

# YOUTH EXCLUSION AND POVERTY: BREAKING THE VICIOUS CYCLE

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## YOUTH 4 CHANGE NETWORK

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# Executive Summary

Youth 4 Change Network is an innovative international action tank and network working towards the professional and social inclusion of vulnerable and excluded young people throughout the world. Connecting NGOs worldwide, its aim is to share resources and knowledge, improve practices, raise awareness, and work together to promote youth empowerment and inclusion.

The 2017 Y4CN report focuses on the connection between poverty and exclusion. While poverty is a more well-known and widespread concept, less attention has been given to the issue of social exclusion. Therefore, this report aims to shed light on how poverty and exclusion are related, oftentimes creating a vicious cycle that is difficult to break. More importantly, it aims to discover the best practices in the field to create a virtuous cycle of social inclusion and prosperity.

Although exclusion can occur at any stage in life, this report focus on the exclusion of young people who are particularly vulnerable members of society. The phenomenon of youth exclusion is complex and largely stems from issues unemployment and poverty. In addition, exclusion often stems from issues of discrimination. In this report, we highlight the issues of HIV/AIDS/STIs; gender inequality; the urban-rural divide; ethnicity and religion; education; migration and refugees; and lack of social capital.

The 2017 report aims to provide a comprehensive view of the global issue of youth exclusion by looking at policies at the state-level and NGOs working in the field and suggest what best practices should be adopted to foster youth empowerment and inclusion. The report concludes by recommending the following best practices: (1) placing youth at the center of youth inclusion initiatives and encouraging youth participation and expression; (2) addressing all forms of discrimination youth may face; (3) providing education and vocational training to increase youth employment; (4) creating a sense of belonging and a feeling of social inclusion; and (5) increasing the effectiveness of NGOs' work by establishing a network with other NGOs, civil society, and government agencies.

These best practices should not be interpreted as a comprehensive list of solutions to tackle youth poverty and exclusion, but rather be viewed as a starting point for further analysis and context-specific approaches. As such, the authors hope that the 2017 Y4CN report can serve as a helpful tool for NGOs working on issues of youth exclusion and poverty.

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- Yuva Parivartan, a Project of Kherwadi Social Welfare Association
- Youth Spirit Center
- Initiative for Development and Cooperation (IDC) Serbia
- Life Project 4 Youth

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# I. Introduction

As of 2015, there are 1.2 billion youth aged 15-24 years in the world.<sup>1</sup> This accounts for approximately 16 percent of the global population. Nonetheless, young people are often excluded from effectively participating in society. This is not only deeply unjust to young people themselves but is also a hindrance to achieving peaceful and prosperous communities. As such, it is vital for governments, NGOs, and the international community as a whole to work on including youth professionally and socially in society. Otherwise, we risk marginalizing an important demographic and losing an entire generation of potential future leaders, problem-solvers, and contributors to society.

The objective of this report is to examine the relationship between exclusion and poverty among youth. These two concepts are often understood and treated separately. However, this report will illustrate the deep connection between poverty and exclusion and show that any effective initiative promoting youth inclusion must take into account the relationship between poverty and exclusion.

The main methodology we used was desk review, involving the analysis and synthesis of relevant data and qualitative research published in reports by international organizations and NGOs. To gain a more comprehensive perspective, we also interviewed several of Y4CN's member organizations working on-the-ground, as well as incorporated personal testimonies of youth drawn from the field work of the NGO Life Project 4 Youth. Moreover, we collected relevant news article for the time period January 2017 - May 2017 to assess the current situation of current government policies and NGO initiatives on youth inclusion.

Our report will be organized as follows. In Part 2, we will illustrate the current situation of youth exclusion and poverty globally, offering recent statistics and regional trends. In Part 3, we will discuss the theory of poverty and exclusion as a vicious cycle. Using this background information and theoretical framework, we will examine efforts being made on-the-ground, including interviews with five NGOs working on youth inclusion, as well as recent government, NGO, and private sector initiatives in different regions throughout the world. We will draw from these interviews and policies to determine the five best practices when it comes to tackling youth poverty and exclusion. Finally, we will conclude in Part 5 by discussing the main challenges that NGOs and governments must address in order to create an effective approach to empowering youth and promoting youth inclusion.

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<sup>1</sup> "Youth population trends and sustainable development," *Population Facts*, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division, No. 2015/1, May 2015, <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/YouthPOP.pdf>.

*“We have a powerful potential in our youth, and we must have the courage to change old ideas and practices so that we may direct their power toward good ends.” - Mary McLeod Bethune*



*Image source: LP4Y*

## II. The Current Situation: Youth Exclusion and Poverty Worldwide

### A. Definitions

#### *Youth*

This report follows the definition of youth used by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years.<sup>2</sup> While the notion of youth is more fluid, varying across different cultures, UNESCO studies utilize this fixed-age group in order to standardize the statistical results of their studies. More broadly, “youth” is the period of transition between the dependence of childhood and the independence of adulthood, parallel with the transition between finishing compulsory education and finding employment.

#### *Poverty*

The question of how to measure and define poverty has been a subject of much discussion. To this day, there is no international consensus on how to define poverty. However, the most common terms used when discussing poverty is income poverty, relative poverty, and extreme poverty (also known as absolute poverty). *Income poverty* refers only to an individual's income and how it relates to the poverty threshold in specific countries. *Relative poverty* is a more fluid concept and refers to the level of poverty in relation to other members of society, i.e. relative poverty exists when someone is living significantly under the standard of living in the rest of the members of a specific societal context. In contrast, *extreme poverty* is absolute and refers to when an individual cannot sufficiently pay for basic needs to survive, i.e. clothes, shelter and food. The World Bank measures extreme poverty as everyone who fall under the poverty threshold and it is currently set to an income of less than 1.9 USD per day.<sup>3</sup>

These definitions and measurements are helpful when assessing the number of poor people in a country or region. Yet, recently, the notion of poverty has expanded to encompass a more holistic and multidimensional concept. Amartya Sen, Nobel laureate in Economics, has refined the concept to include more social dimensions, rather than purely focusing on the economic dimension of poverty. According to Sen, “Poverty is not just a lack of money; it is not having the capability to realize one’s full potential as a human being.”<sup>4</sup> Being poor is not only about lack of income, but also a lack of education, health, justice, and community support. It is not only about material goods necessary for basic survival, but also about human dignity and being able

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<sup>2</sup> “What do we mean by youth?” UNESCO, accessed May 12, 2017, <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/youth/youth-definition/>.

<sup>3</sup> “Poverty,” UNESCO, accessed May 12, 2017, <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/international-migration/glossary/poverty/>.

<sup>4</sup> Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (New York: Knopf, 1999).

to live a fulfilling life.<sup>5</sup> While income and wealth are important for a person's well-being, they are merely means to a greater end. Instead, the real end of development should be to advance people's capabilities and freedom.

Sen's work has greatly influenced development research and work to not only focus on growth, but to also take into consideration education and health and, more recently, empowerment and social inclusion.<sup>6</sup> To focus on inclusion is to focus on development beyond economic growth and numbers, instead expanding to the notion of *human* development. Therefore, Sen's more holistic definition of poverty further highlights the linkage between poverty and social exclusion, as well as the inverse: the relationship between tackling poverty and promoting social inclusion.

### *Social Exclusion*

There are several definitions of *exclusion*. The term is sometimes used interchangeably with relative poverty, yet there are crucial differences between the two terms.<sup>7</sup> While exclusion is highly linked to poverty, especially Sen's multidimensional and holistic concept of poverty centered on, human development introduced by Sen, exclusion does not mean poverty per se. The relationship between exclusion and poverty is intricate and deeply intertwined, and we will discuss this relationship in greater detail in Part 3 of the report.

The International Labour Organisation defines social exclusion as the condition "in which individuals cannot access the living conditions which would enable them both to satisfy essential needs (e.g. food, education, health) and participate in the development of the society in which they live."<sup>8</sup> Meanwhile, the European Commission defines social exclusion as "a process whereby certain individuals are pushed to the edge of society and prevented from participating fully by virtue of their poverty, or lack of basic competencies and lifelong learning opportunities, or as a result of discrimination."<sup>9</sup> Being socially excluded causes individuals to feel distanced from job, income, education, and training opportunities, in addition to social and community networks and activities.<sup>10</sup> This, in turn, causes individuals to "have little access to power and decision-making bodies and thus often feel powerless and unable to take control

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<sup>5</sup> Charo Quesada, "Amartya Sen and the thousand faces of poverty," Inter-American Development Bank, July 1, 2001, <http://www.iadb.org/en/news/webstories/2001-07-01/amartya-sen-and-the-thousand-faces-of-poverty,9286.html>.

<sup>6</sup> Michael P. Todaro and Stephen C. Smith, *Economic Development*, 11th edition (Addison-Wesley: Boston, 2012): 17-20.

<sup>7</sup> "Exclusion," UNESCO, accessed May 12, 2017, <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/international-migration/glossary/exclusion/>.

<sup>8</sup> Neil J. Smelser and Pal B. Baltes (eds.), *International Encyclopaedia of the Social and Behavioural Sciences*, Elsevier, Oxford Science Ltd: 2001.

<sup>9</sup> "Social Exclusion and the EU's Social Inclusion Agenda," The World Bank, paper prepared for the EU8 Social Inclusion Study, February 5, 2007, <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTECONEVAL/Resources/SocialExclusionReviewDraft.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

over the decisions that affect their day to day lives.”<sup>11</sup> As a result, social exclusion is sometimes linked with political exclusion, which could manifest itself in lack of political participation, lack of voice, and lack of decision-making power. Although political inclusion is important, this report will limit its scope to primarily focusing on social and economic inclusion.

According to UNESCO, social exclusion arises “as a result of shortcomings and failures in the systems and structures of family, community and society.”<sup>12</sup> This suggests that social exclusion can be prevented if communities or societies address the structural issues that contribute to the phenomenon in the first place. In order to effectively address these root causes at the structural level, it is important to recognize that social exclusion includes not only the traditional elements of poverty, but also non-material deprivation and social marginalization.<sup>13</sup> Exclusion indicates the non-enjoyment of both economic, social, and cultural rights and civil and political rights by marginalized individuals, such as the right to work, the right to health and well-being, and the right to education.

The determining factors of exclusion, which we will discuss below in Section B, illustrates the cumulative effect of economic and social processes that lead to marginalization.<sup>14</sup> The intersection of various forms of discrimination contributes to a higher degree of social exclusion for certain youth. Moreover, insecurity and isolation and the accompanying feelings of powerlessness and estrangement can, in turn, worsen the degree of exclusion. This leads to a vicious circle “where socially excluded young people are in even more danger of suffering from additional material deprivation, social and emotional marginalisation, and health issues, which in turn expose them to more serious risks of exclusion.”<sup>15</sup> In order to break this cycle of exclusion, active efforts to promote social inclusion must be made. Part 4 of this report will directly address this subject, proposing five best practices to break the vicious cycle of poverty and exclusion among youth.

### *Social Inclusion*

After the recent shift in development work towards a more more holistic and multidimensional approach, inclusion is now viewed as being intertwined with poverty reduction and development. Much like the previous concepts described in this report, inclusion can be defined in several ways.

The EU defines *social inclusion* as “a process which ensures that those at risk of poverty and social exclusion gain the opportunities and resources necessary to participate fully in economic, social and cultural life and to enjoy a standard of living and well-being that is considered normal in the society in which they live. It ensures that they have a greater participation in decision

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> “Exclusion,” UNESCO.

<sup>13</sup> “Youth Social Exclusion and Lessons from Youth Work,” European Commission: Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), 2002, 5.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 5-6.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 4-6.

making which affects their lives and access to their fundamental rights.”<sup>16</sup> In a report from 2010, the UN Department of Economics and Social Affairs defined *social inclusion* as “the involuntary exclusion of individuals and groups from society’s political, economic and societal processes, which prevents their full participation in the society in which they live”.

A milestone occurred in 1995 when the World Summit for Social Development (WSSD) added inclusion to the field of development and human rights work. The Summit explicitly mentioned inclusive societies as a core objective of human and social development and concluded in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action that an inclusive society is a “society for all in which every individual, each with rights and responsibilities, has an active role to play.” Moreover, the Declaration urged UN Member States to take action towards social inclusion and to “promote social integration by fostering societies that are stable, safe and just and based on the promotion and protection of all human rights, and on non-discrimination, tolerance, respect for diversity, equality of opportunity, solidarity, security and participation of all people, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and persons.”<sup>17</sup>

An inclusive society is thus based on principles of non-discrimination and respect for human rights and freedoms, with special attention to disadvantaged and vulnerable groups in society. Emphasis is put on tolerance, cultural and religious diversity, social justice, democratic participation, and the rule of law.<sup>18</sup> In an inclusive society, all people, regardless of their background, are seen as individuals with responsibilities, rights, equal opportunities, and important roles within their communities.<sup>19</sup> The recently adopted UN Development Agenda 2030 also emphasizes this, as the UN Member States pledge that “no one will be left behind”—in other words, ensuring that vulnerable groups and excluded people also play an active role and benefit from the process of development.<sup>20</sup>

Another important factor to consider when discussing *inclusion* is the distinction between the terms *inclusion* and *integration*. These two terms are often used interchangeably, yet they differ in both scope and meaning. Whether social inclusion or social integration is the objective

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<sup>16</sup> *Joint report by the Commission and the Council on social inclusion*, Council (Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs), No. 7101/04, March 5, 2004, [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/soc-prot/soc-incl/final\\_joint\\_inclusion\\_report\\_2003\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/soc-prot/soc-incl/final_joint_inclusion_report_2003_en.pdf).

<sup>17</sup> *Declaration and Programme of Action*, World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, March 1995, <http://www.unesco.org/education/pdf/COPENHAG.PDF>.

<sup>18</sup> Esuna Dugarova, *Social Inclusion, Poverty Eradication, and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda*, United Nations Research Institute for Development, prepared for the UNRISD project on Post-2015 Development Agenda, Working Paper 2015-14, October 2015, [http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BCCF9/\(httpAuxPages\)/0E9547327B7941D6C1257EDF003E74EB/\\$file/Dugarova.pdf](http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BCCF9/(httpAuxPages)/0E9547327B7941D6C1257EDF003E74EB/$file/Dugarova.pdf).

<sup>19</sup> “Promoting Social Integration,” Expert Group Meeting, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Division for Social Policy and Development in collaboration with the Government of Finland, convened in preparation for the 47th session of the Commission for Social Development, July 2008, p. 18, [http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/social/meetings/egm6\\_social\\_integration/documents/AIDEMEMOIRE\\_REVISED.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/social/meetings/egm6_social_integration/documents/AIDEMEMOIRE_REVISED.pdf).

<sup>20</sup> General Assembly resolution 70/1, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, A/RES/70/1, (21 October 2015), available from [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E).

matters greatly when choosing approaches to empower youth and vulnerable groups. Exclusion is prevalent when certain individuals are barred from participating in the community, whereas segregation occurs when certain individuals are separated from the mainstream community. As such, integration refers to when individuals are kept within the community yet separated from participation. In contrast, inclusion refers to when everyone is accepted as a part of the community, having equal opportunity and responsibilities. By definition, social inclusion is broader in its scope and more ambitious in its approach. As a result, Youth 4 Change Network actively chooses to use the term *inclusion*, rather than *integration*.

**Figure 1. Inclusion and Integration**

**Youth Inclusion means**

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Accepting diversity.  
 Increasing participation and reducing exclusion.  
 Restructuring communities in response to the diverse needs of youth.

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Ensuring quality education and training, and supporting youth employment.  
 Accepting that inclusion in education, training and employment are some aspects of inclusion in the society and community.

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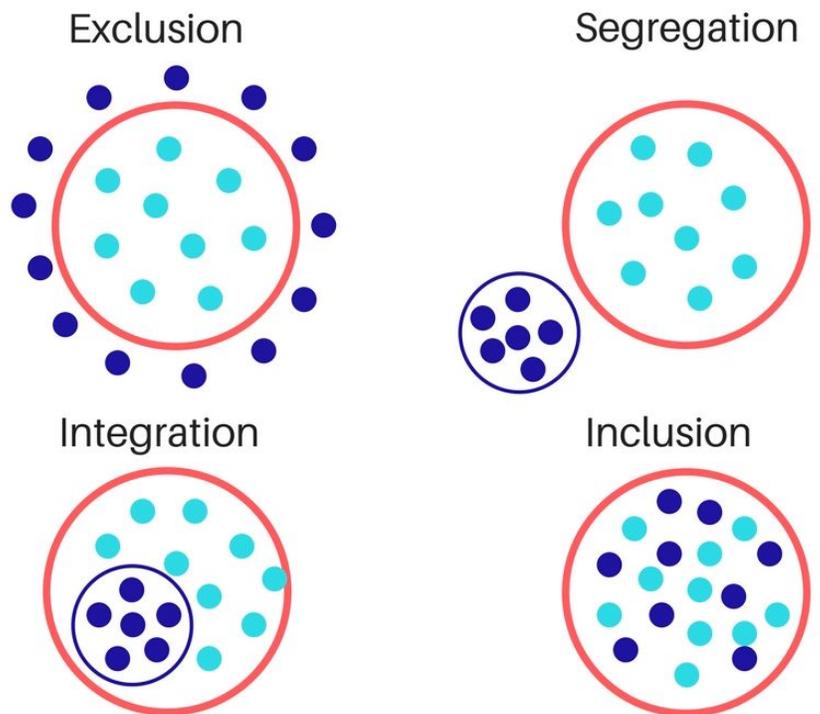
Creating space for youth to express their opinions and be heard.

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Inclusion is about living full lives.

Inclusion is about abilities

Inclusion is about all of **Us**



Social inclusion has been considered as a process to advance the participation and representation of stakeholders in decision-making. However, while it can be used as a means, inclusion possesses intrinsic value and should be considered a goal in and of itself.<sup>21</sup> Nonetheless, an inclusive society benefits more than just vulnerable groups and excluded groups since it furthers and promotes community development, in addition to tolerant, safe, and just societies. Hence, social inclusion is both a question of justice and a pragmatic policy tool.<sup>22</sup>

When social inclusion is the core objective, it becomes necessary to further define what inclusion means in a specific societal context. Who needs to be included? What individuals or social groups should be targeted? Into what should they be included: communities, the labour market, social systems or institutions? And, finally, how should they be included, and for what purpose?<sup>23</sup>

## B. The Current Situation

According to the UN Department of Economics and Social Affairs, there were 1.2 billion individuals aged 15-24 years in the world in 2015, i.e. every sixth person globally. This number is expected to grow significantly, with projections of 1.3 billion young people in 2030.<sup>24</sup>

In general, we associate youth as the period in our lives characterized by massive personal and social development and the remarkable transition from childhood to adulthood. However, global data shows that the development of many youth is hindered today, as young people are disproportionately affected by poor working conditions, unemployment, and poverty. Additionally, global data shows that youth represent an increasing share of HIV affected individuals<sup>25</sup> and substance/drug abusers, two factors that both cause and stem from exclusion. These statistics reveal the extreme vulnerability of youth today in the face of major societal problems. This is not only a sign of great social injustice, but also indicates that societies and communities are missing out on the enormous potential of youth when it comes to facilitating and creating sustainable development and peaceful communities. In fact, according to a 2012 UN study, investing in basic literacy and numeracy skills for youths in low-income countries could lift 171 million people out of poverty. This would mean a 12 percent decrease in poverty worldwide.<sup>26</sup> Still, most governments do not consult young people when developing national

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<sup>21</sup> Dugarova, "Social Inclusion," 7.

<sup>22</sup> *Creating an Inclusive Society: Practical Strategies to Promote Social Integration*, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 21, <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/egms/docs/2009/Ghana/inclusive-society.pdf>.

<sup>23</sup> Dugarova, "Social Inclusion," 8.

<sup>24</sup> UNDESA, "Youth population trends."

<sup>25</sup> "Turning the tide against AIDS will require more concentrated focus on adolescents and young people," UNICEF Data: Monitoring the Situation of Children and Women, December 2016, <https://data.unicef.org/topic/hiv/aids/adolescents-young-people/>.

<sup>26</sup> "Global Education First, Secretary General's Initiative," *United Nations Secretary General's Report*, 2012, <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/The%20Global%20Education%20First%20Initiative.pdf>.

poverty reduction or development plans.<sup>27</sup>

Youth exclusion can mean many things and thus can arise in various ways. The remainder of this section aims to further explain areas of exclusion that are especially prevalent in the world today. Since youth exclusion is such a complex concept, the causes explained here should not be considered as an exhaustive analysis of areas of exclusion, but instead as spotlights for certain areas of particular concern. These highlighted areas include youth unemployment, HIV/AIDS and STIs, gender inequality, the urban-rural divide, ethnicity, limited access and lack of education, and migration and refugees. It is important to note that these issues are not mutually exclusive, but interact and create multiple systems of exclusion and oppression. For example, the challenges and type of exclusion a young male refugee might face might be vastly different from a young female refugee. An intersectional approach - i.e. an approach that incorporates the notion that different overlapping social identities create specific types of discrimination - is needed to fully understand how exclusion manifests itself in different ways.

### Youth Unemployment

A weak economic outlook and hampered global economic growth has shown to be especially harmful for the youth labor market. Youth unemployment generally tends to be at the highest levels in low-income countries. The International Labor Organisation projects a slight increase in youth unemployment levels in emerging countries, from 13.6% in 2016 to 13.7 % in 2017.<sup>28</sup> Although the increase is modest, the level of unemployment remains alarmingly high, especially when considering the growing cohort of youths entering the labor market.

**Table 1. Youth Unemployment and Working Poverty Trends and Projections to 2017**

Youth unemployment and working poverty trends and projections to 2017							
	Unemployment rate, 2007–17 (percentages)				Unemployed youth, 2015–17 (millions)		
	2007–14	2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017
<b>World</b>		12.9	13.1	13.1	70.5	71.0	71.0
Developed countries		15.0	14.5	14.3	10.2	9.8	9.6
Emerging countries		13.3	13.6	13.7	52.9	53.5	53.5
Developing countries		9.4	9.5	9.4	7.4	7.7	7.9
	Working poverty rate, 2007–17 (percentages)				Working poverty, 2015–17 (millions)		
	2007–14	2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017
<b>Total emerging and developing</b>		38.4	37.7	36.9	159.9	156.0	152.2
Emerging countries		31.2	30.2	29.3	107.3	102.7	98.4
Developing countries		73.3	72.2	71.0	52.6	53.3	53.8

Note: Throughout this report figures for 2016 and 2017 are projections. The working poverty rate is defined as the share of employed population in extreme or moderate poverty, i.e. with per capita income or consumption of less than US\$3.10 per day.

Source: ILO calculations based on October 2015 update of the model in Kapsos and Bourmpoula (2013) and ILO Research Department's Trends Econometric Models, April 2016.

<sup>27</sup> "Prioritizing Youth in the Post-2015 Development Agenda," *United Nations Report 2015*, [http://www.un.org/youthenvoy/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/The\\_Global\\_Youth\\_Call.pdf](http://www.un.org/youthenvoy/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/The_Global_Youth_Call.pdf).

<sup>28</sup> *World Employment Social Outlook Trends For Youth 2016*, International Labour Organisation, 3, <http://www.ilo.org/global/research/global-reports/youth/2016/lang--en/index.htm>.

## Regional Trends<sup>29</sup>

### *Africa*

For Sub-saharan Africa, the ILO trajectory shows that the overall trend is a slight reduction in youth unemployment. However, the outlooks for the countries of this region remain very different and mixed. North Africa shows even higher levels, with 29.3% of youth unemployed in 2016. A slight decrease could be contributed to Egypt and Tunisia, in which youth unemployment remains critically high but has decreased slightly.<sup>30</sup>

### *Americas*

The largest increase in youth unemployment for 2016 and expected for 2017 is Latin America and the Caribbean, projected to increase to 16.8 % to 17.1 % in 2017.

### *Arab States*

Overall, a slight decrease in youth unemployment is projected for Arab states in 2017. However, these states still show the highest level of youth unemployment: 30.6%. Moreover, a slight increase in youth unemployment is expected for oil-exporting states (Oman, Qatar and Saudi Arabia).

### *Asia*

Since 2011, East Asia has shown a worrying upward trend in youth unemployment. However, the level of youth unemployment is projected to decrease slightly in 2017, possibly due to more young people remaining in education rather than entering the labour market. For southern Asia the level remains stable at 10.9 %. South Eastern Asia and the Pacific is expected to experience a slight increase, reaching 13.6 % in 2017.

### *Europe and Central Asia*

For Eastern Europe, youth unemployment is expected to decrease slightly, from 16.6 % in 2016 to 16.2 % in 2017. Northern, Southern, and Western Europe are expecting a slight decrease.

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<sup>29</sup> *World Employment Social Outlook: Trends For Youth 2016*, International Labour Organisation, 2016, [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms\\_513739.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_513739.pdf).

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 5-6.

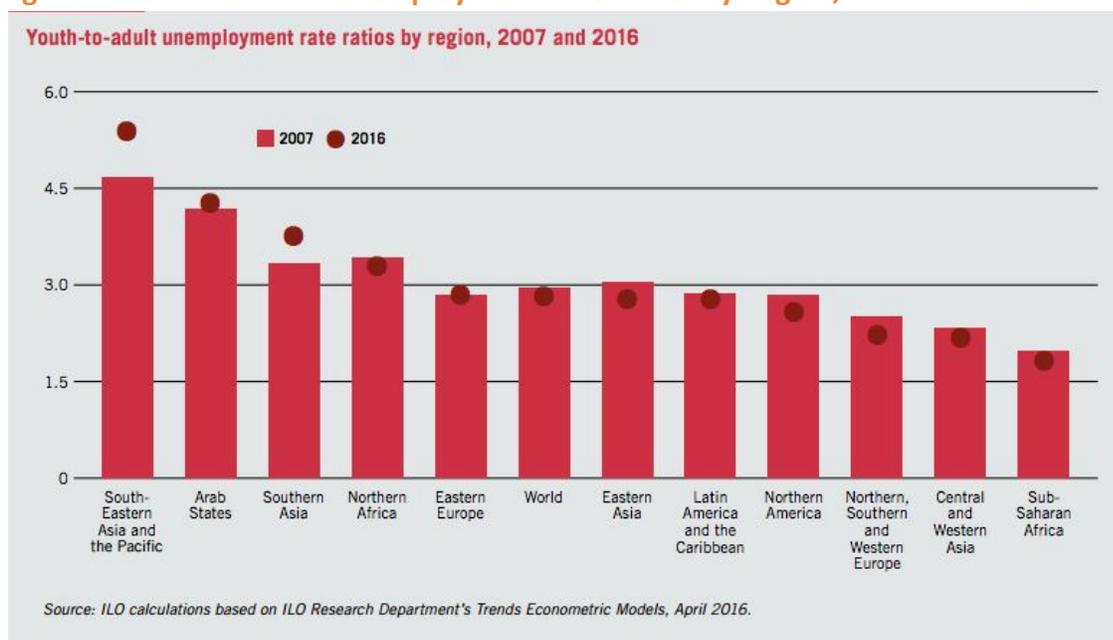
**Table 2. Youth Unemployment Trends and Projections to 2017, by Region**

Region	Unemployment rate, 2007–17 (percentages)				Unemployed youth, 2015–17 (millions)		
	2007–14	2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017
<b>World</b>		12.9	13.1	13.1	70.5	71.0	71.0
<b>Africa</b>							
Northern Africa		29.4	29.3	29.2	3.7	3.7	3.7
Sub-Saharan Africa		10.9	10.9	10.8	11.1	11.3	11.6
<b>Americas</b>							
Latin America and the Caribbean		15.7	16.8	17.1	8.5	9.2	9.3
Northern America		11.8	11.5	11.7	3.0	2.9	2.9
<b>Arab States</b>		30.6	30.6	29.7	2.6	2.7	2.6
<b>Asia</b>							
Eastern Asia		10.6	10.7	10.9	11.9	11.4	11.0
South-Eastern Asia and the Pacific		12.4	13.0	13.6	7.4	7.7	8.0
Southern Asia		10.9	10.9	10.9	13.7	13.8	13.9
<b>Europe and Central Asia</b>							
Central and Western Asia		16.6	17.1	17.5	2.1	2.1	2.2
Eastern Europe		17.1	16.6	16.2	2.0	1.8	1.7
Northern, Southern and Western Europe		20.6	19.7	18.9	4.5	4.3	4.1

Source: ILO calculations based on ILO Research Department's Trends Econometric Models, April 2016.

Globally and regionally, youths are overrepresented among unemployed. The youth-to-adult ratio of unemployment has remained alarmingly high the past 10 years.

**Figure 2. Youth-To-Adult Unemployment Rate Ratios by Region, 2007 and 2016**



## Youth Poverty and the Working Poor

It is estimated that more than 500 million youth aged 15-24 years live on less than \$2 a day, which makes them fall under the poverty line. In 2010, it was estimated that about 152 million young workers live in households with a daily income of less than \$1.25 per day.<sup>31</sup> The young people that fall under this category may not be unemployed, but belong to the category of the “Working Poor.” The ILO defines the working poor as an “employed population in extreme or moderate poverty, i.e. with per capita income or consumption of less than US\$3.10 per day”.<sup>32</sup> This means that, even though the person has employment, the income is not sufficient to meet basic needs. This is mostly due to poor employment quality, poor working conditions, and low salaries. Young people are overrepresented in the working poor group, being disproportionately affected by poor working conditions.<sup>33</sup> Although the share of working youth living in poverty has decreased, youth remain especially vulnerable to these situations. In high income countries, youth have surpassed the elderly as the group with the highest risk of poverty.<sup>34</sup>

## HIV/AIDS/STIs

Health is often deeply intertwined with exclusion. As previously mentioned, youth represent an increasing share of HIV affected people. In 2015, 670,000 youths aged 15- 24 years were newly transmitted with HIV, with 250,000 of those being between the ages of 15 and 19.<sup>35</sup> This shows how vulnerable youths are to STIs. In addition, there is still a problematic stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS, putting infected youth at risk of even further exclusion and discrimination. Moreover, the stigma and shame often cause young people to be less inclined to seek help, thereby limiting their chances of getting adequate treatment and support. Hence, HIV/AIDS and other STIs can act as both be a cause of exclusion but also a consequence. Lack of education, high-risk sexual behaviour, and poverty have proven to be risk factors for contracting HIV, all factors that are prevalent among youth.

## Gender Inequality

Gender inequality remains a global problem, with varying levels of discrimination in different regions of the world. In poor families where resources are limited, young women and girls face discrimination as more resources are allocated to young men and boys. Families depend on the income earned by men, and as a result, the survival of young men and boys is prioritized. Consequently, where resources are limited, women and girls are less likely to have had vaccinations, access to health services, sufficient food and nutrition, and education. In addition, in general, young women are more likely to be unemployed and have unsafe and poor-quality

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<sup>31</sup> "Poverty Line, Poverty Headcount ratio," The World Bank, <http://data.worldbank.org/topic/poverty>.

<sup>32</sup> World Employment Social Outlook Trends, ILO, 4.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 4-10.

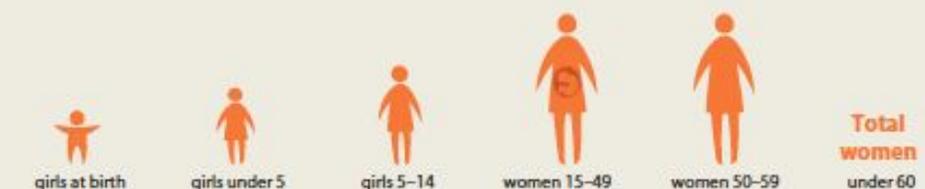
<sup>34</sup> “Global Youth Unemployment is on the Rise of Again,” *World Employment and Social Outlook 2016: Trends for Youth*, International Labour Organization, August 24, 2016, [http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS\\_513728/lang--ja/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_513728/lang--ja/index.htm).

<sup>35</sup> “Turning the tide against AIDS,” UNICEF Data.

employment.<sup>36</sup>

Even when employed, young women often have informal and vulnerable employment, with poor working conditions. Notably, there are regional differences: in East Asia, young men are more likely to be unemployed than young women.<sup>37</sup> All of these factors combined restricts women’s capabilities and therefore their human development and freedom. Moreover, on an extreme level, severe gender inequality has proven to cause excess female deaths due to practices like female infanticide. In fact, the World Bank has estimated that there are 4 million excess female deaths each year.<sup>38</sup>

**Table 3. Almost 4 Million Missing Women Each Year**  
*Excess female deaths in the world, by and region, 1990 and 2008 (thousands)*



	girls at birth		girls under 5		girls 5–14		women 15–49		women 50–59		Total women under 60	
	1990	2008	1990	2008	1990	2008	1990	2008	1990	2008	1990	2008
China	890	1,092	259	71	21	5	208	56	92	30	1,470	1,254
India	265	257	428	251	94	45	388	228	81	75	1,255	856
Sub-Saharan Africa	42	53	183	203	61	77	302	751	50	99	639	1,182
High HIV-prevalence countries	0	0	6	39	5	18	38	328	4	31	53	416
Low HIV-prevalence countries	42	53	177	163	57	59	264	423	46	68	586	766
South Asia (excluding India)	0	1	99	72	32	20	176	161	37	51	346	305
East Asia and Pacific (excluding China)	3	4	14	7	14	9	137	113	48	46	216	179
Middle East and North Africa	5	6	13	7	4	1	43	24	15	15	80	52
Europe and Central Asia	7	14	3	1	0	0	12	4	4	3	27	23
Latin America and the Caribbean	0	0	11	5	3	1	20	10	17	17	51	33
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,212</b>	<b>1,427</b>	<b>1,010</b>	<b>617</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>1,286</b>	<b>1,347</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>4,082</b>	<b>3,882</b>

Source: WDR 2012 team estimates based on data from the World Health Organization 2010 and United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2009.  
 Note: Totals do not necessarily add up due to rounding.

### **The Urban-Rural Divide**

Today, UN Habitat estimates that 85 percent of the world’s youth are living in developing countries, and the number of young people growing up in urban settings is increasing. The

<sup>36</sup> World Employment Social Outlook Trends, ILO, 20.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 21.

<sup>38</sup> “Gender and Development, World Development Report 2012” the World Bank

study estimates that by 2030, 60 percent of the urban population will be under the age of 18.<sup>39</sup>

In recent years, the world has seen an overall surge in the urban population; and today, more than half of the world's population live in cities. This increase can be explained to some extent by young people migrating to cities to search for better employment opportunities. However, this increase has also led to a rise in urban poverty, with more people living in cities with minimal or no social protection, including limited access to health services and housing, in addition to being excluded from opportunities.<sup>40</sup>

Yet, governments in developing countries have long had a tendency to favor the urban sector and population in development plans, a phenomenon so prevalent that it is now called the "urban bias."<sup>41</sup> Urban bias creates and increases the economic gap between urban and rural communities within countries. Thus, looking at the disparity in youth literacy between urban and rural youth, the former has significantly higher levels of literacy. Additionally, poor young women in rural areas have even lower literacy rates compared to their male counterparts.<sup>42</sup> This gap in literacy only serves to further exclude women from fully participating in society, illustrating how the intersection of different forms of discrimination--in this case, relating to gender, geography, socioeconomic status, and education--serve to worsen the degree of exclusion.

### **Ethnicity and Religion**

Being a part of a minority group can present even more difficulties for young people to feel included in society. Several studies have shown that minority groups are often systematically disadvantaged and face discrimination in both obtaining and maintaining employment.<sup>43</sup> In addition, an EU Commission report on youth discrimination in the European Union found that youth of an ethnic minority background experienced high levels of discrimination and isolation in educational settings; and this discrimination negatively impacted their health and contributed to impoverishment and social exclusion.<sup>44</sup>

Furthermore, ethnicity and religion can be especially important in shaping identities, a process that for many takes place when transitioning from childhood to adulthood. As a result, discrimination based on ethnicity or religion can lead not only to marginalisation of vulnerable groups, but can also feed personal struggles in which young people question their identity or feel guilt or shame for belonging to a certain minority or religious group.

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<sup>39</sup> "Youth," UN Habitat, <https://unhabitat.org/urban-themes/youth/>.

<sup>40</sup> "Urban Poverty: An Overview," The World Bank, <http://go.worldbank.org/19N9ZIG9K0>.

<sup>41</sup> Todaro and Smith, *Economic Development*.

<sup>42</sup> "Education for People and Planet: Creating Sustainable Futures for All," *2016 Global Education Monitoring Report*, UNESCO, 74, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002457/245752e.pdf>.

<sup>43</sup> Francesca Froy and Lucy Pyne, "Ensuring Labour Market Success for Ethnic Minority and Immigrant Youth," *OECD Local Economic and Employment Development (LEED) Working Papers*, No. 2011/09, OECD Publishing, June 1, 2011, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5kg8g2l0547b-en>.

<sup>44</sup> "Overview of youth discrimination in the European Union," *European Commission Report* (2015): 7, doi: 10.2838/173010, [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/overview\\_youth\\_discrimination\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/overview_youth_discrimination_en.pdf).

## Education

Like many other concepts described in this report, a lack of education can both cause and result from exclusion. A 2016 UNESCO report points out that "the groups most marginalized in terms of education access and quality vary substantially; they include racial, ethnic and linguistic minorities, people with disabilities, pastoralists, slum dwellers, children with HIV, 'unregistered' children, and orphans".<sup>45</sup> Numbers from 2013 shows that 10.6 percent of the world's youth are non-literate.<sup>46</sup> As of today, many formal education systems are insufficient in providing youth with basic skills needed for future employment. To fill this gap, youth and community based organization have proven to be very efficient providing basic training for young people to develop skills.

## Migration and Refugees

Immigrant and refugee youth also face specific challenges and are especially vulnerable to exclusion. Leaving their home country, they often have to leave their family, friends, and old community and try to become included in a new one, sometimes without speaking the language of the host country. As a result, young migrants and refugees automatically face social exclusion upon arrival in the host country. Additionally, the prevalence of prejudice or xenophobia can pose obstacles when they try to enter the labor market, with employers discriminating against migrants and refugees, even those who are well-educated and highly qualified. Moreover, trying to become included in a community without knowing the host country's language becomes even more challenging without the support of a social network.

In the end, the vulnerable position of young migrants may lead them to settle for lower skilled jobs, for which they are overqualified, or unlawful employment without safe working conditions in which they are exploited. Young female migrants are especially vulnerable to sexual exploitation, leading them to prostitution, either directly forced or indirectly as a last resort out of poverty.

## Social Capital

Social capital is vastly different from physical and human capital, as it mainly refers to social networks and links. Social capital has been described as the "set of resources that inhere in family relations and in community social organisation and that are useful for the cognitive and social development of a child or young person." As such, social capital is not individual, as human capital would be. Instead, it refers to relationships and the social cohesion of a community, and it is highly interactive.<sup>47</sup>

A society which lacks social capital lacks in horizontal trust, i.e. lack of trust within communities.

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<sup>45</sup> UNESCO, "Education for People and Planet."

<sup>46</sup> "Youth and Education," *United Nations Youth*, UNESCO and the Focal Point on Youth, UNDESA, 1, <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-education.pdf>.

<sup>47</sup> David Piachaud, "Capital and the Determinants of Poverty and Social Exclusion," STICERD and Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion, 2002, 8-10.

This, in turn, puts individuals in a precarious state. Youth are especially vulnerable in such situations with low social capital, in which they lack a safety net or community support. While approaches aiming at eradicating poverty often focus on human capital and physical capital, social capital also needs to be considered in order to create stable and supportive communities in which youth can thrive.

### C. Why Focus on Youth?

*Why is it important to focus on youth when addressing the issues of social exclusion and poverty?* To begin, youth encompass nearly one-fifth of the global population.<sup>48</sup> In the southern hemisphere, youth comprise an even greater majority, reaching up to 85 percent in certain developing countries.<sup>49</sup> Therefore, they are a very significant demographic that should not be overlooked. Moreover, it is important to recognize that youth rights are human rights and that youth deserve to be fully included, participating members of society without discrimination.<sup>50</sup>

Unfortunately, youth are especially vulnerable to becoming victims of poverty and social exclusion. According to the ILO in 2011, young people are three times as likely as adults to be unemployed.<sup>51</sup> In fact, age is cited as the greatest determining factor of unemployment, surpassing geography, education level, and gender.<sup>52</sup> There are currently 71 million unemployed youth worldwide,<sup>53</sup> with the global youth unemployment rate standing at 13.1 percent, signifying a half-million increase or a 0.2 percent increase since 2015.<sup>54</sup> Beyond unemployment, youth also represent the majority of the working poor,<sup>55</sup> with 156 million working youth living in extreme or moderate poverty.<sup>56</sup> This constitutes 37.7 percent of working youth, in comparison to 26 percent of working adults in such conditions.<sup>57</sup>

Considering such abysmal figures, it is necessary to create targeted approaches to address the gap in public policy. Notably, tackling youth poverty and exclusion serves as a preventative measure that will help end the cycle of poverty and social exclusion. According to the United

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<sup>48</sup> Jon Hall, "Youth: not simply human beings, but human becomings," United Nations Development Programme, August 26, 2015, <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/blog/2015/8/26/Youth-not-simply-human-beings-but-human-becomings.html>.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, "Executive summary and outcomes," Expert meeting on the human rights of youth, HRESIS/RRDD/18, September 2013, <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Youth/ExecutiveSummary.pdf>.

<sup>51</sup> "Global Youth Unemployment: a ticking timebomb," *The Guardian*, March 27, 2013, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2013/mar/26/global-youth-unemployment-ticking-time-bomb>.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> "Youth employment," International Labour Organization, <http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/youth-employment/lang--de/index.htm>.

<sup>54</sup> "Local youth unemployment exceeds global average," *The Cayman Reporter*, August 29, 2016, <http://www.caymanreporter.com/2016/08/29/local-youth-unemployment-exceeds-global-average/>.

<sup>55</sup> "Global Youth Unemployment," *The Guardian*.

<sup>56</sup> "Local youth unemployment," *The Cayman Reporter*.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) 2014 Human Development Report, disadvantages early in life translate to worsening conditions across a lifetime and thereby greater societal inequality in the long run.<sup>58</sup> The repercussions of such poverty and social exclusion can be seen when youth who do poorly in school, drop out, and earn low wages have children who then end up enduring similar conditions of poverty and exclusion.

However, as a period of transition from childhood to adulthood, the ages between 15 and 24 years is a critical time for individuals. Youth are especially vulnerable during this time, and great hardship "can scar a young person's chances for a better life."<sup>59</sup> Such traumatic experiences will carry on into adulthood and hamper young people's personal development and sense of well-being if they lack opportunities and view their future prospects as being bleak. Negative lifelong consequences include lower wages and distrust of the political and economic system, which may in turn impact the country's social cohesion and political stability.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, disillusioned youth are more likely to turn to organized crime or militant groups.<sup>61</sup>

On the flip side, youth is also a time period in which individuals have incredibly capacity for growth and development. Noting that "[t]he world now has the largest generation of young people in history," former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has deplored such "massive waste of human potential" and stated that he "place[s] great hope in their power to shape our future."<sup>62</sup> Youth possess so much potential that, once tapped, can help them succeed and contribute positively to society at large. This time is a "window of opportunity," in which skills, knowledge, and health status that is gained during this time may allow excluded youth to "override" their earlier disadvantages.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> "Sustaining Human Progress: Reducing Vulnerabilities and Building Resilience," *Human Development Report 2014*, United Nations Development Programme, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-report-2014>.

<sup>59</sup> Hall, "Youth: not simply human beings."

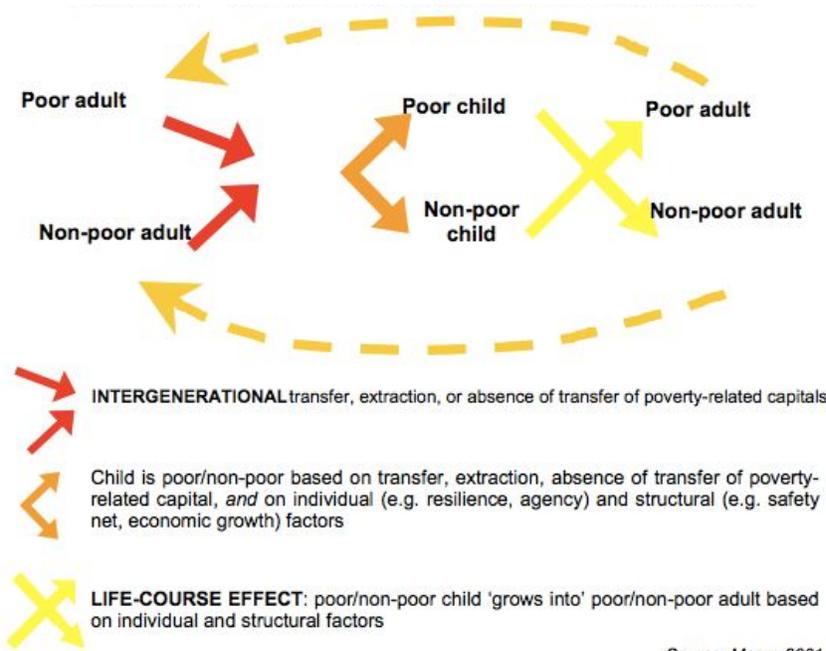
<sup>60</sup> "Global Youth Unemployment," *The Guardian*.

<sup>61</sup> Karen Moore, "Thinking about youth poverty through the lenses of chronic poverty, life-course poverty and intergenerational poverty," Chronic Poverty Research Center, Working Paper 57, July 2005, 6, [http://www.chronicpoverty.org/uploads/publication\\_files/57Moore.pdf](http://www.chronicpoverty.org/uploads/publication_files/57Moore.pdf).

<sup>62</sup> "Global Youth Unemployment," *The Guardian*.

<sup>63</sup> Moore, "Thinking about youth poverty."

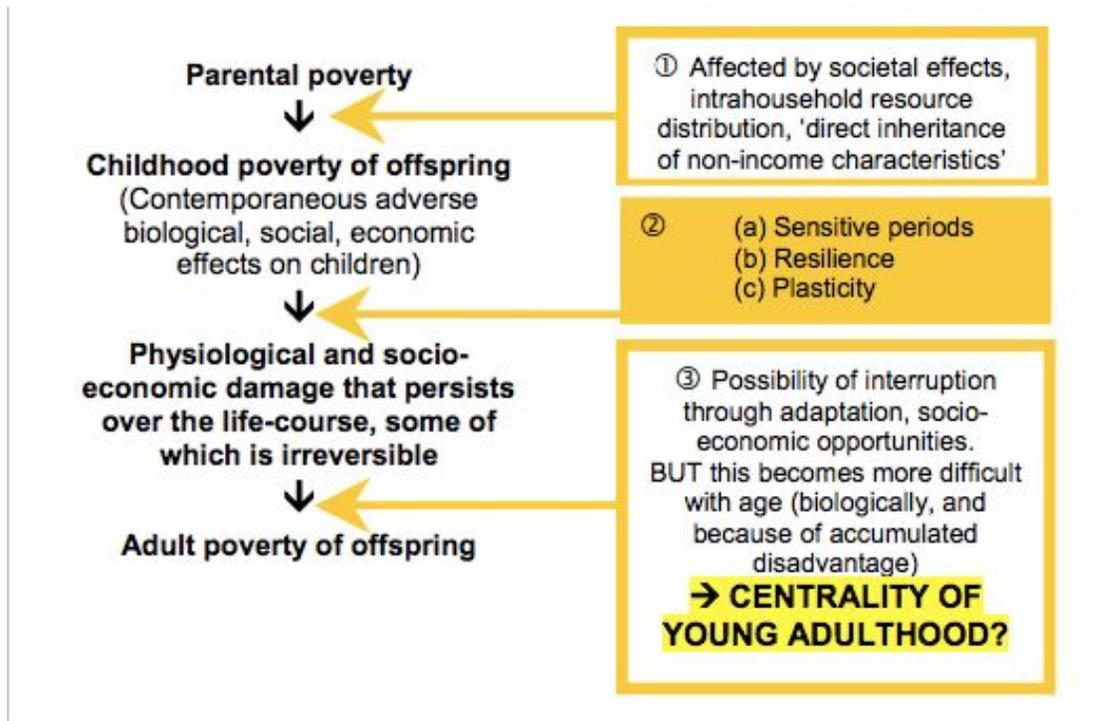
Figure 3. Stylization of Inter-generational and Life-course poverty/Well-being



Source: Moore 2001.

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Figure 4. Timing Matters - An adaptation of Yaqub's 'Born poor, stay poor?'



<sup>64</sup> Moore, "Thinking about youth poverty," 14.

In turn, by giving youth opportunities to begin their adult lives on the right track, they will be able to provide stability, security, and serve as excellent role models for their own children in the future. This potential of youth is especially promising for developing countries, which could experience significant economic gains as a result of youth empowerment. In fact, according to Sam K. Kutesa, President of the 69th Session of the General Assembly, the African continent could gain an additional \$500 billion per year to its economy for 30 years.<sup>65</sup> Therefore, investing in youth translates to investing in the future well-being of our families, communities, and societies. Indeed, “Every excluded youth represents a missed opportunity, with society failing to contribute to his/her socio-economic and personal development.”<sup>66</sup>

Luckily, youth are eager to embrace new opportunities and strive to meet their potential. Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin, Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), stated that youth are “are rejecting the status quo and demanding a better future. Many of them are claiming their right to a decent living, and they are willing to take risks to do so.” Thus, it is critical that we work to provide youth with such opportunities and help end the cycle of youth poverty and exclusion.

#### **D. International Initiatives for Youth Empowerment and Inclusion**

Currently, there exist several initiatives promoting youth empowerment and inclusion at the international level. The UNDP currently offers its Youth Global Programme for Sustainable Development and Peace (Youth-GPS), which discusses youth empowerment, education, and employment.<sup>67</sup> Lasting from 2016-2020, this program strives to reinforce the UNDP’s Youth Strategy 2014-2017, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security.

The UNDP’s Youth Strategy 2014-2017 complements the UNDP Strategic Plan 2014-2017 by focusing on youth empowerment.<sup>68</sup> Identifying the challenges of the modern era and identifying entry points for a cohesive plan to support youth, it strives to produce three outcomes: increased economic empowerment of youth, enhanced youth civic engagement and participation in decision-making and political processes and institutions, and strengthened youth engagement in resilience building. This strategy supports the efforts of the UN Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth and the UN Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development, including the UN System-wide Action Plan on Youth (UN Youth-SWAP).

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> “The Global Phenomenon of Youth Exclusion: the Problem and Its Solutions,” *Youth 4 Change Report 2013*, [http://media.wix.com/ugd/d8ae7d\\_e5df3a5d71114eaf91c7080744a72ea8.pdf](http://media.wix.com/ugd/d8ae7d_e5df3a5d71114eaf91c7080744a72ea8.pdf).

<sup>67</sup> *Youth Global Programme for Sustainable Development and Peace: Youth-GPS 2016-2012*, United Nations Development Programme, <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/Youth-GPS.html>.

<sup>68</sup> *UNDP Youth Strategy 2014-2017: Empowered Youth, Sustainable Future*, United Nations Development Programme, <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/youthstrategy.html>.

Another initiative at the international level is the EU-OECD's Youth Inclusion Project 2014-2017.<sup>69</sup> This project tries to analyze and address the multidimensional barriers youth face that lead to their exclusion, including demographic, economic, social, legal, cultural, and political factors. It also aims to consider the financial, legal, administration, and institutional implications of policies. With these two objectives, the project supports partner countries to more effectively respond to the needs of youth by enhancing national capacities to design evidence-based policies and ultimately help increase youth involvement in national development.

Meanwhile, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was established in 2015, is a major global initiative that also addresses the issues of youth empowerment, education, and employment.<sup>70</sup> The report states, "The future of humanity and of our planet lies in our hands. It lies also in the hands of today's younger generation who will pass the torch to future generations."<sup>71</sup> In fact, more than one-third of UN Sustainable Development Goals refers to youth empowerment, including youth participation and well-being.<sup>72</sup> These include 20 youth-specific targets relating to the issues of hunger, education, gender equality, decent work, inequality, and climate change.<sup>73</sup>

That same year, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security, which strives to encourage youth participate in peace processes and dispute resolution at the local, national, regional, and international levels.<sup>74</sup> This resolution was passed in efforts to combat violent extremism and prevent radicalization among youth.<sup>75</sup>

Finally, UNESCO also advocates for youth empowerment with its UNESCO Operational Strategy on Youth 2014-2021.<sup>76</sup> This strategy aims to connect and establish partnerships with youth organizations and stakeholders, focusing on three key areas: policy formulation and review with participation of youth; capacity development for the transition to adulthood; and civic engagement, democratic participation, and social innovation.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> "Youth Inclusion Project - About," Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, <http://www.oecd.org/dev/inclusivesocietiesanddevelopment/youth-inclusion-project-about.htm>.

<sup>70</sup> *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, United Nations A/RES/70/1, <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/21252030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainable%20Development%20web.pdf>.

<sup>71</sup> "Fast Facts: Youth as Partners for the Implementation of the SDGs," United Nations Development Programme, [http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/results/fast\\_facts/fast-facts--youth-as-partners-for-the-implementation-of-the-sdgs.html](http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/results/fast_facts/fast-facts--youth-as-partners-for-the-implementation-of-the-sdgs.html).

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> "Security Council, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2250 (2015), Urges Member States to Increase Representation of Youth in Decision-Making at All Levels," United Nations, SC/12149, December 9, 2015, <http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/sc12149.doc.htm>.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> "UNESCO and Youth -- Strategy," UNESCO, <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/youth/strategy/>.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

*“Youth are more than victims of poverty and economic downturn - they can be agents of change.” - Ban Ki Moon*



Image source: Y4CN

### III. Poverty and Exclusion: A Vicious Cycle

According to anti-oppressive intervention theory, social divisions, such as race, class, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and age, must be understood in relation to broader social structures. This is because relationships on “personal, family, community, organisational and structural levels” are interconnected and help “shap[e] and determin[e] social reality.”<sup>78</sup> Therefore, only by clearly understanding the use and abuse of power within these relationships can we begin to understand social divisions and inequalities.<sup>79</sup>

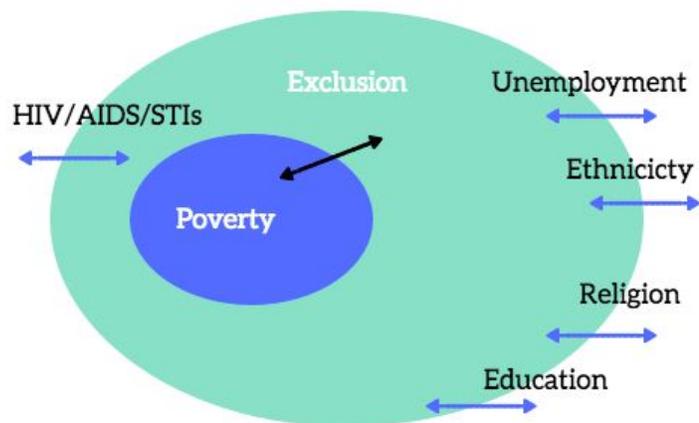
Likewise, in order to understand and effectively address the phenomenon of social exclusion, it is critical to understand the relationship between exclusion and poverty. As shown in Part 2, poverty among youth is widespread and is directly linked to social exclusion. However, the relationship is not straightforward. Rather, it is complex and deeply interconnected, with poverty and exclusion mutually reinforcing one another to create a vicious cycle.

According to the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the close connection between poverty and social exclusion is “the key challenge of our time,” as exclusion hinders economic growth and fosters social inequality. This continuation of poverty and exclusion is rooted in deeply entrenched social structures that perpetuate social injustice. Consequently, both poverty and social exclusion remain widespread despite UN efforts, such as the establishment of the Millennium Development Goals (2000-2015) and the Sustainable Development Goals (2015-2030). Facing such a significant challenge, we will now analyze the relationship between poverty and exclusion in order to address these asymmetric social outcomes and tackle impediments to “a society for all.”<sup>80</sup>

#### A. The Relationship between Poverty and Exclusion: Reinforcing Factors

Figure 5. Poverty as a Part of Exclusion

The simplified chart helps illustrate the general relationship between poverty and exclusion. Poverty signifies exclusion, as a lack of economic means inevitably leads to social exclusion. Youth living under the national poverty line are unable to access many societal goods, such as health services and education, and in turn, find it more difficult to find a job



<sup>78</sup> Robert Adams, Lena Dominelli, and Malcolm Payne, *Anti-Oppressive Practice* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan Ltd, 2002): 227–236.

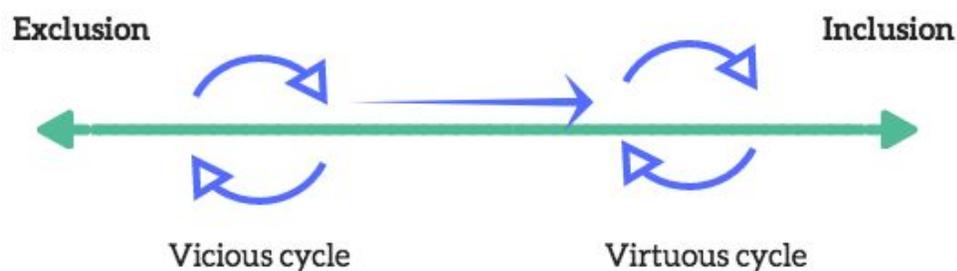
<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> “Promoting Social Integration,” Expert Group Meeting.

and earn money. As a result, this already vulnerable population is unable to fully participate in their communities in the long run, thereby perpetuating the cycle of poverty and exclusion. Therefore, social exclusion is a consequence of poverty.

Conversely, social exclusion also causes poverty. For example, migrants who possess diplomas from their country of origin, but may experience exclusion upon arriving in the new host country and ultimately become poor. However, it is important to note that social exclusion does not always cause poverty. For example, a wealthy woman of color may face both gender and racial discrimination and thereby be excluded from some facets of society despite not suffering from poverty. This can be seen in the graph in the “exclusion” area that does not intersect with the “poverty” subset. In sum, social exclusion and poverty are closely linked, with exclusion acting as both a cause and consequence of poverty.

**Figure 6. The Continuum of Exclusion to Inclusion**



Additionally, the areas of exclusion described in Part 2, such as unemployment, belonging to an ethnic minority, or being affected by HIV/AIDS/STIs, does not mean that all of these groups automatically are excluded, but rather that they are more vulnerable and prone to social exclusion. Thus, it is essential to note that there is not a formal threshold of exclusion to cross; instead exclusion and inclusion exists on a multidimensional continuum, in which individuals undergo a process of moving towards one end of the spectrum or the other. This contrasts with poverty, which is often measured by government with a national poverty line, although, as explained in Part 2, this concept is contested.<sup>81</sup> Therefore, poverty can be seen as a “condition or set of circumstances (the way things are),” whereas exclusion can be seen as a series of “processes (the way things happen).”<sup>82</sup>

Examples of individuals and groups that have been recognized as particularly prone to social exclusion include the following: “people in poverty, lone parents, unemployed people, disabled people, people facing discrimination on the grounds of gender, race, sexuality or disability, homeless people, people with ill health, children not doing well at school, people with few educational qualifications, people with low self esteem, people with addiction problems, communities in areas of deprivation.”<sup>83</sup>

<sup>81</sup> Hilary Silver, “The process of social exclusion: the dynamics of an evolving concept,” Chronic Poverty Research Centre, Working Paper 95, October 2007, <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a08bd740f0b652dd000f1c/95Silver.pdf>.

<sup>82</sup> “Exclusion,” UNESCO.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

## B. The Virtuous Cycle

As described in the previous section, poverty and exclusion can function as reinforcing factors that create a vicious cycle of increased vulnerability. Since social inclusion is a fluid process and not a fixed stage, a vicious cycle can be set in motion by one issue or area of exclusion, which then generates even more exclusion, either heightening one type of exclusion or triggering other forms of exclusion. These factors can trap youth in a negative pattern in which they grow increasingly disadvantaged and feel permanently excluded from society.

While there is a tendency to focus primarily on the vicious cycle, it is critical to recognize that solutions can be found by analyzing the specific context of the vicious cycle. By fully understanding the root causes of the vicious cycle of exclusion and identifying key points of leverage for change, it is possible to counter the destructive patterns and initiate a virtuous cycle of prosperity and inclusion. After determining a possible starting point for inclusion efforts, NGOs can work to foster inclusion in this one aspect of a young person's life. Subsequently, progress in this one area can help empower the young person and open up possibilities for even further personal development in other areas.

In the long run, these young individuals can go from being stuck in a the vicious cycle of exclusion to becoming active promoters of youth inclusion themselves. Oftentimes, youth who have successfully transformed the vicious cycle into a virtuous cycle want to give back to their community by assisting their fellow peers. They seek to inspire other vulnerable youth by sharing their personal stories, in which they provide insight on what helped them turn their own lives around. In turn, these new leaders feel further empowered themselves as they serve as active members of their respective communities. Moreover, the youth often gradually develop bonds of trust and friendship, building bridges to form a social network that removes them from their former state of isolation. Therefore, social capital in the form of networks and community support proves to be especially valuable since helping one young individual can create a domino effect, positively influencing other vulnerable and socially excluded youth. Promoting youth inclusion thus surpasses individual efforts, growing into a collaborative endeavor at the communal level.

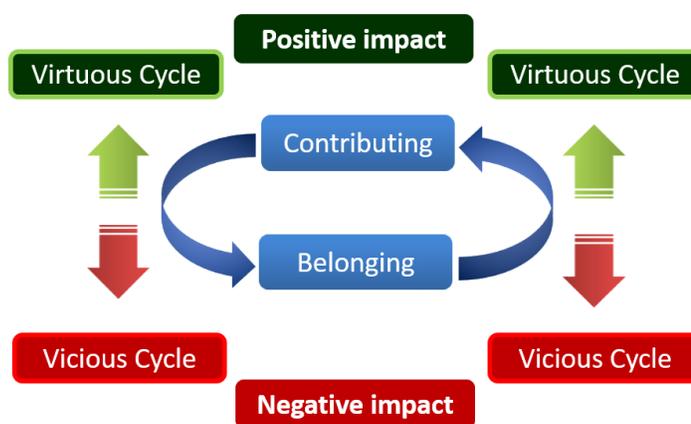


Figure 7. Positive and Negative Impact of Inclusion<sup>84</sup>

<sup>84</sup> "Build inclusion through the Contributing-Belonging Cycle," UGM Consulting, <http://www.ugmconsulting.com/Inclusion-through-the-contributing-belonging-cycle.html>.

## C. Implications

Considering that poverty signifies exclusion and that exclusion can both create and further entrench poverty, it becomes evident that a comprehensive strategy to end youth poverty must address the issue of social exclusion. At the same time, efforts for youth inclusion in society must also combat youth poverty. Only such a holistic method will effectively empower youth. Thus, while it is necessary to tackle poverty in order to fight exclusion, it is not sufficient, for example, to merely provide income for individuals to include them in society. Instead, we must address the circumstances where exclusion is the root cause of poverty and therefore address issues of exclusion when attempting to fight poverty.

Hence, in Part 4, we will provide interviews of five NGOs working in different regions of the world to advocate for youth inclusion, as well as highlight examples of recent state, NGO, and private sector efforts to address social exclusion. Afterwards, we will draw from these sources to come up with the five main best practices regarding youth inclusion and empowerment as important steps to take when tackling the issues of youth exclusion and poverty.

*"Young people are at the heart of today's great strategic opportunities and challenges, from rebuilding the global economy to combating violent extremism to building sustainable democracies."  
- Hillary Rodham Clinton*



*Image source: Y4CN*

## IV. Solutions: Fighting Poverty and Exclusion

### A. On-the-Ground: Interviews with NGOs

In order to shed light on the best practices regarding youth inclusion, we interviewed several NGOs who are working on the ground around the world.<sup>85</sup> These NGOs include Mera Parivar, Yuva Parivartan, Youth Spirit Center, Initiative for Development and Cooperation (IDC) Serbia, and Life Project 4 Youth (LP4Y).

#### **Mera Parivar**

*Location: India*<sup>86</sup>

#### **When and how did you start your project?**

Mera Parivar is a non-profit, charitable NGO, registered under the FCRA Act of the Ministry of Home Affairs. Created in 2006, we have assisted disadvantaged communities, including children, youth, and women, in Gurgaon for the past 10 years.

#### **What is your organization's mission and strategy?**

Mission: Mera Parivar is committed to working towards empowering and enabling communities (children, women, and youth) through education: building capacities and human resources to help individuals realize their full potential and achieve self-reliance and to give them the power to control their lives and future.

The overarching vision of Mera Parivar is "right to life with dignity." We want to create an equal, just, and sustainable world, empowering the poor to demand respect for their basic rights and engaging with them to become active and supportive citizens. Mera Parivar also advocates for an effective and accountable state and the creation of job markets that are accessible to disadvantaged people.<sup>87</sup>

Strategy: We conduct door-to-door visits, meeting with beneficiaries personally in their homes. Mera Parivar also facilitates engagement of all stakeholders (civil society, individuals, private bodies, and government agencies) to create a platform of knowledge and resource-sharing to increase the efficiency of our actions and commitments. Recent reports indicate that while inequalities are increasing in India, lack of emphasis on education and unequal opportunities remains a persistent problem for poor and marginalized communities. To tackle this issue, Mera Parivar has opened two youth centers in Rajiv Nagar and Ashok Vihar (Gurgaon), where we

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<sup>85</sup> We have edited the interviews for greater clarity and comprehension purposes without altering the original intended meaning.

<sup>86</sup> Gurgaon, India.

<sup>87</sup> *Annual Report 2015-16*, Mera Parivar Institute of Transformation, 5, [https://media.wix.com/ugd/2c68df\\_3af1c3e1a8de410e8a1bdc648ec260c4.pdf](https://media.wix.com/ugd/2c68df_3af1c3e1a8de410e8a1bdc648ec260c4.pdf).

provide job-oriented trainings for youngsters, so as to give them the opportunity to develop personally and professionally.<sup>88</sup>

Education and training are key determinants of success in the labor market. But unfortunately, existing systems are failing to address the learning needs of many young people, and surveys of learning outcomes and skills show that a large number of youth have low levels of achievement in basic literacy and numeracy. As a result, young people are almost three times more likely to be unemployed than adults and are continuously exposed to lower-quality jobs, greater labor market inequalities, and longer and more insecure school-to-work transitions.

At Mera Parivar, we fully acknowledge that taking action for the integration of youth is more important today than ever before. India has the world's largest youth population. In our NGO, we work to meet the needs and aspirations of young people that will define our common future. The aim is to transform the lives of many young people and help them become entrepreneurs so that they can participate in the economic and social development of India.<sup>89</sup>

### **From your own experience, what are the main causes of youth exclusion?**

Youth migrate from villages to cities with the hope of finding a good career, often dropping their studies without being aware of the harmful consequences. Unaware of available career opportunities, these youth urgently need guidance and counsel to avoid wasting time and moving in the wrong direction. While their families are unaware of the importance of education or unable to support it, Mera Parivar's Youth Empowerment Program helps young people in the community to be aware of and have access to better opportunities for their future. Not only do they develop their professional career, youth also acquire self-empowerment skills and get personality guidance and training.<sup>90</sup>

### **In the end, what have you found to be the most effective strategies or the "best practices" in the field?**

Door-to-door visits and high-quality teaching are the most effective because the students become convinced and take admission immediately. They are very happy about the good quality of education given by the teachers.

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>89</sup> "Youth Vocational and Skills Training," Mera Parivar, <https://www.meraparivar.org/youth-vocational-and-skills-training>.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

## Yuva Parivartan, a Project of Kherwadi Social Welfare Association

Location: India<sup>91</sup>

### When and how did you start your project?

**Kherwadi Social Welfare Association (KSWA)** was founded in 1998 by late Shri. B.G. Kher, a freedom fighter, statesman, and the first Premier of Bombay State. He was moved by the plight and miserable living conditions of the 100 odd tanner families who had settled in the marshes of Bandra (E) called Chamdewalla-ki-Wadi, later known as "Kherwadi". Kherwadi Social Welfare Association started the Yuva Parivartan™ (YP) Movement in 1998 under the leadership of Mr. Kishor Kher and Mrs. Mrinalini Kher to cater to the unmotivated school dropouts and make them economically independent. The movement was formally launched in February 2003 by the then President of India Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam.

Yuva Parivartan works towards providing livelihoods and enhancing the less fortunate youth with vocational skills, guidance, counseling and financial assistance. Starting with just one center in 1998 with 100 students, we have today trained over 6.5 lakh youth across India spanning 18 states and empowered them for livelihoods. In the year 2016-17, we have impacted and changed the lives of approx. 1.5 lakh youth, thereby giving them a second chance and including them into the economic mainstream.

### What is your organization's mission and strategy?

**Vision:** To create opportunities for school dropouts and deprived youth to help them lead productive and socially useful lives.

**Mission:** To give a second chance to the less educated deprived youth through wage or self-employment based on urban and rural livelihood training provided in partnership with stakeholders.

Yuva Parivartan has identified 4 areas of work which forms the 4 pillars of the YP model:

- **Livelihood Training** - aims at solving the problem of school dropouts without marketable skills and enables them to gain expertise for employment as motor mechanics, tailors, beauticians, electrical wiremen, etc.
- **Community Engagement** - aims to develop leadership among the underprivileged youth and help solve community problems.
- **Livelihood Support** - a dedicated Placement Cell has been formed at the Head Office which has partnerships with many small and large companies, along with Livelihood Coordinators who are spread out geographically.
- **Industry Partnership** - partnering with corporations and like-minded NGOs and institutions.

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<sup>91</sup> North: Jammu & Kashmir, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh; East: Bihar, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand, Orissa, West Bengal; West: Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan; South: Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana

We have various projects running in order to expand our outreach such as Rural Mobile Camps, which includes vocational skill courses; the Prison Project in partnership with the Police to help first-time offenders regain their rightful place in society and desist from the life of crime; and the Integrated Rural Development Program (IRDP) to train farmers for improved agricultural practices.

Yuva Parivartan addresses the three most important paradoxes confronting the Livelihoods space in India today:

1. 80% of all youth who do not complete school, but, receive only 20% of the attention.

YP has an inclusive model wherein we only want the beneficiary to know how to read and write and have a willingness to learn. It focuses on trying to provide Livelihoods through its own in-house developed innovative formats through six models of delivery.

2. 70% of the population lives in the villages, but, receives only 30% of the attention & resources.

Yuva Parivartan believe that for real social impact, rural India has to be integrated into the mainstream through its Rural Camp model.

3. 90% of jobs are in the unorganized sectors, but, they receive only 10% of the attention and resources.

The YP model helps the beneficiary to find opportunities in both the organized and unorganized sector through Placement assistance. Work is in progress to develop a “YP Livelihood Exchange,” a portal which connects job seekers to livelihoods. Yuva Parivartan also provides training for sustainability through farm based occupations. We have successfully completed a pilot in the tribal Taluka of Wada (Palghar district) through IRDP and have extended this initiative in Gadchiroli.

### **From your own experience, what are the main causes of youth exclusion?**

One of the several reasons for youth being excluded from the mainstream is socio-economic challenges the family faces in small towns and villages. Very few and far-in-between schools, public transportation to match school timings, lack of availability of teachers in villages and towns, the quality of teachers, teacher absenteeism, poor school infrastructure, and lack of hygienic toilet/toilets/water/electricity and other basic facilities are some of the several reasons why girls and then later boys drop out of school. Within 5-8 kms from a city, over 100 of school going children dropped out when the public bus service, which came only once in the morning, changed their timing from 8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

### **What are the main challenges you have faced?**

- a. Placement is a challenge in interior India where hardly any industry exists.
- b. It is observed that most of the dropouts had attitude issues leading to dropping out of courses or refusing to take up jobs or leaving jobs within a short period of time. To tackle this issue, an attitude change module, "Soch Ka Parivartan," has been developed.
- c. We also need greater participation and involvement of the service industry to help in providing placement opportunities once they are trained.

- d. To convert youth and convince parents to allow their children to learn a skill.
- e. To maintain standard in the quality of services that we provide.

### What have you found to be the most effective strategies or the “best practices” in the field?

In the last 19 years of its existence, Yuva Parivartan has faced many challenges and has come up with its own set of unique solutions. The key to achieving one’s goals is to adapt to modern developments and the technological advancements.

Yuva Parivartan has formalized its Standard Operating Procedures for hiring, induction, training and development, MIS/ IRIS, organizational development, and promotion of a professional attitude among employees.

- a) Moreover, Yuva Parivartan has developed innovative modes of delivery. For example, in 1998 the organisation realized that they had to come to the youth and accordingly started the Rural Mobile Camps, where vocational skill training camps were conducted in remote villages and the Prison Project where the organisation worked with first time offenders to regain their life in society.
- b) Yuva Parivartan emphasizes the need to tap on the inherent skills of communities for sustained livelihoods. To increase self-employment opportunities in rural areas, local skills need to be enhanced. Yuva Parivartan’s IRDP program helps to teach best agricultural practices for better yield, livestock, and water management (due to extreme weather conditions), apart from facilitating multiple skill training programs to cover as many communities as possible.
- c) Yuva Parivartan uses a partnership model to ensure that training happens in a timely many for the many youths that need it. Therefore, Yuva Parivartan develops capacities in like-minded smaller NGOs across India to empower youth at the local level, thereby ensuring fast coverage of the entire Indian territory.
- d) E-Learning: Due to the short availability of qualified trainers in rural India, the concept of e-learning has been developed to facilitate quality skill training through blended learning modules. This theoretical training combined with local hands-on training helps to reach areas that otherwise seemed impenetrable.
- e) Counseling Session: There are several problems faced by youth who had dropped out of school. Yuva Parivartan devised psychological interventions to promote change in the lives of every YP student so that they reach optimum potential in work with health and happiness. Currently, we are reaching out to the students using Polycom system for conducting group sessions on Self Awareness, Goal Setting, Time management, etc. Apart from the above, we regularly conduct awareness sessions on various topics like substance abuse, domestic violence, AIDS, mental health, etc.
- f) Soch ka Parivartan: An attitude change module developed in house to help youth transition from being students to salary earners. This covers 12 important attitudes necessary for these youth in getting hired and retaining their jobs. These topics have been converted into videos to make them more interesting and easy to understand for our students. Along with other topics, SKP also includes Financial Literacy, in which we teach youth about Savings, Banking, Making a Budget, difference between Debit and Credit Cards, Online banking, Cashless transactions, etc. Training has been provided to

all facilitators pan India to use Soch Ka Parivartan. Our Mobile Livelihood Development Centers are being provided with light and easy-to-carry projectors so that the videos can reach rural audiences as well.

### **Youth Spirit Center**

*Location: Jordan*

#### **When and how did you start your project?**

Our organization started late 2001 as a group of active youth in Interfaith Dialogue, after which the group traveled between different entities as a legal umbrella--for example, under the United Globe Association between 2004-2006. We did this until we gained our legal registration as Nonprofit in January 2007 under the name Youth Spirit Center. The group only started with a few participants, but still demonstrated cultural diversity, as our participants came from all over the Kingdom. In addition, balanced gender participation has always been our priority, and we always aim to support youth-led initiatives by providing technical and financial support whenever possible.<sup>92</sup>

#### **What is your organization's mission and strategy?**

Youth Spirit Center works regularly on hosting, co-organizing, and participating in different local and international youth exchanges, seminars, trainings, and non-formal education programs. We give priority to youngsters with fewer opportunities, especially those concerning social exclusion due to sexual or religious orientation or a lack of self-esteem due to unemployment or school drop-outs. Our mission is to increase the quality of active youth participation in society through local action and international experience; to focus on youth initiatives as a base for development; and to promote our visions of coexistence, diversity, social inclusion, and pluralism. Our target group is young leaders between 15-35 years of age, male and female, from all the governorates of Jordan without discrimination. Our main priority is participants with physical, mental, or cultural challenges in order to strengthen the concept of civil participation and voluntary work in society.<sup>93</sup>

#### Mission

- a. To build bridges between youth from different cultural, economical, educational and religious backgrounds.
- b. To promote dialogue as a tool for communication and better understanding within the same community and with others.
- c. To promote intercultural learning, both nationally and internationally.
- d. To engage youth in the society through promoting among them the concept of voluntary and social work.
- e. To help youth in building their interpersonal skills that will help them through their life and professional careers.
- f. To enhance the leadership skills in every youth.

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<sup>92</sup> *Youth Spirit Center*, <http://yscjordan.blogspot.fr/>.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

**From your own experience, what are the main causes of youth exclusion?**

The main reasons for youth exclusion are the legal system and the lack of awareness in the community.

**What are the main challenges you have faced in youth exclusion programs?**

After the Arab Spring we noticed a conspicuous rise of extremist views, including hate speech against refugees, LGBT people, and religious orientation.

**In the end, what have you found to be the most effective strategies or the “best practices” in the field?**

We believe NGOs should work in parallel with governmental institutions to provide relief for the youth suffering from exclusion and a lack of opportunities.

**Initiative for Development and Cooperation (IDC) Serbia**

*Location: Belgrade, Serbia*

**When and how did you start your organization?**

IDC was formally registered on April 13, 2007 as an association of citizens. IDC is continuing initiatives and guidelines set by the international organization from Spain, Movimiento por la Paz (MPDL), where the founders of the IDC actively worked from 2002 to 2007. IDC has established itself as a prominent organization in Serbia, with its main office located in Belgrade and local offices located in the two largest cities in Serbia – Subotica and Niš. Currently, IDC has eight employees, as well as a large network of associates, volunteers and members of the association that share IDC’s vision. Since 2013, IDC has been devoted to the empowerment of youth program, creating possibilities for active involvement of youth in its activities in order to promote youth mobility, active citizenship, and informal learning.

**What is your organization's mission and strategy?**

Vision: Satisfied people in a just society.

Mission: The development of support programs for vulnerable social groups through innovative socio-economic solutions, respect and protection of human rights, and the building of a just and responsible society that respects diversity and equal opportunities.

**From your own experience, what are the main causes of youth exclusion?**

With a 25.5 percent poverty rate and 38.7 percent of risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate in 2016, Serbia represents the country of great social insecurity, especially for youth. The population that is the most at risk of being in poverty are people between 18 and 24 years (32.7 percent), followed by those younger than 18 years old (30.2 percent). This, combined with the fact that the rate of youth unemployment is 52.8 percent, makes the causes of youth exclusion seem obvious. The phenomenon of prolonged adolescence is a common characteristic among Serbian youth, meaning that most of the young people in Serbia, between 16- and 33-years-old,

are still financially dependent on their parents and live with them. Even though visa liberalization and establishment of youth exchange programs have increased the possibilities for the mobility of Serbian youth, many young people, especially from rural areas, do not have the financial capacity to travel. Work and education migration are increasingly common among Serbian youth. Official data shows that around 58,000 young people under the age of 33 have left Serbia in 2016, mostly in search for job opportunities, among whom the highly educated make up the largest percent.

### **What are the main challenges you have faced?**

The main challenge in building a volunteer network to create possibilities for active involvement of youth is to get young people to get involved. The concept of volunteering in Serbia as a form of gaining experience, active learning, and a chance for mobility and networking is threatened by the fact that it is often illegally used as a form of unpaid work. This fact has caused mistrust among youth towards the concept of volunteer work. On the other hand, young people are understandably oriented towards gaining any sort of income from their activities so they tend to choose underpaid part-time jobs outside of their field of expertise over volunteering within their field of interest. In this context, not many young people are in chance to recognize volunteering as a concept of self-investment and use it in order to improve their own skills and knowledge and increase their own chances in the long-run.

### **What have you found to be the most effective strategies or the "best practices" in the field?**

In order to bring to light the concept of volunteering, IDC has created the program of specialized volunteering. IDC activities are intertwined with and supported by three specialized volunteer teams: a mobile response team, a media team, and a first aid team; and one more team related to inclusion of volunteers in the rural development sector is in perspective. By offering more than just a simple, routine engagement, IDC is offering specialized programs in which volunteers, by providing their ideas and previous skills and knowledge, can develop their practice, learn and grow together with the program. So far, this practice has shown great results, as IDC has broadened its field of activity. For example, the media volunteer team was created through an awareness-raising project, resulting in one documentary movie and a photo exhibition, which was realized through the joint work of more than 60 volunteers.

## Life Project 4 Youth

*Location: Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, India<sup>94</sup>*

### When and how did you start your project?

2009 in Manila

### What is your organization's mission and strategy?

**Mission:** Life Project 4 Youth's mission is the social and professional insertion of impoverished young adults living in exclusion.

**Strategy:** LP4Y accompanies young adults living in extreme poverty (on less than US\$1.90 per day) who are victims of exclusion (people with disabilities, orphans, victims of domestic violence, young prisoners or ex-prisoners, young single mothers, migrants, etc.). The most important criterion for acceptance to an LP4Y program is demonstration of serious commitment and motivation on the part of the young adult. Once their application is approved by the Coach, the young adult is invited to join a team of 15 to work on an economic micro-activity. The young adults work as a team to create, develop and manage a small business, focusing on the economic micro-activity developed by each Life Project Center (LPC), and benefitting from the specially-adapted coaching pedagogy.

LPCs provide an ideal environment where young adults can develop their Life Projects and work towards social and financial autonomy, allowing them to eventually become agents for development in their communities. Each LPC houses between one and three programs, each consisting of 15 Young Adults who benefit from a specially designed pedagogy known as Professional Training for Entrepreneurs (PTE). The LPCs operate in the heart of slum areas in the Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, and India. The first center was opened in 2009.

### LP4Y Indonesia

#### From your own experience, what are the main causes of youth exclusion?

In the northern Jakarta suburbs, the main causes of youth exclusion observed include the following :

- Low-level of education and/or dropped out of school when young
- Family pressure to provide financial support or to stay in their neighborhood
- Living in remote areas far from the center of the economic capital

#### What are the main challenges you have faced?

- It is difficult to find youth who are ready to work hard to change their life.
- The community link is so strong that it is a priority that precedes professional integration.

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<sup>94</sup> Philippines: Manila, Cagayan de Oro, Cebu; Vietnam: HCMC, Hanoi; Indonesia: Jakarta; India: Delhi, Bombay, Kolkata

- Remote areas far from the center of the economic capital means it might take, for example, a 6-hour commute every day to do an internship.

### **What have you found to be the most effective strategies or the “best practices” in the field?**

- Be demanding yet kind, a link that has often been lacking in their lives.
- Be patient and always believe each youth is capable.
- Give the youth the space to inspire others and be a role model for their peers.

### **LP4Y India**

#### **From your own experience, what are the main causes of youth exclusion?**

- Marginalized women: family and community pressure; the only option for women is to be a housewife without any freedom and, in most cases, domestic violence occurs.
- Former street kids: children who grew up in the street because they lost their families or escaped.

One example of exclusion is Mohini. She grew up in a village near Delhi with seven brothers and sisters. Their parents are dead so, as the elder child, Mohini decided to stop school at eight years old. Afterwards, she moved with her sister and husband (married at 13 years old) to Delhi. For 10 years now, she has worked as a housekeeper and lived in the slums. Today, she doesn't know how to read or write, and she has never been pushed to do something greater with her life.

#### **What are the main challenges you have faced?**

The difficult position of women: I have an example of a girl named Pooja who got married and went to live in the husband's house. His family turned out to be cruel; she was beaten by all of the family members until she ended up in a coma for some time. Her family finally came to save her, but since, she has been fighting in court to have her baby back. Today, Pooja is considered nothing in Indian society. She is even rejected by her own family who would like to send her back to her husband's family just to restore their honor.

### **LP4Y Vietnam**

#### **From your own experience, what are the main causes of youth exclusion?**

- Internal migrations from the countryside to the big cities to seek a better life; people living in the countryside are disadvantaged, with no decent jobs, very low salaries, persecution of minorities, etc.
- Lack of formal job opportunities leading to huge instability; low salaries lead the poorest to take on risky jobs like prostitution.
- Broken families
- High expectations regarding educational background from big companies although the quality of college or university is not really good.
- Family pressure to earn money: possessing a short-term view, families can have a very bad influence, such as encouraging young girls to go into prostitution.
- High rental cost and lack of lease protection leads to unstable living conditions.

- Floods
- Difficult administrative process and high levels of bribery.

### What are the main challenges you have faced?

Finding ways to find the most excluded youth. There are many poor and excluded people in Vietnam (e.g. the homeless, prostitutes, inmates), but everything is hidden. Another challenge is the fact that some informal job sectors are better paid than formal ones. Even though the conditions are not decent (no salary, insurance, day off, super long working hours, etc.), since the youth are not used to think about their mid-term or long-term future, it is difficult to get them to leave the informal job sector.

### What have you found to be the most effective strategies or the “best practices” in the field?

Youth have to be actors of the change of their future and treated like adults.

## B. Regional Highlights

As described in the previous sections, much work still needs to be done on the subject of youth exclusion and poverty. Still, many important initiatives have been introduced this past year by governments, NGOs, and the private sector that aim to foster youth inclusion and empowerment. This includes efforts to promote youth employment and curb rates of poverty among youth. We will now provide examples of such initiatives introduced in the various regions of the world.

### Sub-Saharan Africa

#### *Regional*

The New Partnership for Africa Development (NEPAD) plans to invest 38 million euros in youth empowerment programs in Nigeria, Tunisia, Algeria, Cameroon and South Africa, with Nigeria as the pilot country for the program.<sup>95</sup>

#### *Gambia*

The Gambian government, European Union, and the International Trade Centre launched the Gambian Youth Empowerment project, a four-year initiative that aims to promote youth employment in Gambia by providing vocational training, creating small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and improving employment opportunities in the commercial agricultural, service business, and tourism sectors.<sup>96</sup>

#### *Ghana*

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<sup>95</sup> “NEPAD to invest 38m Euros in youth empowerment in Nigeria, 4 other countries,” *The Daily Trust*, February 27, 2017, <http://www.dailytrust.com.ng/news/general/nepad-to-invest-38m-euros-in-youth-empowerment-in-nigeria-4-other-countries/187117.html#jAlzThWP6Xo2yHHk.99>.

<sup>96</sup> Matthew Alexander, “Gambian Youth Empowerment project to tackle youth unemployment,” *Venture Burn*, <http://ventureburn.com/2017/02/gambia-eu-youth-unemployment/>.

Busy, an Internet service provider, launched three youth empowerment programs, including a graduate development program, a student brand ambassador program, and an online educational platform called JUMP, which will be implemented in partnership with select universities in Ghana.<sup>97</sup>

### *Nigeria*

Reaffirming its commitment to Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), Bank of Industry discussed its efforts to promote youth empowerment in Nigeria, including Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme (YES), which helps fund youth start-ups.<sup>98</sup> In addition, the Governor of Edo, Nigeria announced a partnership with Nigeria Legion to promote youth empowerment, including employment.<sup>99</sup>

### *Malawi*

Nancholi Youth Organization (Nayo), an NGO based in Blantyre, Malawi, strove to give young girls a platform to speak out on issues affecting them from attaining education and to address these challenges through a Girls-Talk Initiative.<sup>100</sup>

### *South Africa*

At the National Skills Conference in Irene, South Africa, Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa called for private sector support of government initiatives to improve post-school education and training, including increased investment in Training, Vocational and Educational Training (TVET) colleges. This was in light of the fact that "South Africa's skills deficit has hampered efforts to improve the country's competitive edge which is critical for economic development and job creation." In fact, youth unemployment standards around 60 percent in the country, compared to 25 percent in the general population.<sup>101</sup>

### *Zimbabwe*

Zimbabwe's Ministry of Youth, Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment released the first edition of Zimbabwe Champions and Heroes of the Economic Empowerment Revolution

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<sup>97</sup> Jessica Acheampong, "Busy introduces youth empowerment initiatives," April 5, 2017, <http://www.graphic.com.gh/business/business-news/busy-introduces-youth-empowerment-initiatives.html>.

<sup>98</sup> Femi Adekoya, "BoI reaffirms commitment to MSME development, youth empowerment," *The Guardian*, March 3, 2017, <https://guardian.ng/business-services/boi-reaffirms-commitment-to-msme-development-youth-empowerment/>.

<sup>99</sup> "Edo Govt., ex-servicement partner for improved security, youth empowerment," *The Vanguard*, January 17, 2017, <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/01/edo-govt-ex-servicemen-partner-improved-security-youth-empowerment/>.

<sup>100</sup> Maurice Nkawihe, "NGO Fosters Girls Education Through Girls-Talk Initiative: Nayo Calls For Support," *Nyasa Times*, April 8, 2017, <https://www.nyasatimes.com/ngo-fosters-girls-education-girls-talk-initiative-nayo-calls-support/#sthash.fUFGOZhV.dpuf>.

<sup>101</sup> Tshepo Ikaneng, "Ramaphosa urges private sector to support youth empowerment," *SABC News*, March 24, 2017, <http://www.sabc.co.za/news/a/bd9c6b804086258eb9d1b985991bc033/Ramaphosa-urges-private-sector-to-support-youth-empowerment-20172403>.

(ZimCHEER), a magazine launched last August that aims to highlight the successes of young entrepreneurs that have contributed to the economic growth of the country.<sup>102</sup>

## Americas

The largest backdrop in youth unemployment for 2016 and expected for 2017 is in Latin America and the Caribbean, projected to increase to 16.8 percent to 15.7 percent in 2017.

### *Brazil*

In Brazil, more than 84 percent of the population live in urban areas. In many of these areas, children and adolescents are yet to be guaranteed their rights to quality education; health; and a welcoming, protective environment. These shortcomings impede their full development, restrict their access to opportunities and contribute to violence and the cycle of poverty. To address this, the Platform for Urban Centres (PCU) was launched, in partnership with UNICEF Brazil to reduce inequalities and guarantee the rights of children and adolescents living in the most vulnerable regions of major cities.<sup>103</sup>

### *Canada*

The Canadian federal government agreed to give \$8.6 million to Toronto's Youth Job Corps program in order to aid 1,320 youth gain useful skills and experiences that will help obtain employment.<sup>104</sup> In addition, the government of Canada launched an Indigenous youth employment program.<sup>105</sup> As part of its priority to renew Canada's relationship with Indigenous peoples, the Government of Canada is committed to attracting more young Indigenous Canadians into the federal public service.

### *Guyana*

President David Granger requested assistance to identify youth who are in need of jobs and especially those who have dropped out of school so that they can be enrolled in the Guyana Youth Corps, which will commence the first day of 2018. This program will be funded by the Youth Innovation Fund, which was created in the 2017 budget for youths to launch exceptionally innovative ideas. In addition, the President emphasized his commitment to education.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> "Edo Govt,," *The Vanguard*.

<sup>103</sup> "Meet the teenagers in Brazil's urban centres who are taking charge of their future' - UNICEF," Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, March 22, 2017, <http://www.un.org/youthenvoy/2017/04/meet-teenagers-brazils-urban-centres-taking-charge-future/>.

<sup>104</sup> David Shum, "Toronto receives \$8.6M from federal government to boost youth job program," *Global News*, March 14, 2017, <http://globalnews.ca/news/3308057/toronto-receives-8-6m-from-federal-government-to-boost-youth-job-program/>.

<sup>105</sup> "Government of Canada launches Indigenous youth employment program," Beinzanga, February 10, 2017, <https://www.benzinga.com/pressreleases/17/02/m9029388/government-of-canada-launches-indigenous-youth-employment-program>.

<sup>106</sup> Tackling youth unemployment — Guyana Youth Corps set for January 1, 2018 launch," *Guyana Chronicle*, April 10, 2017,

## East and Southeast Asia/Pacific

### *India*

The Citi Foundation \$2 million investment in six youth-focused programs through its India Innovation Grant Program provides disadvantaged youth with leadership, financial, and workplace skills, complementing the Indian government's Skill India mission to empower 13,000 youth from low-income families.<sup>107</sup> In addition, the Government of India launched several initiatives on skills development, with the Pradhan Mantri Causal Vikas Yojama (PMKVY) being its flagship scheme. It was launched to create a strong workforce at the entry level by extending help to those who are school dropouts or are not able to pay for their skill training. The scheme was recently approved for 2016- 2020 with a mandate to impart skills to 10 million youth. Companies are also mandated to spend at least 2 percent on corporate social responsibility (CSR), money that can be spent on skills development as well.<sup>108</sup>

### *Pakistan*

Plan International Pakistan collaborated with SDG Watch Coalition Sindh Chapter to organize a Conference on Opportunities and Challenges for Sindh in Vision 2025 Sustainable Development Goals "Making Youth Part of Policy Making Process" in order to help create opportunities for youth to shape policies.<sup>109</sup>

### *South Korea*

The South Korean government aims to support youth employment by relaxing mandatory military service requirements, providing financial support young job seekers and encourage those who start their own businesses.<sup>110</sup>

## Europe and Central Asia

### *United Kingdom*

With a £6.1 million investment, Community Jobs Scotland (CJS), working in partnership with the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations, will fund up to 700 new job opportunities for 16-29-year-olds across Scotland, especially those who face significant difficulties obtaining employment. Target groups include carers, young people with experience of care, those with disabilities, and those with criminal records. The program will involve 12-18-month job training opportunities for youth while providing financial support for host employers.

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<https://guyanachronicle.com/2017/04/10/tackling-youth-unemployment-guyana-youth-corps-set-for-january-1-2018-launch>.

<sup>107</sup> Sangeeta Waldron, "The Citi Foundation Empowers India's 13,000 Vulnerable Youth," *Just Means*, January 6, 2017,

<http://www.justmeans.com/blogs/the-citi-foundation-empower-indias-13000-vulnerable-youth>.

<sup>108</sup> "There is much more private sector participation now" April 9, 2017. *Business Today*.

<sup>109</sup> "Plan Int'l provides platform for youth empowerment," *Pakistan Observer*, <http://pakobserver.net/plan-intl-provides-platform-for-youth-empowerment/>.

<sup>110</sup> "Korea ramps up efforts to boost youth employment," *The Korea Herald*, March 22, 2017, <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20170322000882>.

### *Serbia*

The European Youth Capital for 2019 will be the city of Novi Sad, in Serbia, a decision made by the European Youth Forum. During 2019, Novi Sad will launch various initiatives to create more opportunities for youth, such as a Local Youth Governing Forum, and to empower youth to become "proactive initiators of positive change" at the national and international levels.<sup>111</sup>

### *Tajikistan*

Sponsored by the World Bank Group, the second Youth Entrepreneurship Forum celebrated the successes of youth entrepreneurship and raised awareness about youth empowerment, including the capacity of development for job creation and economic growth in Tajikistan.<sup>112</sup>

## **The Middle East and North Africa**

### *Regional*

The UNFPA, in collaboration with UNESCO and the Peacebuilding Support Office, organized a consultation on Youth, Peace and Security in Hammamet, Tunisia. The consultation included youth participants from Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco, many of whom are active players within their communities in promoting peace building. The consultation came as a follow-up to research conducted jointly by UNFPA and UNESCO in the Arab region on the effective participation of young men and women in conflict prevention and social peace-building, as mandated by UN Security Council Resolution 2250.<sup>113</sup>

### *Jordan*

Jordan Education for Employment (JEFE), affiliated with the Education for Employment (EFE) Network, is a youth employment organization that aids Jordanian youth find jobs by first asking employers what skills they seek when hiring employees and then developing relevant training for youth.<sup>114</sup> By doing so, JEFE helps youth obtain the specific skills that will help them meet the competitive demands of the job market. At a recent conference, more than 200 leaders in the private, public, education, and civil society sectors met to discuss innovating solutions for youth employment, including highlighting the important role of businesspeople in creating more job opportunities for youth.

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<sup>111</sup> "European Youth Capital 2019 announced: Novi Sad, Serbia," *European Youth Forum*, November 8, 2016,

<https://europeansting.com/2016/11/18/european-youth-capital-2019-announced-novi-sad-serbia/>.

<sup>112</sup> "World Bank supports Youth Entrepreneurship Forum in Tajikistan," *The Times of Central Asia*, January 18, 2017,

<http://www.timesca.com/index.php/news/17573-world-bank-supports-youth-entrepreneurship-forum-in-tajikistan-2>.

<sup>113</sup> "Sub-regional Youth Consultation on Youth, Peace and Security," United Nations Support Mission in Libya, April 6, 2017,

<http://unsmil.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?tabid=3559&ctl=Details&mid=6187&ItemID=2099954&language=en-US>.

<sup>114</sup> "Jordan Education for Employment' programme aiding youth to find jobs," *Zawya*, April 5, 2017,

[https://www.zawya.com/mena/en/story/Jordan\\_Education\\_for\\_Employment\\_programme\\_aiding\\_youth\\_to\\_find\\_jobs-ZAWYA20170405053602/](https://www.zawya.com/mena/en/story/Jordan_Education_for_Employment_programme_aiding_youth_to_find_jobs-ZAWYA20170405053602/).

## Tunisia

The NGO Tamkeen for Development launched a project called “Entrepreneurship for Participation and Inclusion of Youth in Tunisia,” which will help 1200 young people from Siliana, Jendouba, Béja, and Kef to benefit from training on soft skills, project management, economic empowerment, and participatory democracy.<sup>115</sup>

### C. Best Practices

Based on the interviews with NGOs and the recent state and NGO initiatives highlighted above, what are some best practices to foster youth inclusion and tackle poverty? We have determined five best practices:

1. Placing youth at the center of youth inclusion initiatives and encouraging youth participation and expression
2. Addressing all forms of discrimination youth may face
3. Providing education and vocational training to increase youth employment
4. Creating a sense of belonging and a feeling of social inclusion
5. Increasing the effectiveness of NGOs’ work by establishing a network with other NGOs, civil society, government agencies, and the private sector.

These five best practices are key to creating an effective, holistic approach to tackling youth exclusion and poverty. However, based on our survey of recent NGO and state initiatives, there appears to be the greatest emphasis on vocational training and employment by governments and NGOs. This focus on vocational training is not surprising since youth unemployment is clearly linked to the state of the national economy. Moreover, it is easier to measure the impact of vocational training compared to other initiatives (e.g. increasing the sense of belonging of youth in the community), making it an attractive solution to youth exclusion and poverty.

Nevertheless, other aspects of inclusion remain vital for a successful and sustainable approach to youth inclusion. While economic empowerment and self-sufficiency are important, psychological well-being of youth is also critical, and this can be improved by building social capital through the development of social networks. Hence, while it is important to connect youth with NGOs and companies, it is equally important to connect youth with their community and other youth. The significance of building support networks also applies to NGOs, who should connect with other actors in the field to share resources and knowledge in order to maximize the effectiveness of their work. Only by utilizing the power of networks can we effectively foster youth inclusion and tackle youth poverty.

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<sup>115</sup> “Tunisia: Tamkeen for Development launches UNDEF-funded youth project,” *Africa Manager*, April 14, 2017, [http://africanmanager.com/site\\_eng/tunisia-tamkeen-for-development-launches-undef-funded-youth-project/?v=947d7d61cd9a](http://africanmanager.com/site_eng/tunisia-tamkeen-for-development-launches-undef-funded-youth-project/?v=947d7d61cd9a).

## **1. Place youth at the center of youth inclusion initiatives and encourage youth participation and expression**

Any successful initiative aiming to foster youth inclusion and tackle poverty must place youth at the center of the policy-making process. It is critical to engage youth, hear their voices, and encourage their active involvement in order to accurately assess the needs and aspirations of youth and discover effective ways to address the barriers they face. In doing so, the process of determining youth inclusion policies itself becomes a form of youth empowerment and embeds the notion of youth inclusion at the structural level. By framing youth inclusion initiatives around youth participation, we can guarantee that the policies are centered on the best interest of youth, rather than other factors, such as the growth of the national economy.

The importance of placing youth engagement at the core of the decisionmaking process can be seen in a couple initiatives described above. First, UN Security Council Resolution 2250 (2015) urges member states to increase representation of youth in decision-making at all levels.<sup>116</sup> Adhering to this resolution, the consultation on Youth, Peace and Security described above consulted youth participants from Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco who have been active in promoting peace building in their communities. The consultation of these young actors signals the importance of youth involvement in designing youth inclusion initiatives. Also in Tunisia, Tamkeen for Development's "Entrepreneurship for Participation and Inclusion of Youth in Tunisia" highlighted participatory democracy as one of its main objectives. Youth involvement is particularly critical in regions where youth are the fastest growing demographic<sup>117</sup> or already make up the majority of the overall population.

## **2. Address all forms of discrimination youth may face**

While placing youth at the center of youth inclusion initiatives, it is also crucial to address the various forms of discrimination youth face, as these serve as extra barriers to inclusion. For example, youth who face discrimination based on race, gender, sexuality, class, legal status, etc. have a much harder time at fully accessing resources or obtaining advertised opportunities. Without acknowledging and addressing these multidimensional barriers to inclusion, it will be impossible to understand the realities that youth endure and therefore difficult to meet their individual needs. Moreover, this recognition of the unique forms of discrimination and barriers to inclusion individuals face demonstrates that there is no single solution to achieve a "society for all." Instead, solutions must be tailored to the specific types of exclusion, which we described above in Part 2.

The significance of promoting diversity and fighting against discrimination is evident in various aforementioned initiatives. Youth Spirit Center, one of the NGOs interviewed above, highlighted discrimination as one of the main challenges they face in their work. For example, they have witnessed hate speech against refugees, members of the LGBT community, and

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<sup>116</sup> "Security Council, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2250 (2015)," United Nations.

<sup>117</sup> "Middle East and North Africa: Youth Facts," Youth Policy, <http://www.youthpolicy.org/mappings/regionalyouthscenes/mena/facts/>.

youth of certain religious orientations. Recognizing the prevalence of discrimination and its role in perpetuating youth exclusion, Novi Sad, the European Youth Capital for 2019, notes that it will be committed to addressing diversity and working on specific projects regarding gender equality, LGBTIQ+ rights, and the inclusion of refugees.

### 3. Provide education and vocational training to increase youth employment

The third best practice centers on the importance of education and vocational training. This recommendation involves two facets: connecting youth with NGOs who can offer them skills training, as well as connecting youth with companies to provide them with employment opportunities.

Many NGOs have training centers where youth can obtain useful skills, such as English competency; computer skills; accounting and management skills; communication, teamwork, and leadership ability; and specific vocational skills. For example, Yuva Parivartan works with youth who have dropped out of school and offers them livelihood training. Meanwhile, Mera Parivar has two youth centers where youth can develop professional skills. Various national governments have also strived to provide youth with vocational training. Recall the Gambian Youth Empowerment project, an initiative created by the Gambian government, in partnership with the EU and the International Trade Centre. This four-year initiative aims to increase youth employment in Gambia by providing vocational training and creating small and medium-sized enterprises where you can work.

Likewise, in our survey, many NGOs also emphasised the need for NGOs to build partnerships with companies. Yuva Parivartan, for example, connects youths with companies around India and places youths that have acquired skills in small and large companies. Moreover, LP4Y also connects youth with companies. Here is an example of a young man from the Philippines who gained employment through LP4Y:

**Minh, 18 years old, Vietnam**

“Now I’m in Management Step already, so I have to find an internship. Because my dream is to become a digital marketer so the first internship I want to get is in Coccoc Company, an information technology company; they train us how to make advertising, how to communicate with the customers and how to sell the products. My plan for my future is to join in the training in Coccoc and to get more experience about digital marketing.”

Economic empowerment also has psychological benefits. By having concrete skills and the ability to provide for themselves, youth gain self-confidence and become self-sufficient. This form of self-empowerment and self-reliance is the ultimate goal of many NGOs: “Through education, building capacities and human resources, Mera Parivar wants to help the disadvantaged people to realise their full potential and achieve self-reliance, to give them the power to control their own lives and future.”

#### **4. Create a sense of belonging and a feeling of social inclusion among youth**

While it is undoubtedly important to connect youth with NGOs and companies and promote the economic empowerment of youth, it is equally important to foster a sense of belonging and a feeling of social belonging among youth. Therefore, it is also crucial to connect youth with their community and other youth. Many of the NGOs we interviewed recognize the importance of community involvement. Yuva Parivartan, for example, encourages underprivileged youth to develop leadership skills by helping them solve community problems, including working with the police to help first-time offenders become included in society. Youth Spirit Center also emphasizes the importance youth participation in society through local and international action.

The ties developed between youth with other youth also prove to be important. LP4Y Indonesia notes the importance of giving youth the space to inspire other youth and serve as role models for their peers. Meanwhile, IDC Serbia encourages youth to learn and grow together while working in various volunteer teams. This concept of learning and growing together, in turn, often manifests in youth positively influencing other youth, offering them encouragement and support. One example is that of Thuy, a young woman from Vietnam:

These networks have long-term benefits. Youth can tap into their newly developed social network to help them when they risk becoming excluded again (for example, if they are suddenly without housing or employment). Such acquirement of social capital is invaluable, especially as youth transition into adulthood and leave the NGO centers. As a result, the accumulation of social capital proves to be just as critical as economic capital.

#### **5. Increase the effectiveness of NGOs' work by establishing a network with other NGOs, civil society, government agencies, and the private sector.**

The final best practice is networking with other NGOs, civil society, government agencies, and the private sector. By sharing knowledge and resources with other actors working on youth inclusion, NGOs can more effectively and efficiently achieve their goals. Yuva Parivartan's partnership model helps rapidly develop capacities to empower youth among small NGOs across India at the local level. The network includes over 500 NGOs that offer skills training for youth who have dropped out of school. Through this model, Yuva Parivartan manages to minimize the cost of development and expand its influence, motivating other NGOs to take up its mission of youth empowerment. Next, Mera Parivar maximizes its efficiency by including civil society, individuals, private bodies, and government agencies in a platform of knowledge and resource-sharing. Youth Spirit Center also echoes the importance of working with governmental institutions to carry out youth inclusion initiatives.

The importance of the establishment of such a broad network indicates the important role all of these different actors must play in order to successfully bring about youth inclusion and empowerment. While the responsibility of governments is evident, the role of the private sector is often overlooked. However, as the aforementioned recent initiatives show, attitudes

seem to be shifting, placing entrepreneurs in the spotlight. Examples include those of South Africa, India, and Jordan: in South Africa, the Deputy President urged the private sector support of government initiatives to improve vocational training programs; in India, companies are required to contribute to skills development funding through their 2-percent corporate social responsibility tax; and in Jordan, leaders discussed the responsibility of businesspeople in creating more job opportunities for young people. This new role of the private sector in youth inclusion efforts signals that it is now more important than ever for NGOs to establish broad networks and collaborate with other sectors of society.

*“You are never too young to lead, and you should never doubt your capacity to triumph where others have not.” - Kofi Annan*



Image source: LP4Y

## V. Conclusion

In this report, we addressed the issue of youth exclusion as an impoverishment factor. The first two sections provided statistical and theoretical background information and analysis. Part 2 examined the current situation of youth poverty and exclusion worldwide, providing recent data and analysis of global trends, including youth unemployment, youth poverty and working poor; HIV/AIDS/STIs; gender inequality; the urban-rural divide; ethnicity and religion; education; migration and refugees; and social capital. We also explained why it is important to focus on youth and outlined various international initiatives for youth empowerment and inclusion. Next, in Part 3, we discussed the theory of poverty and exclusion as a vicious cycle, explaining how their deeply interconnected and mutually reinforcing relationship demands a comprehensive strategy. Any effort to tackle poverty must address the issue of social exclusion, and any attempt to promote social inclusion must include measures to curb poverty. Only by using such an approach can we create a virtuous cycle of prosperity and social inclusion among youth.

In Part 4, we focused on how to break the vicious cycle of poverty and exclusion and transform it into a virtuous cycle of prosperity and inclusion. Based on our interviews of NGOs, as well as our review of recent government, NGO, and private sector initiatives, we came up with five main best practices:

1. Placing youth at the center of youth inclusion initiatives and encouraging youth participation and expression
2. Addressing all forms of discrimination youth may face
3. Providing education and vocational training to increase youth employment
4. Creating a sense of belonging and a feeling of social inclusion
5. Increasing the effectiveness of NGOs' work by establishing a network with other NGOs, civil society, government agencies, and the private sector.

These recommendations illustrated the importance of building support networks, namely connecting youth with NGOs, companies, their community, and other youth; as well as NGOs with other NGOs, civil society, government agencies, and the private sector. This concept of networks--for emotional support, knowledge, and resource-sharing--is key to solving the problems of youth exclusion and poverty.

In the end, we found the main challenge ahead to be the overemphasis on skills training and employment at the expense of overlooking the social and cultural aspects of inclusion. NGO and government policies and programs seem to heavily focus on the economic aspect of inclusion instead of taking a balanced and holistic approach, which recognizes the importance of a sense of belonging and identity, especially in the cases of discrimination. Discrimination is another major challenge, barring youth from achieving their full potential and enjoying autonomy in their lives. Finally, incorporating youth participation in the decisionmaking processes may prove challenging, especially since the most marginalized youth are usually the ones who have the

least opportunity or ability to express their voices. NGOs should work in conjunction with governments to address these challenges in order to create sustainable and holistic solutions that will affect long-term change in tackling youth exclusion and poverty.

## 2016-2017 Y4CN Sciences-Po Team



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## The Network: Y4CN Member Organizations

Acina

Arca do Saber

Enfants & Développement

Etijah - Youth Development in Egypt

Horizon d'enfance

Initiative for Development and Cooperation - IDC Serbia

Life Project 4 Youth

Mera Parivar

Observo Onlus

Proxite

Save Youth Future Society (SYFS)

Yes Akademia

Youth Resource Center (ORC)

Yuva Parivartan

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