



# STATE OF URBAN YOUTH REPORT 2012-2013

YOUTH IN THE PROSPERITY OF CITIES

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Youth in the Prosperity of Cities

## Core Team

Director and Principal Author: **Oyebanji Oyelaran-Oyeyinka**

Coordinators: **Mutinta Munyati**

Contributors and Advisors: **Subramonia Ananthakrishnan, Hoda Mansour, Sarah Bryce, Padma Prakash, Ndali Ojeikere, Kaushalesh Lal, Boladale Abiola Adebawale, Willem Kt Vanvliet, Paul Wambua, Victoria Chebet, Catherine Tololwo, John Anugraha, Guenter Karl, Markandey Rai, Douglas Ragan, Thierry Naudin and Oluyomi Ola-David.**

Administrative Support: **Jacqueline Macha, Grace Nduru**

Design and Layout: **Andrew Ondoo**

Sponsor: **Government of Norway**

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P. O. Box 30030, 00100 Nairobi GPO KENYA

Tel: 254-020-7623120 (Central Office)

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# Foreword



I am pleased to present the second *State of the Urban Youth* report focusing on *Youth and the Prosperity of Cities*. This Report builds on the 2010/11 edition, “*Leveling the Playing Field – Inequality of Youth Opportunity*” and its insights into the state of urban youth. Much like the findings of the previous report, this

one provides further evidence of the fundamental importance of job oriented education to the development of urban youth.

At a time when the global economy is looking for paths to recovery and seeking innovative ideas to rejuvenate itself, young people may offer the best hope. The events of the Arab Spring demonstrated that youth can be a powerful social force for positive change. The unexpected nature of these events, point to an underlying problem that afflicts youth in all corners of our world. The question is, why, in an increasingly urbanised world, are young people underappreciated by many governments and not at the forefront of economic activity and innovation?

The increasing prominence of the youth bulge in most urban areas presents a unique opportunity, as they represent the most dynamic human resource available. Their numbers today are larger than at any point in human history. Yet this group suffers the most from urban unemployment and often feels that they lack equal access to opportunities. This is especially acute in developing countries, which have a relatively youthful population that must be mobilised to realise greater economic and social development goals.

Today, 90 million youth around the world are unemployed (or 47 per cent of the total number of unemployed) and an additional 300 million belong in the “working poor” category—they are in unskilled, insecure jobs and live in poor conditions. This Report takes a closer look at the condition of youth in major urban centres in four developing nations - Accra (Ghana), São Paulo (Brazil), Bangalore (India) and Cairo (Egypt).

The conditions of these cities, and the way they are perceived by young people, are seen as representative of those in their respective regions, and therefore provide a reasonable basis for policy recommendations focused on shared prosperity for urban youth. The four-city survey demonstrates that young people suffer disproportionately from poor prospects and low quality employment.

The developing world continues to feature the fastest growing numbers of youth unemployment and persistent rural-to-urban migration; if these young people are to realise their potential, they need innovative solutions that are anchored in local realities.

Survey outcomes suggest that educational and training systems must be better aligned with the current and future needs of young people. In this regard, it would be helpful to share experiences and to investigate alternative educational arrangements for the provision of basic literacy, job skills training and lifelong education. This Report is a step in that direction.

Young people in the survey want equity for better shared prosperity both for their own and their cities’ benefit, and they regard education as the best way of bringing about a more equitable type of urban development. They point to other significant challenges like structural constraints and lack of a democratic culture in their respective cities. These are issues over which local authorities wield a degree of influence that puts them in the best possible position to take remedial action. Local authorities must also seek to mainstream youth issues into all aspects of their planning and operations policy areas.

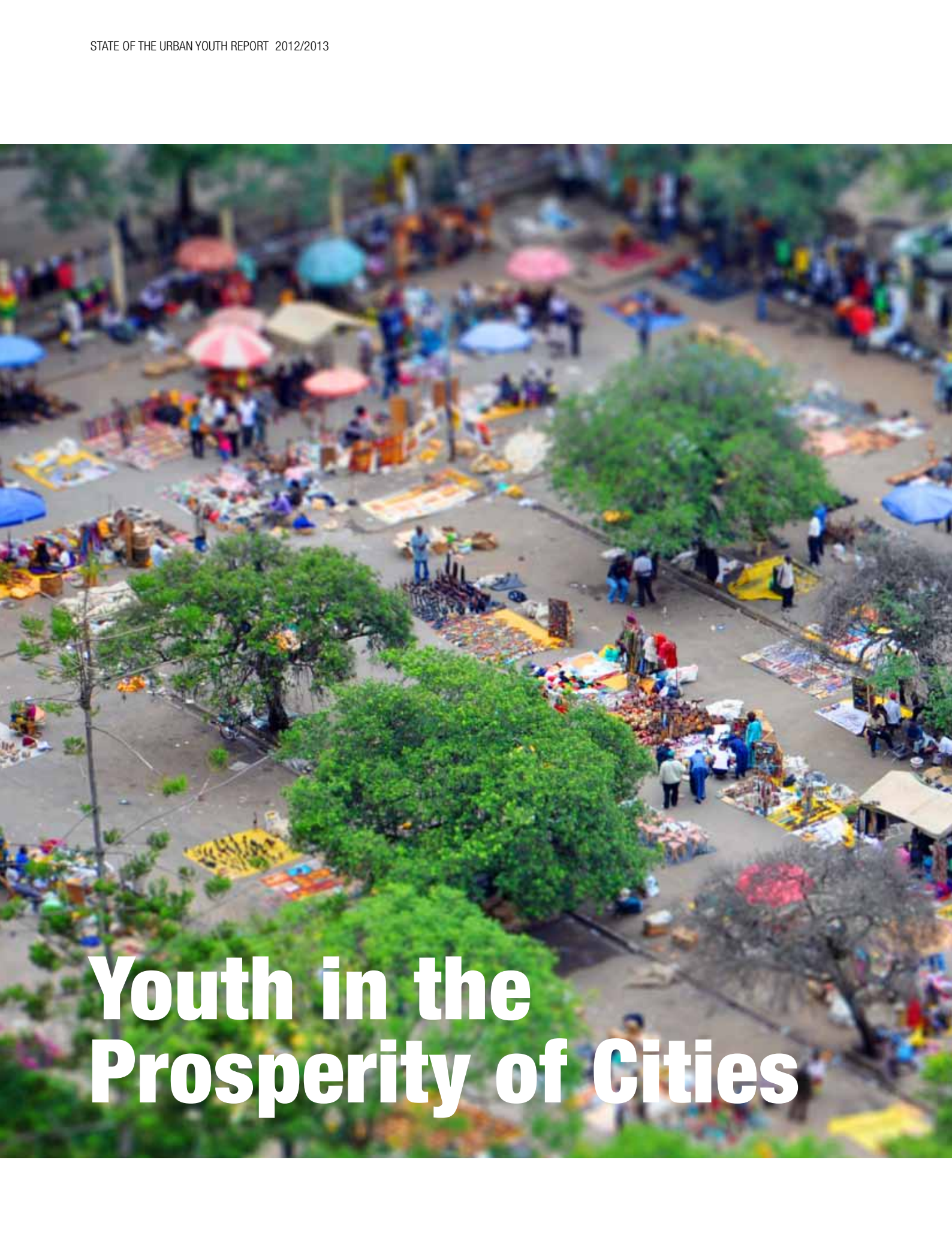
The report recommends a better match between skills and labour markets through vocational training and with the participation of the private sector. ‘Soft’ skills matter more in service-oriented economies, young people in informal settlements need entrepreneurial abilities, and capacities must be better geared to knowledge-intensive business services.

With their typical dynamism and energy, young people can exercise a unique multiplier effect on urban prosperity: the more they are allowed to benefit, the more they can give back, for the overall good of the society.

*“No nation can achieve prosperity unless it makes education one of its central concerns. Education brings honour, independence and freedom to a government and its people”* - 16 year-old Supawat Yasothon province, Thailand.

**Joan Clos**

Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director  
United Nations Human Settlements Programme  
(UN-Habitat)



# Youth in the Prosperity of Cities



# Country Profiles

## Profiles of Countries under review

| Human Development Indicator, HDI                                       | Country   |          |          |             |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|----------|----------|-------------|
|                                                                        | Brazil    | Egypt    | Ghana    | India       |
| <b>HEALTH</b>                                                          |           |          |          |             |
| Public Expenditure on health, (per cent of GDP)                        | 3.5       | 2.4      | 4.3      | 1.1         |
| Under-five mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)                      | 21        | 21       | 69       | 66          |
| Life expectancy at birth                                               | 73.5      | 73.2     | 64.2     | 65.4        |
| <b>INCOME</b>                                                          |           |          |          |             |
| GDP per capita (2005 PPP USD)                                          | 9,414     | 5,151    | 1,410    | 2,993       |
| <b>INFRASTRUCTURE</b>                                                  |           |          |          |             |
| Mobile cellular subscriptions (per 100 people)                         | 100.00    | 87.11    | 71.49    | 61.42       |
| <b>GENDER</b>                                                          |           |          |          |             |
| Adolescent fertility rate (births per 1,000 women aged 15-19)          | 75.6      | 46.6     | 71.1     | 86.3        |
| Labor force participation rate (Ratio of female to male shares)        | 0.734     | 0.297    | 0.981    | 0.404       |
| Gender Inequality Index                                                | 0.449     | 0.599    | 0.598    | 0.617       |
| Maternal mortality ratio (deaths of women per 100,000 live births)     | 58        | 82       | 350      | 230         |
| <b>EDUCATION</b>                                                       |           |          |          |             |
| Mean years of schooling (of adults over 25)                            | 7.2       | 6.4      | 7.1      | 4.4         |
| Public expenditure on education (per cent of GDP)                      | 5.1       | 3.8      | 5.4      | 3.1         |
| <b>DEMOGRAPHY</b>                                                      |           |          |          |             |
| Population, total both sexes (thousands)                               | 196,655.0 | 82,536.8 | 24,965.8 | 1,241,492.0 |
| Youth (ages 15-24) as per cent of total population                     | 17.2      | 19.7     | 19.9     | 19.2        |
| Population, urban (per cent)                                           | 86.9      | 43.5     | 52.2     | 30.3        |
| per cent living in slums                                               | 26.9      | 13.1     | 40.1     | 29.4        |
| <b>UNEMPLOYMENT</b>                                                    |           |          |          |             |
| Total unemployment rate (per cent of total labor force)                | 8.30      | 9.40     | 3.60     | 4.40        |
| Unemployment rate for youth (per cent of total labor force ages 15-24) | 17.8      | 24.8     | 16.6     | 10.5        |
| Unemployment, youth female (per cent of female labor force ages 15-24) | 23.1      | 47.9     | 16.7     | 10.8        |
| Unemployment, youth male (per cent of male labor force ages 15-24)     | 13.9      | 17.2     | 16.4     | 10.4        |

## DEFINITIONS:

- Mobile cellular telephone are subscriptions to a public mobile telephone service using cellular technology, which provide access to the public switched telephone network. The subscriptions may be post-paid and/or prepaid.
- Labor Force Participation Rate is the ratio of female to male in the working-age population (ages 15–64) that are actively engaged in the labor market, by either working or actively looking for work
- The Gender Inequality Index (GII) reflects gender-based inequalities in three dimensions – reproductive health, empowerment, and economic activity. Reproductive health is measured by maternal mortality and adolescent fertility rates; empowerment is measured by the share of parliamentary seats held by each gender and attainment at secondary and higher education by each gender; while economic activity is measured by the labor market participation rate for each gender.

Youth Building Brigades constructing the One Stop Youth Centre in Dar es Salaam.  
© Gadil Kalugendo



- d) The Proportion of urban population living in slums is the aggregate sum of the urban population living in slum households. A slum household is defined as a group of individuals living under the same roof lacking *one or more* of the following conditions: access to improved water; access to improved sanitation; sufficient-living area; durability of housing; and security of tenure. However, since information on secure tenure is not available for most of the countries, only the first four indicators are used to define slum household, and to also estimate the proportion of urban population living in slums.
- c) Unemployment refers to the share of the labor force that is without work but seeking and available for employment. However, definitions of labor force and unemployment differ by country.
- d) Youth unemployment refers to the share of the labor force ages 15-24 without work but seeking and available for employment.

*Sources:*

<http://hdr.undp.org/en/data/profiles/>  
<http://hdrstats.undp.org/images/explanations/GHA.pdf>  
<http://data.worldbank.org/country>  
<http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Data.aspx>  
<http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/index.htm>

# Quick facts:



## The Countries and Cities under review

**Ghana** has a population of about 24 million, of which 27 per cent lives on less than 1.25 US dollar a day with 25 per cent of the working-age population unemployed. In 2010 population density was 107.2 per sq. km.

In 2011 Ghana's gross domestic product (GDP – on a 2011 purchasing power parity (PPP) basis) per capita was USD 3,100 to which the capital Accra contributes 33 per cent, and the labour force in 2010 totalled 11.5 million .

With an estimated population of 3.9 million, Accra is today one of the largest and fastest-growing cities in Africa, with an annual demographic growth rate of 3.3 per cent.

**Accra** is a youthful city, with an estimated 40.6 per cent of the population aged between 15 and 34 (in the year 2000). These are increasingly susceptible to poverty, with Accra's unemployment (10.4 per cent) more than twice the national rate (4.1 per cent) or that of other urban areas in the country (4.7 per cent). In terms of gender (15-24 years) female unemployment (9.1 per cent) is lower than male (11.8 per cent). Only 20.3 per cent of Accra's youth (15-24 years) are economically active.

**India** is one of the most populous nations in the world (1.3 billion) (with an annual demographic growth rate of 1.3 per cent. Some 30 per cent of the population live in urban areas (2010) and the annual urbanization rate of 2.4 per cent (2010-15 EST).

**Bangalore** is the largest city in the State of Karnataka, south-central India. With an estimated population of 9.6 million in 2011, cosmopolitan Bangalore is the third most populous city in India. Roughly 10 per cent of the population live in slums, a relatively low proportion when compared with other cities in the developing world. Density was 4,378/sq.km. in 2011 (2,985/sq.km. in 2001). The total area under Bangalore district jurisdiction is 2,190 sq.km.

Average literacy rate (2011) is 88.5 per cent. The total number of literate residents in Bangalore District was 7,609,962 (2011) of which 4,146,709 male and 3,463,253 female.

More than 62 per cent of Bangalore's population is between 19 and 34 years old. Including over 15 year olds, the proportion rises to 64 per cent. The workforce is predominantly aged 24 to 29. In the past, Bangalore had hardly any slums and almost all areas were equally well provided with basic amenities. This is not the case today and young people are very concerned about a deterioration that affects them deeply. Finally, 42 per cent of the population use public transport.

**Brazil** is the largest country in South America with a population expected to reach 205 million by end of 2012, with a density of 23.04/sq. km and a population growth rate of 1.1 per cent.

**São Paulo** is the country's largest city with a population of 20 million over an area of 1,525 sq.km. It is the financial and economic capital of Brazil.

São Paulo has the largest slum population in South America (about four million, or 20 per cent of the total population).

The rapid growth of informal housing dates back to 1980, when they were host to only five per cent of the population. Although both natural growth and rural-urban migration have reduced significantly, the housing problem remains immense in São Paulo.

Brazil's population growth rate was 1.26 per cent between 2005 and 2010. The urban population was 164 million in 2010 and is expected to reach 174 million by 2015 (or 87 per cent of the total population). The Municipality of São Paulo is home to 1.8 million young people between 15 and 24 years of age, representing just over 16 per cent of the city's total population (11.2 million).

Some 62 of Brazilians are aged 29 or under. The youth (15-24) unemployment rate stands at 17.8 per cent. In 2011, GDP per capita rose to USD11,600 (USD10,700 in 2010). São Paulo alone is responsible for contributing 40 per cent to national GDP.

**Egypt** is the most populous country in the Middle East and the third-most populous on the African continent (after Nigeria and Ethiopia).

**Cairo** (al-Qahirah- population: over 11.2 million) is one of the most densely populated cities in the world (1,540/ sq.km.) and is home to 21.5 per cent of the country's total population.

Egypt's GDP per capita was USD6,500 in 2011. Cairo accounts for 50 per cent of national GDP and 40 per cent of manufacturing outputs. Despite the relatively high rates of economic growth in recent years, living conditions for the average Egyptian have remained poor, contributing to public discontent. The unemployment rate was an estimated 12.2 per cent in 2011, up from 9 per cent in 2010, as rural-to-urban migration remains significant.

In Cairo, the labour force is about 2.2 million and 9 per cent of the population live in poverty, out of which 2.2 per cent are in extreme poverty.

While Cairo is one of the largest cities in the world, it holds an average position in terms of services, and a relatively low one for economic and financial wealth.

*Sources:*

**Ghana:** *World Population Prospects; World Development Prospects; Human Development Report 2010; UNDESA, 2010; CIA, World Fact Book, 2011; World Bank National Accounts Data; ILO, 2011; Population of Accra, Ghana, 2010.*

**India:** *CIA, World Fact Book, 2011; 2011 Census.*

**Brazil:** *UN Population Division, World Population Prospects 2011; CIA, World Fact Book, July 2012; World Bank, 2011; 2010 National Census.*

**Egypt:** *UNDESA, World Urbanization Prospects - The 2011 Revision; CIA, World Fact Book, 2011.*



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# Main Findings, Messages and Policy Recommendations

## 1. The Youth Bulge: The Demographic Dynamics

A rising youth population – what is generally known as the “urban youth bulge” – makes it imperative to address the various dimensions of urban youth against the broader background of prosperity. Youth are society’s most important and dynamic human resource. There are more people under the age of 25 today than ever, totalling nearly three billion – or half of humankind – of which 1.3 billion between ages 12 and 24. Most live in urban areas.

## 2. More Youth, More Youth Poverty

Urban areas in developing countries account for over 90 per cent of the world’s urban demographic growth, and it is estimated that as many as 60 per cent of all urban dwellers will be under the age of 18 by 2030, with most living in slums and informal settlements. Nearly 45 per cent of young people around the world— almost 515 million—live on less than two US dollars a day.



With Increasing Urbanization and poverty in urban areas, Urban Agriculture is providing food and jobs in Bugesera, Rwanda.  
© Julius Mwelu/UN-Habitat

## 3. Fifty per cent youth unemployed, Large Numbers of “Working Poor”

Today nearly 90 million young people around the world are unemployed (47 per cent of the total number of unemployed) and an additional 300 million are “working poor”—i.e., in unskilled, insecure employment, and in unsatisfactory conditions. The vast majority work in the informal sector and live in slums. Indeed, 85 per cent of the new employment around the world is informal and slum-based, forcing young people into low-income jobs with little scope for advancement. The largest number of youth in this situation is in Africa.

Young people suffer disproportionately from low-quality employment with poor prospects – ‘dead-end’ jobs. They are more likely than adults to be among the working poor, i.e. low-paid employment. About 152 million young workers (more than a quarter) live in poor households (with per capita expenditure below USD1.25 a day)<sup>1</sup>. *Young people account for 24 per cent of the world’s total working poor, compared with 18 per cent of all global employment.*

## 4. Fifty per cent of young people believe economic growth is not generating employment for them

The UN-Habitat Youth Survey shows that 52 per cent of respondents were positive about the ability of urban economies to generate employment for young people, except in Cairo where a large majority of respondents (96 per cent) took a negative view.

## 5. Education is the Key to Urban Employment Opportunities

Education is considered the key factor for equal opportunity and access to decent jobs. As many as 86 per cent of youth in the Survey say that local access to primary school is free and equitable but this proportion falls to 36 per cent for secondary school and is negligible when it comes to higher education. Now, this has serious implications for politics and policy-making — the operations of government, legal systems, and regulatory agencies, and indeed, of all the institutions that assign and enforce individual rights and mediate conflicts among citizens— is influenced by the distribution of political power (or influence, or ‘voice’) in society. Inefficiency or

asymmetry of access to these institutions will perpetuate the institutional structures that preserve the interests of the most powerful to the detriment of large majorities of the population.

## 6. Sound Health and Education Infrastructure bring Quality of Life

Alongside education, the UN-Habitat Youth Survey points to health as the other main factor for human development and quality of life. This suggests that higher capital expenditure on health and education constitutes a sound development strategy and is one of the best uses to which cities can put their resources. Healthy children learn better and healthy adults work better—both being major assets to any city. Not unsurprisingly, education is regarded as the best way of gaining empowerment ('agency'), reducing poverty and improving urban productivity.

## 7. Discriminatory Practices do not Promote Prosperity

A large proportion of the youths in multi-racial São Paulo (81 per cent) cited widespread discrimination based on race, ethnic origin or religion when it came to gaining opportunities to education and employment. However, in Accra (87.5 per cent), Bangalore (55.3 per cent) and Cairo (76 per cent) young survey respondents did not mention any such discrimination, and in all four cities, a significant majority (an overall 61 per cent) said there was no discrimination based on race, ethnic origin or religion.

## 8. Equity enhances the Productivity and Prosperity of Youth

Equity is perceived by young people as contributing to economy efficiency, which has a major role to play for the general well-being of any city. Equity also creates the conditions for individual capacity-building through quality education and skills, which in turn enhance individual ability for civic engagement, representation and participation in cultural and political life.

## 9. The benefits of urban Prosperity are not evenly distributed

A substantially large percentage of young people in the four sample cities find that economic prosperity is not evenly distributed across the various social segments of their age cohort.

## 10. As many as 75 per cent of young people rank unemployment, unequal access to education and corrupt institutions as constraints on shared urban prosperity

Survey respondents ranked the main existing constraints on shared urban prosperity as follows: *lack of employment*, which was ranked the highest in Accra (80 per cent) and Bangalore (72 per cent). In Cairo, the highest factor was *ruling elites' control over public institutions* (76 per cent) whereas youths in São Paulo chose *unequal access to education*.

## 11. Physical and Knowledge Infrastructure

Adequate, well-managed infrastructure — improved water and sanitation, reliable and sufficient power supply, efficient transport networks and modern information and communications technology — contributes to wealth creation and prosperity in its various dimensions, such as raising quality of life and productivity. Cities with healthy, well-educated workforces are also more likely to be productive and competitive.

## 12. Over 50 per cent Rank efficient Transport Infrastructure as Key to Prosperity

Over 50 per cent of respondents find that an efficient public transport system is essential for the proper functioning and prosperity of cities. Sustainable transport has brought huge benefits to a number of cities, enhancing their potential for shared prosperity. Apart from *facilitating mobility*, young respondents to the survey relate transport infrastructure directly and indirectly to six different outcomes: *economic growth; improved access to health and education; improved quality of life; improved slum conditions, reduced poverty; and reducing spatial disparities*.

## 13. Health, Education and mobility nurture Youth Prosperity

In all the cities except Cairo, the critical infrastructural factors contributing to urban youth prosperity are found to be “improving access to health and education” while the second most important factor is “facilitating mobility”.



Youth at One Stop Centre Kigali, Rwanda undergoing computer training.  
© Julius Mwelu/UN-Habitat

#### **14. Over 40 per cent believe Corruption and lack of Good Governance promote Inequality**

Of the six factors interfering with urban prosperity, 42 per cent of young Survey respondents rank corruption and lack of good governance as the major impediments. Next to corruption, inefficient and ineffective government ranks very high, and more so in Latin America and Africa than in Asia and Arab States.

#### **15. Knowledge and skill deficiencies hinder urban productivity**

25 per cent of young people in the Survey rank lack of appropriate knowledge and skills development as the major impediment to youth's contribution to urban productivity. Productive cities are gifted with an abundance of well-educated labour, sound infrastructure, mature financial markets, stable political systems and well-grounded market institutions, which are all based on appropriate knowledge and skills. In addition, urban productivity is generally linked to stable macroeconomic conditions and sound institutions.

#### **16. Poor Democratic Culture and Unfair Market Practices undermine Equitable Development**

Discriminatory practices, lack of democratic culture, inefficient, ineffective and corrupt political institutions tend to undermine equitable development. As a result, markets are not always the most equitable or most efficient means of resource

allocation, since they tend to be systematically skewed to the detriment of young people from underprivileged backgrounds regardless of their potential.

#### **17. Predetermined Circumstances Undermine Equality of Opportunity in Cities**

The degree of inequity of outcomes (e.g., earnings and assets) that defines youth inequality in urban life is closely related to the unequal opportunities that occur in successive life stages. In this respect, the Survey confirms earlier findings that unequal access often begins in childhood and continues into youth and adulthood, perpetuating the disadvantage faced in the early years. Historical and generational determinants of inequitable youth opportunities and deprivation in different interconnected spheres of urban activity tend to perpetuate disadvantages across the whole extent of an individual's life.

### **POLICY ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **1. National and City-level Policies should confront the effects of structural change on skill requirements**

Cities in developing countries should deal specifically with structural unemployment. This particular form of the more general problem of lack of labour demand arises from deep-seated obstacles or inefficiencies in urban labour markets (as

opposed, for example, to a short-lived recession). Structural unemployment may result from mismatches between the characteristics of labour demand and supply in terms of necessary skill-sets, or from shifts in the structure of the urban economy (e.g., from manufacturing to services, or from low-skilled manual to highly skilled, knowledge-intensive occupations), which may require a combination of demand-side and supply-side policy responses.

## 2. The need for government policies

There is a need for government policies to specifically address youth unemployment and harness the potential of cities in favour of full and decent employment. National governments have both the powers and resources to act strategically with macroeconomic and legal frameworks that can enhance economic conditions and opportunities for young people.

## 3. Incentives and Policies to target Equitable Youth Employment

Policies including industrial and investment in economic infrastructure; tax and incentives, vocational training schemes employment and labour market regulations should aim at a more equitable labour market for urban youth.

## 4. Build Institutional and Policy Capacities of Municipalities to create Employment

Institutional capacity-building and a sharper municipal focus on urban economic development should be promoted through adequate mechanisms (e.g., involving unemployed young people in the household services sector). In this respect, efforts should be made to align the functions of government departments and agencies and to build cooperative relationships with regional and local authorities.

## 5. Build Complementary Strategic Partnerships with the Private Sector

Youth employment-enhancing policies should encourage municipal authorities to forge partnerships with the private sector to foster emerging job-creating social businesses.

## 6. Finance Formal and Vocational Training and Learning

A national urban policy should empower urban authorities to devise and deliver coherent strategies for sustained employment growth. In particular, formal and professional learning should be systematically connected, as in Germany where youth combine schooling with on-going work experience. Since municipal authorities are more familiar than national governments with local economic conditions, they could be more responsive to opportunities in their respective jurisdictions.

## 7. Build Policies for Equitable Youth Prosperity on Empirical Evidence

Policies looking to spread the benefits of urban prosperity to young people should be shaped by evidence as well as an understanding of economic trends and forces, emerging market realities and distinctive local assets and problems.

## 8. Municipalities should provide direct Business Support

Municipalities can and should provide support to business, including new firms, in the form of suitable land, financial assistance as well as public works programmes and training schemes for the vulnerable age group that is youth. In low- and middle-income countries, municipal authorities should secure financial and technical support from central governments for financing infrastructure and services required to gain economic dynamism that creates employment for young people.

## 9. Invest in Technological Literacy, Numeracy and 'soft' skills

Expansion of the service sector generates demand for a variety of skill-sets. Literacy and numeracy skills have become more important, along with a range of 'soft' (i.e., interpersonal) skills such as communication, team-working and adaptability. Many (white collar) service occupations also require secondary and tertiary education because thinking ability and problem-solving are important. Manual workers have struggled to adjust to deindustrialisation and the new skill demands (and occasionally lower earnings) of the service sector, leading to large-scale structural unemployment in former industrial cities. Urban authorities should enhance technological skills through specific schemes.

## 10. Tackle Unemployment with Knowledge-intensive Business Services (KIBS)

Knowledge-intensive Business Services (KIBS) have been gaining increasing shares in urban economies these past few years. These include financial services, accountancy, computer services, the media, advertising, design, legal services, data processing, research, engineering and other forms of consultancy. They demand highly qualified workers, usually university graduates, the higher demand for which is inciting more and more cities to compete for talent through attractive amenities and diverse career opportunities. Cities are increasingly encouraging local higher education institutions to expand, as this can be a very effective way of attracting youthful talent from elsewhere in the country or abroad. Municipal authorities can support these efforts by providing land or additional student accommodation (a significant determinant in young people's choice of location for their studies).



Herat, Afghanistan : From right Parisa (16), Marzia (18), Maria (16) and Muzhgam (17) study in the library at the Female Experimental High School in Herat. The school is benefitting from the Education Quality Improvement Program (EQUIP) whose objective is to increase access to quality basic education, especially for girls. © Graham Crouch / World Bank

## 11. Invest in Youth Apprenticeship Training

School leavers who are not academically inclined should be encouraged and given incentives to improve their vocational skills and qualifications. An alternative route to skills development is the apprenticeship system, whereby young people learn a trade and gain practical experience through a combination of ‘on the job’ mentoring and part-time ‘off the job’ training. Developing high level skills is vital for long-term career progress. Where youth unemployment is particularly high, it may also be appropriate to introduce a special employment subsidy to encourage employers to recruit young people.

## 12. Use Higher Education and improved Skills-Sets to raise urban Productivity

Intellectual resources (human intelligence, knowledge, skills, ingenuity) are increasingly important determinants of prosperity as they raise productivity and nurture innovation. The emphasis on high-calibre human capital also reflects greater mobility against a background of rising incomes, improved communications and more outsourcing or subcontracting of various business functions. Any city intent on sustaining economic prosperity will aspire to higher-level functions if it is to safeguard its specific comparative advantage. Consequently, cities must invest in advanced skill-sets that cut across industries, on top of more generic and versatile resources. Examples include software engineers, designers, scientists, senior managers, accountants, marketing experts, surveyors and management consultants.

## 13. Educational Strategies for Low-Skilled Youth.

Constraints on land and housing mean that considerable skills, physical resilience and use of personal networks are often required to gain access to urban labour markets. Evidence from developing countries suggests that young men and women are disproportionately represented in informal settlements because of the widespread poverty resulting from mass unemployment. For this reason, government funding will be required for both formal education, lifelong-learning and vocational training for these vulnerable youths, since equal opportunity is largely driven by access to education.

Table 2

### Defining a Prosperous City

A prosperous city is one that fosters:

|                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Productivity                 | Contributes to economic growth and development, generates income, provides decent jobs and equal opportunities for all through effective economic policies and reforms                                                                                                         |
| Infrastructure development   | Provides adequate infrastructure — water, sanitation, roads, information and communication technology —to improve living conditions and enhance productivity, mobility and connectivity                                                                                        |
| Quality of life              | Enhances public spaces for improved community cohesion and civic identity, and guarantees the safety and security of individuals and property                                                                                                                                  |
| Equity and social inclusion  | Ensures equitable (re)distribution of the benefits of a prosperity, reduces poverty and the incidence of slums, protects the rights of minority and vulnerable groups, enhances gender equality, and ensures civic participation in the social, political and cultural spheres |
| Environmental sustainability | Values the preservation of the urban environment and natural assets while ensuring growth with more energy efficiency and reduced pressure on surrounding land and natural resources, together with innovations to reduce environmental losses                                 |

Source: UN-Habitat SWCR 2012/13

#### 14. Build young people's Entrepreneurial Capabilities

Entrepreneurial abilities are an important skill-set. Young people who are unable to find conventional employment can alternatively start their own businesses and create jobs or livelihoods by becoming self-employed or forming new enterprises. Weak labour markets and lack of welfare safety nets tend to encourage this kind of entrepreneurship – it serves as a last resort for people who would ordinarily prefer formal jobs in the public or private sector. The more successful entrepreneurs recognise commercial opportunities where others do not, and position themselves to take advantage with whatever resources at hand and to full effect; but in low-income countries they will find that credit markets are weak and unable to face the risks typically associated with innovation. Informal entrepreneurs tend to use family and social networks to secure additional support and recruit extra labour when needed; however, this is hardly sustainable, and some form of public support becomes crucial.

#### 15. Provide Physical and Knowledge Infrastructure

An important dimension of a productive city is the provision of trunk infrastructure for water, sanitation, power supply and access, which prevents the formation of slums. Investment in infrastructure can deliver major benefits for urban economic growth, prosperity, poverty alleviation, environmental sustainability and health.



A woman vending food along the seaside of Jamestown, Accra, Ghana  
© Julius Mwelu UN-Habitat

Moonbeam Youth training Centre, Mavoko, Kenya.  
© Victoria Chebet/UN-Habitat





# Chapter 1.0



## Youth and the Prosperity of Cities

### INTRODUCTION

The previous edition of this Report (*Leveling the playing field – Inequality of youth opportunity*)<sup>1</sup> clearly showed that inequity, unequal opportunities and the related issues of unemployment and underemployment are, by far, among the greatest challenges faced by urban youth in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. The report made it clear that in both the developed and the developing world, the formal sector is unable to provide adequate employment opportunities for young people seeking gainful work. The inability of national and urban economies to create quality jobs is one of the root causes not just of economic and social exclusion, but of the growth of informal economies, too. When young people in urban areas do find jobs, these are often with family-owned, small, low-productivity businesses, in other informal businesses, and as well in domestic employment– all of which are, characterised by low productivity and the attendant low incomes and little if any labour protection.

The experience of Mohammed Bouazizi, the 26 year old young Tunisian, who sold fruits and vegetables without a permit in Sidi Bouzid, Tunisia, demonstrates what young people go through while trying to make a living. On December 17, 2010, Mohammed doused himself in petrol in front of

a government building, immolating himself to protest the confiscation of his wares and the harassment and humiliation inflicted on him by a municipal official and her aides (Abouzeid 2011)<sup>1</sup>.

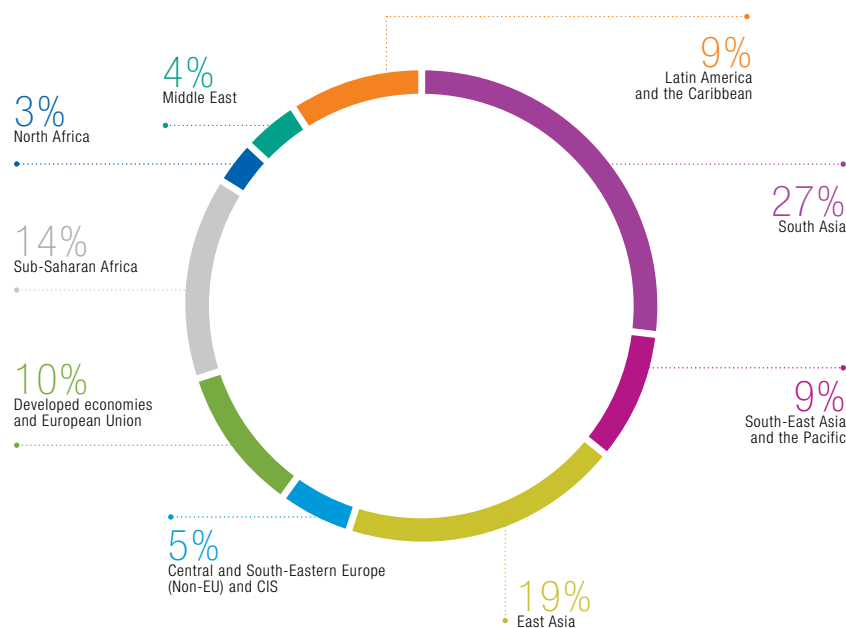
His suicide sparked a firestorm of demonstrations throughout the country. The unrest spread to Egypt and other Arab states, galvanizing the youths who challenged the autocratic regimes.

These developments, commonly referred to as the Arab Spring, directed attention to the large youthful populations that dominate the demographic profiles of these countries, notably in urban centers. The events dramatically illustrated young people's frequent inability to meet basic daily needs through sustainable livelihoods. They also brought to the fore their marginalization in the economic and political life of their communities and society at large.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), adopted by the General Assembly in 1989 and since ratified by all but two countries worldwide, states that children (those under age 18) should be given a voice on all matters that affect them and that their views should be taken seriously.<sup>2</sup> These matters include access to schools, housing, health care, jobs, and life chances more generally. Also the General Resolution A/65/L.87 Outcome document of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding calls for full and effective participation of young people in the decision making processes.

Figure 1.1

## Regional Distribution of the Youth Population, 2012



Source: United Nations: World Population Prospects, the 2010 Revision database

Thus, there is a relationship between the aforementioned civic unrest, popular revolts and the lack of opportunities for young people to participate fully in the making of decisions that shape their lives.

The demographic dynamics – and particularly the growing population of urban youth, known as the “urban youth bulge” – makes it imperative to address the diverse dimensions of the youth phenomenon against the broader background of prosperity. Youth are society’s most important and dynamic human resource. There are more people under the age of 25 today than ever, totalling nearly three billion, or half of the total global population; 1.3 billion of that total are aged 12 to 24. Most live in urban areas. Cities in developing countries account for over 90 per cent of the growth in the world’s urban population. An estimated 60 per cent of that urban population will be under the age of 18 by 2030, and the majority of this high number live in slums and informal settlements. Nearly 45 per cent of all young people around the world — almost 515 million — live on less than two US dollars a day. In today’s world, nearly 90 million youth are unemployed (or 47 per cent of the total number of unemployed) and an additional 300 million are too unskilled for secure, gainful jobs in decent conditions. The vast majority of these youth work in the informal sector and live in slums. Indeed, 85 per cent of the new employment around the world is made available by

slum-based informal economies, forcing young people into low-income jobs with little scope for advancement. The largest numbers of youth in this situation are to be found in Africa.

It is well recognised by now that the dynamics of wealth creation and urbanization are closely related and that urban areas do provide huge opportunities when the benefits of economic growth are equitably distributed. However, young people living in urban slums tend to experience greater deprivations compared with those in rural areas when it comes to access to education and other social amenities such as health. These youths also face greater challenges in finding dignified work, often resorting to jobs in largely unregulated, highly exploitative informal economies. This is happening regardless of the goals of full employment and decent work that were endorsed at the 2005 World Summit, where heads of State “*strongly supported fair globalisation and resolved to make the goals of full and productive employment and decent work for all, including for women and young people, a central objective of national development strategies, including poverty reduction strategies, as part of efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.*” Teenage girls and young women, in particular, face even greater barriers to decent livelihoods, with poorer access to education and jobs and often under threat of violence or harassment. Clearly, urban youth poverty merits attention in its own right, since this phenomenon involves some issues that are

Table 1.2

**Regional Distribution of the Youth Population, 2012**

| City      | Urban Population (million) | Slum Population (Thousands) | Rate of Youth Unemployment (per cent) | National & City GDP per capita (USD 000s) |
|-----------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Accra     | 3.9                        | 4, 848                      | 10.4                                  | National: 1.7<br>City:                    |
| Bangalore | 9.6                        | 104, 679                    | 10                                    | National: 1.5<br>City: 6.5                |
| Cairo     | 11.2                       | 6, 143                      | 12.2                                  | National: 6.5<br>City: 3.0                |
| São Paulo | 4.0                        | 44, 947                     | 17.8                                  | National: 12.4<br>City: 4. 2              |

Source: UN-Habitat Youth Survey (2012)

distinct from those addressed in the typical analysis of poverty.

This report makes heard the voices of young people in four cities of Accra, Bangalore, Cairo, and São Paulo in the developing world. It puts forth their perceptions and opinions regarding their quality of life and their access to resources, including education, medical care, urban services, employment, and municipal institutions. Based on empirical evidence and contextualized by recent research, this report argues that city governments should treat their young populations not as a problem and a burden, but as a resource and an opportunity to attain greater prosperity. The participation of young people in a city's economy is a prerequisite for sustainable urban growth and a sound investment in national development (World Bank 2007).<sup>3</sup>

### Do youth see themselves as benefitting from urban prosperity?

On average, only 44per cent of 441 surveyed youth in Accra, Bangalore, Cairo, and São Paulo agreed that they benefit from the prosperity in their city. However, this average obscures significantly between these cities: Accra: 36per cent; Bangalore: 82per cent; Cairo: 12per cent; and São Paulo: 55per cent.

## METHODOLOGY

The primary basis for this report is provided by four background reports prepared by local researchers in four cities in developing regions as well as city Survey of youth complemented by Focus Group Discussions (FGDs).<sup>4</sup> Cairo, Egypt, is of interest as a focal point of youth engagement in the

Young businessman outside his office.  
©elwynn / Shutterstock



Arab world. Its Revolutionary Youth Coalition created greater awareness of the importance of public space (particularly Tahrir Square) and the role of social media in the mobilization of youth. Bangalore, India, is often seen as a successful Asian example of business process outsourcing in information technology, taking advantage of a relatively well educated young population. Accra, Ghana, is a youthful African city, mentioned as effective in creating youth employment. São Paulo is an economic hub in South America that has experienced economic growth leading to greater prosperity, while still being plagued by high levels of inequality, violence and possessing a public education system that leaves many young people ill prepared for the job market. These four cities were not selected to be representative of all cities in the developing world. Rather, they provide a glimpse of the challenges and opportunities faced by young people in these and many other cities.

Table 1.2

**Survey respondents in four cities by age (N=443)**

| Accra     | Cities    |       |           |    |     | All cities |
|-----------|-----------|-------|-----------|----|-----|------------|
|           | Bangalore | Cairo | São Paulo |    |     |            |
| AGE       | 15 - 18   | 19    | 21        | 11 | 65  | 116        |
|           | 19 - 21   | 9     | 52        | 12 | 14  | 87         |
|           | 22 - 24   | 28    | 20        | 22 | 19  | 89         |
|           | 25 +      | 56    | 12        | 80 | 3   | 151        |
| Total (N) | 112       | 105   | 125       |    | 101 | 443        |

Box 1.1

**Field Study Methodology in Four Cities****Cairo, Egypt.**

The study included 125 respondents from age 15 to 32, selected from various locations, including Tahrir Square, Faculty of Economics and Political Science, Heliopolis Sporting Club and the El Youm 7 Newspaper and Lawyer Syndicate. These locations were chosen to reflect a range of social classes and religions. While participants came from different backgrounds and professions, including advantaged and disadvantaged areas, a majority had their primary degree in English, and accordingly would not be drawn from populations living in high poverty areas with low educational attainment. Questions aimed at getting youth opinions on the levels and patterns of exclusion and inclusion and ways of achieving a more egalitarian distribution of the benefits of the city's prosperity.

**Bangalore, India**

The study had 105 respondents, mostly between the ages of 20 and 30, but including a few high-school students. Many were employed. Some were college students and job-seeking migrants. They came from various areas in the city, with a reasonable spread across occupations, locations, and socioeconomic status, although logistical obstacles and lack of transportation led to a low representation of young people from the lower-middle class. Focus Group Discussions were held following the survey.

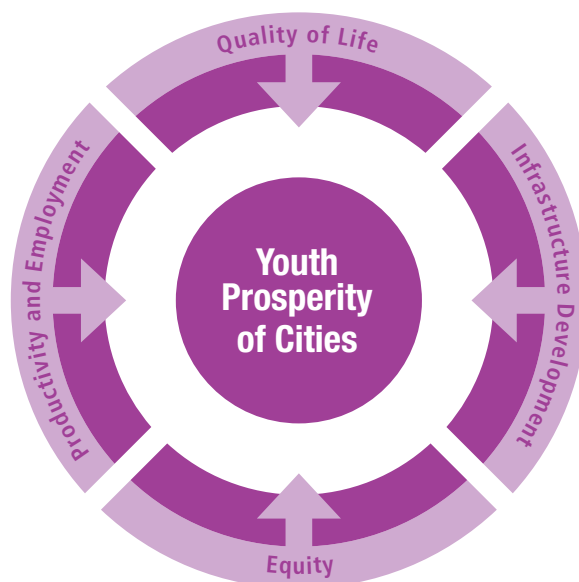
**São Paulo, Brazil**

The study analyzed 101 respondents between 15 and 29 years old. They were drawn from the city's largest informal settlement as well as a middle-class housing project, and a trades program, among others. About 65 per cent of them were high-school students. The survey was carried out in partnership with five NGOs, involving eight organized youth groups. About 20 per cent of the responses came via the internet from youth with relatively high incomes and educational levels. As an alternative to Focus Group Discussions, at the annual São Paulo Municipal Youth Conference, 21 youth participated in individual or small group interviews to discuss key survey questions.

**Accra, Ghana**

In total, 112 youth were chosen according to socio-economic status, geographic location in Accra, level of education, and age to approximate a good cross representation of youth in the city of Accra. Participants were selected from university students, high school students, youth living in low income areas, youth employed in the formal sector, youth employed in the informal sector (street hawkers, petty traders, apprentices, etc.), unemployed youth, members of various youth organizations (ethnic, religious and social), and youth living with disability. The questionnaire was administered in conjunction with the Focus Group Discussion, and also given to members of various youth organizations, youth in the informal sector who were assisted with the completion process, and several students.

Figure 1.2

**Youth and Prosperity in Cities: Conceptual Framework**

As related above, field surveys were conducted by UN-Habitat and partners in all the four cities considered. Data was collected from a cross-section of young people through focus groups discussion and the Survey. The responses elicited on the various aspects of prosperity shaped the different chapters in this report. In total, 443 young people participated in the study distributed across several age groups. Accra and Cairo had a relatively strong representation of those 25 years and older, while Bangalore and São Paulo provided more input from younger age groups (See Table 1.2).

The youth that participated in the study were chosen to demonstrate a range of perceptions found among young people in the four cities. The research methodology followed the same broad outlines including series of focus group discussions and survey in all the cities, however, specific research processes differed based on particular characteristics of each city. (See Box 1.1). The city reports also provided general background information related to population composition, economic trends, and issues of equity and inclusion.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Prosperity can be narrowly seen in terms of economic flourishing. However, in a wider perspective in which this report is situated, prosperity includes other dimensions of thriving such as quality of life and equity. This report embraces this broader vision taking into account the conceptualization of prosperity adopted in the State of the World Cities 2012-13 report. Figure 2 shows prosperity as comprising four key

components: economic productivity and employment, quality of life, infrastructure development, and equity.<sup>5</sup>

These components are closely interrelated. For example decent jobs require the right kind of education, skills and depending on the job requirement, some level of vocational training. A city requires affordable and efficient transportation for young people to access its educational facilities and subsequent employment opportunities. Spatial mobility, in turn, requires a safe environment that enables young people to move around without fear. Equity aspects permeate all other components and patterns of social exclusion are seen in all areas. Discriminatory practices against youth are exacerbated by barriers associated with, for example, gender, race, and social class.

### Age matters

On average, 28 per cent of surveyed 15 to 8 year olds in Accra, Bangalore, Cairo and Sao Paulo stated that their city government is committed to equity. However, only 6 per cent of those aged 25 to 32 said so.

Building on the State of Urban Youth report 2010/11, this report emphasizes aspects it found central in the lives of youth, particularly inequality of opportunities and resultant

unequal outcomes. While it is important to identify objective conditions of urban prosperity, it is also critical to ascertain and recognize young people's subjective assessments of these conditions and their place relative to them. After all, it is their perceptions that guide their actions.<sup>6</sup> Depending on how they evaluate their situation, youth will be inclined towards different behaviors, whether negative (e.g., crime) or positive (e.g., civic engagement). Therefore, this report details the opinions of young people themselves regarding various dimensions of urban prosperity, with special attention given to patterns of inclusion and exclusion.<sup>7</sup>

### Place matters

Almost 60 per cent of surveyed young people say that their level of prosperity is related to where they live in the city, ranging from a high of 89 per cent in Cairo to a low of 44 per cent in Bangalore.

At the same time, young people do not form their evaluations in a vacuum and their context influences the circumstances and the future they see for themselves. Factors that are important in one city may be less significant elsewhere, while other factors may be shared in common across different cities. It is, therefore, helpful to use a comparative perspective. Indeed, when asked how committed their city is to promoting the various dimensions of prosperity, the responses of the participating youth show similarities as well as differences. For example, in

all four cities, youth believe that the greatest local commitment is to infrastructure development, but the proportion of youth expressing this opinion ranges from as low as 8 per cent in São Paulo to a high of 42 per cent in Cairo. The prosperity components where youth see the least commitment by their local governments likewise differs across the cities. In Bangalore, youth least often say that there is a commitment to aspects of productivity (14 per cent), whereas it is quality of life in Bangalore (13 per cent), and equity in Cairo (19 per cent) and São Paulo (3 per cent). These findings also make clear that the lowest levels of commitment perceived in one city, can exceed the highest commitment levels perceived elsewhere (see Table 1.3).

A better understanding of these and related perceptions is important for informing policies that promote urban prosperity for all.

The rest of the report is arranged after the conceptual model outlined above. Chapter Two takes a broad perspective on quality of life that includes such issues as education, safety, social supports, and discrimination, while Chapter Three focuses more specifically on findings regarding economic productivity and employment. Chapter Four examines urban infrastructure in greater depth and the ways in which its development creates or hinders opportunities for youth. Chapter Five focuses on important aspects of equity and the effectiveness of city policies in redressing the uneven distribution of benefits accruing from urban prosperity. The last chapter concludes the report with implications for policy.

Table 1.3

### Proportion of young people stating that their local government is committed to dimensions of prosperity (by city)

|                 | Bangalore   | Cairo       | São Paulo  | Accra       |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| Quality of Life | 35 per cent | 20 per cent | 8 per cent | 13 per cent |
| Productivity    | 14          | 47          | 8          | 26          |
| Infrastructure  | 37          | 42          | 6          | 23          |
| Equity          | 30          | 19          | 3          | 18          |

Source: UN-Habitat Youth Survey (2012)

### Endnotes

1. Bouazizi: The Man Who Set Himself and Tunisia on Fire. <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,2044723,00.html>. Accessed July 1, 2012
2. See <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc.htm>
3. World Development Report 2007: Development and the Next Generation.
4. UN-Habitat Youth Survey (2012).
5. See pp. 7-8, The prosperity of cities: Concept note for State of the World's Cities Report 2012/13. 2010. No author given. UN-Habitat, Nairobi. This conceptualization roughly coincides with Friedmann's (2006) seven clusters of city regions and is similar to the urban livelihoods framework, developed by Rakodi and Lloyd-Jones. Rakodi, C., & Lloyd-Jones, T. (2002). Urban livelihoods: A People-Centered approach to reducing poverty. Earthscan/James & James. This report acknowledges the importance of environmental sustainability as a pivotal component of urban prosperity and considers it a proper subject for separate coverage, as provided by documents emanating from the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on June 20-22, 2012. See also State of the World's Cities 2012-13.
6. This point was first established by the Thomas Theorem in 1928 (Thomas and Thomas, 1928) and has since been corroborated by numerous empirical studies.
7. A well established literature demonstrates the importance of considering subjective quality of life dimensions, e.g., Zhenghui and Gareth (2009)

# Chapter 2.0



## Youth and Quality of Life

### INTRODUCTION

A prosperous city provides the whole population, with adequate housing and decent basic services irrespective of race, ethnicity, gender or socioeconomic status, facilitating equal access to social amenities, public goods and sound environmental conditions. The phrase “*quality of life*” broadly defines the overall well-being of individuals or communities. The concept has been applied across a wide range of domains, particularly in international development, for instance the *Human Development Index* (HDI) and more recently the *Multi-dimensional Poverty Index* (MPI), which have been jointly developed by scholars, politicians and policy-makers. Quality of life is qualitatively different from *standard of living*, which derives largely from income; the measure of Quality of life includes proxy statistics for wealth, employment, the built environment, physical and mental health, education, recreation and leisure time, and sense of social belonging. For statistical purposes, both objective and subjective measures are now broadly used in the development agenda by decision-makers, practitioners and policy-makers in a bid to address the challenges they face. For instance, politicians and economists have used quality of life measures to assess the liveability of a specific city or nation. The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) and Mercer’s *Quality of Living Reports* combine both subjective and objective proxies as determinants of quality of life.

For the purposes of this Report, the pursuit of quality of life is considered as one of the essential factors behind urban

prosperity. The main variables include access to education, health and other basic services and in addition, to these core defining features are - a non-discriminatory social environment- where every citizen feels welcome and safe.

However, from the perspective of most young urban residents, who constitute a very large share of the world’s population today, prosperous cities are simply places where residents can find gainful jobs that pay a living wage. A prosperous city provides its citizens with basic services, including safe water and adequate sanitation. The inhabitants of a prosperous city have access to educational opportunities and health care. They are not at risk of forced eviction and enjoy secure tenure in affordable housing. They live in communities that are safe and environments that are clean. And, perhaps

Group of students attending a training course at school.  
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most importantly, prosperous cities are void of discriminatory practices and governed through inclusive local democratic processes (Van Vliet—2002).

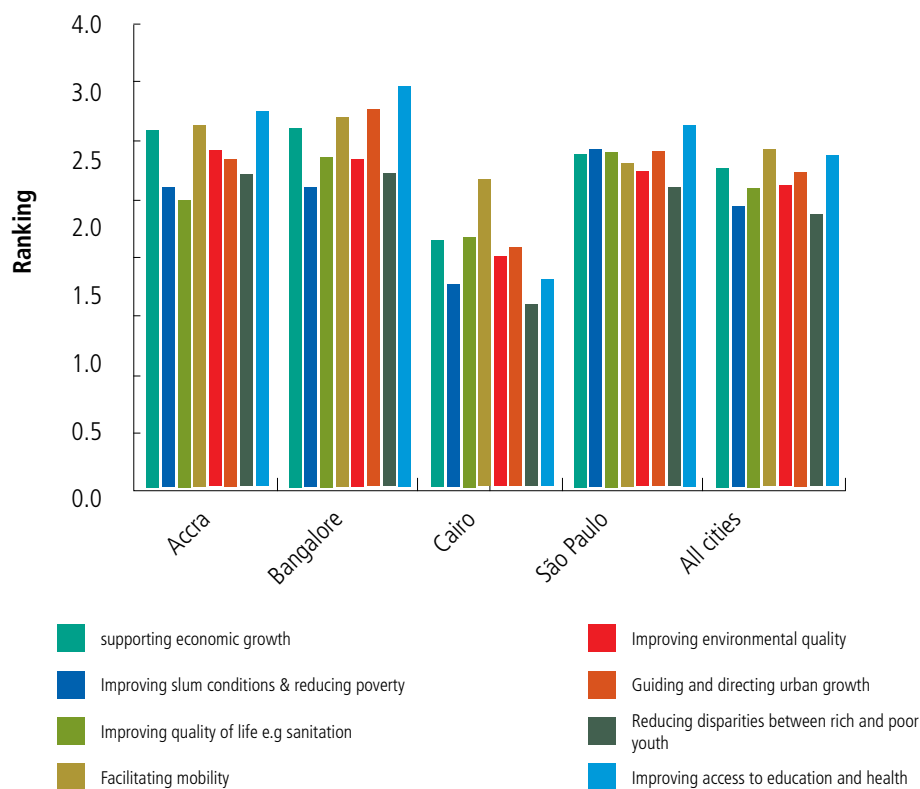
Reflecting a broad view of quality of life, young people in Accra, Bangalore, Cairo and São Paulo were asked about a range of factors contributing to their sense of prosperity. These factors included, employment, education, safety and security, active participation, housing, and transportation. Table 2.1 and Figure 2.1 show young people's assessments of these factors in these cities. A few findings stand out. In three of four cities, youth see good quality education as contributing most to their prosperity. Indeed, primary education is free for a large majority in all cities, as is secondary education according to a

large majority in Cairo (94 per cent) and São Paulo (85 per cent), although actual enrollment and drop-out rates can be problematic.

Meaningful employment and a decent income also rank high as factors contributing to prosperity, but somewhat less so than education, suggesting that job opportunities fall short of the positions for which young people's education prepares them. In other words, education is not enough and local governments would do well to create jobs that match young people's educational qualifications. This point is well illustrated by experience reported by young men in India (See Chapter 3 of this report).

Figure 2.1

### Young people's rating of the importance of factors contributing to a sense of prosperity by city



**Ranking scale:** 1→ Not contributing, 2→ Somewhat contributing, 3→ Contributing, 4→ Contributing effectively, 5→ Fully contributing

Source: UN-Habitat Youth Survey (2012)

Table 2.1

**Young people's rating of the importance of factors contributing to a sense of prosperity by city**

|                                                   | Accra | Bangalore | Cairo | São Paulo | All cities |
|---------------------------------------------------|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|------------|
| A meaningful employment & decent income           | 4.24  | 3.66      | 1.93  | 3.85      | 3.36       |
| Adequate housing with basic services              | 3.71  | 3.47      | 2.10  | 3.91      | 3.24       |
| Easy access to Internet                           | 3.76  | 3.50      | 2.63  | 3.92      | 3.42       |
| Security to live and work freely without fear     | 4.15  | 3.68      | 2.85  | 3.75      | 3.58       |
| Availability of sport and recreational facilities | 3.68  | 3.28      | 2.26  | 3.44      | 3.13       |
| Good and affordable public transportation         | 3.77  | 3.64      | 2.29  | 3.60      | 3.28       |
| Active participation in community affairs         | 3.04  | 3.27      | 1.91  | 3.56      | 2.89       |
| Ability to use public spaces in the city          | 3.29  | 3.29      | 1.86  | 3.71      | 2.98       |
| Good quality of education                         | 4.19  | 4.22      | 2.03  | 4.09      | 3.56       |
| Easy access to public leisure and culture         | 3.35  | 3.50      | 1.85  | 4.00      | 3.11       |
| Quality of the natural and built environment      | 3.43  | 3.73      | 1.84  | 3.60      | 3.09       |
| A sense of equity                                 | 3.71  | 3.93      | 1.94  | 3.81      | 3.29       |
| <i>Source: UN-Habitat Youth Survey (2012)</i>     |       |           |       |           |            |

Also considered important are safety to live and work freely without fear and a sense of equity. Youth in Cairo point to easy access to the internet as the second most important factor contributing to prosperity. This is interesting because research has shown the pivotal role of ICTs in facilitating the recent youthful uprisings in the Arab world.<sup>1</sup> So also illustrating the ways in which profit-seeking social media corporations can restrict protest movements whose activities may run counter to goals of commercial gain.<sup>2</sup>

Active participation in community affairs was consistently rated as the factor least contributing to urban prosperity (see Figure 2.1). This assessment likely reflects young people's lack of influence in local decision making. Their roles in the political sphere differ between cities, depending on local circumstances.

In Bangalore, a group of NGOs launched a Civic Dialogue program to encourage systematic debate on youth participation, but focus group discussion concluded that the city administration has not been keen to formalize youth involvement.<sup>3</sup> Focus groups in Cairo agreed that there is little youth involvement in local councils and recommended that youth be allowed to participate in the council's work and in the formulation of local public policy.<sup>4</sup>

Youth in Accra have been mainly involved as foot soldiers in political campaigns, and as the main actors in sometimes violent confrontations demanding their reward in terms of promised job opportunities. They, too, would like to see better

opportunities for their participation in local governance.<sup>5</sup>

Opportunities for civic engagement and political participation are closely related to dominant perceptions of youth as a population in need of resources versus views that accommodate young people as valuable partners in creating prosperous cities. These perceptions, in turn, underpin local policy approaches that create more or less equitable distributions of the costs and benefits of urban growth. The resulting patterns of inequity, and young people's perceptions, are taken up in Chapter five of this report.

The low ranking of city prosperity by the youths in Cairo stand out in contrast to those of their counterparts in Accra, Bangalore and São Paulo although Cairo is not less wealthy a city.

An explanation for the differences may lie in a study of residential satisfaction among the residents of a cooperative housing project, which found that resident's involvement in the project's operations and management correlated negatively with their levels of satisfaction.<sup>6</sup>

### What's Your Dream for Brazil?

In a 2010 national survey, 1784 Brazilian youth between 18 and 24 years of age responded to the question: "What's your dream for Brazil?" The top response was: less violence (18per cent).

Possibly, those who were more involved experienced the associated frustrations resulting in less satisfaction. Likewise, it is possible that youth in Cairo who engaged actively or emotionally with the tidal changes that swept through the country, became disappointed with subsequent developments. The dissolution of the Revolutionary Youth Coalition in July 2012 reflects a splintering of Egypt's youth movement and adds to the uncertainty of future of youth engagement in the Egyptian revolution.<sup>7</sup>

"Security is bad for everyone, and the youth – especially the poor and slum dwellers -- are killed"

**Paloma, 18**  
**Bela Vista, Sao Paulo**

The lack of toilet provision within a safe environment leads to fears among children and also about sexually motivated attacks on women and girls. Both of these concerns are related to distance of toilets from the home. In Nairobi, the lack of proximate facilities is a major risk to women, most of whom have to walk more than 300 metres to a toilet. Women report that it is risky for them to walk alone in the settlement after seven in the evening. Cost is a further factor that prevents use of sanitation facilities. In Durban (South Africa), women have access to piped supplies used for washing and water-borne sanitation but the increased emphasis on cost-recovery service management has led to expensive bills, and hence women are reluctant to flush the toilets and draw additional water. (Tacoli, 2012).

## Safety

A factor that features prominently in youth's perceptions of prosperity is the role of safety and their ability to live and work freely without fear. Overall, only one in four youth report feeling safe.

However, this average conceals as much as it reveals. Feelings of safety, not surprisingly, differ by city.

In Cairo, more than one out of every two youth feels safe, but in São Paulo, a mere 1 per cent of youth say they feel safe. Violent deaths among young people in this city are much higher in the outlying areas than in the center, reflecting spatial

patterns of exclusion. Although significantly lower than in 1998, the São Paulo Youth Vulnerability Index still showed high rates of homicides in a 2008 survey among youths between 15- and-24 age range (30.6 in the Metropolitan Region in 2008)<sup>8</sup> Indeed, research attests to the problems of violence in this city. A Social and Health Assessment study of incarcerated youth in São Paulo found that exposure to violence in the 12 months prior to incarceration, after controlling for demographic and family variables, was associated with having peers involved in risk behavior; easy access to guns; and having slept on the street.<sup>9</sup>

A community near Taolagnaro, Madagascar, began organizing nightly patrols following a rise in crime  
© Guy Oliver/IRIN



Although the UN-Habitat survey did not collect gender specific data, other research shows that security concerns are especially prevalent among young women. A study of incidents reported by women victimized by violence in São Paulo shows that the judicial process is often a difficult, long and expensive process, with little institutional protection.<sup>10</sup> São Paulo was home of the first women's police station, run exclusively by police women for women with the authority to investigate crimes against women, such as domestic violence, assault, and rape. There are now more than 300 women's police stations throughout Brazil.<sup>11</sup>

In Mumbai, women's savings groups similarly work with the police to set up community police stations in informal settlements. Once established, one of their tasks is to close down illegal drinking places, helping to reduce alcohol abuse and hence domestic violence.<sup>12</sup>

Focus group discussions with youth in Bangalore concluded that poorly lit roads contributed to women's lack of safety and that law and order agencies in the city do not attract respect from young people.<sup>13</sup> Improved lighting of streets and other public spaces is one of several recommendations to reduce gender-based violence through urban upgrading; including supervised communal sanitary facilities, and better spatial integration of job and housing markets to reduce dependence on unsafe public transportation.<sup>14</sup>

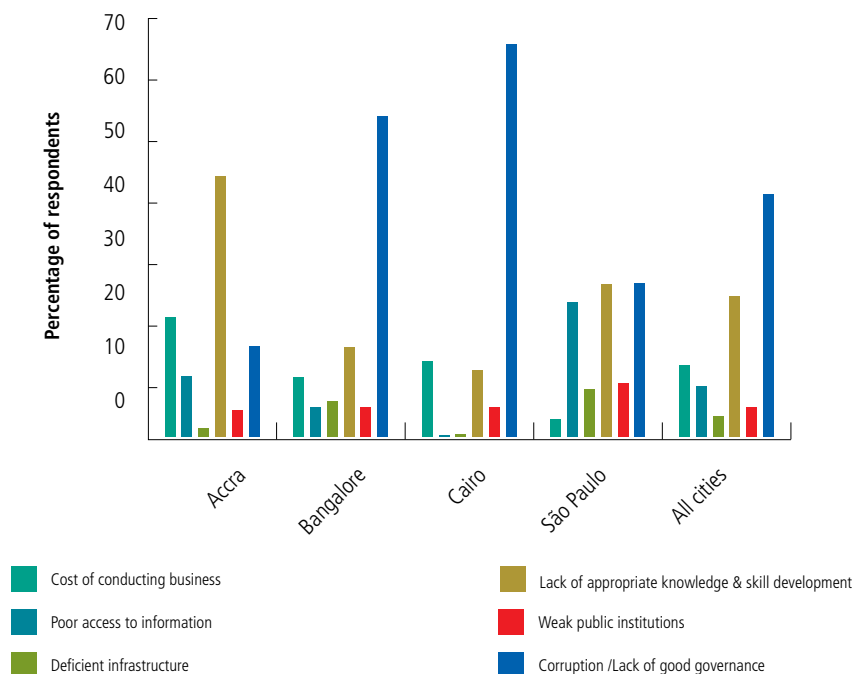
Table 2.2

**Categories of Violence to which Youth are Subjected**

| Category of violence | Types of violence by perpetrators and/or victims                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Manifestations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Political            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State and non-state violence</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guerrilla conflict</li> <li>• Paramilitary conflict</li> <li>• Political assassinations</li> <li>• Armed conflict between political parties</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Institutional        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Violence of state and other "informal" institutions</li> <li>• Including the private sector</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extra-judicial killings by police</li> <li>• Physical or psychological abuse by health and education workers</li> <li>• State or community vigilante-directed social cleansing of gangs and street children</li> <li>• Lynching of suspected criminals by community members</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                |
| Economic             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organized crime</li> <li>• Business interests</li> <li>• Delinquents</li> <li>• Robbers</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intimidation and violence as means of resolving economic disputes</li> <li>• Street theft, robbery and crime</li> <li>• Kidnapping</li> <li>• Armed robbery</li> <li>• Drug-trafficking</li> <li>• Car theft and other contraband activities</li> <li>• Small-arms dealing</li> <li>• Assaults including killing and rape in the course of economic crimes</li> <li>• Trafficking in prostitutes</li> <li>• Conflict over scarce resources</li> </ul> |
| Economic/social      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gangs</li> <li>• Street children (boys and girls)</li> <li>• Ethnic violence</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Territorial or identity-based "turf" violence; robbery, theft</li> <li>• Petty theft</li> <li>• Communal riots</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Social               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intimate partner violence inside the home</li> <li>• Sexual violence (including rape) in the public arena</li> <li>• Child abuse: boys and girls</li> <li>• Inter-generational conflict between parent and children</li> <li>• Gratuitous/routine daily violence</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical or psychological male–female abuse</li> <li>• Physical and sexual abuse, particularly prevalent in the case of stepfathers but also uncles</li> <li>• Physical and psychological abuse</li> <li>• Incivility in areas such as traffic, road rage, bar fights and street confrontations</li> <li>• Arguments that get out of control</li> </ul>                                                                                               |

Source: Moser (2004).<sup>15</sup>

Figure 2.2

**What is preventing youth in your city from becoming more prosperous?**

Source: UN-Habitat Youth Survey (2012)

Table 2.2 categorizes different types of violence to which youth can be subjected. Significantly, it references mostly manifestations of physical violence and does not include, for example, white collar crime. Indeed, as seen, being safe from physical violence is a major concern of young people. However, when asked what prevents youth in your city from becoming more prosperous, very few respondents selected high levels of crime as the primary factor (See Table 2.3 and Figure 2.2). It is nonviolent crime that stands out. In Cairo, no less than 60 per cent of surveyed youth indicated corruption as the single most important factor hindering their progress towards greater prosperity, as did 52 per cent in Bangalore. In São Paulo, 20 per cent of youth agreed, making it the second most important factor in that city, as it was in Accra at 14 per cent.

Drawing on labor stratification and life course perspectives, research has found that violent crime among younger adults is affected by both the quantity and the quality of work. Higher violent crime rates among young people was found to be higher when there were fewer jobs available to them and when those jobs were low wage.<sup>16</sup>

Some cities have employed innovative approaches that involve youth in efforts to increase safety and increase capacity for peaceful conflict resolution among citizens. For example, the City of Bogota hired some 400 youths, stationed at various points throughout the city, after training them as mimes

to use art and humor, encouraging citizens to behave like good citizens, escorting elderly pedestrians across the street, discouraging littering and promoting respect for crosswalks among drivers. Measures to protect rights, enhance social services and expand the use of public spaces, particularly in poor communities, were a key component of Bogota's quality of life campaign. The Bogota example shows that it is possible to take crime and civility seriously without criminalizing minor offences by coupling security measures with broader initiatives to strengthen democratic inclusion.<sup>17</sup>

Using a more top-down approach, a U.S. city has sought a way to improve the quality of life for urban youth by passing a special initiative that sets goals for funded service activities and requires a comprehensive evaluation of outcomes. A performance logic model was developed to guide the collection and reporting of evaluation data from grantees, as well as track community-wide indicators of quality of life for youth. Other key features of this comprehensive evaluation include the development of a performance index summarizing overall performance and the utilization of a post hoc measure of change due to program outcomes.<sup>18</sup>

Table 2.3

**What is preventing youth in your city from becoming more prosperous?**

|                                     | Accra  | Bangalore | Cairo  | São Paulo | All cities |
|-------------------------------------|--------|-----------|--------|-----------|------------|
| Lack of appropriate infrastructure  | 14.29  | 7.92      | 0.80   | 11.11     | 8.24       |
| High incidence of slums & poverty   | 14.29  | 6.93      | 4.00   | 8.08      | 8.24       |
| Corruption                          | 14.29  | 52.48     | 64.00  | 20.20     | 38.67      |
| Poor governance & weak institutions | 39.29  | 16.83     | 29.60  | 36.36     | 30.66      |
| High level of crime                 | 3.57   | 8.91      | 0.00   | 12.12     | 5.72       |
| High cost of doing business         | 14.29  | 6.93      | 1.60   | 4.04      | 6.64       |
| Lack of access to education         | 0.00   | 0.00      | 0.00   | 8.08      | 1.83       |
|                                     | 100.00 | 100.00    | 100.00 | 100.00    | 100.00     |

Source: UN-Habitat Youth Survey, 2012

**Endnotes**

1. See, for example, Analyzing the Role of ICTs in the Tunisian and Egyptian Unrest from an Information Warfare Perspective. Van Niekerk Brett; Pillay Kiru; Maharaj Manoj. INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF COMMUNICATION Volume: 5 Pages: 1406-1416. 2011; How Egyptian and Tunisian youth hacked the Arab Spring. Streetbook Pollock, John). TECHNOLOGY REVIEW. Volume: 114 Issue: 5. OCT 2011 and Mapping the Arabic blogosphere: politics and dissent online. Etling Bruce; Kelly John; Faris Robert; et al. NEW MEDIA & SOCIETY. Volume: 12 Issue: 8 Pages: 1225-1243. DEC 2010.
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4. See Cairo background report, p. 13.
5. See Accra background report, pp. 14-15.
6. Breslauer (1978)
7. See Ismail and El Nagar (2012).
8. See background report on Sao Paulo, p. 5.
9. See Huculak, McLennan and Bordin (2011)
10. Violence against women: a study of the reports to police in the city of Itapevi, Sao Paulo, Brazil. Godoy Serpa da Fonseca Rosa Maria; Egry Emiko Yoshikawa; Guedes Rebeca Nunes; et al. MIDWIFERY. Volume: 27 Issue: 4 Pages: 469-473. AUG 2011.
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14. Moser, Winto, and Moser (2005, cited in Tacoli (2012, p. 27).
15. Moser (2004).
16. See Krivo and Peterson (2004)
17. Beckett and Godoy (2010)
18. A city initiative to improve the quality of life for urban youth: how evaluation contributed to effective social programming. Green, Ellis and Lee (2005)

# Chapter 3.0



## Urban Youth Employment and Productive Cities

More than 18 per cent of today's world population, which is more than 1.2 billion people, are between the ages of 15 and 24. The vast majority of them, 87 per cent, live in developing countries; 62 per cent of them live in Asia and 17 per cent of them live in Africa.<sup>1</sup> A growing number of youth live in urban areas. Findings presented in this report show that youth in urban areas often lack access to housing, transportation and other basic services and have unequal access to opportunities for education, training, employment, and recreation. Cities in the developing world are expected to account for about 90 per cent of the world's projected urban growth.<sup>2</sup> In other words, increasing numbers of young people live in cities in developing countries, where they face difficult economic, political and social challenges.

### CITIES AS ENGINES OF ECONOMIC GROWTH

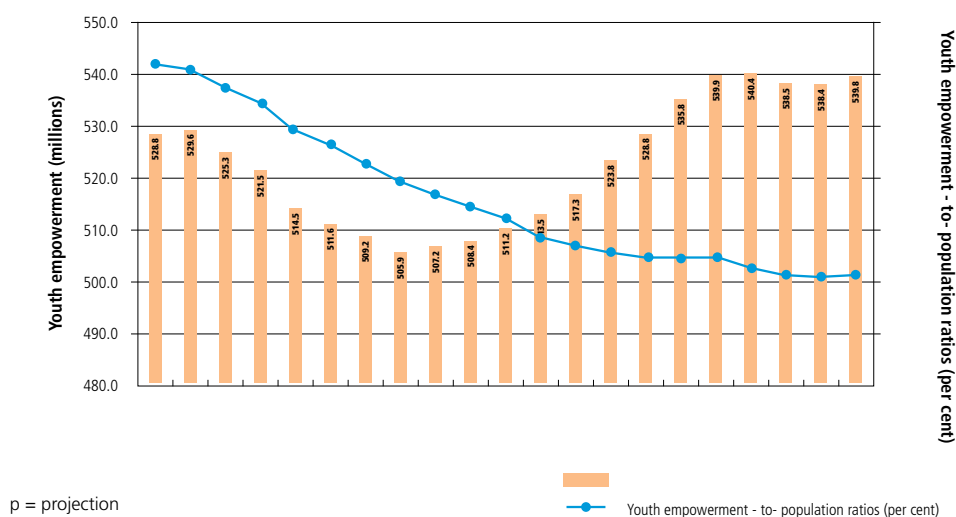
A prosperous city fosters economic development and creates the conditions for provision of decent, productive and gainful jobs, along with equal opportunities and decent living standards for everyone. This is achieved through effective economic policies and reforms that take into account creativity,

innovation, research and development, science and technology. A prosperous urban economy contributes to national growth, while employment acts as the main gateway out of poverty and an important step towards social integration. It is the basis of wealth creation and the primary instrument for equitable (re) distribution of the benefits of prosperity.

In 2010, the World Bank launched the *Innovative Cities* dialogue series to help mayors and policymakers share innovations to improve urban life across the globe.<sup>3</sup> Its monthly webinar series on "Cities as Engines of Economic Growth", begun in 2012, provides a forum for leading experts, policy makers and the private sector to discuss timely topics on city competitiveness.<sup>4</sup> The notion of cities as economic growth engines is nothing new. In the late 1980, scholars encouraged a view of cities to stimulate economic growth.<sup>5</sup> It is also a tenet of the accompanying State of the World's Cities report 2012-2013.

While there is no doubt that urban economic growth can lead to greater prosperity, it is also a fact that the potential of this growth is not equally realized for all urban residents. The benefits and costs of economic growth are not evenly distributed and some groups benefit more than others, while some bear a larger burden than others. Award-winning research in this regard has influenced numerous studies in various countries, showing that specific interests, particularly those related to real estate development, must be studied as stakeholders organize, lobby, manipulate and structure urban

Figure 3.1

Global youth employment and employment - to - population ratio, 1991 to 2011<sup>7</sup>

Source: ILO, Trends Econometric Models, April 2010.

land use patterns and the economic gains they generate.<sup>6</sup> As is evident from this report, particularly Chapter Five, youth are among the groups who do not share equally in the prosperity generated in the cities where they reside. As such, it is not sufficient for cities to be engines of growth; they must also function as agents of change to bring about greater prosperity for all (Van Vliet, 2002).

## DECLINING YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

The negative scissors effect of trends in youth employment and youth population growth have produced a rapidly growing job deficit for young people since about 2000 (See Figure 3.1).

Recent reports published by the International Labour Organization point to this daunting challenge. For example, using the most recent data available, the ILO report “Global Employment Trends for Youth 2012” shows increasing youth unemployment rates, particularly in the Middle East (26.5 per cent) and North Africa (27.9 per cent) where the unemployment rate has risen by almost 5 percentage points following the Arab Spring<sup>8</sup> (See Table 3.1)

Currently, more than 75 million youth are unemployed worldwide, an increase of more than 4 million since 2007. Projections point to continuing high levels of youth joblessness (ILO 2012). Young women are particularly disadvantaged in the labour market access, as reflected in their low participation rates. The gender gaps are especially large in South Asia (34.1 per cent), the Middle East (33.6 per cent), North Africa (27.4 per cent), and Latin America & the Caribbean (19.9 per cent).<sup>10</sup>

Clearly, an important role of cities in bringing greater prosperity to youth relates to the creation of appropriate jobs and the provision of adequate training that youth need in order to work in those jobs. The UN-Habitat field surveys carried out in Accra, Bangalore, Cairo and São Paulo offer useful insights regarding the performance of their local governments in these areas. More than 38 per cent of the young people surveyed state that their city is *not* making enough efforts and *not* committed to promoting productivity.

Table 3.1

### Youth unemployment rate 2011 by region<sup>9</sup>

| WORLD                            | 12.6per cent |
|----------------------------------|--------------|
| Developed economies & Eur. Union | 18.0         |
| Central & S-E Europe & CIS       | 17.6         |
| East Asia                        | 9.0          |
| S-E Asia & the Pacific           | 13.5         |
| S-Asia                           | 9.8          |
| Latin America & the Caribbean    | 14.3         |
| Middle East                      | 26.5         |
| North Africa                     | 27.9         |
| Sub-Saharan Africa               | 11.5         |

Table 3.2

**What hampers economic productivity in your city the most?**

|                                                    | Accra  | Bangalore | Cairo  | São Paulo | All cities |
|----------------------------------------------------|--------|-----------|--------|-----------|------------|
| Cost of conducting business                        | 21.43  | 10.89     | 13.60  | 3.96      | 12.76      |
| Poor access to information                         | 10.71  | 5.94      | 0.00   | 23.76     | 9.57       |
| Deficient infrastructure                           | 1.79   | 6.93      | 1.60   | 8.91      | 4.56       |
| Lack of appropriate knowledge & skills development | 44.64  | 15.84     | 12.00  | 26.73     | 24.60      |
| Weak public institutions                           | 5.36   | 5.94      | 6.40   | 9.90      | 6.83       |
| Corruption/lack of good governance                 | 16.07  | 54.46     | 66.40  | 26.73     | 41.69      |
|                                                    | 100.00 | 100.00    | 100.00 | 100.00    | 100.00     |

Source: UN-Habitat Youth Survey ( 2012)

The proportion is even higher among older age groups: 22-24 years: 44 per cent; and 25+ years old: 53 per cent . This finding likely reflects the greater difficulty older youth have in securing adequate jobs.

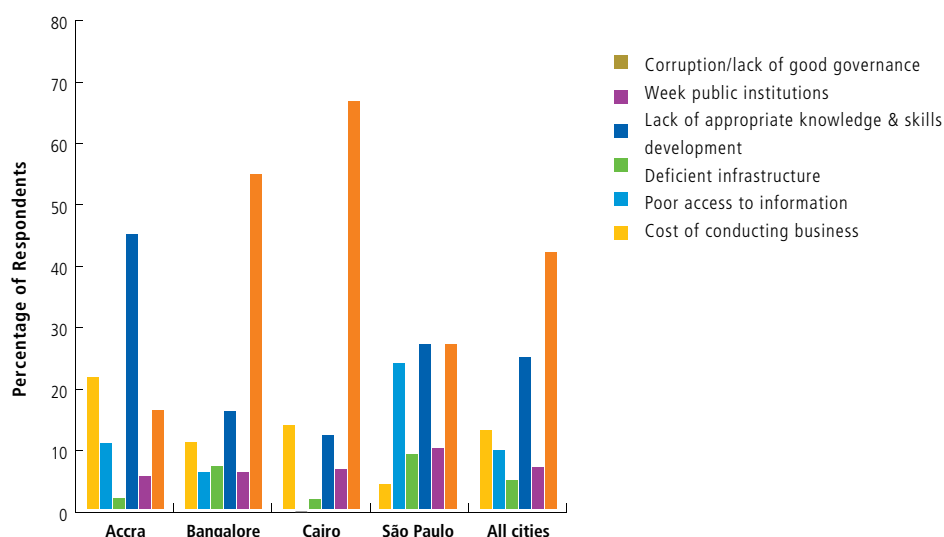
When asked what hampers youth contributions to economic productivity, the most important reason given is corruption and lack of good governance (42 per cent). However, the relative importance of reasons differs by city. In São Paulo, lack of appropriate knowledge and skills is an equally important barrier as corruption (27 per cent ) and poor access to information is also seen as a significant factor (24 per cent ). In Accra, lack of appropriate knowledge and skills is considered by far the most important factor (45 per cent , whereas in Bangalore and Cairo young people see corruption and lack of good governance as the major impediments (54 per cent and 64 per cent ). (See Table 3.2 and Figure 3.2 for these and related findings).

**Access to Credit**

Young people's entrepreneurial initiatives are often stifled by lack of access to credit. Making Cents International's global Youth Inclusive Financial Services Linkage Program (YFS-Link) offers innovative, practical tools and guidance that assist financial service providers (FSPs) and youth serving organizations (YSOs) to serve young clients with appropriate financial services. In partnership with the Master Card Foundation, Making Cents develops strategies to address gaps in information, skills, and resources required for institutions to meet demand for financial services by young people.

Source: <http://www.makingcents.com>

Figure 3.2

**What hampers economic productivity in your city the most?**

Source: UN-Habitat Youth Survey ( 2012)

### Entra 21: IT Training for Jobs

Entra 21 is an initiative developed by the International Youth Foundation to prepare Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) youth, 16 to 29 years of age, for today's information-based economy. Entra 21 has been implemented widely by local and central governments, NGOs, and local businesses to improve the employability of disadvantaged youths. The program started in 2002 with the goal of providing skills training in information and communication technology to 12,000 young workers in a 3-year period and to place at least 40 percent of them in employment. Entra 21 programs are co-financed by the Multilateral Investment Fund of the Inter-American Development Bank.

Source: Puerto, S (2007). Interventions to Support Young Workers in Latin America and the Caribbean: Regional Report for the Youth Employment Inventory. Accessible at: [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTLM/Resources/390041-1188243960961/YEI\\_LAC\\_07-01.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTLM/Resources/390041-1188243960961/YEI_LAC_07-01.pdf)

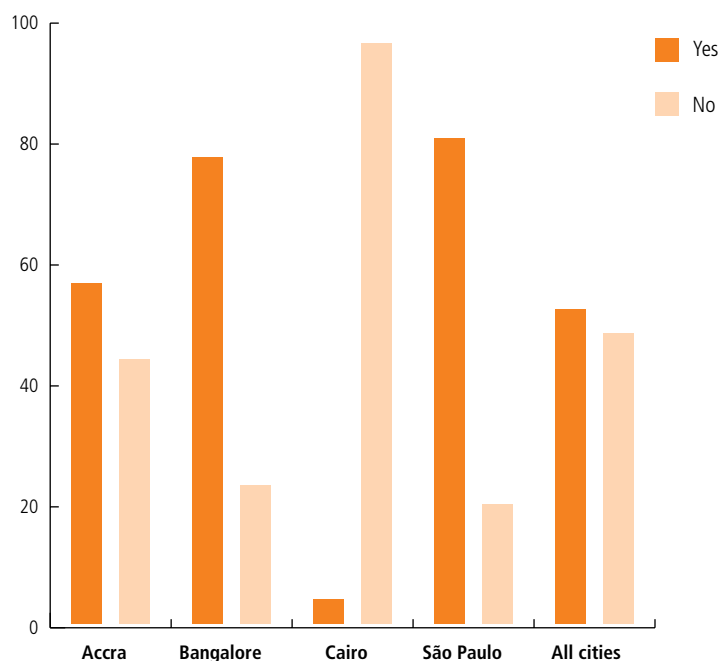
In so far as these perceptions align with actual conditions, these findings indicate the importance of remedial policies and programs that target *locally specific factors* underlying the underutilization of young people's contributions to economic productivity.

About one-half of surveyed youth, also state that economic growth in their city does not generate youth employment, although there are considerable differences between the four cities notably in Cairo (See Figure 3.3). Unfortunately, a majority of these youth in the four cities studied (64 per cent ) say that their city does not have a long-term plan that encourages youth contributions to sustain productivity and prosperity of its inhabitants.

They are more sanguine regarding programs and initiatives specifically addressing youth; 54 per cent say their cities have such a plan, but with large inter-city differences, ranging from a high of 81 per cent in São Paulo to a low of 6 per cent in Cairo. Of those who say that their cities have such initiatives, 71 per cent indicate that they seek to enhance the quality of informal sector employment, while 68 per cent say that they aim to provide skills to increase young people's employability.

Figure 3.3

Is urban economic growth in your city generating youth employment?



Source: UN-Habitat Youth Survey ( 2012)

Taken as a whole, the picture that emerges is one in which youth do not generally see their city government as undertaking significant efforts to improve young people's paths to greater prosperity. And even when youth become highly qualified, city governments are not perceived as having a policy to retain such qualified individuals. In fact, only one out of every four youths surveyed believed that their local or national government has any kind of policy targeting the employment of highly qualified youth.

In line with the findings for Accra, Bangalore, Cairo and São Paulo, field surveys carried out in four Chinese cities in cooperation with UN-Habitat, using the same set of instruments, found that job opportunities and level of pay were the most important push and pull factors causing young people to leave their hometown in search of better prospects in large cities.<sup>11</sup>

### Box 3.1

#### **Sustainable Livelihoods in Accra, Ghana: YouthWorks!**

Youth Empowerment Synergy Ghana (YES-Ghana)'s YouthWorks Project provides solid waste management training and capacity building for youth in Ashiedu-Keteki sub-metropolis of Accra. Through Youth Works, youth are mobilized to undertake youth-led service delivery in solid waste management. Youth beneficiaries sensitize residents on the benefits of environmental cleanliness and proper ways of managing solid waste. With funding from CHF International, YouthWorks allows youth to contribute to environmental sanitation while earning productive and sustainable livelihoods. Over 150 youth have already gained full employment through YouthWorks and the project contributes to improved sanitation in Accra's low-income sub-metropolitan areas.

Source: <http://www.yesghana.org>; <http://www.youth-employment-inventory.org>

Notwithstanding the generally unfavourable assessment of the surveyed youth in the UN-Habitat and Chinese studies, there exist emerging programs and policies which point to possibilities of addressing the observed trends in ways that will lead to greater prosperity for young people. As discussed in Chapter Six of this report, attention is often focused on macro-level policies and frequently oriented to more developed economies, where data informing such policies are more readily available. However, scattered evidence suggests that a different approach, addressing economic productivity at the local level may be an important strategy that deserves further exploration.

On going training on carpentry and woodwork in youth centre, Afghanistan.  
© UN-Habitat



This Report finds that youth employment is a special challenge in cities around the world because of their youth-biased demographic structures. The global economic crisis has exposed the particular vulnerability of young people in the labour market. Youth who are not integrated into the world of work after leaving school risk long-term exclusion from productive engagement. Young people are also more likely than adults to be among the working poor in informal jobs. An unemployed youth represents a colossal waste of resource, a social hazard and a burden on families or the government social support schemes, where any. Being forced into precarious livelihoods by intense poverty and lack of social protection is a lost opportunity, since these young people might otherwise attend school or college and acquire the skills and abilities that could raise their future productivity and earnings.

### Box 3.2

#### **Creating jobs and building houses, while reducing waste: Techamos Una Mano**

Techamos Una Mano (Lend a Helping Hand) is a youth-led initiative which transforms milk and juice boxes and plastic bottles into building materials that are used to build homes for low-income families in Oaxaca, Mexico. The project engages student volunteers, aged 15-20 to collect discarded materials and construct the homes. The students have since constructed ten houses while selling the excess waste they collect, including paper, aluminum, and glass to interested companies for project sustainability.

Source: [www.iyfnet.org](http://www.iyfnet.org), [www.tum.org](http://www.tum.org)

Green cars are being charged, in Naples, Italy.  
© Julius mwelu/UN-Habitat



Rickshaw driver working in Calcutta, India. Rickshaws have been around for more than a century, but they could soon be a thing of the past.  
© Hung Chung Chih / Shutterstock



## Endnotes

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3. See <http://wbi.worldbank.org/wbi/stories/cities-seen-engines-growth-incubators-innovation>.
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# Chapter 4.0



## Urban Infrastructure Policies and Institutions

### INTRODUCTION

Urban prosperity is critically dependent on a supportive physical urban infrastructure. These infrastructures include efficient transportation, effective communication technology, adequate sewage disposal and sanitation facilities, well-functioning distribution systems for water and energy as well as the availability of technologies. This chapter will first provide a general overview of youth's infrastructure perceptions in Accra,

Bangalore, Cairo and São Paulo, before considering in more detail spatial mobility and communication capability, two infrastructure factors that play increasingly important roles in the prosperity of young urban dwellers.

No less than 75 per cent of youth surveyed in Accra, Bangalore, Cairo and São Paulo stated that the infrastructural resources in their city inadequately support productive activities. This negative assessment was made by more than 90 per cent of the surveyed youths in Accra and Cairo. When asked how infrastructure components most contribute to youth prosperity, there was general agreement that facilitating mobility is most important, followed by related concerns having to do with access to education and health services (See Figure 4.1 and Table 4.1).

Table 4.1

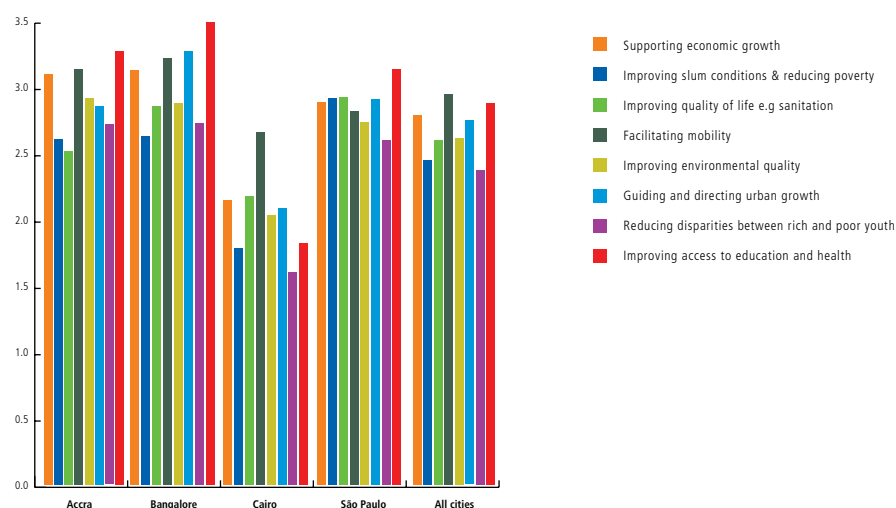
**Importance of Infrastructure Development to Youth Prosperity Concerns**

|                                                  | Accra | Bangalore | Cairo | São Paulo | All cities |
|--------------------------------------------------|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|------------|
| Supporting economic growth                       | 3.09  | 3.12      | 2.14  | 2.88      | 2.78       |
| Improving slum conditions & reducing poverty     | 2.60  | 2.62      | 1.78  | 2.91      | 2.44       |
| Improving quality of life e.g. sanitation        | 2.51  | 2.85      | 2.17  | 2.92      | 2.59       |
| Facilitating mobility                            | 3.13  | 3.21      | 2.65  | 2.81      | 2.94       |
| Improving environmental quality                  | 2.91  | 2.87      | 2.03  | 2.73      | 2.61       |
| Guiding and directing urban growth               | 2.85  | 3.26      | 2.08  | 2.90      | 2.74       |
| Reducing disparities between rich and poor youth | 2.71  | 2.72      | 1.60  | 2.59      | 2.37       |
| Improving access to education and health         | 3.26  | 3.48      | 1.82  | 3.13      | 2.87       |

Source: UN-Habitat Youth Survey (2012)

Figure 4.1

## Importance of Infrastructure Development to Youth Prosperity Concerns



Source: UN-Habitat Youth Survey (2012)

Various benefits of infrastructure development were considered in the survey and opinions were sought on the five-point scale, from “Not contributing” to Fully contributing. In rating their ease of access to specific infrastructure components, youth are most positive about their access to telecommunications across board: 3.49 on a five-point scale (See Figure 4.2 and Table 4.2). In all four cities, youth also rated their access to electricity highly. At the other end of the spectrum, youth generally agreed that access to adequate sanitation was most problematic. Youth in Accra and Bangalore also frequently mentioned access to water as an issue, whereas in Cairo and São Paulo youth were more often concerned about urban transportation (See Figure 4.2 and Table 4.2).

Municipal workers lay asphalt in the Atanasio Tzul avenue, zone 12, Guatemala City, Guatemala. © Maria Fleischmann /World Bank



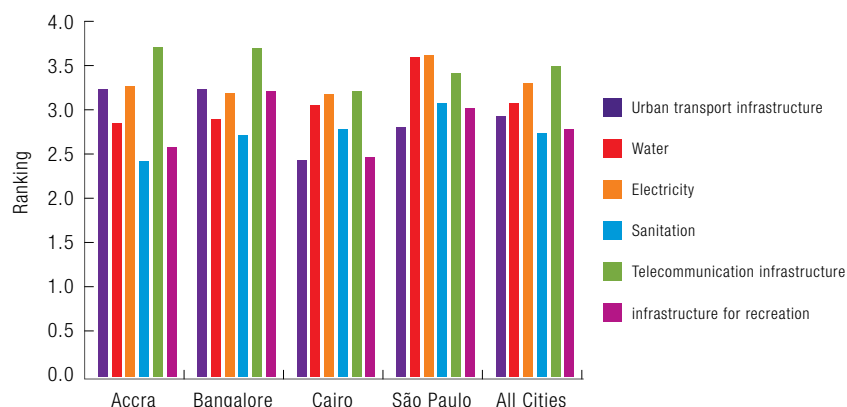
Table 4.2

## Ease of infrastructure access by youth in 4 cities

|                                  | Accra | Bangalore | Cairo | São Paulo | All cities |
|----------------------------------|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|------------|
| Urban transport infrastructure   | 3.25  | 3.24      | 2.42  | 2.81      | 2.91       |
| Water                            | 2.85  | 2.88      | 3.04  | 3.59      | 3.08       |
| Electricity                      | 3.26  | 3.18      | 3.18  | 3.62      | 3.30       |
| Sanitation                       | 2.40  | 2.71      | 2.78  | 3.06      | 2.73       |
| Telecommunication infrastructure | 3.71  | 3.71      | 3.19  | 3.41      | 3.49       |
| Infrastructure for recreation    | 2.57  | 3.22      | 2.46  | 3.01      | 2.79       |

Source: UN-Habitat Youth Survey (2012)

Figure 4.2

**Ease of infrastructure access by youth in 4 cities**

Source: UN-Habitat Youth Survey (2012)

**ELECTRICITY**

Inquiring further about potential urban issues negatively affecting prosperity, more than 90 per cent of youth interviewed were again in general agreement about one issue; interruptions in the supply of electricity. Power failure was cited as a problem by an average of 85 per cent of participating youth (See Figure 4.3 and Table 4.3). Mentioned significantly less frequently were telephone line interruptions. It is revealing, however, that of nine major infrastructure components listed, even this least problematic one was seen by almost 50 per cent as having negative prosperity impacts. From these results, it appears that youth in these cities believe that infrastructure where they live and work leaves much to be

desired and needs significant improvement in order to attain greater prosperity and prevent formation of slums.

The participating youth gave more specific information when asked how infrastructure underdevelopment in their city affected them. They clearly indicate the cost of living as the by far most undesirable outcome of underdeveloped infrastructure in the cities where they live. In Cairo, no less than 65 per cent of surveyed youth say so. At the same time, high proportions of youth state that the effects of underdeveloped urban infrastructure are not evenly distributed and particularly impact low-income populations, most notably in Accra, where 45 per cent say that the most important impact is the increased vulnerability of poor communities (See Table 4.4).

Manager of Hyundai Heavy Industries contractor at E-power, Kevin Jung J. H., (center) working at E-Power plant in Port-au-Prince, November 6, 2012.  
© Dominic Chavez / World Bank



Table 4.3

**Youth Perceptions of Infrastructure Problems by City (per cent)**

|                                                         | Accra  | Bangalore | Cairo  | São Paulo | All cities |
|---------------------------------------------------------|--------|-----------|--------|-----------|------------|
| Congested roads                                         | 94.64  | 91.26     | 92.00  | 87.13     | 91.38      |
| Flooding                                                | 91.07  | 47.96     | 0.00   | 76.24     | 51.83      |
| Power failures                                          | 98.21  | 88.12     | 80.80  | 73.27     | 85.19      |
| Interruption of telephone lines                         | 70.54  | 38.61     | 35.20  | 42.57     | 46.70      |
| Shortages of portable water supply                      | 89.29  | 73.53     | 75.20  | 40.59     | 70.45      |
| Shortage of cooking gas and any other sources of energy | 98.21  | 28.28     | 80.80  | 30.69     | 61.78      |
| Leaking sewerage systems                                | 84.82  | 82.18     | 85.60  | 66.34     | 80.18      |
| Poor facilities for pedestrians                         | 83.93  | 70.30     | 88.00  | 83.17     | 81.78      |
| Slow internet connections                               | 70.54  | 38.54     | 32.80  | 72.28     | 53.00      |
| Others                                                  | 100.00 | 100.00    | 100.00 | 4.55      | 94.21      |

Source: UN-Habitat Youth Survey (2012)

**URBAN MOBILITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

The close linkage between urban infrastructure and equity is seen most clearly perhaps in the transportation systems of cities and the associated mobility of the young people living in them. Youth in the four cities studied for this report repeatedly talked about uneven access (See boxes with comments from youth in São Paulo, Cairo, and Bangalore).

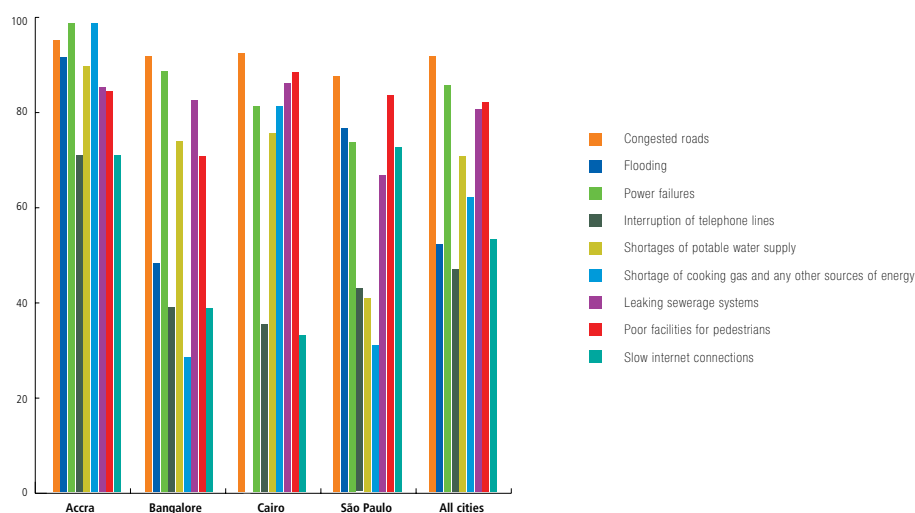
Development of an adequate and efficient urban infrastructure that fosters greater prosperity involves numerous actors. In metropolitan areas, those actors operate at different levels of government.

**Inequitable Infrastructure Access**

"Access to proper infrastructure, services and resources is very limited. Only the rich and part of the middle class can afford them. Where we live is determined by our economic status, so residents of poorer areas just can't access basic services"

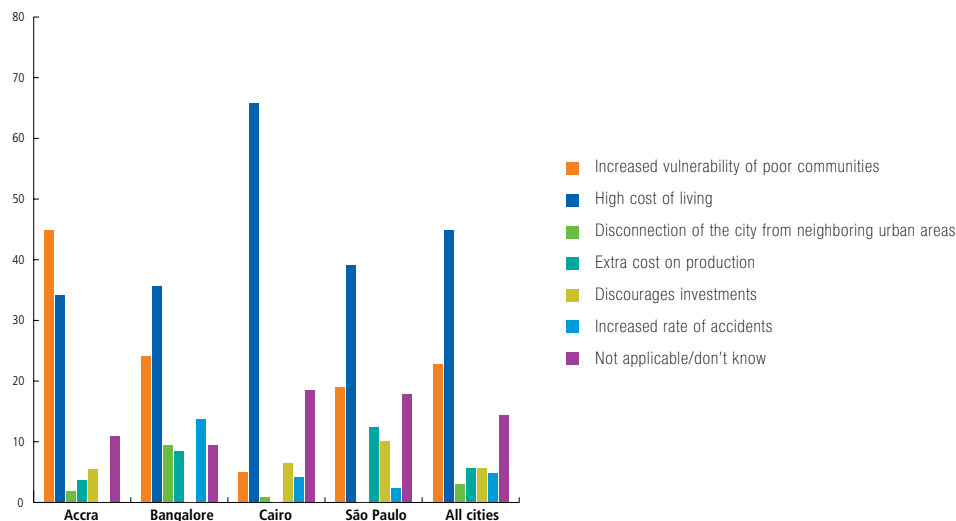
Focus Group Discussion, *Cairo*

Figure 4.3

**Youth perceptions of infrastructure problems by city**

Source: UN-Habitat Youth Survey (2012)

Figure 4.4

**What is the most important effect on youth of infrastructure underdevelopment in your city?**

Source: UN-Habitat Youth Survey (2012)

**Transportation Infrastructure**

"The City of Sao Paulo does not have the necessary infrastructure for the mobility of its residents. Public transportation is lacking in all aspects: slow service, poor upkeep, and lack of respect for the transit users by employees."

**Lilian**

*San Mateo, São Paulo*

Proper coordination of their efforts is of paramount importance for the successful outcomes. Youth that were asked about their perceptions on how well coordinated efforts to provide infrastructure at city and regional levels are, did not have very positive opinions. On average, more than 75 per cent stated that those efforts are not well coordinated. Young people in Cairo were especially negative in their assessments: 95 per cent thought that intergovernmental collaboration was not properly implemented.

The cities where young people live are nodes in regional and global flows of resources with localized destinations and transit points. Research has shown the pivotal role that spatial mobility plays in the everyday lives of young people, underscoring further the significance of a well-functioning transportation structure to access these resources, from training opportunities to jobs. For example, a study in Accra, Ghana, found that young people's mobility was bounded by a range of factors including labor market characteristics, gender

and generational relations, and their spatial location on the outskirts of the city and the margins of the world. However, neither their daily mobility, nor their spatial imagination was restricted to their local community; real or imagined travel takes them to other parts of the city, into rural areas and across the nation's borders.<sup>1</sup> Cycling can be an inexpensive mode of transportation to access educational and employment opportunities. In this regard, it is illuminating that cultural and other factors can complicate physical infrastructural issues. One African study, also conducted in Accra, found that children from southern ethnic groups were not encouraged to cycle by their families. Among boys it was perceived as dangerous: the behavior of 'rebellious, deviant school age males'. If girls dared to ride, they were considered of 'questionable sexuality'.<sup>2</sup>

Another study also examined mobility constraints, especially as these interact with household labor demands, and found that they restrict young people's access to education and livelihood opportunities, particularly for girls.<sup>3</sup>

"Do wider roads really matter to the poorer classes? Most of these roads have hardly any pedestrian pavements and we only see many more cars."

*Bangalore*

Table 4.4

**What is the most important effect on youth of infrastructure underdevelopment in your city?**

|                                                        | Accra  | Bangalore | Cairo  | São Paulo | All cities |
|--------------------------------------------------------|--------|-----------|--------|-----------|------------|
| Increased vulnerability of poor communities            | 44.64  | 23.96     | 4.80   | 18.89     | 22.70      |
| High cost of living                                    | 33.93  | 35.42     | 65.60  | 38.89     | 44.68      |
| Disconnection of the city from neighboring urban areas | 1.79   | 9.38      | 0.80   | 0.00      | 2.84       |
| Extra cost on production                               | 3.57   | 8.33      | 0.00   | 12.22     | 5.44       |
| Discourages investments                                | 5.36   | 0.00      | 6.40   | 10.00     | 5.44       |
| Increased rate of accidents                            | 0.00   | 13.54     | 4.00   | 2.22      | 4.73       |
| Not applicable/don't know                              | 10.71  | 9.38      | 18.40  | 17.78     | 14.18      |
|                                                        | 100.00 | 100.00    | 100.00 | 100.00    | 100.00     |

Source: UN-Habitat Youth Survey ( 2012)

South Africa's Shova Kalula (Ride Easy) National Bicycle Programme, which commenced in 2001, is a particularly interesting government initiative not least because of its scale: it aims to provide one million low-cost bicycles (used and new) in rural and peri-urban areas to disadvantaged groups, including children and youth. Certain problems notwithstanding, an early assessment concluded that the project was helping school children to arrive at school in better time, but lacked adequate consideration of gender; a new phase is now in progress.<sup>4</sup>

## TELECOMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE

Constraints on spatial mobility can, in part, be offset by improved communication technologies. The rapid rise in the adoption of mobile phones, dropping prices, increased licensing, and the expansion of ICT networks can mitigate transportation needs. Recent data show that 45 per cent of inhabitants in the developing world have a mobile phone, with one out of four Africans and one out of three Asians owning a mobile phone (ITU, 2010). Africa's has more than 198 million mobile subscribers, with annual growth over the past five years averaging about 50 per cent.<sup>5</sup>

While there is sparse information on the use of mobile technology by young people specifically, a survey on youth access to ICTs done for the 2007 World Bank World Development report found that in India well over 50 per cent of youth surveyed had access to mobile phones.<sup>6</sup>

Research on youth and ICTs has found that of the five billion mobile phone owners globally, 1.6 billion were youth, who spend an estimated USD 330 billion annually on mobile phones. It has also been estimated that by 2012 one in five of the youth who own mobile phones will live in India, making them more prolific than toilets in that country.<sup>7</sup>

### Box 4.1

#### Young Urban Environmental Leaders Project

Alma Ambiental's Young Urban Environmental Leaders Project received funding from UN-Habitat Urban Youth Fund to provide youth residents of an impoverished urban social housing complex in Santo André ( São Paulo) with training, education, leadership, experience, and opportunities to take action on environmental issues in their community. Through the project, youth beneficiaries educate and mobilize residents and peers to take individual and collective action toward improved management of waste, environmental awareness, access to green space and public sanitation. Youth beneficiaries also intern for partner organizations to enhance their social inclusion in the City.

Sources: <http://www.globalyouthdesk.org>

In a national South African study, 81 per cent youth surveyed stated that they would rather spend their last R10 on their mobile phones than on food.<sup>8</sup>

A study of mobile phone use among nearly 3,000 youth in three sub-Saharan countries, using in-depth ethnographic research and a follow-up survey, found that virtual mobility of the mobile phone not only promotes young people's inclusion in existing social networks but may also encourage the extension of social networks. Given the fact that social networks play an important role in enabling households and individuals to move out of poverty, networking activity of all types is not only logical but also likely to expand as young people's access to mobile phones expands.<sup>9</sup>

## Box 4.2

**Improving sanitation, creating jobs and promoting social inclusion in Cairo**

Cairo's Zabballeen (Garbage People) have long been the invisible entrepreneurs on the frontlines of city cleanliness, recycling activities and environmental protection. The Zabballeen fight daily for legitimate entrepreneurial opportunities and rights accorded to corporate waste management companies. Now a youth-led Non-Governmental Organization, Spirit of Youth Association, has been authorized to formally organize Cairo's Zabballeen. Spirit of Youth advocates for the integration of garbage collectors into Cairo's formal waste management. The initiative affords underprivileged youth educational and employment opportunities while improving their living environment and advocating for environmental cleanliness across Cairo.

Source: Global Alliance of Waste Pickers (<http://globalrec.org>)

The findings from these and other studies suggest that mobile communication technologies can help youth overcome transportation constraints that limit their livelihoods and can help increase their prosperity.

**ACCESS TO BASIC SERVICES**

Although UN-Habitat data indicate that housing conditions and access to basic services have improved from the 1990s onward, not only for cities as a whole but for those living in slum areas as well, great disparities persist between rich and poor. Those with the worst housing conditions also suffer from lower access to education and health services. The specific findings in the 2010-2011 State the Urban Youth Report indicate that; Youth and, by extension, children born within families living in highly deprived areas such as slums (and compared with non-slum dwellers within the richest wealth quintile) can have far less access to health services such as antenatal and delivery care as well as to immunization. Family resources expressed in terms of shelter (slums and non-slums) space have a significant impact on other instrumental capabilities such as education and access to basic services (water, sanitation, electricity). Infrastructure factors such as sanitation influence all the health dimensions that serve as measures of unequal opportunities. Combined with unsafe water supply and poor hygiene, poor sanitation is responsible for relatively high mortality rates among young slum dwellers. Poor sanitation is the primary determinant of water, air and food contamination. Access to improved sanitation and safe drinking water is positively associated with national wealth

as measured by GDP. Evidently, countries with higher GDP per capita allocate more resources to the social sector, allowing larger segments of society access to better infrastructure. In particular, this Report corroborated the association of per capita GDP and per capita expenditure on health (UN-Habitat 2010-2011)

**INFRASTRUCTURE FOR RECREATION**

Cities that have been most successful in attracting foreign direct investment (competitive cities) are those that have vastly improved the range and quality of their infrastructure. This includes infrastructure for recreation. Developing adequate and improving existing infrastructure for recreation is necessary for the development and support of youth activities and ultimately the prosperity of cities. Varied research points to wide ranging benefits of these developments in the areas of employment, health and well-being, skills development, social capital and overall economic strength.

Lack of social infrastructure causes poor local services and weak social networks in the community as well as isolation, mental health problems, fear of crime, and issues with community cohesion.

A boy fetching water from a tap in Mathare slum Nairobi, Kenya.  
© Julius Mwelu/UN-Habitat



Students from the Afghanistan National Institute of Music (ANIM) play in the Wolfensohn Atrium.  
© World Bank



Youth centers are an ideal space to engage youth. They should however be designed to function as a multi-faceted and integrated community spaces which provides programs and services geared to facilitating positive lifestyle choices and career development opportunities. They should be centers for youth to channel their creative and personal expressions, provide opportunities for recreation, social, health-based and/or other services oriented to the youth. As such, it is necessary that the city be involved in the operation of such a facility and the youth should be engaged in the design and operation of the facilities and programs, thereby empowering them, facilitating positive leadership skills and creating a sense of ownership in the facility.

Recreational activities may include sports, tourism, parks, playing fields and courts, recreational centers, museums, among others. All of which require building and maintenance of facilities which serve as meeting places for the youth. Such amenities create a sense of belonging, identity and play a role in the building of social networks. They shape how inclusive a city is for the youth and they have a direct impact on local issues like policy and support for young people. Recreational infrastructure creates a platform to advance youth development, nurture talent while strengthening the contribution that these initiatives make towards enhancement of qualities of life for the community. They give youth an opportunity to spend time with themselves, others, meet new people, make new friends and socialize. Some help them in developing leadership qualities and interpersonal skills. And in addition, they increase opportunity for local employment.



Women play football on the 28 September Stadium grounds. These days, the venue is again used for sporting events.  
© Nancy Palus/IRIN

## Endnotes

1. Langevang and Gough (2009)
2. Grieco, Turner and Kwakye (1995)
3. Mobility, education and livelihood trajectories for young people in rural Ghana: a gender perspective. Porter, Gina. Hampshire, Kate; Abane, Albert; Tanle, Augustine; Esia-Donkoh, Kobina; Amoako-Sakyi, Regina Obilie; Agblorti, Samuel; Owusu, Samuel Asiedu. CHILDRENS GEOGRAPHIES. Volume: 9 Issue: 3-4 Special Issue: SI Pages: 395-410. 2011.
4. Mahapa (2003)
5. International Telecommunications Union (2010).
6. Halewood and Kenny (2007)
7. Rees (2011)
8. Ibid.
9. Porter, Hampshire, Abane, Muntali, Robson, Mashiri and Tanle (2012)

# Chapter 5.0



## Prosperity and Equity-Based Youth Development

A Prosperous City is inclusive, pursuing reduction of poverty and inequality through a systematic (re)distribution of the benefits of development. This is achieved through protection of the rights of the poor, minorities and vulnerable groups, enhancing gender equality, and ensuring civic participation by all in the social, political and cultural spheres. Over the past few decades, the world has witnessed a steepening in income inequalities. Other forms of inequity related to opportunities in life, political participation, consumption and access to resources, among others, have persisted. Simultaneously, new forms of inequity have emerged, such as limited access to communication technologies, skill development and abilities.

Inequalities is in large part generated and sustained by various factors related to power imbalances, socio-cultural values, identities and diverse forms of exclusion. An individual will be treated inequitably on the basis of group identity such as gender, ethnicity or religion, or birthplace or parental background. Such discrimination reduces life opportunities and impairs enjoyment of basic rights and freedoms. However, no city can claim to be harmonious when large sections of the population are denied basic needs while others live in affluence. Therefore, the pursuit of equity is not only fundamental for the reduction of poverty and exclusion; it is also inherent to

progress and development. A more equitable distribution of resources and opportunities; just laws and enforcement combined with a fair system of rules and relationships that govern institutions will lead to better access to services and social amenities to enhance a city's prosperity, whatever its socio-economic status.

More equitable cities feature lower degrees not just of poverty, but also ill health, exposure to various risks, violence and crime, mental illness and environmental problems. Prosperous, and equitable cities routinely safeguard the whole population against a wide variety of existing, evolving and foreseeable risks (of a legal, socioeconomic, health, environmental and other nature), including through (re) distribution of the benefits of development. These safeguards provide the individual and collective sense of confidence in the present and the future that is inherent to shared prosperity; the absence of which triggered phenomena such as the Arab Spring. A fair amount of this confidence lies in the availability of multiple opportunities for individuals to fulfil their potential.

Equity does not only enhance economic efficiency, which is needed to raise general well-being in the city; it also creates conditions for people to improve their capacities to represent themselves and participate in a more inclusive manner in a city's cultural and political life. In the *State of the World's Cities 2010/11* report, UN-Habitat laid down a series of practical steps to help cities become more inclusive from an equity perspective. These four steps include: providing universal public services, social protection, targeted action for underprivileged groups, and mechanisms for wealth redistribution.

Table 5.1

**Equity in Four Cities Youth Field Survey Responses in Accra, Bangalore, Cairo, and São Paulo (per cent)**

|                                                                                                                                 | Accra | Bangalore | Cairo | São Paulo | All Cities |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|------------|
| <b>Political inclusion</b>                                                                                                      |       |           |       |           |            |
| The work of the main agency responsible for ensuring equitable development in city is transparent and accountable               | 30    | 55        | 3     | 34        | 29         |
| Different minority groups are represented in the city's governance structures                                                   | 47    | 36        | 1     | 31        | 28         |
| Your city enables democratic local decision making                                                                              | 66    | 50        | 2     | 43        | 39         |
| Local institutions support people's civic and political involvement                                                             | 71    | 49        | 2     | 43        | 40         |
| Your city is removing barriers that limit people's ability to exercise their civic rights and to participate in decision making | 54    | 40        | 4     | 40        | 33         |
| <b>Economic inclusion</b>                                                                                                       |       |           |       |           |            |
| There have been sustained policies and programs over the past five years to reduce youth poverty                                | 52    | 54        | 4     | 57        | 40         |
| <b>Social inclusion</b>                                                                                                         |       |           |       |           |            |
| Your city recognizes and promotes its residents' cultural rights                                                                | 72    | 54        | 3     | 54        | 44         |
| Your city protects and promotes the human rights of all people                                                                  | 79    | 41        | 2     | 31        | 37         |
| Gender disparities in access to different opportunities are being reduced                                                       | 62    | 60        | 23    | 53        | 48         |
| <i>Source: UN-Habitat Youth Survey (2012)</i>                                                                                   |       |           |       |           |            |

Many young people struggle to make ends meet in the informal sector and support themselves through uncertain livelihoods. Overall, they do not share in and enjoy the prosperity of their cities but rather face daily challenges and indignities resulting from persistent poverty. Their economic disadvantages may be exacerbated by discriminatory practices, hindering their access to life chances and, in the long term, lowering the quality of their personal and family lives while also limiting the contributions they can make to their communities.

Poverty is multidimensional. It includes monetary elements of income and wealth, but it also comprises less tangible aspects such as property rights, and access to services and infrastructure. In all of these and related aspects, poverty makes it difficult for young people to meet their basic needs and it blocks their access to opportunities that lead to prosperity. For many their poverty is accentuated by inequities; they experience poverty when others delight in the pleasures of wealth. While inequality simply refers to different qualities (e.g., amounts, levels), inequity denotes an associated dimension of social injustice. Inequality may be justifiable. For example, young children may need more medical care than healthy adults. However, inequity is inequality that is considered unjust, such

as when women do not hold the same rights as men. Abundant research has demonstrated the far-reaching implications of societal inequities. While objective measures of such inequities are essential to the formulation of redistributive policies and the implementation of appropriate programs, studies have also shown the critical importance of subjective perceptions of inequity to people's well-being and quality of life.<sup>1</sup> The following sections of this report present findings from field surveys carried out among young people in Accra, Bangalore, Cairo, and São Paulo.

Overall, youth in Accra speak more favorably about equity in their city, followed by youth in Bangalore, with São Paulo not far behind. The negative assessment by the young respondents in Cairo is noteworthy but strikingly, to each of nine questions asking about equity, more than 50 per cent of the young people who participated in the field surveys, conducted in these four cities, responded negatively (See Table 5.1). When examining the youth's responses more closely, it is possible to distinguish several aspects of inequity: political, economic, and socio-cultural.

## POLITICAL INCLUSION

On average, respondents were especially critical of the lack of transparency and accountability of the main agency responsible for ensuring equitable development in their city, and of the lack of representation of minority groups in the city's governance structures (see Table 5.1). On average, only 39 per cent agreed that their city is enabling democratic local decision making and just 40 per cent agreed that local institutions support people's civic and political involvement. An even smaller proportion (33per cent) believes that their city government is removing barriers that limit people's ability to exercise their civic rights and to participate in decision making. Just 15 per cent rank their national and city governments as being very aware and active when it comes to equity and an overwhelming 78 per cent say that different levels of governments do not work together to develop appropriate initiatives to promote urban equality. These findings indicate a largely marginalized youth population that does not have a high opinion of government policies and of the people and organizations responsible for them.

When asked why initiatives promoting youth equity are not effective, not surprisingly, lack of political will is mentioned by 50 per cent of youth across the four cities, cited more than three times as the next factors (institutions not performing efficiently and lack of adequate funding, each 15 per cent). Lack of political will is seen as especially prevalent by youth in Cairo (73 per cent), while it is the most important reason for 33 per cent in Accra where it is just slightly more important than inefficient institutions (31 per cent), and lack of political will is foremost for 38 per cent in Bangalore, where as 30 per cent say that lack of citizen participation is key (See table 5.2 and Figure 5.1).

### Uneven Prosperity

Youth overwhelmingly believe that economic wealth and prosperity are not well distributed between different population groups:

- Bangalore: 68per cent
- São Paulo: 72per cent
- Accra: 88per cent
- Cairo: 99per cent

*UN-Habitat Field Survey*

## ECONOMIC INCLUSION

Even though young people are over-represented among the unemployed and underemployed, city governments are generally not seen actively pursuing ameliorative policies. In Cairo, a mere 4 per cent of youth respondents said that their city had had sustained policies and programs over the last five years to reduce youth poverty. In Accra, Bangalore and São Paulo, the corresponding proportions were just over 50 per cent (Table 5.1). They are not impressed by the outcomes of these efforts. Only 23 per cent say that economic growth in their city is effective or very effective in promoting progress and well-being among youth. Moreover, insofar as urban policies produce results, youth see the economic benefits as being unevenly distributed. They associate economic prosperity benefits to the following: youth connected to politicians and decision makers (79 per cent), youth from wealthy homes (78 per cent), and well educated youth (57 per cent). In other words, a large majority believe that a good education does not overcome the disadvantages of not being born into a wealthy

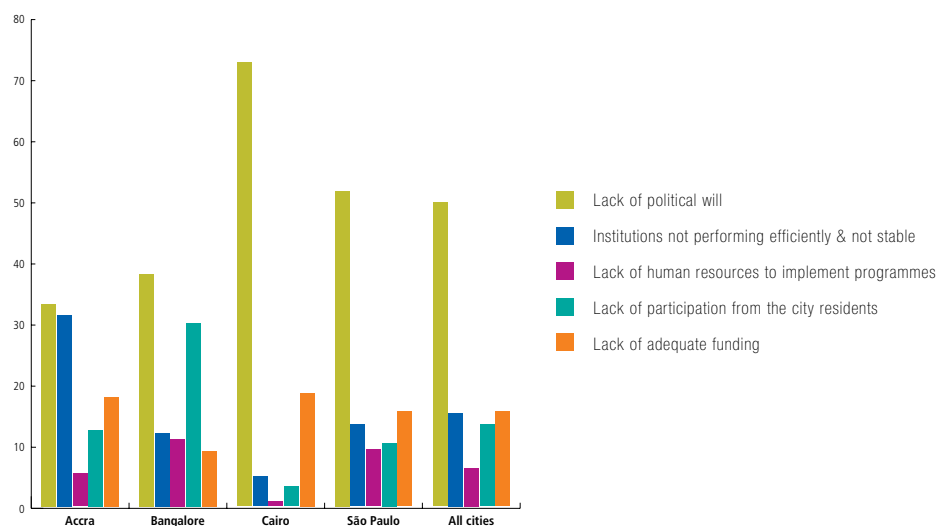
Table 5.2

### Reasons why Urban Initiatives Promoting Youth Equity are not Effective

|                                                      | Accra  | Bangalore | Cairo  | São Paulo | All cities |
|------------------------------------------------------|--------|-----------|--------|-----------|------------|
| Lack of political will                               | 33.04  | 38.00     | 72.58  | 51.55     | 49.65      |
| Institutions not performing efficiently & not stable | 31.25  | 12.00     | 4.84   | 13.40     | 15.24      |
| Lack of human resources to implement programmes      | 5.36   | 11.00     | 0.81   | 9.28      | 6.24       |
| Lack of participation from the city residents        | 12.50  | 30.00     | 3.23   | 10.31     | 13.39      |
| Lack of adequate funding                             | 17.86  | 9.00      | 18.55  | 15.46     | 15.47      |
| Total                                                | 100.00 | 100.00    | 100.00 | 100.00    | 100.00     |

Source: UN-Habitat Youth Survey (2012)

Figure 5.1

**Reasons why Urban Initiatives Promoting Youth Equity are not Effective**

Source: UN-Habitat Youth Survey ( 2012)

family or lack of access to influential individuals. Less than 25 per cent see economic prosperity in their city as beneficial to youth living in poverty. The assessments are especially pessimistic in Cairo, where only 2 per cent see benefits for those in poverty and only 11 per cent believe there are benefits for the well-educated (See Table 5.3 and Figure 5.2).

### Socio-cultural inclusion

In Accra, more than 70 per cent agreed that the city government recognizes and promotes its residents' cultural rights. In Bangalore and São Paulo the corresponding proportion was 54 per cent, while it was only 3 per cent in Cairo. In the last city, youth were more positive about the reduction of gender disparities in access to opportunities (23 per cent), but still far less optimistic than their counterparts in the other three cities in the study. Except for those in Accra, young people were less sanguine about the protection of the

human rights of all people. These findings indicate that large segments of the youth population in these four cities feel disenfranchised.

### Factors Limiting Equality for Youth

The findings reported above clearly indicate that youth participating in the four cities hold rather dire views of equitable prosperity in their cities and often feel excluded politically, economically and socially. It is important to take note of these perceptions because youth represent a large proportion of the urban population. It is, therefore, well advised to consider as well the factors that youth consider as limiting greater levels of equality. Table 5.4 and Figure 5.3 provide further insight in this regard. Asked to rank nine factors on a five-point scale in terms of their importance, on average, the youth ranked lack of employment as most important at 3.77.

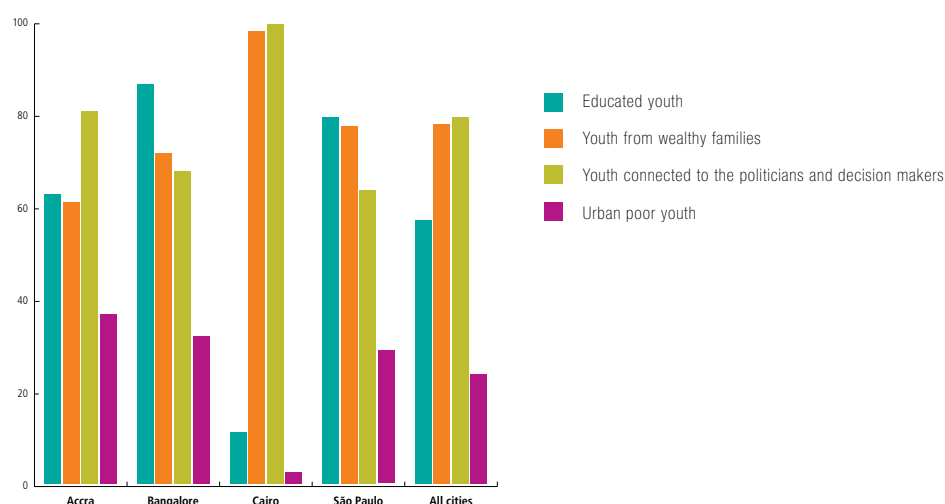
Table 5.3

**Who Benefits from Economic Prosperity?**

|                                                        | Accra | Bangalore | Cairo | São Paulo | All cities |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|------------|
| Educated youth                                         | 62.50 | 86.32     | 11.20 | 79.21     | 56.81      |
| Youth from wealthy families                            | 60.71 | 71.43     | 97.60 | 77.23     | 77.62      |
| Youth connected to the politicians and decision makers | 80.36 | 67.42     | 99.20 | 63.37     | 79.16      |
| Urban poor youth                                       | 36.61 | 31.76     | 2.42  | 28.71     | 23.70      |

Source: UN-Habitat Youth Survey ( 2012)

Figure 5.2

**Who Benefits from Economic Prosperity?**

Source: UN-Habitat Youth Survey (2012)

The one exception was Cairo, where public institutions controlled by the ruling elite were seen as the greatest limitation at 3.84 (Table 5.4). Unequal access to education is also considered an important barrier, although, as shown above, educational advancement is not seen as sufficient to overcome disadvantages of family origin in terms of wealth and connections. In the light of young people's unfavorable views of government initiatives to redress inequitable conditions, it is a further concern that youth generally believes that a weak civil society not, able to claim and protect their rights, is a contributing factor as well. Other research, conducted in the City of Santo Andre, South Eastern Brazil, with census data

and local socioeconomic indicators, found that youth aged 15 to 24 with access to wealth lived in more central locations, whereas others less fortunate lived in more peripheral areas. The study found significant inequalities regarding conditions of work, study and living.<sup>2</sup> This study supports the findings from the urban youth in the UN-Habitat field survey who believe that their city's resources are often localized and that spatial structure plays a big role in who has access to what. Consequently, youth rank locational patterns where they live as an important factor in determining levels of equality (Table 5.4 and Figure 5.3)

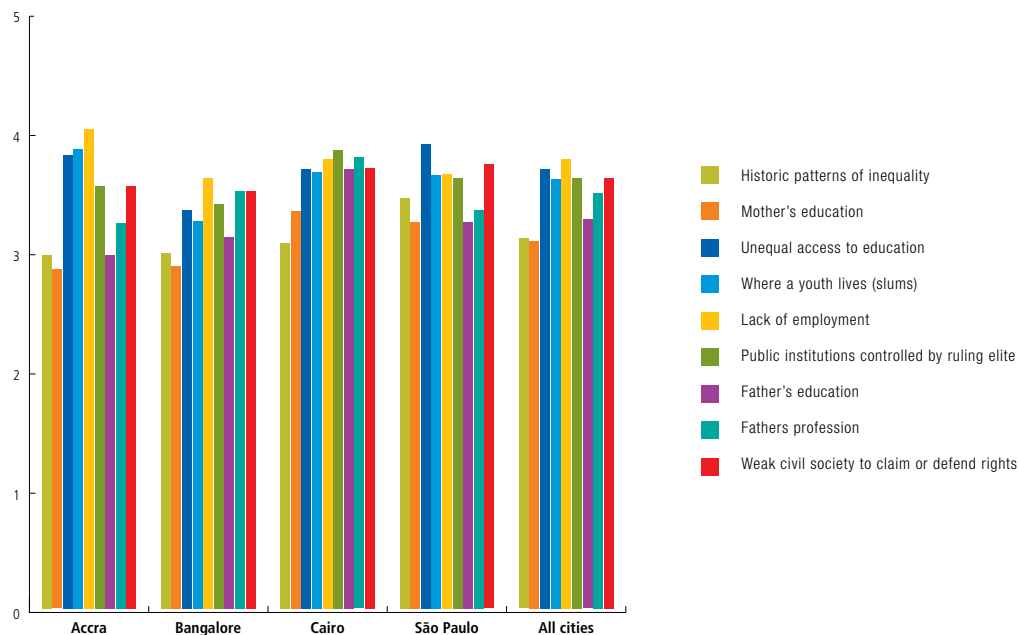
Table 5.4

**Factors Limiting Greater Equality for Youth in Four Cities**

|                                                | Accra | Bangalore | Cairo | São Paulo | All cities |
|------------------------------------------------|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|------------|
| Historic patterns of inequality                | 2.96  | 2.98      | 3.06  | 3.44      | 3.10       |
| Mother's education                             | 2.84  | 2.87      | 3.33  | 3.24      | 3.08       |
| Unequal access to education                    | 3.80  | 3.34      | 3.68  | 3.89      | 3.68       |
| Where a youth lives (slums)                    | 3.85  | 3.25      | 3.66  | 3.63      | 3.60       |
| Lack of employment                             | 4.02  | 3.61      | 3.77  | 3.64      | 3.77       |
| Public institutions controlled by ruling elite | 3.54  | 3.39      | 3.84  | 3.61      | 3.61       |
| Father's education                             | 2.96  | 3.11      | 3.68  | 3.24      | 3.26       |
| Fathers profession                             | 3.23  | 3.50      | 3.78  | 3.34      | 3.48       |
| Weak civil society to defend rights            | 3.54  | 3.50      | 3.69  | 3.72      | 3.61       |

Source: UN-Habitat Youth Survey (2012)

Figure 5.3

**Factors Limiting Greater Equality for Youth in Four Cities**

Source: UN-Habitat Youth Survey (2012)

**SOCIETAL IMPLICATIONS OF INEQUALITY**

In previous chapters of this report, we have seen how inequality does manifest itself not just as one form of exclusion. The youths in all the studied cities reported feelings of exclusion in the political, economic and social spheres. Inequality permeates all components of youth prosperity in these cities. It is evident in access to education and employment, access to urban infrastructural elements such as electricity, sanitation and transportation, and in various aspects of quality of life such as housing, public spaces, and personal safety.

It is important to recognize that inequality affects not just individual lives, but has repercussions for the society as a whole. Indeed, a recent wide-ranging multi-nation study describes inequality as a general societal dysfunction.<sup>3</sup>

Using data from multiple sources, this research shows clear associations between income disparities and the quality of health, social relationships and human capital. The greater the inequality, the higher the levels of distrust, homicides, teenage birth rates, child conflicts, drug abuse, infant mortality, obesity, imprisonment rates, and school drop-out rates. The same research also reveals that inequality goes along with lower levels of social capital, shorter life expectancy, lower math and literacy scores, less social mobility and lower scores on a United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) index comprising 40 indicators of child well-being (See Figures 5.4 and 5.5). Furthermore, while

it is those living in poverty who are most affected by inequality, cross-national comparison shows that those of comparable higher social classes are also impacted with individuals in more unequal societies doing worse than their counterparts in more equal societies.<sup>4</sup>

**Bringing Attention to Unequal Infrastructure: Flood Protection in São Paulo**

"We wanted to tell people that the floods were preventable and weren't coincidental but a strategy to pressure residents to leave. Walking on stilts in the middle of the flood was a way to draw attention to the facts hidden in the media, a situation invisible to the rest of the population"

**Leandro, 26**  
São Paulo

São Paulo has developed programs that aim to empower local actors to work in coordinated fashion toward improvements in the city's quality of life. Successful experiments show that programs to foster cooperation between local actors, non governmental organizations, community organizations, and municipal governments have very positive effects.<sup>5</sup>

## Box 5.1

**Youth-Led Development in Civic Participation and Job Creation**

Restless Development (RD) is an international youth-led development agency working in over 50 countries to promote youth civic participation, livelihoods and employment, and sexual reproductive health. RD works to ensure governments and policy makers recognize and support the active role of young people in society at all levels; empowers young people with the skills, inspiration and resources to take up productive livelihoods and employment opportunities that contribute to improved household income and their local and national economies. Restless Development currently works full-time in India, Nepal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Source: [www.restlessdevelopment.org](http://www.restlessdevelopment.org)

Students in a technical education program supported by the World Bank in Antioquia, Colombia. © Charlotte Kesi /World Bank



The challenge of these programs is to increase social capital available to poor urban dwellers by creating and reinforcing dense networks of intermediate organizations-civil associations, churches, community groups, schools, professional associations. Digital inclusion, social entrepreneurship, income generation, educational subsidies and job training, offer different ways of reducing social exclusion.<sup>6</sup>

All depend significantly on local organizational capacities and potential individual mobilization. Important changes are reported to occur when they are implemented cooperatively by local actors, government officials, and professionals within organized civil society.<sup>7</sup>

The concluding chapter will focus on the policy implications and recommendations arising from the observations presented in this and preceding chapters. The final chapter considers recommendations suggested by the youth in the cities of Accra, Bangalore, Cairo and São Paulo, as well as recommendations emerging from the wider recent literature that is concerned with youth and urban development.

**Safety of young women**

Police are better known for their 'moral policing' than for protecting women late at night

*Focus group discussion Bangalore*

**The Need to Be Involved**

"If we stay in our own community, in the poor suburbs, waiting for things to fall into our laps, it's not going to happen. We have to reach out, go after things"

**Alisson, 18**  
São Paulo

## Box 5.2

**Urban Youth in Governance and Development**

The Northern Patriots in Research and Advocacy (NORPRA)'s Urban Youth in Governance and Development (UYOGOD) Project aims to reduce poverty and unemployment through active participation of disadvantaged youth in urban governance in Bolgatanga Township (Ghana). UYOGOD's major components include beneficiary and volunteer mobilization; meeting between beneficiaries and Local Government Authorities; and sensitization on policy interventions for youth empowerment. Meetings and forums allow youth beneficiaries to discuss and understand youth issues with city officials and politicians. UYOGOD is funded by UN-Habitat's Urban Youth Fund.

Source: NORPRA First Quarter Report for 2011. Urban Youth in Governance and Development (available: [www.globalyouthdesk.org](http://www.globalyouthdesk.org))

UN-Habitat Urban Youth Fund Grantees.  
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## Endnotes

1. See, for example, Wilkinson and Pickett (2009)
2. Yonekura, Tatiana; Soares, Cassia Baldini; Minuci, Elaine Garcia; Sivali Campos, Celia Maria; Trape, Carla Andrea (2010)
3. Ibid., p. 173 ff.
4. Ibid.
5. Jacobi (2006)
6. 52 Ibid.
7. 53 Ibid

# Chapter 6.0



## Conclusions and Recommendations

This report is concerned with the ways and the extent to which youth benefit from and contribute to the prosperity of the cities where they live. The conceptual framework adopted for the report views prosperity as possessing dimensions related to quality of life, economic productivity and employment, urban infrastructure and services, and equity. Each of the preceding chapters focused and examined components of these dimensions. Importantly, these chapters brought attention to the personal perceptions that youth hold of their living situation. The decision to look at current urban developments through the eyes of young people themselves is deliberate. It recognizes that young people's choices regarding their own lives are based on how they themselves assess their personal situation, rather than a macro-level lens, giving an aggregate perspective from above that does not do justice to their individual situation. As such, this report aims to create a platform for young people to have their voices heard, in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. GA resolution. In summary, this report argues that city governments should treat their young populations not as a problem and a burden, but as a resource and an opportunity to attain greater prosperity. The participation of young people in sustainable urban growth is also a sound investment in national development.

This final chapter reviews and summarizes the findings presented in the earlier chapters that discussed the field surveys conducted by UN-Habitat in Accra, Bangalore, Cairo and São Paulo. Taking into account and contextualized in the wider recent literature, these observations form the basis for recommendations for policy and further research.

### FINDINGS FROM THE FIELD SURVEYS

Data was collected from a cross-section of young people through focus groups and a survey with questions asking about the four components of prosperity. The participating youth were not chosen to be representative of all young people in these cities, but to indicate and illustrate a range of perceptions and views found among them. They resided in four cities of Accra, Bangalore, Cairo, and São Paulo. These four cities were not selected to be representative of all cities in the developing world. Rather, they provide a glimpse of the challenges and opportunities faced by young people in these and many other cities.

**Quality of Life:** When asked about a range of factors contributing to their sense of prosperity, several factors, including jobs, education, housing, and transportation stood out. Education was ranked as the most important factor, followed by meaningful employment and a decent income. Also considered important were safety to live and work freely without fear and a sense of equity. Youth in Cairo point to easy access to the internet as the second most important factor contributing to prosperity. Active participation in community affairs was consistently rated as the factor least contributing to urban prosperity, likely reflecting young people's lack of influence in local decision making. A striking finding is that,

overall, only one out of every four young people surveyed opined that they are able to live and work freely without fear. In São Paulo, only 1 per cent of surveyed youth feel safe. Safety concerns are generally more prevalent among women.

**Productivity and employment:** Youth population growth and current economic trends are producing a growing job deficit for young people and continue to present tremendous challenges for local and national policy makers. Youth unemployment rates remain near all-time highs, with the highest rates seen in North Africa, the Middle East and some countries in Europe. Among young people, women often face added difficulties when seeking jobs because of gender discrimination. This gender gap is especially large in South Asia (34.1 per cent), the Middle East (33.6 per cent), North Africa (27.4 per cent), and Latin America & the Caribbean (19.9 per cent).

Many of the surveyed youth (38 per cent) see their city as neither making enough efforts nor committed to promoting economic productivity, with a larger proportion in older age groups saying so. A majority (64 per cent) say their city does not have a long-term youth-focused plan. Corruption and lack of good governance were cited as the most important hindrance to youth contributions to economic productivity.

**Infrastructure:** Urban prosperity requires a supportive physical infrastructure. Yet, no less than 75 per cent of the surveyed youth in Accra, Bangalore, Cairo and São Paulo stated that the infrastructural resources in their city do not adequately support productive activities. More than 90 per cent of them see congested roads as a problem negatively affecting urban prosperity. They also view provisions that facilitate spatial mobility as being most important, followed by access to education and health services. Youth generally rated access to telecommunications and power favourably, but many agree that adequate sanitation is a problem. Of nine major infrastructural components, even the least problematic one (interruption of telephone lines) was cited by almost half of all respondents as having negative prosperity impacts. Overall, youth in the

UN-Habitat study believe that the urban infrastructure in the cities where they live and work needs significant improvement in order for them to attain greater prosperity. They perceive the high costs of living as the most undesirable outcome of underdeveloped urban infrastructure and they opined that the burdens of these deficiencies are disproportionately borne by low-income populations, whose communities are made more vulnerable.

**Equity:** The UN-Habitat's field surveys revealed that youths in the four cities experience marginalization in the political, economic and social sphere. For example, a majority take the view that the main agency responsible for equitable development in their city is not transparent and the minority are not ably represented at the local government. Likewise, most do not discern sustained policies to reduce youth poverty or adequate protection of human rights. Youths cited lack of political will as one of the reasons for lack of effectiveness of youth equity initiatives. Only 23 per cent find that economic growth in their city promotes youth well-being, and they observed that the benefits of that growth are unevenly distributed, with advantages accruing primarily to those connected to politicians or born into wealthy families. Educational advantage is not seen as sufficient to overcome these inequities.

**Recommendations:** Policymakers and researchers have shown increasing interest in young people's economic and political marginalization. The urgency of addressing its negative fall-out for society at large is reflected in the tone of titles that headline recent reports, including terms such as "crisis" and "disaster."<sup>1</sup> This burgeoning interest is dominated by macro-economic concerns with security, often in relation to financial stability and liberalizing markets. Much less attention is given to essential local aspects of the creation of decent jobs, earning a living wage, and the training and education needed to obtain the skills required for those jobs.

Further, policy attempts to address the global economic crisis post-2008 have suffered from the incompatibility of austerity

Table 6.1

**Incidence of austerity measures in 158 countries, 2010-2012<sup>3</sup>**

| <b>Authority Measures</b>                             | <b># of Countries</b> | <b>per cent of Countries</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Contracting public expenditures in 2012*              | 133                   | 74.3                         |
| Cutting public capping the wage bill                  | 73                    | 46.2                         |
| Phasing-out or removing food and fuel subsidies       | 73                    | 46.2                         |
| Targeting or further rationalizing social safety nets | 55                    | 34.8                         |
| Reforming pensions                                    | 52                    | 32.9                         |

Source: Authors' analysis of 158 IMF country reports published from Jan. 2010 to Feb. 2010 (see Ortiz and Cummins 2012)

\* Authors' calculations based on IMF's World Economic Outlook (September 2011); contractions are based on charges in total expenditure as a percent of GDP, and the sample cover 179 countries.

measures and job creation. A review of recent IMF reports indicates four main policy options among the 158 countries surveyed. Overall, 73 countries are considering wage bill cuts/caps, 73 are eliminating or phasing out subsidies (incl. for food and fuel), 55 are targeting social protection for the poorest, and 52 are expanding retirement age and/or limiting benefits.<sup>2</sup>

All of these policies have the effect of reducing employment, exactly when young people need decent jobs more than ever.

### Youth Employment

Education does not produce jobs. Education raises productivity and fosters innovation, but promoting education will not generate jobs. The current generation is much more educated than their parents, but they have fewer employment opportunities. Young people need programs that help them enter the labor market

Source: Ortiz (2008)

**“Social Policy.”**In: *National Development Strategies, Policy Notes*. New York, United Nations

Recent reports, produced under ILO-auspices, contain numerous recommendations at various levels of specificity intended to create more job opportunities for young people.<sup>4</sup> They include broad rubrics such as wage policies, working conditions, and job security as well as more specific measures such as the Technical and Vocational Education and Training framework endorsed by members of the African Union; thereby establishing a national regulatory authority to oversee professional market demands and guide career development paths for youth (Tanzania), as well as setting up a Youth Desk in key government offices (Ethiopia). Often overlooked in these and other recommendations is the obvious fact that place matters. Young people live in particular places, with their own distinct characteristics, requiring policies and programs that match local needs and priorities.<sup>5</sup>

Young people's own voices are insufficiently heard in the formulation of recommendations and the decision making processes regarding those policies and programs.

The young people surveyed in UN-Habitat's field studies were not asked specifically about their recommendations for actions and policies that would increase their prosperity. However, several related questions elicited responses that are pertinent. For example, when asked which factor they see as most influential in creating greater prosperity for youth, the most common response is the need for “a system that creates equal opportunities for all” (29 per cent). This view was found especially among youths in Bangalore (39 per cent) and São Paulo (49 per cent), while youths in Accra pointed primarily to

Youth Training Centre in Kabul, Afghanistan.  
© UN-Habitat



policies to create employment, and those in Cairo did not settle on any factor in particular.

In responses to a similar question, inquiring about factors that have enabled youth to become more prosperous in their cities, the most common response was the “presence of institutions that perform efficiently” (20 per cent). However, in this case as well, there exist significant inter-city differences. In Accra, youth find the level of technological and industrial development more important, while the most frequent perception in Cairo is that no factors have led to greater youth prosperity in that city (See Table 6.2 and Figure 6.1).

Focus group discussions included very specific suggestions. For example, Ghanaian youth proposed that more attention

### Lead Country Network

The Youth Employment Network (YEN) Lead Country Network is a group of governments from developing and emerging countries that have voluntarily committed themselves to prioritizing youth employment on their national policy agendas. The Lead Country Network identifies benchmarks for successful youth employment initiatives that can be shared and replicated in peer Lead Countries. The Lead Country Network was created in 2001 under an U.N. resolution and as a joint policy response of the UN, World Bank, and ILO to improve employment opportunities for young people.

Source: [www.ilo.org/yen](http://www.ilo.org/yen)

Table 6.2

**Which factor has enabled youth in your city to become more prosperous?**

|                                                     | Accra  | Bangalore | Cairo  | São Paulo | All cities |
|-----------------------------------------------------|--------|-----------|--------|-----------|------------|
| A charismatic & committed leader                    | 12.50  | 8.82      | 3.20   | 6.00      | 7.52       |
| Presence of institutions that perform efficiently   | 9.82   | 35.29     | 15.20  | 23.00     | 20.27      |
| Development of a corporate culture promoting change | 5.36   | 9.80      | 1.60   | 21.00     | 8.88       |
| Creation of a new policy or legislation             | 4.46   | 0.98      | 8.80   | 6.00      | 5.24       |
| Presence of external support                        | 13.39  | 9.80      | 1.60   | 11.00     | 8.66       |
| Technological & industrial development              | 30.36  | 21.57     | 6.40   | 8.00      | 16.40      |
| Other                                               | 4.46   | 9.80      | 4.00   | 12.00     | 7.29       |
| None                                                | 19.64  | 3.92      | 59.20  | 13.00     | 25.74      |
|                                                     | 100.00 | 100.00    | 100.00 | 100.00    | 100.00     |

Source: UN-Habitat Youth Survey (2012).

**Global Partnership for Youth Employment**

The GPYE seeks to build and disseminate evidence on youth employment outcomes and effective programs to help address the challenges facing young people in their transition to work. The GPYE employs the technical and regional experience of partner organizations in youth employment research, programming, evaluation, and policy dialogue. The GPYE is a joint initiative of the World Bank Development Grant Facility, International Youth Foundation, Youth Employment Network, Arab Urban Development Institute, and the Understanding Children's Work Project. The partnership's work focuses on Africa and the Middle East, regions most in need of better evidence on effective approaches to promote youth employment.

Source: <http://www.gpye.org/about-us>

be given to the rights of young people who are homeless or living with a disability. They further recommended that the government should expedite implementation of the National Youth Policy as a framework to address identified youth challenges.<sup>7</sup> Youth in Cairo also argued for initiatives that guarantee rights to housing and social inclusion and advocated for a participatory approach to the city's youth policies.<sup>8</sup>

Youth in Bangalore pointed out the need for more space for youth participation, improved urban infrastructure and greater equity.<sup>9</sup>

As noted, the youths that participated in UN-Habitat's survey conducted for this report were not statistically representative of all young people in these cities. Rather, they were chosen to indicate and illustrate a range of perceptions and views found among them. Likewise, Accra, Bangalore, Cairo, and São Paulo, the four cities where the study was carried out, were not selected to be representative of all cities in the developing world. However, when taken together, the

survey responses and focus group discussions reveal noteworthy similarities as well as differences, which provide valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities faced by young people in these and many other cities around the world. Bearing these considerations and looking beyond specifics at the larger picture, several conclusions with implications for policy formulation and program development emerge from analysis of the responses provided by these young people.

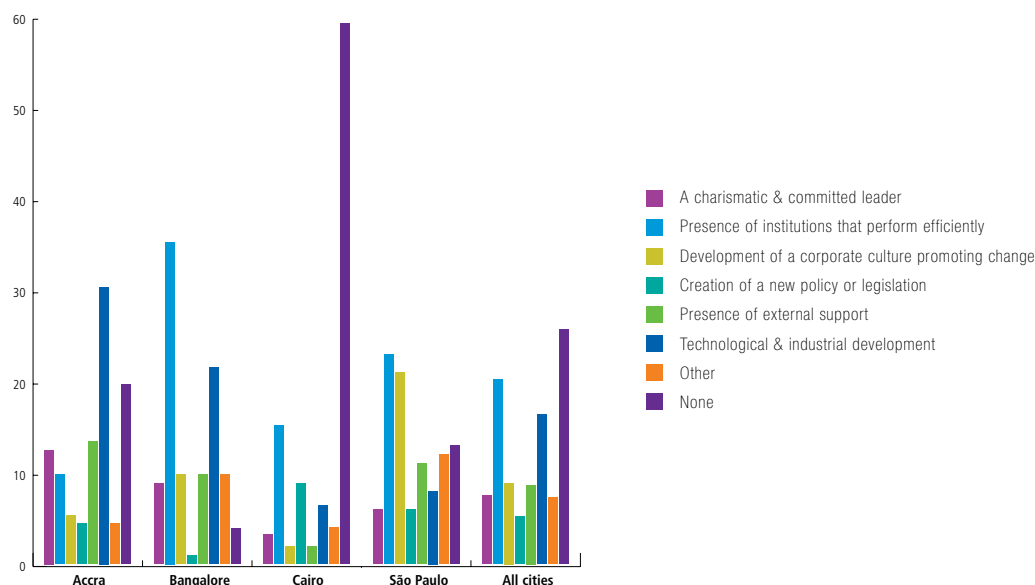
First of all, it is evident that clear differences exist in how youth in the four cities perceive key aspects of prosperity. This observation is important because it demonstrates that policies and programs aimed at increasing youth prosperity cannot be effective if they follow a standard, one-size-fits-all cookie-cutter approach. *Policy makers must take into account the specific circumstances of each city, and adjust their intervention strategies accordingly.* For example, youth in Cairo emphasized issues such as lack of adequate housing, gender inequality, and corruption, while youth in São Paulo prioritized issues related to safety and transportation.

Secondly, youth clearly link prospects for greater prosperity to improved educational opportunities. However, they are also keenly aware that, in their current reality, factors other than educational attainment are equally or more important. In this regard they point to observed advantages of having connections to influential politicians and benefits arising from being born into a wealthy family. They realize that these *inequalities are not overcome simply by better access to education alone, but also require eliminating corruption and improving the transparency and accountability of government system.* In other words, *improvements at the individual level must be accompanied by improvements at the city level.*

Thirdly, even with improvements as just mentioned, difficult challenges remain in the creation of jobs. Findings from the

Figure 6.1

## Which factor has enabled youth in your city to become more prosperous?



Source: UN-Habitat Youth Survey (2012).

four cities as well as the wider literature show that educational improvements can lead to greater dissatisfaction, if they do not go hand-in-hand with enhanced employment opportunities. This observation is important because it points to the *need for multi-pronged policies that are intersectoral* (see Box on Liberia, below, for an example of a program that creates green jobs while improving educational opportunities at the same time). There are programs galore that aim to provide young people with valuable skill sets, for example, construction techniques, information technology, sustainable resource operations and entrepreneurship. *These training programs are necessary and important, but at the same time, more attention must be given to what young people need in order to be able to profit from the qualifications they acquire.* For example, in addition to skills, young people also need access to credit to start a business, access to work space, access to land, and access to markets. They also need the removal of barriers related to discrimination based on age, gender, religion, race or tribal origin.

Fourth, greater prosperity for young people will require improved access for them to resources in the cities where they live. Those resources include educational opportunities, jobs, transportation, housing, medical care, among others. Access to these resources is essential for sustainable livelihoods and quality of life. Such access must be based on a normative framework for policies and programs that recognize young people's rights to the city. However, rights-based approaches

requires more than just access to available resources. They are also about young people's rights to help shape the future development of their cities. Therefore, *greater prosperity for urban youth simultaneously requires improved and equitable access to city resources as well as opportunities to participate meaningfully in the institutional processes and structures that determine the direction of urban development.*

The challenges faced by city governments seeking to increase the prosperity of their young residents are great. Indeed, it

### Center for Women's Empowerment

Youth Action International-Liberia developed a Women's Empowerment curriculum in consultation with a group of top universities including Harvard University. The multi-disciplinary program combines counseling, life skills and vocational training for young women in post-conflict Liberia. Young women are trained to work in various professions, such as tailoring, cosmetology, jewelry making, interior decorating, and baking/pastry making. Twenty cooperatives comprising 10 women each have already been formed and each cooperative receives micro-credit loans to start their businesses.

Source: YEN & UNIDO (2011).  
The Youth to Youth Fund in West Africa (*available: [www.unido.org](http://www.unido.org)*)

## BOX 6.1

**Renewable Energy for Youth Entrepreneurs: Liberian Initiative creates clean energy jobs while improving educational opportunities**

Access to modern energy services enables social and economic development, offering opportunities for improved lives and a path to prosperity. In Liberia, 97 per cent of the population live without access to electricity, and the impact on the children is considerable.

The youth of Liberia represent tremendous untapped potential. The majority of these young people have spent more time engaged in war than in school, yet they possess the innovative spirit necessary to foster and lead important socio-economic changes. For most, however, the sets every evening on their eagerness to learn. In the dark of night, children study outside - in parking lots and roadside gas stations - clustered together under the light of a streetlamp. Others read by the light of a kerosene flame, breathing in smoke and toxic fumes. Many have no light at all. Through the Global Light to Learn Challenge, ChildFund International and Nokero International are bringing sustainable and nontoxic solar lights to the children of Liberia. Students are able to study and read safely at home after dark, by checking out a light from school each night. The lights are also being used in classrooms to teach students about renewable energy and the power of the sun.

In an emerging follow on initiative that holds much promise, ChildFund and Nokero are engaging Liberian youth in programs that improve livelihoods, and at the same time, promote renewable energy solutions. Growing urbanization and a youth bulge mean increasing rates of young Liberians unemployed. Through the Renewable Energy for Youth Entrepreneurs program, ChildFund will train under and unemployed Liberian youth in business and entrepreneurial skills, and then set them up in clean energy businesses. This program will not only promote the adoption of renewable energy sources in a country where less than 3 per cent of households have access to electricity, it will bring lasting and positive health, economic, and environmental benefits to communities across Liberia.

must be recognized that local authorities cannot, by themselves, undertake all that needs to be done. A recent review of best practices in reducing poverty and enhancing urban livability shows that the most effective approaches involve collaboration in broad-based partnerships with the private sector and civil society organizations.

In these arrangements, the role of government is less of resource provider and more oriented to catalyzing, regulating and coordinating the work of all partners.

**Endnotes**

1. See, for example, the urgent tone of recent reports such as Ortiz & Cummins (2012); Agbor et al. (2012); ILO (2012).
2. Ortiz & Cummins (2012, pp. 25-6).
3. See Ortiz & Cummins (2012, p. 26).
4. Notable recent publications include, among others: ILO. 2012. Giving Youth a New Start. World of Work, no. 74, May (special issue).; ILO. 2012. The Youth Employment Crisis: Time for Action. International Labour Conference, 101st Session, report V; ILO. 2012. Promoting Green Entrepreneurship; First lessons from the youth entrepreneurship facility in Kenya 2010-2011, YEF/AFRICA.org.; ILO. 2012. Africa's Response to the Youth Employment Crisis; Synthesis of key issues and outcomes from eleven national events on youth employment in the African region, March-May. Freedman, David H. 2005. Youth employment promotion: A review of ILO work and the lessons learned. YEN Paper. Geneva: ILO.
5. A recent review of community-based employment initiatives underscores the importance of this point with case studies and a discussion of common lessons. See Kenyon, Peter. 2009. Partnerships for Youth Employment. Geneva: Youth Employment Programme, Employment Working Paper No. 33.
6. See background report on Accra, p. 13 and p. 16.
7. See background report on Cairo, passim.
8. See background report on Bangalore, p. 23.
9. See UN-Habitat (2009b) See also Kenyon (2009)

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# STATE OF URBAN YOUTH REPORT 2012-2013

## Youth in the Prosperity of Cities

The increasing prominence of the youth bulge in most urban areas presents a unique opportunity, as they represent the most dynamic human resource available. Their numbers today are larger than at any point in human history. Yet this group suffers the most from urban unemployment and often feels that they lack equal access to opportunities. This is especially acute in developing countries, which have a relatively youthful population that must be mobilised to realise greater economic and social development goals.

Today, 90 million youth around the world are unemployed (or 47 per cent of the total number of unemployed) and an additional 300 million belong in the “working poor” category —they are in unskilled, insecure jobs and live in poor conditions. This Report takes a closer look at the condition of youth in major urban centres in four developing nations - Accra (Ghana), São Paulo (Brazil), Bangalore (India) and Cairo (Egypt).

The conditions of these cities, and the way they are perceived by young people, are seen as representative of those in their respective regions, and therefore provide a reasonable basis for policy recommendations focused on shared prosperity for urban youth. The four-city survey demonstrates that young people suffer disproportionately from poor prospects and low quality employment.

The developing world continues to feature the fastest growing numbers of youth unemployment and persistent rural-to-urban migration; if these young people are to realise their potential, they need innovative solutions that are anchored in local realities.

Survey outcomes suggest that educational and training systems must be better aligned with the current and future needs of young people. In this regard, it would be helpful to share experiences and to investigate alternative educational arrangements for the provision of basic literacy, job skills training and lifelong education. This Report is a step in that direction.

Young people in the survey want equity for better shared prosperity both for their own and their cities' benefit, and they regard education as the best way of bringing about a more equitable type of urban development. They point to other significant challenges like structural constraints and lack of a democratic culture in their respective cities. These are issues over which local authorities wield a degree of influence that puts them in the best possible position to take remedial action. Local authorities must also seek to mainstream youth issues into all aspects of their planning and operations policy areas.

The report recommends a better match between skills and labour markets through vocational training and with the participation of the private sector. ‘Soft’ skills matter more in service-oriented economies, young people in informal settlements need entrepreneurial abilities, and capacities must be better geared to knowledge-intensive business services.

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**UN HABITAT**

United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

P O Box 30030, Nairobi, 00100, Kenya

Tel: +254 20 762 3025

Fax: +254 20 762 3080

[www.unhabitat.org/publications](http://www.unhabitat.org/publications)