thirds of them were still living with their parents and not looking for a job, while the rest had started their own households and already had children – in most cases not looking for work either (p.9).

ILO's 2015 *Global employment trends for youth* states that gender differentials in youth unemployment rates are small at the global level and in most regions (p.7). However, it highlights two regions – the Middle East and North Africa – where there is a gap of as much as 20–22 percentage points between unemployment rates among young women and those among young men (the former being greater) (ibid.). This is confirmed by figures for youth employment-to-population ratio (EPR) (the share of the working-age population that is employed). The female youth EPR in the Middle East was 7.4 percent and in North Africa 11.0 percent. These rates are both far lower than the global average (33.7 percent) and lower than those of young males in those regions. In South Asia, the gap between the male and the female EPR was even higher, reaching 29.6 percentage points in 2014 (ibid.: 14). The report explains these low female rates as 'a clear reflection of the socio-cultural factors that keep most young women from employment' (ibid.: 13). It concludes, 'While the general trend is a slight lessening of gender gaps between 2000 and 2014 (with largest improvements in Latin America and the Caribbean and South Asia), the statistics imply that a long road lies ahead in the quest for equal access to work' (ibid.: 14).

As well as having higher unemployment rates than men, women are more likely to be employed in the informal sector and in low-paid work. 'Young women often engage in unpaid work, such as domestic work and household enterprises, as well as lower-paying informal work, all of which lack benefits' (S4YE, 2015: 20). An ILO study of 10 countries found that in all of them young men were more likely than young women to obtain stable employment and find work in the formal sector (UNFPA, 2014: 34). The S4YE 2015 baseline assessment of youth employment found that 86–88 percent of women in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, the Middle East and North Africa were self-employed (p.13). In sub-Saharan Africa, 'Women are less likely to be able to leave agriculture, and they are also less likely to gain wage employment' (World Bank, 2014b: 62).

World Bank (2014b), on youth employment in sub-Saharan Africa, lists the various factors that restrict employment opportunities for young women: 'Women's employment opportunities are constrained not only by the fact that they tend to exit school earlier, but also by gender-specific constraints associated with marriage and fertility choices. Women's employment opportunities are also more likely to be constrained by occupational segregation, social norms or the fear of sexual harassment' (p.62).

The S4YE baseline assessment identifies similar constraints for young women: household responsibilities, lack of access to education and health services, social norms and lack of public safety (S4YE, 2015: 20). Child marriage is illegal in most countries but remains a major issue, particularly in the developed world. For the period 2010–2011, an estimated 34 percent of women aged 20–24 in developing regions had been married or in a union before the age of 18, with an estimated 12 percent married or in union before the age of 15 (UNDP, 2014: 12).

Women as victims of violence linked to youth unemployment

The literature review uncovered very few data and very little research on gender aspects of the links between youth unemployment and violence/criminality. The reasons for this are partly the same as those for lack of data about youth unemployment and violence in developing countries: data are not collected regularly, they are often incomplete or inaccurate, cross-country comparisons are difficult because of lack of standardisation and so on. These constraints are even truer for collection of gender-disaggregated

data: ‘The limited availability of gender-disaggregated statistics in developing countries is a major constraint in policy-making and development planning’ (AFDB, 2014: 3).

Further factors are the frequent assumption that youth unemployment and violence is essentially a male issue. Indeed, as noted earlier, the term ‘youth’ in the literature often refers only to young men: young women are ‘invisible’ partly because they are not seen as a threat, and partly because in some cultures girls are thought to make a transition straight to womanhood (McLean Hilker & Fraser, 2009: 9). In the context of domestic violence, in particular, in many cultures there is reluctance to report this and/or to take it seriously on the part of the authorities. ‘Because of significant underreporting of domestic violence, and often police unwillingness to consider it a crime, data on trends in domestic violence, its relationship to economic crisis and the age groups most affected are very limited’ (Marcus & Gavrilovic, 2010: 39).

The review found some evidence of a link between economic crisis and domestic violence. ‘The East Asian financial crisis, Mexico’s peso crisis of 1994 to 1996 and transition in the former Soviet Union and Central and Eastern Europe were all associated with rising levels of domestic violence’ (Marcus & Gavrilovic, 2010: 43). Survey data from Romania in 1995, six years after the transition from communism and when the country was still in economic difficulty, showed ‘rates of domestic violence had risen substantially in recent years, owing to a combination of economic decline and increased rates of alcohol consumption’ (ibid). It should be noted, though, that economic crisis can only be taken as an indicator of youth unemployment, and domestic violence does not refer only to that perpetrated by youth or where youth are the victims.

There is limited evidence that *young* women are disproportionately at risk of domestic violence. ‘Police records in the Philippines indicate that women between the ages of 15 and 34 account for nearly two-thirds of all violent deaths among women, despite representing only 36 percent of the female population’ (UNODC & World Bank, 2007, cited in Marcus & Gavrilovic, 2010: 39). Marcus and Gavrilovic (2010), on the effects of economic crisis on young people, also note that a large proportion of young people in the Caribbean – ‘a region where disadvantaged groups have experienced serious long-term economic difficulties’ – have witnessed domestic violence, and this experience is likely to lead to them repeating this behaviour in adulthood. A regional survey of victims of violence in the Caribbean found 48 percent of adolescent girls’ sexual initiation was ‘forced’ or ‘somewhat forced’ in nine Caribbean countries. A WHO (2016) fact sheet on youth violence claims sexual violence affects a significant proportion of youth, but the evidence cited for this is a WHO multi-country study on *women’s* health and sexual violence, in which 3–24 percent of women surveyed reported that their first sexual encounter was forced.

One effect of rampant gang violence and drug turf wars being seen in parts of Central America – notably El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala – is girls marrying or coupling with gang members and older men as a form of protection. While child marriage was traditionally more prevalent among indigenous communities in rural areas, humanitarian groups say ‘anecdotal evidence gathered in the past five years shows drug-fuelled gang violence and organised crime is driving more girls to get married in cities’ (Moloney, 2015).

The reports referred to above highlight the lack of research or data specifically on youth unemployment, violence and gender. At best, the data establish a tenuous link between these based on assumptions – for example that economic crisis implies high youth unemployment, that high rates of sexual assault in the Caribbean are connected to economic crisis simply because the region is characterised by that and so on.

While domestic violence affects women more than men, the overwhelming majority of victims of youth homicide are males. A 2015 WHO report on preventing youth violence states that worldwide some 200,000 homicides occurred among youth (defined as aged 10–29 years) (representing 43 percent of total homicides globally): 83 percent of these involved male victims (WHO, 2015: 6). The data does not examine the correlation between homicide and youth unemployment specifically, but another WHO report notes that with the exception of the United States, ‘most of the countries with youth homicide rates above 10.0 per 100,000 are either developing countries or those experiencing rapid social and

economic changes' (WHO, 2002: 25). Furthermore, while there is a gender gap globally, this tends to be bigger in countries with high rates of homicide. In Colombia, for example, where the homicide rate is 84.4 per 100,000, the male to female homicide ratio is 13.1:1, and in El Salvador (50.2 homicides per 100,000) it is 14.6:1. By contrast, the ratio in the Netherlands and the Republic of Korea is 0.9:1 and in Hungary 1.6:1 – all these countries have homicide rates around 1 per 100,000.

Women as perpetrators of violence

The review was able to find no data specifically on women's participation in violence/criminality in the context of youth unemployment. It found some evidence of increased vulnerability of women and girls to prostitution and to trafficking in times of economic hardship. For example in Nigeria, 'Among young women, lack of employment opportunities has contributed to increasing feminisation poverty. It has also encouraged prostitution as a means of survival in several towns and cities. Furthermore, it has encouraged trafficking in women and girls across international borders to engage in prostitution' (Alabi, 2014: 310). The same paper identifies poverty and unemployment as factors pushing women to migrate – something that increases their vulnerability to abuse and sexual exploitation.³ There is also evidence of young females joining armed groups both because of their economic situation and as a means of empowerment. In Colombia, for example, girls made up 20–30 percent of child soldiers: 'Colombia is not alone. Globally, thousands of young women have been active members of paramilitary organisations in 59 countries' (Mercy Corps, 2015: 41).

³ http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/events/coordination/3/docs/P01_DAW.pdf

3. Interventions to tackle youth unemployment and violence

3.1 Donor programming for youth

Growing focus on youth

Youth-focused programming by donors has been growing in the past decade, motivated by a number of factors: the ‘youth bulges’ being seen in many developing countries; the perceived threat this poses, as well as the potential for demographic dividends; high levels of youth unemployment; and high youth involvement in violence (crime), extremism and armed conflict.

We have the daunting challenge of creating opportunities and a brighter future for these young people. If they do not have work or opportunities, then naturally they will become disillusioned and frustrated, nurturing a growing sense of exclusion. Their immediate instinct is not to resort to violence. Without hope they are easily influenced and manipulated. Excluded and disillusioned youths become the raw recruits of the next wars.⁴

However, it is also driven by appreciation of the positive role youth can play: ‘in recognition of the fact that youth have the energy and potential to make a positive contribution to economic growth, peace building and sustainable development’ (IRC, 2012: 7).

The increased focus on youth is clear from comparison of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Under MDG 8, target 16 was ‘to develop and implement strategies that give young people everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work’. This was the only explicit reference to youth in the MDGs. While some of the MDGs had elements that targeted youth, for example achieving gender equality at all levels of education, most of the MDGs were ‘only implicitly relevant to the needs of youth’ (UNDP, 2006: 37). By contrast, the SDGs target youth far more clearly. In relation to youth employment, under SDG 4, target 4.4 is to, ‘By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship’. Under SDG 8, targets are to: ‘By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training’ and ‘By 2020, develop and operationalise a global strategy for youth employment and implement the Global Jobs Pact of the International Labour Organisation’ (S4YE, 2015: 5). These new youth unemployment goals are cited as evidence of heightened concern and a new activism to address failures and constraints, and improve capacities to bring about change (ibid.: 4).

Mapping of donor youth policies/strategies

Youth programming by donors covers a range of areas, notably education, health, social protection, peace building, youth participation and voice, youth rights and youth employment. See the Annex for a mapping of the youth policies/strategies of key donor agencies. Donor programmes were too numerous to map; moreover, many interventions targeting youth are implemented under wider sectoral programmes such as health and education.

Youth employment programmes

The objectives (or rather, precise goals) of youth employment programmes can vary. In some the goal is to promote overall development and poverty reduction: ‘Gainfully employed young citizens are more likely to demand good governance and accumulate the capacities necessary to foster social cohesion... Reducing unemployment will result in important human gains to young people themselves and social gains to their communities... By investing in youth employment, donors can facilitate progress not only in

⁴ Ian Bannon, Manager, Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction Unit, World Bank, cited in UNDP (2006: 59).

poverty reduction, but also in health and gender equity' (Pereznieto & Harding, 2013: 5, 17). In others, it is specifically for armed violence reduction and to counter extremism. These are typically undertaken in fragile and conflict-affected or post-conflict states. (Counter-terrorism programmes in developed countries have a somewhat different focus, e.g. tackling dissemination of radical ideologies.) However, there is increasing recognition that armed violence reduction/counter-terrorism requires a multi-pronged approach and hence that employment promotion has to be undertaken alongside other interventions (Walton, 2010). Finally, youth employment also features in violence (crime) prevention programmes, though in this case again often as just one element in a much wider range.

While the precise objectives of youth employment interventions can vary, they typically entail a similar range of approaches, notably skills development and vocational training; education; entrepreneurship promotion; changes in legislation/regulations to encourage youth employment; engagement with the private sector; and public works schemes.

Youth violence prevention programmes

These refer to programmes focused on tackling violence and criminality in non-conflict states, notably crime, gang membership and domestic violence. Again, there is recognition that this requires a multi-sectoral approach:

Preventing a rise in youth crime requires both measures that reduce poverty and increase young people's stake in society, such as employment promotion and cash transfers, and action to enhance social cohesion. There is indicative evidence of programmes that engage young people in sports, drama and community service, mentoring programmes and parenting education for parents and carers of adolescents all help provide a supportive social network that reduces the attractiveness of gangs and other criminal groups as a source of social and emotional support (Marcus & Gavrilovic, 2010: ix).

WHO (2008) highlights the need to deal with 1) risk factors that promote violence and 2) the consequences of violence. Relevant sectors include education, justice, safety and security, housing, employment, sports and recreation and welfare, while relevant actors include government agencies, civil society groups, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), communities and families (p.1). WHO has identified 10 credible prevention strategies to decrease different forms of violence (p.8):

- Increase safe, stable and nurturing relationships between children and their parents and caregivers;
- Reduce availability and misuse of alcohol;
- Reduce access to lethal means;
- Improve life skills and enhance opportunities for children and youth;
- Promote gender equality and empower women;
- Change cultural norms that support violence;
- Improve criminal justice systems;
- Improve social welfare systems;
- Reduce social distance between conflicting groups;
- Reduce economic inequality and concentrated poverty.

Strategies for dealing with the consequences of violence include improving emergency response to injuries from violence; providing mental health and social services for victims of violence; and reducing recidivism among perpetrators (WHO, 2008).

The point to highlight from the above is that youth employment promotion is *only one* of a large number of multi-sectoral interventions that need to be implemented in order to effectively reduce and prevent

youth violence (criminality). Success stories with regard to reduction of crime and violence in cities in Latin America, notably Bogota, Medellin, San Pablo and Recife, show the range of *non*-employment related interventions needed. All applied similar sets of policies:

... a police force who is more results-oriented and who intensively uses information to guide prevention and control activities; regulations for control of weapons and the sale of alcohol; programs which provide opportunities to at-risk youth or revitalise hot zones through comprehensive strategies which actively involve the community in the response. At a programme level, interventions at an early age help families to guarantee that their young children grow up in socially protective environments, where pro-social behaviour and community integration are promoted and where domestic violence is unacceptable. These have proven very effective in the long term (World Bank, 2014c).

This review looks only at youth employment programmes. However, there are a number of evaluations available of youth violence prevention programmes, such as WHO (2015), which details the different types of interventions undertaken in this regard and assesses the effectiveness of each. (In relation to vocational training, it finds this can increase youth employment if training is well matched to current employment opportunities but has not been clearly shown to reduce violent behaviour (pp.40–41).)

3.2 Evaluation of donor approaches to youth employment

Limited information and evaluation of youth employment programmes

While youth programming, including youth employment programmes, has been growing in recent years, detailed information about and evaluation of this is limited.

In 2012 the International Rescue Committee (IRC) commissioned a report to analyse key trends in donor strategies, programmes and funding to meet the needs of youth (aged 15–24) in conflict- and disaster-affected countries. The review was motivated by a lack of detailed information about donor youth policies and programmes. The analysis found ‘most donors are currently unable to generate accurate quantitative information about their levels of spending on youth, as there are no youth markers in their project management systems’ (IRC, 2012: 5). The only exception is the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) (as Global Affairs Canada was called then) (see Annex). Other key gaps identified by the review were (ibid.: 27):

- Limited comprehensive analyses of the situation of youth in specific conflict- and disaster-affected contexts;
- A lack of age-disaggregated data;
- Limited evidence and lesson-learning on the impacts of youth-related programming.

With regard to youth employment programmes specifically, according to House of Commons (2015: 61), the *2007 World Development Report: Development and the next generation* stated on the first page ‘one of the biggest challenges in writing this Report was that the evidence base was uneven. There were few rigorous evaluations of youth programmes and policies for any of the issues covered in the Report. The Bank’s inventory of over 750 youth employment interventions found that less than 3 percent measured for cost-effectiveness and many had no evaluation at all.’ One expert noted that, ‘Youth employment, and the study of youth employment, is a relatively new area, and has only really emerged as a focus since the World Bank World Development Report of 2007’, adding that there was a ‘lack of investment in research and monitoring evaluation’ and ‘poor project design’.⁵ In his mapping of job creation

⁵ Andrew Devenport, Youth Business International, testimony to House of Commons International Development Committee (House of Commons, 2015: 62).

programmes in the context of youth and violence, Walton (2010) observed: 'Donor interventions have been poorly evaluated and evidence of success is usually limited to demonstrating increases in employment levels, with little effort made to assess the impact on conflict' (p.1).

To help address these issues, the World Bank launched the Youth Employment Inventory (YEI), an online database of completed and ongoing youth employment programmes, documenting the programme design, implementation, results and – where available – evaluation. The initiative was intended to promote evidence-based project planning, management and monitoring. YEI support has since widened to become a joint effort of the World Bank, the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, IADB, ILO and the Youth Employment Network. As of May 2014, YEI included a total of 730 projects in 110 countries (GIZ, 2015: 5). Though designed to facilitate analysis and lesson-learning, a 2015 assessment of YEI found 'a significant number of interventions in the YEI have not (yet) been rigorously evaluated with respect to their impacts' (ibid.: 1). It concluded, 'YEI's potential for evidence-based policy making could be further increased by rigorously evaluating a larger share of interventions' (ibid.).

Donor approaches: Critique and lessons learnt

UNDP's 2006 *Youth and violent conflict: Society and development in crisis?* reviewed youth programming by UN agencies and other international and bilateral development agencies. In relation to promotion of youth employment, the report's key findings were as follows (p.69):

- The most common approach in youth employment programmes is training of various kinds. While numbers of trained youths were reported, 'it is difficult to measure the impact of this training'.
- Skills training programmes were often too short.
- While young people who opted to go back to school tended to stay there, 'those who received vocational training were frequently unable to develop transferable skills within the limited programme period'.
- Much of the training aimed at moving young people into the formal economy, but this missed an important point that lack of training or education for young people was only part of the problem. The other part was the demand-side constraints – the economy's limited capacity to create jobs and absorb young people.

As such, the report recommended that donors focus not only on the supply side (young people's skills) but also on the demand side of the economy. Specifically, it said, 'training must be accompanied by entrepreneurial opportunities, governmental regulations and incentives favourable to the employment of young people, an increase in international investment and an improved macroeconomic environment'.

Sommers (2007b, cited in McLean Hilker & Fraser, 2009) argued that a fundamental problem was that mainstream youth employment approaches in West Africa focused on rural areas and the formal sector, but were unlikely to succeed as youth were increasingly concentrating in the opposite direction – in cities and in the informal sector.

Walton's (2010) rapid mapping study reviewed donor approaches to addressing armed violence through youth job creation programmes. It found that 'both the theoretical and the empirical cases for using youth employment programmes as a stand-alone tool for reducing violent conflict are extremely weak' (p.1). Interventions were found often to be based on a general assumption that mass youth unemployment could drive violent conflict rather than on a specific analysis of causal factors underlying conflict in a region, or on a clearly articulated theory of youth violence:

'The assumption that unemployment and poverty are straightforwardly linked to violence persists, and many (if not most) donors still assume rather uncritically that attempts to reduce unemployment and boost growth will help to prevent or reduce violence' (ibid.: 2).

Buscher (2008: 69, cited in *ibid.*) goes further in his criticism: '(Donor) interventions are often designed with caricatures of idle and unproductive youth in mind, or based on ill-founded fears of unmanageable youth bulges, where large populations lacking employment opportunities are depicted as a "social Molotov cocktail ready to be ignited."'

Walton's study echoes the 2006 UNDP assessment in stating that 'donor interventions have been poorly evaluated and evidence of success is usually limited to demonstrating increases in employment levels, with little effort made to assess the impact on conflict'. They also focused on short-term results and failed to see what happened to beneficiaries beyond the end of the project cycle, and to disaggregate participants by gender or ethnicity – problems exacerbated by the paucity of official unemployment statistics or detailed labour market information in such countries (*ibid.*: 9). While donors were increasingly recognising the specific challenges and needs of female youth, the study noted that young women continued to be under-represented in programming and policy (*ibid.*: 11).

Again echoing the UNDP report, Walton (2010: 5) found donors tended to focus on supply-side interventions, such as training and skills development and job counselling, and neglect the demand side, for example public works programmes, entrepreneurship schemes and targeted wage subsidies; and they often prioritised the formal employment sector at the expense of the informal sector. Additionally, donor youth employment programmes failed to connect with other strands of youth programming, such as rights-based work. Walton noted there had been a shift among donors towards a more holistic approach, based on recognition of the fact that young people turn to violence as a result of a complex mix of factors, and thus to more comprehensive programming. But he also noted a significant gap between donors' rhetorical commitment to comprehensive youth programming and actual practice (*ibid.*: 4).

As described earlier, in response to a lack of detailed information about donor youth policies and programmes, IRC commissioned a review in 2012 focusing on youth and livelihoods. It highlighted a number of positive developments: recognition of youth as an important target group; increased investment in formal and informal education for youth; greater focus on local economic recovery; recognition of the need to address the specific needs of adolescent girls; and the development of toolkits on youth-related programming in different sectors (IRC, 2012: 27). However, it also found significant gaps and challenges remained (*ibid.*: 27–29):

- Limited comprehensive analyses of the situation of youth in specific conflict-and disaster-affected contexts;
- Lack of age-disaggregated data;
- Limited evidence and lesson-learning on the impacts of youth-related programming;
- Lack of understanding on how to mainstream youth across different sectors and ensure youth issues and needs are adequately prioritised;
- Lack of specific youth markers in project management systems, making it difficult to account for performance against policy commitments on youth;
- Few examples of comprehensive empowerment programmes, despite increased use of the language of empowerment (lack of programmes addressing the range of challenges facing youth in order to empower them economically, politically and socially);
- Reliance on an unproven assumption that general development programmes will automatically benefit youth in contexts where the youth population is high;
- Need to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the informal sector and whether and how this can provide opportunities for youth;
- Lack of research and analysis on the links between youth, livelihoods and violence prevention in order to develop a more comprehensive approach to youth and post-conflict recovery.

In 2012, the World Bank's Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) carried out an evaluation of World Bank and International Finance Corporation (IFC) support for youth employment. Key criticisms were that, for the most part, youth employment had not been specifically targeted. Although youth employment was addressed in education, social protection and labour strategies, it was not recognised as an issue in most country strategies – even where youth unemployment was serious; although youth employment is a multi-sectoral issue, few youth employment projects were implemented by multi-sectoral teams (p.xi).

In terms of what works in promoting youth employment, the IEG report stressed the need for a comprehensive approach and complementary interventions, for example combining training with job search and placement assistance, rather than implementing isolated interventions. It also stated that, in high-unemployment environments, wage subsidies, skills training and job search support were of little impact; demand-side interventions were needed. The report placed particular emphasis on the importance of strong diagnostics when designing youth programmes, and the need to strengthen evidence-based feedback loops to the strategic planning process (IEG, 2012: xi).

Mercy Corps' 2015 report *Youth and consequences: Unemployment, injustice and violence* questions the assumption underlying many donor programmes that youth unemployment leads to political violence. As noted earlier in this review, Mercy Corps' research points to experiences of injustice (discrimination, corruption and abuse by security forces) as the principle drivers of political violence. As such, the report asserts that not only are youth employment programmes, in isolation, unlikely to make youth more peaceful, but also they could even make things worse. Like others, the Mercy Corps report points to the need for rigorous research and learning, 'to date an appalling deficiency' (ibid.: 3). And it too raises the imbalance between supply- and demand-side interventions: 'Supply side vocational training projects, not linked to meaningful employment in the marketplace, risk raising expectations that cannot be satisfied. And where programs fail to target the most marginalised – as many do – or have been manipulated by local elites, they may aggravate perceptions of unfairness' (ibid.: 2). It highlights the importance of taking a comprehensive approach to tackling youth issues, noting that 'multisector programs, which offer a range of interventions – market-based vocational training, psychosocial support, protection measures – can harness good outcomes for conflict-affected youth' (ibid.). Indeed, it urges global commitment and coordination by international actors and national governments to fight corruption, extend the rule of law and empower local people and youth to build more just and inclusive societies.

The Mercy Corps report attributes many of the problems with donor youth programming to constraints imposed by the way development works overall. Notably, it points to limited donor time and staff (who are often located in distant cities or countries); typical three- and five-year programme windows; pressure on donors to disburse funds and deliver results; lack of scope for flexibility in donor programmes; a tendency to implement programmes that have already been implemented elsewhere, regardless of context; and lack of appropriate indicators. In the context of youth programming specifically, it notes that, while many donors have youth strategies, there is a lack of youth coordinators at headquarters and mission level, and programme implementation continues to be piecemeal. 'There is a tendency to create individual projects – economic development, education, conflict and peace building, civil society – in which youth may be a targeted population, rather than youth-focused programs that bring different sectors under one roof' (Mercy Corps, 2015: 50).

The S4YE Coalition was launched in October 2014, initiated by a number of partners including the World Bank, Plan International and ILO. It describes its work as follows: 'The S4YE coalition provides leadership and resources for catalytic action to increase the number of young people engaged in productive work. The coalition supports stakeholders across all sectors to link to each other for coordinated action, to identify, learn from, and innovate upon successful solutions, and to leverage and scale up effective policies and investments to enhance employment among youth.'⁶ In 2015, S4YE published a baseline

⁶ <https://www.s4ye.org/about>

assessment report looking at three aspects of youth unemployment: 1) the scale and characteristics of youth unemployment; 2) policies, investments and initiatives to tackle youth unemployment and the evidence and knowledge generated from these; and 3) inclusion focusing on gender, conflict and fragility, and spatial (rural–urban) dynamics, as well as disability.

Key findings with regard to policies, investments and initiatives were as follows (S4YE, 2015: 15–16):

- Empirical evidence shows youth employment interventions, especially those that provide skills or entrepreneurship training, or subsidise employment, yield positive and statistically significant results on labour market outcomes for participating youth. But, while rigorous evaluation results do prove these investments to be worthwhile, the magnitude of the impact is modest.
- Creating long-lasting positive changes in the labour market outcomes of youth seems to take more than the provision of services offered through active labour market measures. For example, interventions to promote entrepreneurship show the largest effects on employment outcomes and earnings. Similarly, access to finance has proven an important strategy in reducing barriers, but its impact is sustained only when combined with skills training.
- On the demand side, interventions that combine a reduction of the employer’s social security contributions with a reduction of the employer’s labour or wage costs also show a positive impact on employment.
- The effects from employment services are, on the other hand, generally weaker and deserve further experimentation, particularly in developing contexts where the evidence is still scant.

The S4YE report cited evidence from the Adolescent Girls Initiative (AGI) to identify five practices essential for higher impacts of interventions on young women (S4YE, 2015: 16):

- Outreach is needed to reach the right target audience, especially in environments where young women do not traditionally have opportunities for employment outside the home.
- It is critical to create the right incentives for the community, participants, training providers and employers. Benefits such as child care, food and transport, literacy training, flexible schedules and other accommodations make programmes much more attractive.
- Programmes will be effective only if they are designed with an understanding of and in response to the local labour market and the most promising training opportunities, including non-traditional jobs. This includes knowing where workers are in demand, and where self-employment will be more successful than traditional employment.
- Supplementary training in areas such as business and life skills can strengthen the resilience of programme participants.
- Programmes can have catalytic impact if they help build social and financial capital by assisting participants to open savings accounts and build financial skills, and by providing incentives to save and invest.

3.3 Areas for future research

Perhaps the biggest finding of this review is the *lack* of data and research on all aspects of youth unemployment and violence. Research and analysis are needed in the following areas:

- The scale and characteristics of youth unemployment in developing countries, with gender- and age-disaggregated data;
- The scale and characteristics of youth violence in developing countries, with gender- and age-disaggregated data;

- The links between youth unemployment and violence/criminality, specifically whether youth unemployment leads to violence/criminality, the precise pathways through which this works, the types of violence promoted by youth unemployment and the scale of the impact;
- Other factors that work alongside unemployment in promoting violence/criminality, and factors that prevent youth violence/criminality (some societies have high youth unemployment but not high youth violence);
- The specific effects of youth unemployment and youth violence on young women;
- Situation diagnostics in each context to inform design of donor programmes tackling youth unemployment and violence, with specific attention paid to the needs of female youths;
- Rigorous evaluation of donor youth employment programmes and violence prevention programmes to identify lessons and effective approaches;
- Cross-country comparisons of youth unemployment–violence data and donor programming.

4. Select annotated bibliography

Links between youth unemployment and violence

Cramer, C. (2010). *Unemployment and participation in violence. World Development Report 2011: Background Paper.* Washington, DC: World Bank.

This paper elaborates the link between unemployment and violence, drawing on an OECD literature on crime, gangs and unemployment and on recent economic models of developing country 'civil wars', and the widespread view that youth unemployment is a key cause of insurgency or civil war. The paper then shows there are other analytical approaches to studying labour market participation and its links to violent behaviour, in wars and other forms of violence, including domestic violence. The implications are that there are other grounds for acting to protect the lives and improve the prospects of those very large numbers of people vulnerable to appalling working conditions, to un and under-employment, to poor health and premature death, to violence and to extreme poverty; that specific variables, such as unemployment, typically have rather complex implications for violent outcomes; and that labour market and economic policy, if they are to be a part of efforts to reduce violence, cannot be reduced to policies designed simply to maximise the number of work opportunities available at however competitive or apparently market clearing a wage rate. A key finding is that not enough is known empirically, or theoretically, about the links between labour force participation, institutions and relations and violence.

Marcus, R., & Gavrilovic, M. (2010). *The impacts of the economic crisis on youth: Review of evidence.* London: ODI.

This report reviews evidence on the impacts of economic crises on young people, drawing out implications for young people, in particular indicating which groups of young people and in what circumstances are most likely to be vulnerable. It identifies impacts likely to have long-term, intergenerational or wider social effects, and those where the impacts are more discrete or shorter in term. The report also draw together evidence on policies that have proven effective (or otherwise) in protecting young people during and following economic crises. In terms of areas of impact, it covers Impacts of economic crises on youth in relation to employment, education, health, social well-being and citizenship (including crime and security).

Mercy Corps. (2015). *Youth and consequences: Unemployment, injustice and violence.* London: Mercy Corps.

This report tackles some of the most persistent assumptions driving youth programming in fragile states. Drawing on interviews and surveys with youth in Afghanistan, Colombia and Somalia, it finds the principal drivers of political violence are rooted not in poverty but in experiences of injustice: discrimination, corruption and abuse by security forces. In light of these findings, it concludes that many familiar approaches – vocational training programmes, for instance, and civic engagement – are unlikely, in isolation, to have much effect on stability. It calls for a new approach, one that tackles the sources of instability, not just the symptoms. It also makes a number of recommendations for getting youth-focused programming right.

Regional and country analysis

CDB. (2015). *Youth are the future: The imperative of youth employment for sustainable development in the Caribbean.* St Michael: CDB.

This report by the CDB proposes a comprehensive, multi-sectoral approach to tackling chronic youth unemployment in regional territories. The study focuses on the high levels of youth unemployment in the region and the consequences for youth and wider socioeconomic development. Drawing on global best practices, it discusses a number of policy interventions and an action plan to reduce youth unemployment and provide decent jobs by 2030.

De Hoyos, R., Rogers, H. & Székely, M. (2016). *Out of school and out of work: Risks and opportunities for Latin America's ninis*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

This study looks at the situation of young people in Latin America who are not in school and not working – *ninis*. It undertakes a comprehensive diagnosis quantifying the problem, develops a conceptual framework identifying the determinants of youths' choices, uses all the available data to test the theoretical implications and reviews the evidence regarding interventions that have proven effective in keeping youth in school and helping them become employed. The findings of the study offer policy-makers options to provide opportunities to the region's 20 million *ninis*.

Donor programming

IEG. (2012). *Youth employment programs: An evaluation of World Bank and IFC support*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

This is the first IEG evaluation of the World Bank Group's support to countries trying to address youth employment issues. This evaluation was carried out to better understand the contributions of the World Bank and IFC to these efforts, their effectiveness and what could be learnt from the experience to help decision-makers find new solutions. The report includes a detailed listing of youth employment programmes in the World Bank and IFC portfolios, and makes a number of recommendations.

IRC. (2012). *Youth and livelihoods: An analysis of donor strategies, programmes and funding for youth and livelihoods in conflict- and crisis-affected contexts*. New York: IRC.

Responding to the lack of detailed information on donor youth programming, this report analyses key trends in donor strategies, programmes and funding to meet the needs of youth (aged 15–24) in conflict- and disaster-affected countries, with a specific focus on youth livelihoods development. Based on an in-depth desk-based review of available donor policy documents and programme and project information, as well as interviews with donor representatives, it focuses on the major public sector donors that have worked on, with and for youth over the previous decade. The analysis finds that youth issues and needs are rarely mentioned in donors' overall strategic priorities and plans. Nonetheless, it identifies a number of trends in donor policy-making, with implications for donor programmes on youth in conflict- and disaster-affected contexts.

Pereznieto, P., & Harding, J. (2013). *Investing in youth in international development policy: Making the case*. London: ODI.

This report gathers evidence from previous research, key expert interviews and case studies to make a strong case for why the UK government and other international development actors should apply a youth lens to all their development policies. With a focus on the need for entrenched mechanisms of youth participation in the design, implementation and evaluation of development policy, the report lays out the human rights, social and economic benefits in investing in youth. It details specific ways in which investment in youth can be put to work to achieve the greatest benefits.

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S4YE is a multi-stakeholder coalition that includes the World Bank, Plan International and ILO (among others). Its mission is to provide leadership, mobilise efforts and develop innovative solutions through practical research and active engagement with public, private and civil stakeholders, to significantly increase the number of young people engaged in productive work by 2030. S4YE's inaugural report assesses the baseline with regard to youth unemployment, summarises learning from different approaches to tackling youth unemployment and focuses on issues of inclusion (e.g. gender, disability, minorities).

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Annex: Mapping of key donors' strategies/policies on youth unemployment and violence

As elaborated in Section 2, there has been a growing focus on youth in donor programming in recent years. This Annex maps the policies and strategies of key donors in relation to youth, including, where specified, their policies and approaches to tackling youth unemployment and youth violence. A mapping of donor youth programmes has not been undertaken because 1) globally these are very numerous and 2) often interventions for youth are implemented as part of wider or sectoral programmes, such as in health and education.

This section is based largely on the analysis of donor youth policies given in the IRC (2012) analysis *Youth and livelihoods* (pp.18–20) and the 2013 ODI report *Investing in youth in international development policy – making the case* (Pereznieto & Harding, 2013: 6–7). Where additional sources have been used, this is specified.

United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

The US has been one of the most active donors in the area of youth, with a focus on livelihoods development, education and violence prevention. In 2008, USAID produced the *Youth livelihoods development program guide*. USAID's Education Strategy for 2011–2015 identified tertiary and workforce development programmes as one of its three priority areas. Youth are also clearly identified as a core target group in USAID's approaches to countering extremism, which identify core problems of relative deprivation, frustrated expectations and social exclusion, and proposes that skills development, supporting the transition to work, employment creation and supporting entrepreneurship be priorities.

In late 2012, USAID released a policy paper titled *Youth in development: Realising the demographic opportunity*. USAID aims to empower young people to make economic, social and political contributions that can '[lift] countries out of poverty, [ensure] greater stability and [promote] healthier societies' (USAID, 2012). Applying a two-pronged approach of mainstreaming youth across all sectors and providing direct funding for youth-focused projects, the policy prioritises 1) youth economic participation, 2) civil stability and 3) a stronger youth voice in producing policy and accessing institutions. In January 2014 USAID released *Youth engagement in development: Effective approaches and action-oriented recommendations for the field*. Based on a review of over 20 organisations' strategies to solicit youth participation, this offers guidance on how to effectively engage youth in programmes, policies and operational practices.

Highlights of USAID youth programmes are available at <https://www.usaid.gov/youthimpact> and <https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/fact-sheets/global-highlights-usaid-youth-programs>

World Bank

The World Bank has had a particularly strong focus on youth unemployment issues. Its 2007 *World Development Report: Development and the next generation*, for example, outlined three priorities for investment in youth: expanding opportunities; enhancing capabilities; and providing second chances. Recommendations under 'expanding opportunities' included smoothing the transition to work. However, the Bank does not currently have a 'youth policy'. It set up a Children and Youth Unit in 2002 to guide and contribute to more effective work on children and youth development but this was later disbanded and merged with the Social Protection Unit, because it was felt that its mission cut across other 'policy pillars'. This has resulted in less clarity about the Bank's focus on youth.

Nevertheless, research on and support for youth-related programmes is scattered throughout different areas, including gender, social cohesion, violence and risky behaviours, as well as a particular focus on employment. For the Bank, the key argument for investing in youth is economic, particularly as its clients are finance and planning ministers who prioritise interventions to achieve economic growth. They are driven by the notion of investing in youth today, to contribute to economic growth and social cohesion, both now and in the future.

The World Bank Group supports interventions that improve labour market outcomes for youth, including policies to address market failures that affect employability and opportunities for self-employment and entrepreneurship. It supports active labour market and youth employment programmes that use training, public works, and job search assistance in helping young people develop skills and increase employment opportunities. As noted earlier, the Bank has collaborated with a number of other agencies to set up YEI, aimed at providing comparative information among more than 500 youth employment programmes in around 90 countries. The Bank is increasingly using impact evaluations to generate an evidence base of the ingredients for improving the design and implementation of youth employment policies and its investment in this area has been growing, an indicator of its commitment to promote youth employment. Despite this, the Bank's IEG review of work on youth employment (2012) advised that a 'comprehensive approach is missing in the Bank's youth employment projects'. For a detailed review of the World Bank and IFC portfolios for youth employment, see Annex D and Annex E respectively of IEG (2012).

The World Bank's Global Partnership for Youth in Development (GPYD) comprises entrepreneurs, business leaders, policy-makers and civil society organisations. GPYD aims to 'move the youth agenda forward by building a sustainable partnership' between these, and by providing evidence, diagnostic and analytical tools for effective programme design and research to understand 'how to overcome the enormously complex constraints and problems facing young people today'.⁷ GPYD convenes regular Global Youth Forums, the most recent in June 2016, which bring together partners, representatives of public and private sectors and civil society and young people themselves, to discuss effective ways to address the challenges facing young people and engage youth in development.⁸

Global Affairs Canada

In 2009, CIDA (as Global Affairs Canada was then called) established three overarching priority themes, one of which was securing the future of children and youth. In 2010, it produced its *Children and Youth Strategy*, which focuses on three areas: 1) child survival, including maternal health; 2) access to a quality education, including increased access to learning opportunities for youth in and out of school; and 3) safe and secure futures for children and youth (violence prevention, human rights, child protection). This is consistent with the agency's rights-based approach and its focus on women and children and youth in all programming. Global Affairs Canada has a significant portfolio of projects that benefit youth, including projects on technical and vocational education and training, entrepreneurship and employment creation.

Global Affairs Canada is the only donor to have a specific 'youth' marker in its project management system. Since September 2011 the agency has been systematically employing existing policy markers to qualify and collect information on investments, one for children and one for youth. This allows them to accurately quantify the number and location of projects and overall levels of funding to devoted to youth overall or to specific sectors. Moreover, Global Affairs Canada is able to produce information on projects

⁷ <http://www.youthindev.org/partners>

⁸ <http://www.youthindev.org/global-youth-forum>

that have youth issues as a 'principal' (youth a primary consideration in planning and design of a project) and 'significant' (youth issues considered in project planning/design and/or secondary outcomes or results could be related to youth) consideration in their design and outcomes (IRC, 2012: 11).

UK Department for International Development (DFID)

In 2007, DFID commissioned a *Youth mapping study* to look at how the organisation works on youth across its programmes. This noted several examples of successful programmes involving youth as partners but recommended a more systematic approach to youth, especially in fragile states. In 2009, DFID then commissioned two reports: *Youth exclusion, violence, conflict and fragile states*, and *Youth, jobs and inclusive growth*. The reports reviewed the evidence in these areas and made recommendations for DFID policies and programmes, including proposing that DFID capitalise on opportunities to include a greater focus on youth.

In 2010, the DFID–CSO Youth Working Group (a coalition of youth-centred development NGOs) published an online guide *Youth participation in development*. This guide was made available to all DFID offices worldwide for consideration in designing programmes and consulting with youth. It represents the culmination of a process to increase the attention to youth within UK development policy begun by DFID. The guide provides concrete examples of successful youth participation in planning, implementation and evaluation, providing a model for full integration of youth participation techniques across DFID's development activities. In 2011, DFID followed up with a Programme Partnership Arrangement with the Youth Consortium, led by NGOs also part of the Youth Working Group, demonstrating continued commitment to strengthening their performance on youth and development.

As a result of internal structuring in 2011, the overall lead for work on children and youth transferred from the Equity and Rights Team to the Civil Society Department, part of DFID's Policy Division. This department has traditionally focused on DFID's policy and programming work with civil society organisations and stakeholder management – working with youth-related NGOs (e.g. Plan International, Save the Children) through specific programmes, rather than specifically focusing on policy related to youth. The Civil Society Department is looking at how best to develop a global picture of DFID's work on children/youth, and is working closely with DFID country offices and other departments that include consideration of youth in their work, including the Conflict, Humanitarian and Security Department (youth involvement in violence), the Education Team in the Policy Division (post-primary education), the Research and Evidence Division and the Stakeholder Outreach Team in the Communications Division.

In April 2016, DFID produced *Putting young people at the heart of development: The Department for International Development's Youth Agenda*. The document articulates DFID's commitment to including youth in development, specifically to integrate young people in DFID programmes, enable young people to deliver development programmes on ground and support young people to 'fulfil their potential to shift social norms and change behaviour both of young people and the wider population'. It focuses on two transition periods seen as pivotal, early adolescence and from adolescence to adulthood.

German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ)

Since 1997, youth had been a strategic priority for German cooperation, and the former German Organisation for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) had implemented a wide range of youth programmes – both multi-sectoral programmes and specific assistance to youth ministries, networks and civil society. However, following the 2005 Paris Declaration, as Germany moved towards sectoral concentration and because youth was not viewed as a stand-alone sector, there was a gradual reduction in specific youth

projects and their approach moved towards mainstreaming youth issues into broader sectoral programmes. Since 2008, the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), as it is now called, has recognised the need to renew the focus on children and youth issues in German cooperation. This led to the creation of a specific project team, Sector Project on Implementation of Children and Youth Rights, tasked with ensuring children and youth issues are mainstreamed not only into all sectors across country programmes but also in German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) policies and strategies so German development cooperation more systematically includes children and human rights standards and principles in its work.

GIZ supports partner countries in opening up prospects for young people and getting them involved in forward-looking projects and initiatives to shape a sustainable future.⁹ Projects in which it is involved range from providing advisory services and implementing youth policy, to training youth social workers and designing non-formal educational methods. Specific initiatives include combating child trafficking in West Africa, boosting political participation of young people in North Africa and supra-regional projects aimed at violence prevention in Latin America. The latter, Preventing Youth Violence in Central America, takes an ‘ecosystemic approach’ focusing not on young people but on those around them who have direct contact with youth and can influence them, for example teachers, parents, neighbours and police officers. One of the programme’s three areas of action is promoting youth employment and the employability of socially disadvantaged young people.¹⁰

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

In 2006, UNDP’s Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery was one of the first organisations to publish a report on youth in fragile states, *Youth and violent conflict: Society and development in crisis*. This identified the scarcity of education and employment opportunities as key factors underpinning young people’s sense of exclusion from society; it also highlighted that this could lead to youth engagement in violence. This was followed up by a lessons learnt document and a whole series of reviews were planned of youth programmes in conflict-affected contexts. Many UNDP programmes target youth, in particular programming by the Livelihoods and Economic Recovery Group (employment creation and youth livelihoods), the Conflict Prevention Group (youth, conflict prevention and peace-building) and the Governance and Rule of Law Unit (youth political participation).

The UNDP Youth Strategy 2014–2017 ‘Empowered youth, sustainable future’ is the first organisation-wide youth strategy that explicitly states UNDP’s commitment to youth (UNDP, 2014). It has three expected outcomes: 1) increased economic empowerment of youth; 2) enhanced youth civic engagement and participation in decision-making and political processes and institutions; and 3) strengthened youth engagement in resilience-building. The focus under economic empowerment is both on increasing the quantity of jobs for young people and on enhancing the quality of jobs by improving their productivity, facilitating movements of young people into productive sectors and increasing access to social protection. Areas for action include access to finance and markets, skills-building for young entrepreneurs (in particular young women entrepreneurs), public–private employment opportunities, non-formal education and fostering a policy environment conducive to job creation for young people.

In July 2016, UNDP launched the Youth Global Programme for Sustainable Development and Peace (Youth-GPS) (2016–2020). This is a five-year global programmatic offer on youth empowerment, designed

⁹ <https://www.giz.de/expertise/html/11000.html>

¹⁰ <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/13494.html>

to sharpen the agency's response to the challenges young people face worldwide and to boost implementation of UNDP's Youth Strategy 2014–2017, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security. Youth-GPS offers a multi-level response to the needs of young people and their communities in four interdependent thematic areas of work: civic engagement and political participation; peace- and resilience-building; economic empowerment; and youth as partners in the 2030 Agenda implementation and monitoring.¹¹

International Labour Organization (ILO)

The work of ILO on youth employment aims at improving opportunities for young people to gain and maintain decent jobs. Through its Youth Employment Programme, set up in 2005, ILO provides technical assistance in a wide array of youth employment-related areas, with the overall objective of strengthening national capacities to develop policies and programmes that enhance employability, improve employment prospects and increase the earnings of young people. It takes an integrated approach to tackling youth unemployment, one that combines supportive economic policies and targeted measures addressing labour demand and supply, as well as the quantity and quality of employment.¹²

ILO conducts a regular Academy on Youth Employment in Turin, Italy. The main objective is to enhance the capacity of decision-makers (notably ministries of labour and other relevant government institutions, workers' and employers' organisations) to develop comprehensive strategies to tackle youth employment challenges.¹³ Examples include policies to mainstream youth employment into national employment policies and development frameworks, and promoting a multi-pronged, integrated approach to decent job creation for youth. The Academy also promotes participation by youth organisations.

¹¹ <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/Youth-GPS/>

¹² http://www.ilo.org/employment/areas/youth-employment/WCMS_192889/lang--en/index.htm?ssSourceSiteId=global

¹³ http://www.itcilo.org/en/areas-of-expertise/youth-employment/academy-on-youth-employment/?set_language=en