Strengthening a Life-Cycle of Intergenerational Dialogue and Partnerships with Youth
Youth Bulge

- Over 1.8 Billion – and growing, youth are not a homogeneous group; their socio-economic, demographic, and geographical situations vary widely both within and between regions.

- The vast majority of the world’s youth – some 87 per cent – live in developing countries and face challenges such as limited access to resources, education, training, employment, and broader economic development opportunities.

- Access to different economic, cultural, natural, political, and social resources is still a challenge for young people around the world

- Approximately 64 and 84 per cent of African and Asian youth live in countries where at least one third of the population is considered to be under the poverty line –which basically means that they subsist on less than US$ 2 a day

- While accounting for only 25 per cent of the world’s working-age population in 2007, young people accounted for more than 40 per cent of the unemployed. Employment, also central to the aforementioned transition, is a problematic area, as youth is persistently overrepresented among the world’s unemployed.
Youth Bulge

• in North Africa and the Middle East, youth unemployment has reached 30 per cent – the highest worldwide

• Latin American youth was worse off in 2007 than they were fifteen years before. An astounding 27 per cent of those aged 20-24 were neither studying nor working

• Young people today have very different lives to those of previous generations.

• The World Health Organization (WHO) classifies the causes of death intro three categories: 1. Infectious and parasitic diseases, respiratory infections and maternal and perinatal conditions; 2. non-communicable diseases; and 3. encompasses all injuries

• In South Asia, for example, they are the cause of 40 and 29 per cent of female and male deaths of those aged 10-24. Much worse is the situation in Africa, where they cause 70 and 44 per cent of female and male deaths in the same age group. This region accounts for 83 per cent of the world’s HIV/AIDS-related deaths between the ages of 10 and 24.
Figure: Global median ages in 2012
Intergenerational Partnerships

• Intergenerational relations have typically centered on sharing knowledge, cultural norms, traditions as well as reciprocal care, support and exchange of resources.

• Today, demographic transitions, changes in family structures and living arrangements along with migration trends are increasingly influencing relationships across.

• With rising longevity and declining fertility, the world is aging rapidly. By 2050, the number of people over 60 is projected to increase by 50 per cent in developed countries and triple in developing countries, with global life expectancy increasing to 75 years.

• While older adults may have more opportunities to share knowledge and resources with younger generations, they are also more likely to depend on the support of younger generations for longer periods of time.
Intergenerational Partnerships

• Furthermore, due to growing unemployment among youth, housing shortages or insufficient means to gain independence, young people may also be dependent longer on their parents.

• Although still common in parts of the world, multigenerational families with intergenerational support and reliance are rapidly declining, especially in urban areas.

• Families are becoming smaller, and young people are postponing marriage, having fewer children and getting divorced.

• In rural settings, intergenerational patterns of socialization are often disrupted as youth migrate to cities, missing opportunities to benefit from the knowledge and guidance of older family members.

• Such trends pose new demands on family members and test the traditional grandparent-parent-youth relationships.
The United Nations and Intergenerational Partnership

• In 2007 the General Assembly adopted a supplement to the World Programme of Action for Youth, which included Intergenerational Relations as a priority area. Its proposals for action focus on strengthening families, empowering young women and bolstering intergenerational solidarity.

• The 2009 UN International Experts Group meeting on “Family Policy in a Changing World: Promoting Social Protection and Intergenerational Solidarity” recommended building partnerships and cooperation between youth and older persons organizations.

• The 2002 Madrid International Plan of Action on Aging notes that solidarity among generations is fundamental to an intergenerational society that values and demonstrates equity and reciprocity between generations.

• The 2009 meeting on “Family Policy in a Changing World: Promoting Social Protection and Intergenerational Solidarity” recommended partnerships and cooperation between youth and older persons organizations, community-based active ageing centres and research on intergenerational transfers to be used in national development plans.
World Programme of Action for Youth: O. Intergenerational issues

• At the family and community levels, intergenerational ties can be valuable for everyone. Individual and family choices, geographical mobility and the pressures of contemporary life can keep people apart, yet the great majority of people in all cultures maintain close relations with their families throughout their lives.

• These relationships work in both directions, with older persons often providing significant contributions financially, emotionally and in respect of the education and care of grandchildren and other kin, thereby making a crucial contribution to the stability of the family unit.

• The weakening of intergenerational connections in the context of ageing societies implies that various needs of youth, children and older persons, which may have been supported through intricate and complex familial relationships, are increasingly not being met and are instead becoming the responsibility of the State or the private sector.
World Programme of Action for Youth: O. Intergenerational issues

• It is therefore incumbent on Governments and relevant sectors of society to develop programmes that renew or restore intergenerational solidarity. Where there has already been substantial erosion of the ability of communities to meet this objective, Governments should intervene to ensure that basic needs for protection are met.

Proposals for action

1. Strengthening families

• While respecting individual preferences for living arrangements, all sectors of society, including Governments, should develop programmes to strengthen families and to foster intergenerational relations.

2. Empowering young women

• Governments should promote greater participation by young women in the labour force, including those living in rural and remote areas, by providing and developing the necessary skills to enable them to find employment, especially taking measures to eliminate male and female stereotypes, promoting role models and facilitating better reconciliation of work and family life.
World Programme of Action for Youth: O. Intergenerational issues

*Strengthening intergenerational solidarity*

- Government and private sector businesses should capitalize on the opportunity to use the experience and skills of older workers to train younger and newer employees.

- Governments should promote equality and solidarity between generations, including by offering young people full and effective participation in poverty eradication, employment creation and social integration programmes within their societies.

- All sectors of society should be encouraged to develop reciprocity in learning, which provides older persons with opportunities to learn from younger generations.

- Where traditional forms of social support have been reduced by migration, globalization and related situations, Governments should work with nongovernmental organizations and the private sector to provide assistance and support to older caregivers, especially those providing care for HIV/AIDS orphans, in meeting the needs of their children and grandchildren.
World Programme of Action for Youth: O. Intergenerational issues

- Governments should take steps to strengthen solidarity among generations and intergenerational partnerships through the promotion of activities that support intergenerational communication and understanding, and should encourage mutually responsive relationships between generations.

- The full and effective participation of young people and youth organizations at the local, national, regional and international levels is important for the realization of the Millennium Development Goals.

- The promotion and implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, and the evaluation of the progress achieved and the obstacles encountered in its implementation, and for support of the activities of mechanisms that have been set up by young people and youth organizations.

- Governments should encourage their participation in actions and decisions and in strengthening efforts to implement the World Programme of Action, bearing in mind that young women and young men are active agents in decision-making processes and for positive change and development in society.
UN Secretary General Report on Implementation of the World Programme for Action on Youth

• ...41. Intergenerational relations also concern cultural trends. In the transitional phase from childhood to adulthood, young people create their own identity, adopting the cultural norms and values of their parents and adapting them to the society they encounter around them. The globalization of media has enlarged the scope of norms and values upon which young people draw in creating their identities. Young people are increasingly taking over aspects of cultures from around the world and incorporating them into their own identity. This may cause cultural gaps with their parents and grandparents to widen. The intergenerational digital divide between the young and old generations also contributes to this gap....
Progress on Inter-generational Partnerships

- There is a growing understanding of the importance of social integration and intergenerational solidarity, rooted in interdependence among generations during the lifecycle.

- The issues of intergenerational transmission of poverty and ways to prevent it by investing in children, youth and strong families have received more attention over the past years as well.

- Conditional cash transfer for vulnerable families, implemented in many Latin American countries helped to reduce poverty, improve health and nutrition of children and reduce child labour.
Youth as Right Holders and Youth Responsibilities

- A positive conversation among youth regarding their own human rights will prepare them to actively engage and participate in processes that transform their reality and that of others around them.

- A focus on their responsibilities is key to prepare them as active and engagement global citizens.

- For many, opportunities begin in their family or caregiving settings, in their school and workplace, and in their community. It is vital to emphasize that, more often than not, youth claim their human rights at the local level.

- This experience, nevertheless, may have a ripple effect in subnational and national processes. And youth action in this regard can be manifested both in individual and collective behaviour, all with the aim of positive social change.

- There is no doubt that, as recent events attest, youth are making important contributions to their societies by exercising their voice. The more they are involved in public affairs, the more they learn and develop as citizens.
Modelling inclusive participatory behaviour is crucial in building a human rights culture among youth. Figure shows the need to build and support sustainable capacity of rights holders, in this case youth from diverse backgrounds. It call for a continuous dialogue between generations.
Intergenerational dialogue between adults and children/youth of different ages can also be encouraged, thus promoting increased understanding and collaboration among the generations.
Participation is a fundamental right, and also the key to inter-generational dialogue

• Through active participation, youth are empowered to play a vital role in their own development as well as in that of their communities. This allows them not only to learn vital life-skills, but also to develop knowledge on human rights. To participate effectively, young people must be given the proper tools, such as education about and access to mechanisms to enforce their human rights.

• Many governments are yet to develop national strategic frameworks and action plans to promote meaningful youth participation in issues that affect them. Some other challenges include a lack of laws that promote youth participation; a limited or absence of capacity to promote participation; inadequate structures, mechanisms and processes to enable inclusive participation of all youth, including indigenous youth, youth affected by HIV/AIDS, youth slum dwellers, and youth with disabilities.
Case Study 1: Inter-generational outreach in the My World 2015 Survey and World We Want 2015 People’s Platform
My World Global Priorities by Age Segments

224,897 Votes  
15 & Younger

- A good education
- Better healthcare
- Better job opportunities
- Affordable and nutritious food
- Access to clean water and sanitation
- An honest and responsive government
- Protection against crime and violence
- Equality between men and women
- Support for people who can't work
- Freedom from discrimination and persecution
- Better transport and roads
- Phone and internet access
- Reliable energy at home
- Political freedoms
- Action taken on climate change

852,397 Votes  
16-30

- A good education
- Better healthcare
- Better job opportunities
- Affordable and nutritious food
- Access to clean water and sanitation
- An honest and responsive government
- Protection against crime and violence
- Equality between men and women
- Support for people who can't work
- Freedom from discrimination and persecution
- Better transport and roads
- Phone and internet access
- Reliable energy at home
- Political freedoms
- Action taken on climate change

338,118 Votes  
31-45

- A good education
- Better healthcare
- Better job opportunities
- Affordable and nutritious food
- Access to clean water and sanitation
- An honest and responsive government
- Protection against crime and violence
- Equality between men and women
- Support for people who can't work
- Freedom from discrimination and persecution
- Better transport and roads
- Phone and internet access
- Reliable energy at home
- Political freedoms
- Action taken on climate change

109,455 Votes  
46-60

- A good education
- Better healthcare
- An honest and responsive government
- Affordable and nutritious food
- Access to clean water and sanitation
- Freedom from discrimination and persecution
- Protection against crime and violence
- Equality between men and women
- Support for people who can't work
- Freedom from discrimination and persecution
- Political freedoms
- Phone and internet access
- Reliable energy at home
- Action taken on climate change

42,428 Votes  
61 & Older

- A good education
- Better healthcare
- An honest and responsive government
- Affordable and nutritious food
- Access to clean water and sanitation
- Freedom from discrimination and persecution
- Protection against crime and violence
- Equality between men and women
- Support for people who can't work
- Freedom from discrimination and persecution
- Political freedoms
- Phone and internet access
- Reliable energy at home
- Action taken on climate change
- Phone and internet access
Data Highlights

• Out of 1,592,845 total voters, 1,077,294 or 67.63% are below the age of 30 years old

• “A Good Education” is voted consistently as the #1 priority across all age groups

• Voters 30 years & younger chose “Better Healthcare” & “Better Job Opportunities” as their 2nd & 3rd priorities

• Voters 46 years & older chose “Better Healthcare” and “An Honest and Responsive Government” as their 2nd & 3rd priorities as well as young people.

• “An Honest and Responsive Government” is placed as the 2nd priority for voters between 31-45 years old, higher compared to other age segments

• Protection from crime a violence is a top 6 priority across generation including focus on ending discrimination and persecution
Inter-generational outreach

This unique survey across generations is bringing young people throughout the world to participate in three ways: the first one, inviting them to vote themselves; second to invite their peers and youth club members to vote and third, perhaps very unique, to bring votes from their community members including children and elderly to take the survey.

A young volunteer explains to an old lady, born in 1920, what is the MY World Survey.
Case Study 2: Sri Lanka: Youth-Led ICT Training for Municipal Officials Young leaders

- Youth-Led ICT Training for Municipal Officials Young leaders in Sri Lanka are training municipal officials in ICT skills and creating new ICT platforms for citizen-government local interaction. This is part of a broader UN-HABITAT supported youth-led training and education program in Kandy City entitled YES - City of Youth.

- Through the course of project implementation, the ICT capacity gap among local officials emerged as a major barrier to overall progress that needed to be addressed: “One major barrier we have is communicating with city officials who like paper and face-to-face interactions. To change this situation, we started training City Council staff on Internet, email, local language ICT and Facebook. We plan to connect city officials to citizens on a Facebook Page.” -Poornima Meegammana, UN-HABITAT Urban Youth Fund Project Coordinator
Case Study 3: ICT-Enabled Governance Is Having a Greater Impact on Youth, Rwanda

- ICT-enabled governance is having a greater impact on youth at the national level than at the local level. New modes of youth participation and communication between youth and national leaders have not effectively taken root with local government. Rwanda, a recognized leader in ICT for development, provides a stark example of this trend.

- Young Rwandans are amazed to see the President himself tweeting on their blogs, responding to their SMS messages and inviting them to take part in issues that concern them. Such interaction was unthinkable just a few years ago. National ministers are following suit, opening up their ICT channels to these avid technology users to express their views and ideas online. Any citizen can send an SMS to a minister and it translates into a tweet so that they can read it, making this type of social media accessible to wide audiences, particularly youth.
The Way Forward

Focus on a Life cycle and human rights based approach

Invest in inter-generational partnerships from local to global levels

Promoting good practices of Intergenerational Partnerships in creating a human rights based society

Implementation of World Programme for Action

Capacity Development on Youth and Adults on Intergenerational Partnerships
Advancing Youth Civic Engagement and Human Rights with Young Women and Young Men

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TIME

THE GENERATION CHANGING THE WORLD

Why They’re Making History
By Andrew Maraniss
What They’re Doing for America
By Joe Nocera