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Children & Youth: A Framework For Action

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The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank
1818 H Street, NW
Washington, DC 20433
Telephone: 202-473-1000
Internet: www.worldbank.org
E-mail: childrenandyouth@worldbank.org

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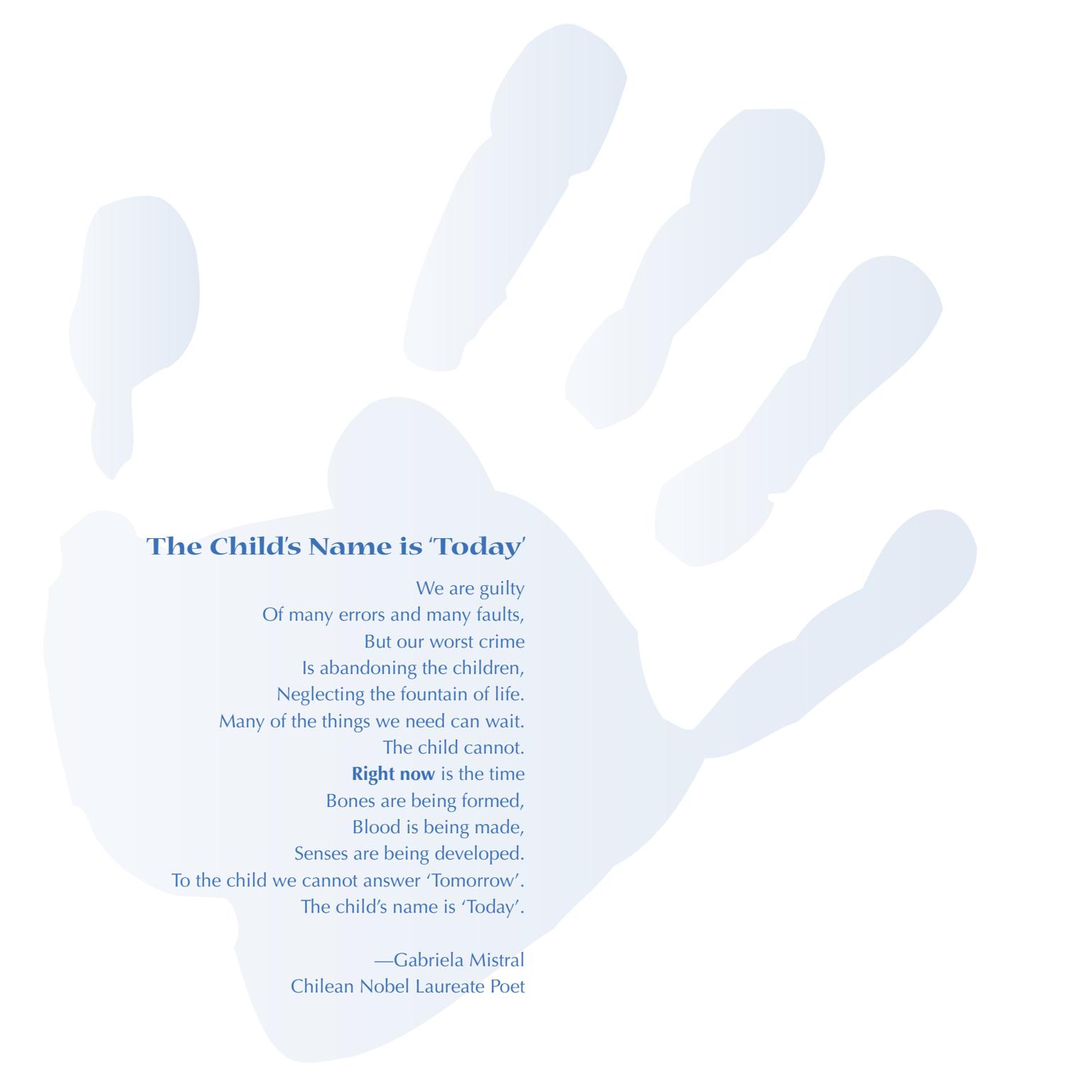
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The Child's Name is 'Today'

We are guilty
Of many errors and many faults,
But our worst crime
Is abandoning the children,
Neglecting the fountain of life.
Many of the things we need can wait.

The child cannot.

Right now is the time
Bones are being formed,
Blood is being made,
Senses are being developed.
To the child we cannot answer 'Tomorrow'.
The child's name is 'Today'.

—Gabriela Mistral
Chilean Nobel Laureate Poet

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Foreword

“Young people are not just the Future. They are also the Present.”

Today's children and youth are growing up in a world that is vastly different from that of previous generations. More than ever, our world is linked: by trade, by finance, by information, by the environment that we share. It is also linked by disease, by HIV/AIDS, by crime, by drugs, by war, by disasters, both natural and man-made.

Consider that 2.8 billion people on our planet today are under 25 years old. Over the course of the next 25 years, the world will add another 2 billion people and only a fraction—50 million—will have the luxury of being brought up in well-off countries. If today's inequalities are any indication of what the future may bring, these surging numbers of children and youth will confront a world where one child in six never lives to see his or her fifth birthday. Of those fortunate enough to survive, many will never complete even a primary school education. They will face a world where adolescents and young adults feel excluded from having any say in the making of decisions that will greatly affect their individual futures, not to mention that of their communities or countries. When young people feel hopeless, they risk doing desperate things which are costly to themselves and to society at large.

Our work will fall short if we cannot provide these young people with the opportunity to build a better tomorrow. That means we must do more and do it better to reach them now. It means we need to incorporate their perspectives, their ideas and energy not just as beneficiaries of programs, but also as active participants in defining and carrying out such programs.

The World Bank has invested billions of dollars over the past decades in expanding opportunities for young people—through education, health, social protection, the environment, and economic growth. Though much progress has been achieved, there is so much more to do. In a world that has grown increasingly insecure, it is ever more important to focus on some of the most important causes of this insecurity: poverty, alienation, and a lack of hope. Nowhere is this more important than among those who will lead the world into the future.

Together with young people themselves and country leaders, we can do it if we scale up our efforts to assist the most vulnerable, whether they are children in the early years of life—from age 0 to 5—or adolescents and young adults at a time when young people are moving from dependence to independence. We must intensify our efforts to reach the youngest with appropriate early childhood interventions to ensure that they have the necessary foundations upon which to build a healthy and productive future. We must also deepen our knowledge of what are the most effective means to address the multitude of challenges facing poor youth—from lack of marketable skills and employment prospects to violence and crime, from early pregnancy to high rates of HIV/AIDS. Finally, the Bank recently elected to have the 2007 World Development Report focus on “Development for (and by) the Next Generation,” a testament to the commitment we place on moving forward on this important topic.

Above all, it means placing children and youth at the center of what we do and seeing how we can leverage all our forms of assistance—knowledge, policy advice, lending, grants—to move more rapidly and more effectively towards achieving the results that we have all agreed to so widely in the Millennium Development Goals. But it also means actively seeking out the participation of young people in deciding and shaping what best helps them meet their unique challenges. My experience has taught me that the transformational power of development lies in giving people a chance to participate in their own future. And that future is now.

—Jim Wolfensohn
World Bank President

Preface

Listening to the voices of poor people, as well as country clients and partners, has been the hallmark over the past ten years of the World Bank's more comprehensive approach to reducing poverty. This holistic strategy is built on two pillars: (i) improving the investment climate to accelerate growth; and (ii) investing in and empowering people.

Improving human development outcomes more quickly is now central to all our work. Indeed, this Framework for Action is all about placing the prospects and well-being of children and youth squarely in the vanguard of this work. It charts a more vigorous course of action for us in helping developing countries improve the lives today of those who will inherit the planet from us tomorrow. This Framework responds to the demands of country leaders, partners, and youth organizations worldwide, for the Bank to generate new 'evidence-based' knowledge for the benefit of children and youth—especially in the areas of economic and social benefits, costs, and the impact of investment—and to shape subsequent policy responses across the development spectrum. Through wide consultation at country, regional and global levels, the Framework also reflects the broad priorities identified by young people from every continent.

The Framework reflects years of operational experience by the World Bank and its partners in helping improve the lives of young people through the more traditional means of Education, Health, Social Protection, and overall poverty reduction. This accumulated body of evidence allows us to know what works, and how best to scale up these interventions. However, it also highlights our gaps in knowledge and resources, and where we need a more integrated and cross-sectoral approach to develop policies and interventions that can make a difference in tackling the development issues facing children and youth today that have, thus far, proven hardest to solve.

Accordingly, the Framework poses a series of important questions. For example: How can governments, with already too little money in their budgets, be convinced of the wisdom of investing in early childhood programs for the poor when many of the benefits do not appear for a decade or more? What are the most cost-effective ways to help young people who, for example, drop out of school, are unemployed and have few skills to offer, feel alienated from the mainstream of their communities, and therefore are vulnerable to criminal and violent activities, early pregnancy, risky sex and substance abuse? How can we specifically help orphans, children with disabilities, child laborers and soldiers, and other vulnerable groups, who tend to fall through the cracks of regular programs?

There are no simple answers. Yet, much can be learned from the experiences throughout the developing and industrialized world. Together with our partners, the Bank will continue to build that knowledge, and work closely with our country clients to tailor that knowledge to their own specific local situations. The Children & Youth Resource Guide that accompanies the Framework offers useful tools which will allow Bank Staff and others to learn from innovative experiences around the globe, and to update the Guide as new lessons and data come to hand.

This Framework for Action cannot and does not aim to provide all the solutions. Rather, it presents the lens through which we might view the relevant issues, measure our actions, and deepen our collective impact.

—*Jean-Louis Sarbib*
Sr. Vice President for Human Development



A Framework for Action

“If we act now with realism and foresight, if we show courage, if we think globally and allocate our resources accordingly, we can give our children and youth a more peaceful and equitable world. One where suffering will be reduced. Where opportunities and hope are within every young person’s reach. This is not just a dream. It is our responsibility.”

—*Jim Wolfensohn, World Bank President*

Nearly half the people of the world today are under 25 years old. Nine out of ten of these young people live in developing countries. A billion of them will need jobs in the next decade. More importantly, **the majority of the developing world’s poor are children and youth.**¹ Although significant progress has been made in reducing income poverty worldwide—thanks in part to stronger economic growth—the fact remains that most of the **Millennium Development Goal (MDG) outcomes** directly targeting the young are not likely to be met unless greater attention is paid to the next generation.

The World Bank is the world’s largest external funder to developing countries for the two sectors most directly related to children and youth outcomes—education and health—and has contributed significantly to addressing the issues of poverty, HIV/AIDS, nutrition, social protection and environmentally and socially sustainable development among the many other sectors affecting the lives of young people. How, then, can we build on this experience to respond to the clear message of the MDG Global Monitoring Report² that **we need to scale up action significantly and swiftly?**

In addressing the needs of **children (0–14)**, we know much of what works and we know the powerful economic and social justifications for early investment. Yet, progress on meeting the MDGs, particularly for the earliest years (0–5), will require a broad range of actions moving beyond the already substantial effort of the Bank and its partners. The challenge is to understand **how to effectively scale up** within the scarce resource environment confronting our clients. This will call for a careful assessment of different approaches to scaling up. It will also require placing children even more centrally in our policy dialogue—from the macro to micro levels—and greater attention to intersectoral approaches to focus all sectors on outcomes of children. For those children who continue to fall through the cracks—the **most vulnerable** (e.g., orphans, child laborers, children with disabilities, children in conflict countries, etc.)—the challenge is to build upon the work already initiated in the Africa region and elsewhere to better identify and target their unique set of needs with cost effective interventions.

1. Definitions of children (0–14) and youth (15–24) are based on those employed by the Millennium Development Goal Framework; empirical evidence indicates that poorer families have more children, hence increased incidence of poverty among children & youth.

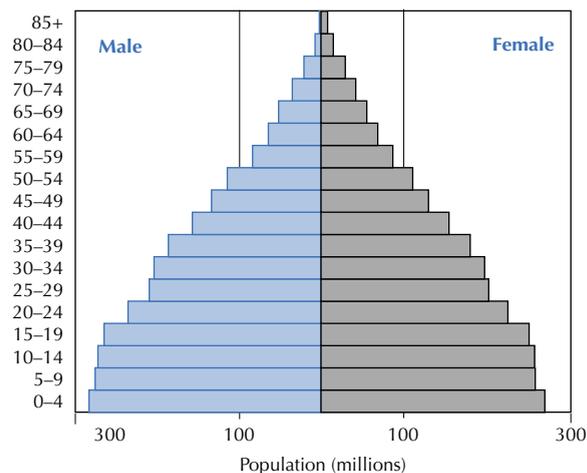
2. World Bank, *Global Monitoring Report 2004: Policies and Actions for Achieving the MDGs and Related Outcomes*; UN Millennium Project, *Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the MDGs* (2005).

Tackling the needs of **youth (15–24)** is more challenging for the Bank, our partners, and most importantly, for our clients. Today’s youth represent the largest cohort ever to enter the transition into adulthood. The issues they face—unemployment, lack of schooling and skills, risky behaviors, and violence, among others—represent enormous economic and social costs to society. Yet they have little or no voice in current strategies for development, leaving them susceptible to politically and economically disruptive activities.

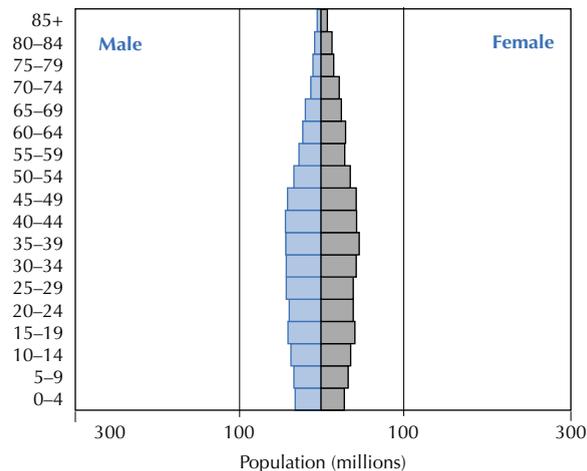
While youth development has emerged as a new focus for Bank work in certain regions—most notably pioneering work in the Latin America and Europe & Central Asia Regions—this segment of the population **remains a largely neglected constituency**. Unfortunately, there is very little international work on cost-effectiveness of most youth interventions, with the exception of those related to the education sector, to assist policymakers in making difficult investment decisions in a resource-constrained environment. Demand for the Bank’s support in addressing the needs of youth—from both clients and partners—is growing. The challenge will be to move the agenda from advocacy to evidence, and from evidence to action.

This document builds on the important work of the Bank and its partners to date to propose a **Framework for Action to intensify our focus on children and youth outcomes in all Bank operations** as a key strategy for poverty reduction and human development. In this context, it:

Population by sex and age group, less developed countries, 2004



Population by sex and age group, more developed countries, 2004



- Provides the **business case** for increased focus on children and youth.
- Presents a **conceptual framework** to assist countries to systematically identify key vulnerabilities, gaps and strategic opportunities for scaling up investment in children and youth across sectors, and along the life-cycle.
- Proposes a broad **strategy for integrated investments** in children and youth.
- Recommends **priority areas for increased concentration**.
- Outlines the **next steps** in moving the children and youth agenda forward in the Bank's work.

This document is intended to provide in summary form a Framework for Action to share with our clients and partners globally. It is complemented by a **Resource Guide for Bank Staff** which provides much greater detail on each of the sections outlined here. This document provides specific case studies and recommendations to assist Bank Staff in applying a children and youth lens across all our work. It is available through the World Bank's Children and Youth Website at: www.worldbank.org/childrenandyouth and is intended to evolve as new evidence becomes available.



1. Why Invest More in Children and Youth?

Demographic Urgency: Nearly half of the world's population and the majority of the poor are under the age of 25 in developing countries. Today's 1.1 billion youth (15–24) are the largest cohort ever to enter the transition to adulthood, the majority of whom need jobs. In most developing countries, these numbers have not yet peaked, and the consequences of these trends will reach into all productive and social sectors, straining governments' capacity to provide basic public services. By 2015, there will be 3 billion young people in the world with 2.5 billion living in developing countries. In Africa and South Asia, children and youth constitute over 60% of the total population.

MDGs: Though each of the 8 broad MDGs will have an impact on children and youth—directly or indirectly—there are specific outcome indicators targeted for children (0–14) and for youth (15–24), which deserve particular attention. These have shown some of the weakest progress of all indicators. It is clear that if we do not scale up actions rapidly and focus more intensively on the next generation, these outcomes will not be met.

Economic Efficiency: *Children* represent the highest leverage point for investments to build human and social capital; the earlier the investment, the longer the benefits and, usually, the lower the costs. Investments in youth preserve the benefits of investments in children, counteract lack

MDG Indicators Targeting Children and Youth

(Indicator) *Children (0–14)*

- Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger**
(4) Prevalence of underweight children (< 5 yrs)
- Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education**
(6) Net enrollment ratio in primary education
(7a) % of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5
(7b)* Primary completion rate
- Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women**
(9) Ratio of girls to boys in primary education
- Goal 4: Reduce child mortality**
(13) Under-5 mortality rate
(14) Infant mortality rate
(15) Proportion of 1 yr-olds immunized against measles
- Goal 5: Improve maternal health**
(16) Maternal mortality ratio
(17) % of births attended by skilled health personnel

Youth (15–24)

- Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education**
(8) Literacy rates among 15–24
- Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women**
(9) Ratio of girls to boys in sec. & tertiary ed
(10) Ratio of literate females to males 15–24
- Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases**
(18) HIV Prevalence among pregnant women (15–24)
(19*) % of pop. 15–24 with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS
- Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development**
(45) Unemployment rate among 15–24

* proposed as additional MDG indicators, but not yet adopted.
Source: United Nations MDGs.

of earlier investments, and have the added value of immediate intergenerational effects as youth become new parents. Moreover, evidence is increasingly demonstrating that the costs of NOT investing in youth are staggering both politically and economically. For the poor in particular, capital market failures leading to continued sub-optimal investment in human capital, such as schooling and health care, and resulting in continuing the vicious cycle of poverty are key arguments for increased public investment.

Political Imperative: It is essential to recognize that youth are a large, politically visible, and sensitive group with no formal voice, leaving them susceptible to disruptive activities which are costly to society and economic growth. By contrast, if integrated into the development process, they can be a positive force for change.

Demand: Given the failure to progress in meeting the MDGs for children and youth in many regions, there is considerable demand for the Bank's assistance in scaling up key interventions focusing on the young, broadly speaking, as well as for the Bank to provide stronger technical and financial support in addressing the critical and growing number of issues facing youth more specifically.

But issues and risks differ significantly between children and youth....

Children	Youth
<p>Malnutrition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 140 million (out of 613 million <5 children) are malnourished <p>Childhood Illness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One in six will die before reaching the age of five, most from communicable diseases <p>Infant Mortality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 million infants die annually in the first month of life <p>Maternal Mortality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 500,000 women die each year in childbirth <p>Lack of access to and retention in school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 113 million school age children are out of school in developing countries (2/3 are girls) Of those who enter school, one in 4 drops out before attaining literacy 51% in SSA do not complete primary school <p>Unsafe home environment</p> <p>Orphans and vulnerable children (from HIV/AIDS, conflict, street children, disability, etc.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 60 million in Africa alone <p>Child Labor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nearly 190 million worldwide 	<p>Unemployment/Idleness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Globally 47% of all unemployment Rates are 3+ times higher than adults <p>Lack of Access and Retention in School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 133 million are illiterate In Sub-Saharan Africa, <20% complete secondary school In Latin America and the Caribbean, only 62% net secondary enrollment <p>Risky Behaviors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early Pregnancy (13 million girls 15–19 give birth each year) HIV/AIDS (Youth account for nearly half of all new HIV infections) Violence and Crime (countries with 40% or more youth 15–29 were twice as likely to break out in civil conflict in 1990s) Substance Abuse <p>No skills, no prospects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality of education lacks in providing marketable skills <p>Lack of participation in development policies and process</p>

Development Success Generates New Challenges: Progress towards achievement of certain key development goals, such as universal primary education in many countries, has presented a new set of development challenges, such as an imminent explosion of demand for access to quality—and relevant—secondary and tertiary education. This requires a shift in emphasis in strategic investments without losing ground on the important gains made in recent years.

So do potential solutions...

For **children**, we know much of what works, so how do we scale up effectively and selectively? How do we address those falling through the cracks—the most vulnerable? For **youth**, experience and analytic underpinnings are new and uneven. The demand for the Bank's comparative advantage in providing solid economic analysis is high. How do we build on pioneering work within the Bank and among our partners? How do we move from advocacy to evidence? How do we integrate youth perspectives and participation into all levels of our work?

So why should we put children and youth together in a single Framework?

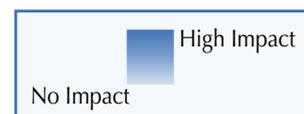
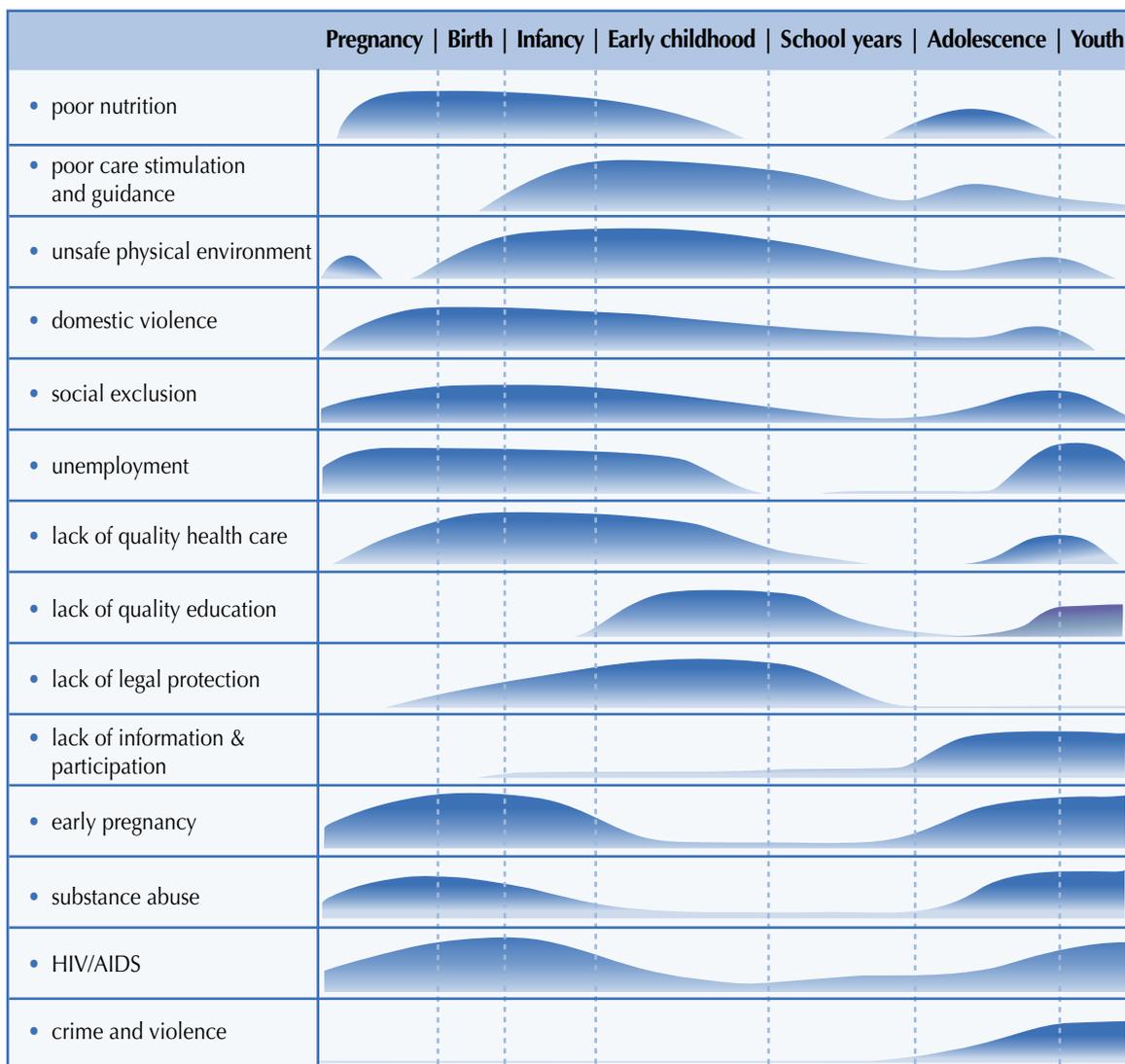
Pro-poor: many income and non-income poverty indicators are much worse among children and youth; and today, these two groups represent the majority of the developing world's poor. Strategies that focus on investing broadly in children and youth are inherently—and doubly—pro-poor, that is, reaching the currently poor while reducing future poverty.

Unique Vulnerability: among the poor, children and youth are the most susceptible to increased vulnerability during periods of economic downturn and other external shocks (eg. as indicated by malnutrition, school dropouts to assist families, youth unemployment, violent and risky behavior, etc.).

Highest Risk: both age groups represent the two periods of highest physiological and social risk in the life-cycle. In early years, this is manifested more by malnutrition, child diseases, infant and child deaths. Whereas in adolescence and young adulthood, this is manifested more by risky sexual behavior, early pregnancy, higher rates of maternal mortality, HIV/AIDs, crime, gangs, and violence (see section 1.2). Preventive risk management would argue that these are the two most productive and efficient periods for investing in human capital development.

Life-Cycle: They are *integrally linked along the life-cycle* during a critical period of life in which investments—or underinvestments—will have a much longer period to manifest positive and negative consequences to individuals and to society. If investments are not made in the early years, the costs and consequences become particularly evident in adolescence and early adulthood. And if they are not corrected at this stage, the costs to society can be staggering not just for this generation, but as well for the next as children born to young disadvantaged parents continue the cycle of poverty.

Distribution of risk along the life stages



2. The Life-Cycle Approach

“We are a group of people, not a sector”

The life-cycle framework is a potentially powerful tool to provide policy-makers the means to place children and youth outcomes more centrally across an entire country program as a measure of success. The importance of assessing the various dimensions of poverty early on in the life-cycle is gaining recognition with the better understanding that risks are not homogeneously distributed along the life-cycle and are typically higher in earlier stages of life, with important long term and sometimes irreversible consequences on later stages of life. As illustrated here, risks are extremely high during the ages of 0–5 years, and are again concentrated in adolescence and youth, a period which can have an immediate impact on the next generation.

The table on the next page shows the key stages in the life cycle for children and youth, starting with in-utero and infancy, the pre-school years, moving through the school-age years, adolescence, and then early adulthood. It also illustrates the key vulnerabilities at each of these stages and the corresponding short-term/long-term outcomes which have an impact on subsequent life stages. Importantly, definitions of life stages vary from culture to culture and across sectors of interventions, but there are physiological commonalities across all cultures. Understanding the multiple channels of influence along the life-cycle and their interrelationship is, thus, critical to guiding policymakers in deciding where investments in human capital formation will have the greatest impact. Using a life-cycle approach in evaluating and developing country programs, therefore:

- Provides an important **diagnostic tool** to assess the status, trends and scale of children and youth issues across ages, sectors, poverty status, etc. and highlights those areas needing the greatest attention, and for which market failures are the most evident.
- Identifies **age-specific** vulnerabilities, risks, gaps and opportunities for investment, pointing out the importance of the “right” timing and nature of interventions.
- Illustrates positive and negative **intergenerational** effects and linkages.
- Facilitates co-targeting of interventions, improving **synergies** across sectors and ages.
- Enables **monitoring of impact** of interventions on specific children and youth outcomes over time.
- If used globally, regionally and sub-regionally, can provide countries with useful **benchmark** information, and where serious “**outliers**” deserve specific attention as they relate to countries in comparable situations.

Applying a life-cycle framework to a **specific country context** will enable country teams to prioritize interventions based on the scale of identified gaps, targeted populations and projected impact on outcomes. For example, in a resource-constrained environment, this may mean:

- for some **lower-income countries** the emphasis may necessarily fall on scaling up efforts to address especially weak indicators for early childhood, primary education, child mortality, (eg. Sub-Saharan Africa, East Asia, Middle East and North Africa).
- for **middle-income countries**, which have achieved reasonable outcomes in basic nutrition, health and education for children, the emphasis may fall more intensively on issues of secondary school enrollment and completion, risky behavior for youth (eg. crime, drugs, violence, gangs) and very targeted interventions for the poorest to ensure that they are adequately prepared to enter school.
- for **countries in conflict**, where central and local government services have broken down, and significant numbers of children and youth are orphaned or extremely vulnerable, emphasis will necessarily focus on strategies to address their unique vulnerabilities and the weaknesses of traditional social service delivery.
- for **transition countries**, where many youth indicators are actually worsening (eg., secondary school enrollment, youth unemployment, HIV/AIDS, etc.), there is an increasing urgency to address critical youth issues, while also focusing on issues of institutionalized children.



Examples of key children & youth vulnerabilities and their impact over the life cycle

Age Group	Vulnerabilities	Short-term Outcomes	Long-term Outcomes
In utero & at birth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In utero exposure to maternal infections, nutritional deficiencies, and environmental toxins, as well as poor care around birth, may lead to severe and irreversible damage to the brain and other organs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased risk of maternal mortality, premature births, birth defects, low birth weight, and neonatal death. Low birth weight is the single most important determinant of infant mortality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Severe, potentially irreversible consequences for physical and cognitive growth and development. The majority of permanent disabilities have their origin in neonatal disease.
↓	↓	↓	↓
Early childhood (0–5 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of basic cognitive and social abilities occurs in the first few years of life. Adverse factors—poor diets, infections, disease, lack of cognitive stimulation—can cause poor physical and intellectual growth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased risk of infant and child morbidity and mortality. Stunting, slow physical growth, and other manifestations of early childhood malnutrition. Lack of socialization or acquisition of psychosocial skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Irreversible effects on physical and cognitive growth and development. Increased likelihood of learning disabilities, delayed school entry, poorer school performance, and increased likelihood of early drop out and lower grade attainment.
↓	↓	↓	↓
School age children (6–14 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family resource constraints, gender bias, inadequate infrastructure and public services prevent school attendance and health service provision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to enroll, delayed enrollment, grade repetition, reduced school performance, early dropout. Child labor and child soldiers. Early pregnancy and marriage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of human capital development and capacities. Persistence of gender inequalities. Social exclusion.
↓	↓	↓	↓
Adolescence & youth (15–24 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of opportunity to access and complete primary and/or secondary schooling; to relevant non-formal education, including life, livelihood, and marketable skills development; to relevant health services and reproductive health information. Poor job market opportunities magnified by specific barriers posed by employers to hiring first job seekers. Lack of participation in decisions and policies that affect the lives of adolescents and youth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate skills development and poor prospects for employment Risky behaviors: early pregnancies, substance abuse, sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS, violence, criminal and gang activities, and premature death. Unemployment, hazardous or exploitative labor. Child soldiering Exclusion from decision making as key component of civil society, often leading to civil unrest or increased risky behavior. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long-term unemployment or low-wage employment Intra—and inter-generational transmission of poor health and its consequences (low birth weight, vertical transmission of HIV/AIDS). Reduced productivity. Inter-generational transmission of household and community violence. High economic costs of risky behaviors and forgone assets for development. Lost opportunities for involving youth as agents of better governance, accountability, and development of democracy.

Source: The World Bank, HDNCY, (2004), Children and Youth Background Paper.

3. Building Blocks for Integrated Investments

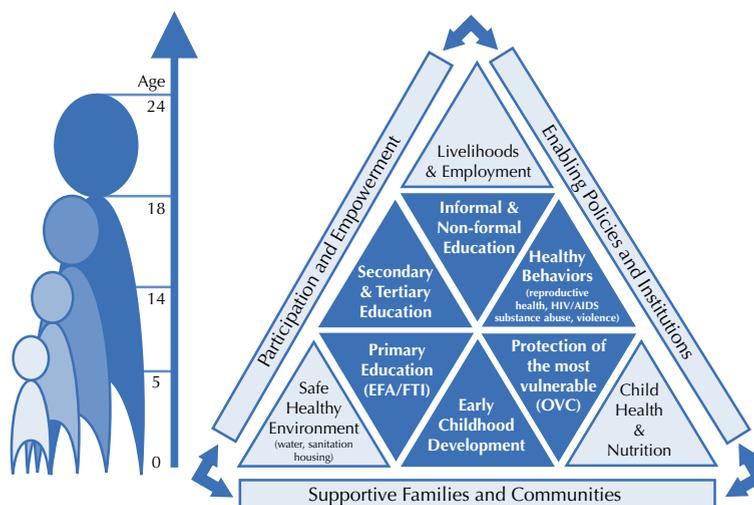
How do we apply the approach to World Bank work?

If the preceding approach to children and youth risks along the life-cycle is applied Bankwide, a broad strategy for integrated investments emerges. As illustrated below, these investments are integrally linked and cumulative. They can be seen as “**building blocks**” along the life-cycle, representing the foundations upon which all young people will need to build their human capital. If risks are not addressed through investments in early years, the impact will be more costly to redress in later years.

For the **ages 0 to 5**, the building blocks focus on those interventions which will ensure a child survives infancy and early childhood, while also contributing to the necessary elements they and their families need to ensure that children enter and succeed in school and later life. Neglecting to invest effectively in these critical years can produce adverse outcomes, which are more likely to be severe, long-lasting and irreversible. Given the projected failure of most countries to meet the key MDG objectives related to this age group, the building blocks give particular attention to cross-sectoral interventions contributing to:

- Child Health and Nutrition:** every year over 10 million children in developing countries die before they reach the age of five, most from preventable causes which rarely occur in wealthier countries. This building block addresses policies and programs ranging from integrated management of *childhood illness to maternal-child health programs*. The effectiveness of such interventions will be enhanced significantly with co-targeting of other sectoral investments such as providing adequate infrastructure to access health and nutritional services, ensuring food security, and improving the quality and efficiency of health service provision.
- Early Childhood Development:** ensuring that the basic needs of children born into poverty are met

Building Blocks for Integrated Children and Youth Investments Along the Life Cycle



through entry into primary school requires interventions which build on those mentioned above, with a particular focus on adequate *nutritional supplementation*, *psychosocial stimulation*, and *support to caregivers* regarding parenting and childcare skills. Evidence now clearly shows that, if well-targeted, early childhood development programs can have a substantial impact in reducing inequalities over a lifetime as regards outcomes in education, earnings, health, crime and violence. They also enable parents to seek employment with the knowledge that their children are in a safe and secure environment.

- **Safe and Healthy Environment:** poor children ages 0–5 are comparatively more at-risk by being exposed to the poor quality of their shelter and immediate environment. Interventions in this building block include, for example, the provision of *potable water and basic sanitation*, *affordable and safe housing*, *slum upgrading*, *adequate access to quality of social service facilities*, and promotion of policies aimed at *sustainable use of air, water and land resources*.

From the **ages 6 to 14**, the importance of a **quality primary education** among all of the other factors becomes primordial. The extent to which other sectors can facilitate this important building block is essential during this stage of the life-cycle (e.g., water, health, transportation and infrastructure interventions which facilitate a child's access to and retention in school). The **protection of the most vulnerable** (e.g., orphans, children with disabilities, child laborers, child prostitutes, child soldiers, etc.) starts from birth and requires special attention throughout to address their unique set of needs and ensure their inclusion into society.

For the **ages 15–24**, a different set of building blocks emerges which takes into consideration the unique transition stage of “youth” (see box), whereby a person moves from a time of dependence (childhood) to independence (adulthood). This is a particularly vulnerable period in the life-cycle, especially for poor youth who are often faced with low skills, poor prospects for employment and higher risks than their peers for everything from school dropouts, early pregnancy, substance abuse, crime, violence, and HIV/AIDS. Consequently, the building blocks for youth focus on four broad areas which are integrally linked:

- **Secondary & Tertiary Education** with a focus on higher rates of completion and relevance to job market (e.g., improved quality and relevance of coursework for job market, adequate school-to-work transitions, safe and healthy schools, etc.).

Defining Youth

Although any definition of “youth” is complex and debatable, the most common one in the youth development field—and that used by the MDGs for global comparisons—is the **age cohort spanning from 15 to 24** years.

Qualitatively, youth is generally defined as a phase when a person moves from a time of dependence (childhood) to independence (adulthood). This transition involves several common shifts which present unique challenges:

- Moving **from school to seeking work** and independent sources of income
- Moving from **parental home to new living arrangements**
- Forming close **relationships outside the family**, often resulting in marriage and children

The **role of youth policy** in this context is to create favorable conditions for success by preparing young people for the roles and responsibilities of adulthood, while recognizing that youth is a valuable stage in and of itself with its own unique set of risks and opportunities. Integrating youth into the design and implementation of youth policy is therefore crucial.

- **Informal & Non-formal Education** with a view toward building adequate skills and competencies for life and work particularly for those who have never entered formal school or who have dropped out of school (e.g., lifelong learning, apprenticeships/internships, youth multipurpose centers, life skills, literacy and numeracy, vocational skills, ICT, return-to-school programs, and peer education).
- **Healthy Behaviors** with the objectives of policies and interventions that assist in lowering rates of HIV/AIDSs, crime, substance abuse, violence and conflict, malnutrition, risky sex and early pregnancy, and improving knowledge of reproductive health, parenting skills, etc (e.g., provision of relevant and youth-oriented information and services through schools, peer-to-peer programs, health clinics, mass media).
- **Livelihoods and Employment** with a focus on the range of policies and interventions to increase youth employability and employment. Examples include labor market policies, the role of private sector for first job seekers, understanding the structural mismatches between education and the labor market, apprenticeships and internships, youth entrepreneurship and income generation support, credit policies, and community driven development projects. Assessing the relative impact and cost-effectiveness of these policies and interventions in a resource-constrained environment will be central to this work, as will the importance of distributional issues, measuring externalities, and the interaction of market failures and poverty.

Meeting these challenges will require **significant additional resources** from both donors and countries if meaningful progress toward meeting the MDGs related to children and youth is to be made. However, additional resources are only part of the picture. Success will depend on increased **synergy among sectors** to expand and improve access to basic services for the young, and specific attention will need to be given to three broad categories of **enabling environment** and their impact on the well-being of children and youth:

Policies and institutions which enable C&Y investments to succeed, both at the sectoral and macro level. This includes, *inter alia*:

- economic growth strategies which are pro-poor (and therefore necessarily pro-young) and public expenditure strategies which reflect these priorities (including protected expenditure categories, where necessary).
- increased emphasis on multisectoral interventions and co-targeting of investments outside of the traditional education and health sectors (eg. water, sanitation, and infrastructure development) with those traditionally viewed as “children and youth” investments.
- specific attention paid to **supply-side bottlenecks** such as improved service delivery (public, private, NGO), human capacity, and governance.

Families and communities which support, benefit from, and thereby have ownership of the strategies and interventions.

- specific focus on demand-side bottlenecks: tackling incentive problems to increase effective demand for needed services, taking into account household capabilities and constraints as well as parental preferences (see *Box on Conditional Cash Transfer programs*).

Participation and Empowerment of youth (and children, where possible) as stakeholders, decision-makers and beneficiaries at all levels of development—from strategy to design of programs, from implementation to evaluation—particularly as it relates to policies and interventions that directly affect their lives. This will ensure both their ownership of the development process as well as improve the effectiveness of interventions in reaching youth. It establishes the conditions by which youth have choices and opportunities to positively impact their own lives, as well as that of their families, communities, and countries.

Creating Incentives for the Poor Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) Programs

Conditional Cash Transfers are part of a new generation of programs that focus on the demand side of human capital accumulation among the young as a means of breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty. The Bank has financed and is financing several CCT programs throughout Latin America, Asia and Africa. As their name implies, CCTs provide money to poor families conditional upon certain behavior, usually investments in human capital such as sending children to school or bringing them to health centers on a regular basis, or having parents attend parenting skills programs. As such, they provide incentives to poor parents to invest in their children, reducing poverty today while also reducing poverty tomorrow.

Several CCT programs in the LAC region (e.g. Mexico, Brazil, Honduras, Colombia, and Nicaragua) have been subject to rigorous evaluations of their effectiveness and have shown high promise in reducing poverty, improving access to education, improving nutrition, and health. Many other countries have introduced or are in the process of designing similar programs (e.g. Jamaica, Costa Rica, Cambodia, Ecuador, Turkey, Palestine, and Peru).

The principal advantages of CCTs reside in:

- directly addressing **demand for services**, providing families with responsibility for their own progress;
- more efficient **targeting** of specific populations (e.g. poor children and youth, gender, etc.) than general subsidies or investments in infrastructure due to fewer inclusion errors;
- complying with **multisectoral** objectives (e.g. health, nutrition, and education) through the single instrument of cash;
- demonstrated **effectiveness** in reaching—and improving specific well-being outcomes of—the beneficiaries;
- potential for **large scale** intervention (e.g. Mexico's *Oportunidades* went from 300,000 households in 1997 to over 4 million in 2002, or 20% of the Mexican population);
- increased demand for services increasing pressure on governments to improve efficiency, quality, delivery and **supply of services** (e.g., Mexico, Colombia, Brazil).

Highlights: In *Nicaragua's Red de Proteccion Social*, average primary enrollment rates increased 22% in treatment areas, while immunization rates improved by 18% for children 12–23 months; in Brazil's PETI, the rate of children aged 7–14 working fell by nearly 26% in Bahia, which has the highest child labor force participation rate in Brazil (38%); in *Mexico's Oportunidades*, infants under 3 increased their growth monitoring visits at clinics between 30 to 60%, children aged 0–5 had a 12% lower incidence of illness, and an increase of about one sixth in the mean growth per year among children aged 12–36 months.

Source: Evaluating the Impact of Conditional Cash Transfer Programs: Lessons from Latin America, Rawlings and Rubio, 2003; Workshop Final Report on CCTs: Operational Experiences, March 2003.

For more information, visit: World Bank Social Protection Website on Safety Nets and Transfers.

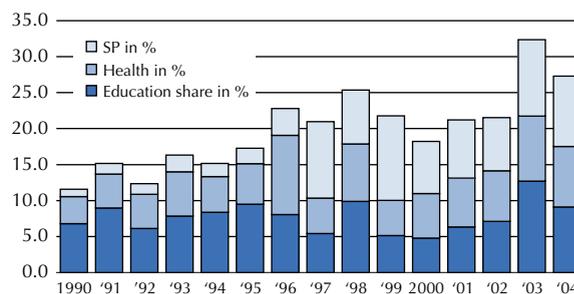
As with any approach, applying a children and youth lens globally masks the huge variation of needs at the regional and country levels. **Country specificity** will obviously illustrate the range of possible interventions and the enormous differences in priorities across regions and countries.

World Bank Lending for Children and Youth: A Shift in Approach

Although there are many ways to evaluate trends in World Bank lending for children and youth in recent years, very few sectors outside of Human Development³—and some projects within Social Development—have specific references to impact on children and youth. Therefore, a look at trends in Human Development lending can serve as a proxy for assessing trends in Bank emphasis on this age group. A recent review of Bank lending in the human development sectors (1990–2004) suggests that⁴:

- Overall, **Human Development** as share of Bank lending has increased significantly in the past 15 years, from 11.6% in 1990 to 27.3% in 2004. This represented an increase from US\$2.4 billion (for 72 projects) in 1990 to US\$5.5 billion (for 225 projects) in 2004.
- However, most of the growth has been in **Social Protection** (from 1% to nearly 10%), where programs for children and youth have rarely surpassed 15% of the total (though this is where Conditional Cash Transfers are growing).
- **Health, Nutrition and Population** lending has fluctuated greatly, from 3.8% in 1990 (or US\$77 million for 18 projects), peaking in 1996 with 11% (or US\$2.35 billion for 41 projects), and in 2004 was around 8.4% of overall Bank lending (representing US\$ 1.7 billion for 64 projects).
- **Education** has also shown fluctuations, with 6.8% in 1990 (or US\$1.4 billion with 32 projects), peaking in 2003 with 12.7% of overall Bank lending (representing US\$2.35 billion for 70 projects), and currently at around 9.1% (or US\$1.8 billion for 73 projects).

Education, Health and Social Protection As a Share of Total Bank Lending (1990–2004)



Assessing which categories of expenditures benefit children and youth directly is often very difficult, particularly in the context of broad sectoral reform. Moreover, within each sector, it is even more difficult to assess which portion of lending goes to children and which goes to youth, especially since the Bank does not yet systematically classify such information by age groups. Finally, there is a multitude of

3. Includes Education; Social Protection; and Health, Nutrition and Population.

4. World Bank Business Warehouse (2005).

additional factors that contribute to children and youth development indirectly in any given country (eg. overall economic growth contributing to poverty reduction and demand for labor, improvement of overall governance and social service delivery to reach greater shares of the general population, improvements in infrastructure enabling young people to better access schools, health services and jobs, etc.), which render the analysis more complex.

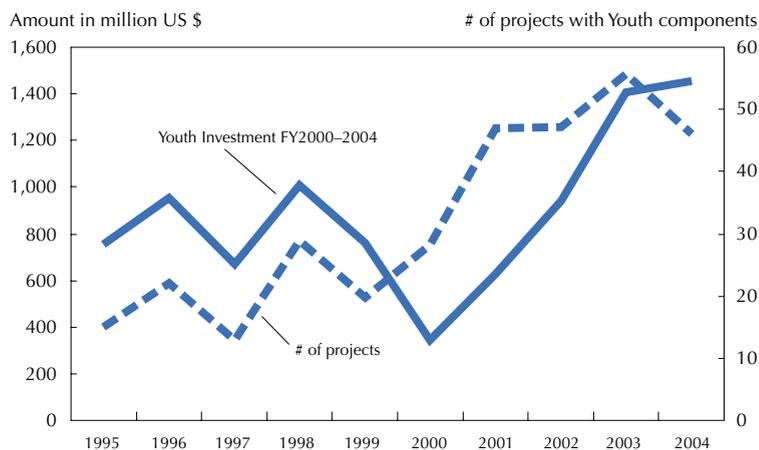
Increased Attention to Youth in Recent Years . . .

With these caveats in mind, it is nonetheless important to build our knowledge base to better assess the impact and trends of Bank interventions across all sectors on these populations. A preliminary analysis of Bank operations since 1995⁵, which attempts to disaggregate project information based on specific reference to youth as a target population, reveals a series of interesting trends signaling a **shift in approach** toward addressing **youth** in particular.

Importantly, there has been a sharp increase since 2000 in the **number of projects** with youth components (from 15 in FY95 to 46 in FY04) and in the **total amount of investment** targeted toward this age group (from US\$752 million in FY95 to US\$1.5 billion in FY04); more than tripling in a span of four years.

Lending for youth in the **early 1990s** was concentrated in the **education sector** (with a predominance of vocational education programs); yet as evidence demonstrated disappointing results and high costs of many of these programs, lending for youth reached a low in 1999–2001. **Since 2000**, the **sectors** specifically addressing youth issues have **broadened significantly** to include nearly all the sectors in the Bank's portfolio. While still relatively small compared to education lending (41% from other sectors), this nonetheless represents a significant shift in approach towards addressing youth issues in a multisectoral way. Specifically, the sectors with the highest growth

*Projects with Youth Components FY1995–2004:
Share of Youth Investments Global Summary*



Prepared by HDN-CY—Stocktaking of Projects with Youth Components—FY1995–2004.
Source: ImageBank—The World Bank.

in youth-oriented investments since 2000 are the Urban and Health sectors, though Social Development and Social Protection sectors have many projects under preparation.

From a regional perspective, there is a notable shift in emphasis as well. In the early 1990s, the regions with the greatest share of investment in youth were East Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. **Since 2000**, however, all regions have placed greater emphasis on this age group, with **significant increases in Africa, South Asia, and Europe and Central Asia**. In 2004, the Africa Region had the highest share of lending directed toward youth (49%), or US\$743million. As the Bank, its partners, and clients focus more intensively on reaching the MDGs in the coming years, understanding these trends—and their impact—will become increasingly important.

While preliminary, these figures reflect the growing demand from clients in addressing this particular segment of the population, and the World Bank's commitment to meet that demand with evidence-based approaches. They also reflect the growing institutional priority placed on tackling the complex issues faced by young people in our client countries from a multitude of sectors. In 2002, President Wolfensohn began meeting systematically with youth representatives around the world—and designated the first Adviser on Children and Youth.

Today, each of the regions in the World Bank has begun developing its own strategy for deepening our commitment to better outcomes for children and youth. In key sectors, specific attention is being devoted to youth issues, where policies and interventions had received relatively less attention in the past: adolescent health, youth employment, secondary and tertiary education, youth in urban environments, youth empowerment, and youth participation among others. Over 30 local offices have established youth consultation networks to both inform youth about what the World Bank does and is, as well as to incorporate their perspectives into Bank strategies and programs. The accompanying Resource Guide highlights many of these specific regional and sectoral initiatives.

President Wolfensohn placed the critical importance of meeting these challenges front and center in his 2004 Annual Meetings Address to global financial leaders by highlighting the importance of investing in young people and their education as one of the three most critical issues for a more secure world. It is clear that while much progress has been made in improving the lives of the world's young people in recent decades, if we are to accelerate that progress in order to meet the goals the world has set for itself through the MDGs, much greater effort will be required.



4. Priority Areas for Increased Concentration

Focus on the periods of greatest vulnerability

It is clear that different approaches will be needed for different regions and countries, reflecting where they are in the development process and the challenges they face. The Framework for Action proposes to focus on those interventions for which there is evidence of a need to significantly scale up attention, or for which there has been relatively less support (analytically and operationally) in the past. These areas build on the emerging work of the past decade and also reflect the periods of greatest vulnerability along the life-cycle:

- **The Early Years (0–5):** We know that there is extensive evidence and research showing that interventions during pregnancy, around birth and in the early years of life are far more important than previously realized, and the multiplier effects far greater. Despite significant progress in policy and lending approaches to these areas in recent years, there is still ample room for **scaling up** our efforts, particularly given the projected failure of most countries to meet the key MDG outcomes related to this age group. In this context, scaling up will be seen as successful only if we make progress on outcomes. Strategies will need to adopt creative approaches to targeting the hardest-to-reach groups, striking the right balance between demand and supply side policies, as well as quality and access considerations. Particular attention should be given to two types of interventions with a proven track record in reaching the early years—Early Childhood Development (ECD); and Integrated Management of Childhood Illness (IMCI), both with an emphasis on nutrition—as well as on targeting the goal of universal primary education for those countries (especially in Africa, South Asia, Middle East and North Africa) which lag the furthest behind.
- **Youth (15–24):** although there is promising new work emerging from certain regions, youth remain a largely neglected constituency in Bank analytical and operational work, either as participants or beneficiaries, despite their demographic importance and their potential for positive economic and social contributions, and the demand from our clients. Globally, youth data and relevant cost/benefit and economic analyses are relatively scarce. The Framework and accompanying Resource Guide take stock of ongoing Bank work on youth development, and propose to place particular emphasis on: i) select thematic areas reflecting the “building blocks” mentioned above as well as key concerns identified by youth groups worldwide; and ii) moving the agenda from **advocacy to evidence** through a series of evidence-based research, and from **evidence to action**—building on successful programs within the Bank and among our partners—wherever possible. Specific themes for increased emphasis include, but are not limited to:

- **The Education/Employment Nexus:** to address the urgent need to help countries develop a skilled and flexible workforce able to respond to the shifting demands of knowledge-driven global markets, while looking at the underlying “demand-side” reasons for youth and under-employment and building on important work in both the Education and Social Protection sectors on the quality and relevance of secondary education; tertiary education and life-long learning; assessment of vocational and non-formal education programs; and youth unemployment and labor markets policies.
- **Risky/Healthy Behaviors:** to focus on country-specific identification of risky behaviors (eg., risky sex, criminal activities, gangs, substance abuse, early pregnancy, and violence), their economic and social costs to society, and cost-effective approaches to preventing—and disengaging—youth from seeking such behavior.
- **Effective Integration into Development:** to formulate specific approaches to effectively integrate youth into the design, implementation and evaluation of programs—and where possible, policies—that directly affect them, thereby enabling youth to become agents of their own development. This will need to be handled carefully, building upon the experience of gender and poverty to avoid creating a new cadre of youth “elite”, and to ensure that the diverse views and needs of youth are adequately addressed at all levels.
- **The Most Vulnerable:** the unique set of needs and vulnerabilities of those who are falling through the cracks and for whom systemic programs are failing to work require a distinct set of flexible approaches to remove barriers that stand in the way of their equal participation in programs designed to benefit all children. The Framework and accompanying Resource Guide build upon the Orphans and Vulnerable Children work already underway in the Bank and among its partners, and places emphasis on those countries where the numbers of extremely vulnerable children and youth merit the larger scale intervention for which the Bank may have a comparative advantage (eg., Conflict and Post-conflict countries, High Prevalence HIV/AIDS countries—and those projected to be the next wave, countries in transition). Specific attention is given to issues related to Child Labor.

Finally, within each of these areas, the Framework proposes to look carefully at specific **demand approaches** (e.g., Conditional Cash Transfers mentioned above), which could potentially provide an effective mechanism for widespread scaling up and/or increased targeting of select interventions.

5. Next Steps: Applying a Children and Youth Lens

It is important to recognize the significant differences in approaches to addressing the needs of children and those of youth. For certain middle-income countries which have achieved reasonable outcomes in basic health and education for children, the demand for Bank support may fall more intensively on issues related to youth development or on developing a National Youth Policy. However, for many countries, a specific focus on children **and** youth across all sectors in an integrated way (and in such key strategic documents as Country Assistance Strategies, Poverty Reduction Strategy Programs, Public Expenditure Reviews, and Poverty Assessments) will reveal important gaps for both groups, particularly if linked with progress toward outcomes and poverty. Consequently, this section links the two groups into one set of next steps—**Applying a Children and Youth Lens**—while recognizing that approaches will vary widely among regions and countries.

In Operations

- Develop Regional Children and Youth Strategic Frameworks including strategies for increased collaboration among sectors not traditionally seen as impacting children and youth, but having an important impact on their outcomes.
- Identify Pilot/Focus Countries based on country demand.
- Provide country teams and TTLs with relevant tools, resources, analysis, technical and, where possible, financial support to focus more intensively on children and youth as both stakeholders and beneficiaries. For youth in particular, support their involvement at all stages of strategy and project development in interventions directly related to their outcomes.
- Embed Children and Youth into national development strategies and operational tools (e.g. Country Assistance Strategies, Public Expenditure Reviews, Poverty Reduction Strategy Programs, Poverty Assessments), and where possible, identify opportunities for co-targeting of interventions across country portfolios to improve C&Y outcomes.
- Integrate Children and Youth data monitoring and evaluation into overall systems, both internal to the World Bank and external with partners and client countries.
- Build capacity of staff and clients to diagnose children and youth issues in their countries, to strengthen institutional capacity to deal with multisectoral policies and interventions, and to develop cost-effective interventions to addressing their country-specific issues.
- Build strategic partnerships, with particular emphasis on youth, where World Bank work is relatively newer, in order to assess relative comparative advantages of the Bank and its partners, and to provide

effective and coordinated support to countries wishing to pilot and scale up approaches to children and youth development.

In Analysis

- Use the World Bank's World Development Report 2007 entitled "Development for (and by) the Next Generation" as a platform to deepen knowledge on effective policies, institutions, and investments as well as on defining specific risks and opportunities for young people in developing countries.
- Undertake a research agenda to fill in key information gaps (e.g., economic and impact analysis of youth interventions related to principal themes; growth and expenditure strategies that benefit poor children and youth; cost-effectiveness of OVC interventions; measuring the costs of not investing, and the corresponding externalities) and improve knowledge sharing across regions on existing research.
- Develop a set of standard Children and Youth Outcome Indicators across regions to be used for both regional and country based Children & Youth assessments (in collaboration with key partners) and to assist countries in benchmarking their progress. Build upon the MDGs and work already completed by the Children and Youth Unit together with key partners.
- Establish a global Children and Youth monitoring and evaluation system to complement efforts underway for the MDGs.
- Collect and disseminate "good practice," building on lessons learned from effective programs in OECD and developing countries alike to assess relevance for the wide range of social and economic contexts of our client countries.
- Conduct rigorous impact evaluations of interventions for which evidence-based research is lacking.

In Participation

- To effectively build strategies and interventions for youth, it is essential to bring their perspectives and participation into the process at all levels—global, national and local.
- Involve youth in the development, implementation and monitoring of country level strategies and projects that directly effect this cohort.

In Partnerships

- Engage key partners, including UN agencies (e.g., UNICEF, ILO, etc.) and youth-serving NGOs (e.g., Save the Children, Plan International, etc.), bilaterals with strong children and youth emphasis (e.g., USAID, GTZ, CIDA, etc.), youth organizations (e.g., The "Big 7", ICNYP, etc.) as full partners in the Children and Youth agenda at both the global and local levels. Particularly in the area of youth, some of these partners are relatively new for the Bank, or will require a different understanding of respective

strengths and weaknesses. The Children and Youth Website and accompanying Resource Guide provide further detail on these partnerships, and will evolve over time.

In Staff Support

- Moving toward a significantly scaled up approach to children and youth at the country level will, in many cases, require additional resources. Because of the multisectoral nature of many strategic C&Y priorities, country teams may require more than just financial support, including technical, analytical and capacity- building assistance. The accompanying Resource Guide outlines these categories, and proposes to develop analytic and operational tools based on the expressed demand of staff responsible for developing country level policies and projects.
- Work with the World Bank Institute (WBI) to further develop training programs for policymakers and Bank staff to strengthen cross-sectoral institutional capacity to apply a children and youth lens.

Conclusion

In sum, the World Bank is committed to continuing and deepening its investments in children and youth, not just for the productive adults that they will become and the contributions they will make to their future families, communities and countries. This commitment is also for today. For the survival of the infants, for the development of the children, for the perspectives and insights that youth can provide into their own development, for enabling young people everywhere to see their lives in terms of opportunities rather than despair, to lead a productive and secure life . . . now.

For a fuller discussion of the issues, proposed strategies and case studies, please refer to the Children and Youth Resource Guide (see Box below) below or on the C&Y website:
www.worldbank.org/childrenandyouth.

Children and Youth Resource Guide

Executive Summary

1. Overview

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- 1.2 Life-Cycle Approach
- 1.3 In Bank Operations: Building Blocks for Integrated Investments
- 1.4 Priority Areas for Attention

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- 2.1 Status and Trends: Serious Concerns
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3. Youth (15–24): Integrating the Neglected Constituency

- 3.1 Status of Youth: Rising Urgency
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- 3.3 Taking Stock of Bank Work
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4. Addressing the Most Vulnerable

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5. Next Steps: Applying a Children and/or Youth Lens

- 5.1 In Operations
- 5.2 In Analysis
- 5.3 In Participation
- 5.4 In Partnerships
- 5.5 In Staff Support

Boxes and Case Studies (by section)



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The majority of the developing world's poor are children and youth. Although significant progress has been made in reducing income poverty worldwide, the fact remains that most of the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) outcomes directly targeting the young are not likely to be met unless greater attention is paid to the next generation.

How can the World Bank build on its experience — and that of its partners — to assist countries in scaling up action swiftly and significantly in those areas where there is clear evidence of what works? How can we deepen global knowledge on those issues which have proven hardest to solve?

This Framework for Action places the prospects and well-being of children and youth at the center of the Bank's work. It identifies opportunities and risks, highlights gaps in knowledge, poses difficult questions and charts a path accelerating our work to improve the lives today of those who will inherit the planet from us tomorrow.

“Our work will fall short if we cannot provide these young people with the opportunity to build a better tomorrow. That means we must do more and do it better to reach them now.”

— James D. Wolfensohn



The World Bank Children and Youth Unit
Human Development Network
1818 H Street, NW
Washington DC 20433 USA

childrenandyouth@worldbank.org