

Youth in Extreme Poverty: Dimensions and Country Responses

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We will spare no effort to free our fellow men, women and children from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty, to which more than a billion of them are currently subjected. We are committed to making the right to development a reality for everyone and to freeing the entire human race from want.

We resolve therefore to create an environment – at the national and global levels alike – which is conducive to development and to the elimination of poverty.²

GOAL: To halve, by the year 2015, the proportion of the world's population whose income is less than one dollar a day and the proportion of people who suffer from hunger and, by the same date, to halve the proportion of people who are unable to reach or to afford safe drinking water.³

Introduction

Poverty and hunger are highly emotive terms. They are a challenge to action for many, an expression of pity for others and a label of shame for governments. Most young people in the high-income countries regard poverty, understood in its broader meaning of having no money, famine, war and conflict, as not only unacceptable but also as an issue likely to impinge on their well-being too.⁴ Opinion poll results show that some 80 per cent of young people in the European Union, for example, think poverty in low-income countries should be addressed and that they are willing to act to bring about change. Furthermore, unemployment, exclusion, poverty, the upholding of democratic values and human rights are issues many young people think should be tackled and focused upon at a regional and global level.⁵

Young people in middle and low-income countries also regard poverty and the distribution of income and wealth as major issues of concern. A survey of participants aged 13 to 17 years at the 21st Arab Children's Conference, Jordan in July 2001 rated education (25 per cent) and jobs (23 per cent) at the head of their list of concerns, followed by health care (15 per cent), the environment (13 per cent), poverty (11 per cent), political participation (8 per cent) and distribution of income and wealth (6 per cent).⁶

¹ I would like to express my appreciation to Xavier Foulquier for his research assistance in preparing a spreadsheet of available statistics and in reviewing the Poverty Reduction Strategy papers and other reports for information on young people in poverty.

² UN, 2002, United Nations Millennium Declaration., paras 11-12.

³ UN, 2001, Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration: Report of the Secretary-General, September, p 19.

⁴ Mc Donnell, Ida , 2002, 'Youth Attitudes about Poverty', Submission based upon ongoing work of the OECD Development Centre and the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe on Public Opinion and International Development Co-operation in OECD Countries, OECD Development Centre, Paris.

⁵ Eurobarometer, flash survey carried out between May-June 2002, *15 to 24 year olds: young people want Europe to be Tangible*, available online at: http://europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion/index.htm , cited by McDonnell 2002, p 1.

⁶ UNDP, 2002, *The Arab Human Development Report 2002: Creating Opportunities for Future Generations*. <http://www.undp.org/rbas/ahdr/>

Many or most of the young people who live in low and middle-income countries can be assumed to be poor in the broader meaning of the concept of poverty as a lack of access to resources. However, no published data are available on the total numbers of young people in poverty and in which regions the greatest numbers in poverty are to be found. The chapter first presents estimates of the number of young people in extreme poverty in the world. The poverty head counts are based on the income and malnutrition indicators used to measure progress towards the poverty eradication targets of the Millennium Development Goals.

The head count of young people in poverty is based on the assumption that the incidences of poverty in a country apply evenly to all age groups in the population. The second part of the chapter looks at evidence of whether poverty is more likely to be concentrated among young people. In other words, is there evidence of a greater relative risk of poverty for young people and young women in particular? This is a key question to be answered as it has a number of implications for public policy. If poverty is evenly spread throughout all age groups in the population, general policies aimed at poverty alleviation are justified. However, if young people in poverty face particular obstacles, policies need to be targeted at overcoming the specific obstacles poor youth face.

The evidence presented on young people at risk of poverty is based on information available in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. The content of the completed Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers of 17 countries are analysed to identify whether and how youth poverty is being addressed. The paper concludes with a discussion of reasons for the likely under representation of young people in the country level poverty statistics and the policy initiatives examined. The implications of these findings are drawn out for youth as stakeholders with the potential to influence the formation of public policy in their own countries.

Defining youth

The term youth has different meanings depending on its context. This applies particularly to this paper. The first section uses the term youth or young people as a statistical artefact to refer specifically those aged 15 to 24 years. This is done for ease of comparison, as it is the age grouping in which the available data are provided. However, this age grouping is often too narrow when the usages of the term youth is considered on an individual country basis. For example, The UNDP's Human Development Report for Jordan in 2000 has a focus on youth defined as young people aged 15-29 years.⁷

The second section of paper also uses other meanings of the term youth. One is the common distinction in English between youth as young males separately from young females who are between adolescence and physical maturity. The third meaning, used in discussion of the policy responses of governments to the particular problems faced by young people, is based on a sociological definition of youth as a transition stage between childhood and adulthood. This is best summed up in a series of transitions as identified by the Jordan Human Development Report 2000 'from adolescence to adulthood, from dependence to independence, and from being recipients of society's services to becoming contributors to national economic, political, and cultural life'.⁸

Defining poverty

Poverty has been defined by the Government of the Republic of Mozambique as the 'inability of individuals to ensure for themselves and their dependants a set of basic minimum conditions necessary for their subsistence and well-being in accordance with the norms of society'.⁹

Absolute or extreme poverty in terms of income has been defined by the same government as 'the lack of income necessary to satisfy basic food needs or minimum calorie requirements'. Relative

⁷ UNDP, 2000, Jordan: Human Development Report 2000. http://www.undp-jordan.org/publications_jhdr/publications_jhdr.html

⁸ UNDP, 2000, Jordan Human Development Report 2000.

⁹ Government of the Republic of Mozambique, 2001, Action Plan for the Reduction of Absolute Poverty (2001-2005) (PARPA) p 11.

poverty is defined as the 'lack of sufficient income to satisfy the basic essential food and non-food requirements given the average income of the country'. The food poverty line is defined as an intake of less than an average of 2,100 Kcal per day per capita.

There is some controversy over the absolute poverty measure of \$US1 a day used in the Millennium Development Goals targets. There remain a range of statistical problems that still need to be resolved to provide a more accurate measure based on purchasing power parity.¹⁰ The use of a fixed and static international poverty line rather than national poverty lines has also been criticised for underestimating of the extent of global poverty.¹¹ The following analysis using income poverty measures based on the \$US 1 a day benchmark should, therefore, be taken as a minimum estimate of the numbers of young people in poverty. The term 'extreme poverty' is, therefore, used to indicate the minimal nature of the estimates presented. This chapter also uses estimates of young people in hunger to provide a further cross check of its estimates based on the income poverty indicator.

However, it is important to note that the dimension of poverty cannot be captured in a single measure.¹² Human poverty is more properly defined as the 'lack of basic human capacities, such as illiteracy, malnutrition, low life expectancy, poor maternal health, prevalence of preventable diseases, together with indirect measures such as access to the necessary goods, services and infrastructures necessary to achieve basic human capacities – sanitation, clean drinking water, education, communications, energy, etc.-'.¹³

This broader view of poverty as a lack of capacities should also include access to knowledge which may not necessarily be closely correlated with income poverty. One indicator of this is differential access to the Internet. Although the Arab countries of the Middle East are classified by the World Bank as ranging from lower to upper middle income, they have the lowest level of access to the Internet of all regions in the world. Their level of Internet connectivity is even lower than that for sub-Saharan Africa whose countries are mostly classified as low income.¹⁴

This broader definition of poverty better reflects the views of the poor themselves. A qualitative survey of 1363 rural villagers in Niger noted that people saw poverty as involving the following characteristics: dependency, marginalisation, want, restrictions on rights and freedoms, and incapacity (see Box 1).

Box 1: People's perception of poverty

In the poverty analysis, 54 percent of the people interviewed attempted to define poverty... 40 percent mentioned dependence in their definition: '*...a poor person always has to seek out others...*'; '*...a poor person is one who always works for somebody else...*' Thirty-seven percent referred to marginalisation in defining poverty: '*...a poor person is one who is alone...*,' '*...with no support...*,' '*...a person who does not feel involved in anything...*,' '*...someone who is never consulted...*'

Thirty-six percent of the people defined poverty as scarcity: '*nothing to eat; lack of means to meet clothing and financial needs; lack of food, livestock, and money; having nothing to sell*'. Twenty-six percent associated poverty with a restriction on rights and freedoms, stating that '*...a poor person is someone who does not have the right to speak out....*' They believe that '*...a poor person is someone who will never win a case or litigation against*

¹⁰ McCarthy, P; Woolford, K; Pietsch, L and Harper, P; 2002, 'Improving Our Knowledge and Analysis of Changes in Poverty and Inequality: the International Statistical Architecture', Reserve Bank of Australia and the Australian Treasury, Globalisation, Living Standards and Inequality, Sydney 26-28 May; <http://www.rba.gov.au/PublicationsAndResearch/Conferences/>

¹¹ Vandemoortele, J; 2002, 'Are we really reducing global poverty?' Bureau for Development Policy, United Nations Development Programme, to be published in *World Poverty: New Policies to Defeat an Old Enemy*, edited by Peter Townsend and David Gordon, Bristol Policy Press (forthcoming).

¹² Vandemoortele, J; 2002, p 5.

¹³ Government of the Republic of Mozambique, 2001, p 11.

¹⁴ UNDP, 2002, *The Arab Human Development Report 2002*, p29.

someone else....' Twenty-one percent of the interviewees likened poverty to incapacity: the incapacity to take decisions; the incapacity to feed and clothe oneself; the incapacity to act on one's own initiative.

Source: Republic of Niger, 2002, Full Poverty Reduction Strategy, January, p 18-19.

Numbers of young people in low and middle income countries

Almost half a billion young people aged 15 to 24 years, according to world population estimates for 2000, live in low-income countries, representing nearly half (46 per cent) of all young people in this age group in the world (see Table 1). A further third of all young people aged 15 to 24 years (34 per cent) live in lower middle-income countries, as defined by the World Bank. Only 11 per cent of young people in this age group in 2000 live in high-income countries (see Table 1). In terms of the relative share of the population, young people account for a fifth (20 per cent) of the population in low-income countries but only 13 per cent of the population in high income countries.

Table 1: World population classified by income level of country, total, youth aged 15-24 years and youth share of the total population.

| Income level of country | Total population 2000 | Youth population aged 15 to 24 yrs | Youth share of total population, per cent |
|---|-----------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| Low | 2,492,712,000 | 486,605,957 | 45.91 |
| Lower middle | 2,178,021,000 | 361,576,779 | 34.11 |
| Upper middle | 487,622,000 | 92,755,912 | 8.75 |
| High income | 903,147,500 | 118,958,602 | 11.22 |
| Total | 6,061,502,500 | 1,059,897,250 | 100 |
| Source: UN population estimates 2000 and World Bank, 2002 | | | |

In relation to a more specific group of low and middle income countries classified by the World Bank as severely indebted countries, the estimated number of young people 15 to 24 year olds in these countries is 241 million, representing a share of 19.5 per cent of the total population. A further 148 million young people in the same age group are estimated to live in countries classified as moderately indebted, representing a similar share of these countries' populations. The countries classified by the World Bank and the IMF as Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) and, therefore, eligible for comprehensive debt relief, have an estimated youth population of 128 million representing 19.8 per cent of their total population.

These data overlap closely with the concentration of the youth population in particular regions. The largest concentrations of young people aged 15 to 24 years in low-income countries are to be found

in the Asia Pacific region (17 per cent of all young people): India (191 million), Pakistan (30 million), Indonesia (42 million) Vietnam (16 million) and Myanmar (10 million). The other important regional concentration of young people in low-income countries is in Africa (19.8 per cent of all young people): Nigeria (24 million), Ethiopia (12 million), Democratic Republic of the Congo (10 million), Kenya (7 million), Tanzania (7 million), Zimbabwe (7 million) and Sudan (6 million).

Value in using the Millennium Development Goal indicators

A more specific set of estimates of the number of young people in extreme poverty can be derived from the Millennium Development Goals' targets on poverty eradication, set by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 2000. The four indicators of progress in poverty and hunger eradication in relation to each country have been set. These are the incidence of extreme poverty, the poverty gap ratio, the poor's share of national consumption and the prevalence of child malnutrition.

The value of using the Millennium Development Goals as a source for estimating the number of young people in poverty is two fold. The first is that the targets are used by the United Nations, including its specialised agencies in collaboration with the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation & Development (OECD), to report on progress. This reporting process at international level is intended to 'trigger action and promote new alliances for development'.¹⁵

The importance of the Millennium Development Goals as a spur to action is demonstrated by the commitment of the Heads of State and Government of eight major industrialized democracies and the Representatives of the European Union at the Kananaskis Summit in June 2002. This commitment, in the context of the initiative taken by African States in adopting the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), offered the assurance that: 'no country genuinely committed to poverty reduction, good governance and economic reform will be denied the chance to achieve the Millennium Goals through lack of finance'.¹⁶

The second value of using the Millennium Development Goals is that they are accepted internationally as a means of monitoring progress at a regional and national level to 'help reduce the gap between what needs to be done and what is actually being done'.¹⁷ In particular, the Millennium Development Goals at country level are intended to help 'increase the coherence and consistency of national policies and programmes ... to ensure that poverty reduction strategies increase the focus on the poorest and most vulnerable through an appropriate choice of economic and social policies'.¹⁸

Many low-income countries now have information available on key development indicators and a clear outline of their policies to address the Millennium Development Goals in an easily accessible form. The Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, a requirement for debt relief under the heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) initiative of the IMF, are based on a consultative process with a range of stakeholder groups within the country concerned. In addition, UN country assessments and national human development reports provide additional information.¹⁹ These reports and assessments provide valuable information on the position of young people, both in terms of their situation and the policies proposed to address specifically the needs of young people.

15 UN, 2001, p 55

16 G8 Africa Action Plan, G8 Summit 2002, Kananaskis, Canada, 25-27 June, http://www.g8.gc.ca/kan_docs/afraction-e.asp

17 UN, 2001, p 19

18 UN, 2001, p 19

19 As of April 2002, National Millennium Development Goal reports have been published for Bolivia, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chad, Madagascar, Nepal, the United Republic of Tanzania and Viet Nam.

Young people and the poverty eradication indicators of the Millennium Development Goals

How are young people in the world are currently faring in relation to these indicators? The first and most important of the Millennium Development Goals is to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. The two targets have been set for this goal. The first is to reduce by half, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of the world's population whose income is less than \$1 per day. The second target is to reduce by half, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger (see Box 1). Achievement of the two targets is to be assessed by changes to five indicators referring to measures of income poverty and malnutrition (see Box 1).

In concrete terms, the Millennium Development Goal's first target on poverty is to reduce the world's population surviving on less than \$US 1 dollar a day to less than 15 per cent by 2015. The Millennium Development Goal's second target, in specific terms, is to reduce malnutrition among children under the age of 5 years from 32 per cent to 16 per cent.²⁰

The World Bank's World Development Indicators database is a repository of the most recent data on all the indicators chosen to measure progress in relation to the Millennium Development Goals. These data in relation to poverty are based on representative household surveys and relate to varying years post 1990 for most countries of the world.²¹

The first Millennium Development Goal poverty indicator measures the absolute income poverty level for a country. The absolute income poverty level is based on the proportion of a country's population in households with a per capita consumption of less than one US dollar per person per day, measured at 1985 purchasing power parity. The figure of \$1 a day has been chosen because it is regarded as typical of the poverty lines in low-income countries.²² However, as this absolute measure of poverty excludes most middle or high-income countries, the incidences of poverty using a national poverty line are also reported on to provide an idea of a country's relative poverty level.

Box 2: The first Millennium Development Goal, the targets to achieve that goal and the indicators to be used to measure progress

| Goal 1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger | |
|--|---|
| Targets | Indicators |
| Target 1. Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of population whose income is less than \$1 per day | 1. Proportion of people whose income or consumption is less than one dollar a day |
| | 2. Poverty gap ratio (incidence x depth of poverty) |
| | 3. Share of poorest quintile in national consumption |
| Target 2. Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger | 4. Prevalence of underweight children (under five years of age) |
| | 5. Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption |
| Source: UNDP Millennium Development Goals, Targets and Indicators http://www.undp.org/mdg/goalsandindicators.html | |

Head count of youth in extreme poverty

It is possible to use the country level indicator of absolute income poverty to estimate a head count of the number of young people in extreme poverty in 2000. This can be done by applying the

²⁰ World Bank, 1998, Indicator Methodology Sheets.

²¹ World Bank, 2002, Poverty and hunger: World Development Indicators Database.

<http://www.developmentgoals.org/Data.htm>

²² Sala-i-Martin (2002) notes that the original definition of \$1 a day came from the work of Ravallion et al (1991) who used "perceptions of poverty" in the poorest countries to place the poverty line at \$31 per month. The \$1 a day line has since been adopted by the World Bank as the "official" definition of 'absolute poverty'.

proportion of people in a country below the poverty line of one US dollar per person per day to the 15-to-24 age group to calculate the number of youth people below the poverty line²³ Estimates can be made for countries for which there are no poverty measures by matching them with another country with an available poverty measure in the immediate region.²⁴

Using this method, the number of young people in the world surviving on less than \$1 dollar a day in 2000 is estimated to be 238 million. This represents nearly a quarter (22.5 per cent) of the world's estimated youth population of 1.059 billion (see Table 1). The South Asia region has the largest concentration of young people in extreme poverty (106 million), followed by sub-Saharan Africa (60 million) and East Asia and the Pacific (51 million). Latin America and the Caribbean are estimated to have 15 million young people in extreme poverty.

The eleven countries with the largest concentration of youth below the poverty line (77 per cent of the 238 million) are shown in Table 2. The countries with the largest headcount of young people in extreme poverty are: India, China, Nigeria, Pakistan, Bangladesh, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Vietnam, Brazil, Ethiopia, Indonesia and Mexico.

Table 2: Poverty Head Count of Young People in the World: the number of young people aged 15 to 24 years with an income of less than \$1 per day, estimated from national data.

| Country | Proportion of the total population below \$1/day, per cent | Total estimated youth population aged 15-24 yrs 2000 | Number of youth below the \$1/day poverty line |
|------------------|--|--|--|
| India | 44.2 | 191,286,300 | 84,548,545 |
| China | 18.8 | 191,445,150 | 35,991,688 |
| Nigeria | 70.2 | 24,726,912 | 17,358,292 |
| Pakistan | 31.0 | 29,485,323 | 9,140,450 |
| Bangladesh | 29.1 | 30,152,850 | 8,774,479 |
| Congo, Dem. Rep. | 66.6 | 9,780,561 | 6,513,854 |
| Vietnam | 37.0 | 16,270,898 | 6,020,232 |
| Brazil | 11.6 | 34,009,602 | 3,945,114 |
| Ethiopia | 31.3 | 12,110,025 | 3,790,438 |
| Indonesia | 7.7 | 42,087,870 | 3,240,766 |
| Mexico | 15.9 | 19,973,962 | 3,175,860 |
| | | | 182,499,718 |

Sources: World Development Indicators, World Bank April 2002; UN population estimates. The poverty rate for the Congo imputed from the rate for the Central African Republic. The Poverty rate for Vietnam based on UNDP, 2001, Progress Report International Development Targets/Millennium Development Goals.

A broader measure of absolute income poverty is the number of people who live under \$US2 a day. The United Nations Development Program's Human Development Report for 2002 provides data, where available, on the proportion of the population in each country who are surviving on below \$2 a day. Applying this proportion to the population of young people, the total number of young people surviving on less than \$2 a day is estimated to be 462 million. Using this broader measure, just over a third (37.5 per cent) of the estimated number of young people in the world aged 15 to 24 years in 2000 can be defined as being in poverty.

23 The assumption is that young people are likely to experience poverty no less or no more than the population as a whole.

24 This method is similar to the one used by Bourguignon and Morrisson (2002) as outlined by Sala-i-Martin (2002: 9).

The number of young people in the poorest countries in the world

The second indicator used by the UN to measure poverty is the Poverty gap ratio. This refers to the combined measurement of the incidence of poverty and the depth of poverty in each country. As noted above, the incidence of poverty is the proportion of people who live below the poverty line. The depth of poverty refers to the difference between the poverty line of \$1 a day and the average income of the population living under the poverty line. Multiplying the incidence of poverty by the depth of poverty produces a measure of the magnitude of poverty.²⁵ In other words, countries can be rated in terms of not only the proportion of their population who are poor but also how poor they are. The target for this indicator is to halve the Poverty Gap Ratio between 1993 and 2015 so that this indicator will be under 5 per cent by 2015.²⁶

Nineteen countries with the largest poverty gaps or largest concentrations of poverty (ie with a ratio of 10 per cent or more) are listed in Table A1 in the attachment to this paper. The table also lists each country's estimated population of young people aged 15 to 24 years and estimated youth poverty headcount. The total number of young people living in countries with the largest concentrations of poverty is an estimated 255 million. Of these young people, some 118 million or nearly half are living below the poverty line of \$1 dollar a day.

It is no surprise to note from Table A1 that 15 out of the 19 poorest countries in the world are in Sub-Saharan Africa. The number of young people in these countries amounts to 51 million or 37 per cent of all young people in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Poverty and inequality

The third indicator of income poverty used by the Millennium Development Goals concerns the degree of inequality in a country. This is measured by the income/expenditure of the poorest 20 per cent of the population as a proportion of total income/expenditure of the whole population. The aim of the indicator is to focus on the situation facing the most vulnerable group in the population. It has more value as an indicator for comparing changes over time. Its prime value is in recording whether increased economic growth is benefiting the poorest fifth of population.²⁷

As the inequality indicator serves as a crosscheck on the other poverty indicators, no specific target has been set for it. However, the World Bank has noted a baseline proportion for the world in 1990 of 7 per cent of income going to the poorest fifth of the populations of countries for which data are available.²⁸ The regions where the poorest receive a greater share of their country's national income are South Asia (9.2 per cent), Middle East, North Africa & Europe (7.4 per cent) and Europe & Central Asia (6.1 per cent). The smallest shares go to the poorest fifth in the regions of East Asia and the Pacific (5.9 per cent), Sub-Saharan Africa (5.0 per cent) and Latin America & Caribbean (3.3 per cent) that Bank.²⁹

Young people in hunger

The Millennium Development Goals acknowledge that poverty needs to be measured in ways other than income.³⁰ Reducing the hunger among the world's population is a necessary condition for eliminating poverty because better nourishment improves the capacity of people to produce a sustainable livelihood.

As noted above, the second target for the Millennium Development Goal of reducing poverty is to halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger. The achievement of this target is to be measured by two indicators: the prevalence of underweight children (under

25 World Bank, 1998, Indicator Methodology Sheets, p 6

26 World Bank, 1998, p 6

27 World Bank, 1998, p 7

28 World Bank, 1998, p 7

29 World Bank, 1998, p 7

30 UN, 2000, Road Map Towards the Implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration: Report of the Secretary-General, p 19.

five years of age) and the proportion of a country's population below a minimum level of dietary energy consumption. Data are available for the first indicator only. The specific target for this indicator is to reduce the prevalence of underweight children from 32 per cent of the population aged 0 to 5 years in 1990 to 16 per cent by 2015.

Data on the prevalence of children who are underweight is a key indicator not only in its own right as a measure of progress in improving child nutrition. It is also a valuable way to crosscheck the reliability of the income-based measures of poverty Bank. Another advantage is that it offers better coverage of the world's population than the income poverty measures (89 per cent compared with 71 per cent of the world's population represented for those surviving below one dollar a day).³¹

Altogether 57 countries can be identified with higher proportions of their children underweight than the 2015 target of 16 per cent. The estimated youth population aged 15 to 24 years in 2000 in these countries is 497 million, of whom 35 per cent are estimated to be surviving below the absolute poverty line of one dollar a day. The largest countries in terms of population with the highest proportion of underweight children are: Bangladesh (61.3 per cent), Ethiopia (47.2 per cent) and India (47 per cent). Their estimated youth population aged 15 to 24 years in 2000 is 233.5 million.

Background documentation produced for The World Food Summit: Five Years Later, of the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) which was held in Rome, June, 2002 provides a rating of countries according to their prevalence of under nourishment, based on 1997-99 data. The background report *Mobilizing The Political Will And Resources to Banish World Hunger* for the Summit rates countries in the world with over a million population where data are available according to their incidence of under nourishment and classifies them into five categories.³² Categories 1 and 2 refer to a low incidence of under nourishment, category 3 refers to intermediate level of under nourishment and categories 4 and 5 refer to a high prevalence of under nourishment.³³

Some 49 countries are classified by the FAO as having a high prevalence of under nourishment (ie in categories 4 and 5) (see Table A1.2 in the attachment). If the incidence of under nourishment in each of these countries is applied to the youth population in that country, it is possible to estimate the number of youth in hunger. Using this method, the number of youth in hunger in countries with a high prevalence of under nourishment is estimated to be 110 million (see Table A1.2 in the attachment). This number represents 72 per cent of all young people in all countries with over a million population who are under nourished (152 million).

The number of young people in hunger in the Category 5 countries with the highest incidence of under nourishment is estimated to be 38 million. The regional distribution is shown in Table 3.

31 World Bank, 1998, p 7

32 FAO, 2002, *Mobilizing the political will and resources to banish world hunger* Technical background documents. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Rome.

33 The FAO uses the following method to calculate the incidence of under nourishment in a country: the total number of calories available is calculated based on local food production, trade and stocks; an average minimum calorie requirement for the population is then calculated based on the number of calories needed by different age and gender groups and the proportion of the population represented by each group. This is then divided by the total number of calories available by the number of people in the country. Account is also taken of inequality in access to food in the form of a coefficient for distribution. This information is used to construct a measure of the distribution of the food supply within the country. This gives the percentage of the population whose food intake falls below the minimum requirement – see <http://www.fao.org/FOCUS/E/SOFI00/sofi004a-e.htm>

Table 3: Estimated number of young people aged 15 to 24 years who are in hunger in countries with high incidences of under nourishment, by region and total population, years 1997-1999 and 2000.

| Region | Estimated youth population under nourished |
|--|--|
| Sub-Saharan Africa | 39,313,150 |
| East Asia & Pacific | 7,441,023 |
| Latin America & Caribbean | 3,725,974 |
| Middle East & North Africa | 1,176,583 |
| South Asia | 58,473,191 |
| Total | 110,129,920 |
| Source: FAO 2002 based on 1997-99 data and UN population estimates, 2000 | |

Summary of analysis: how many young people are in extreme poverty?

Two broad sets of indicators are used to measure progress on the Millennium Development Goal of eradicating poverty, income and malnutrition. In relation to income poverty, estimates of the number of young people surviving on less than one dollar a day were presented. The numbers of young people in countries with high levels of child malnutrition and low calorie intake for the population as a whole offer another source of information on the extent of poverty independent of the income measures. The latter help to confirm the income based estimates of youth in poverty in terms of their accuracy.

At the bottom end of the scale, there is the estimate of the 38 million young people in hunger living in the 23 countries designated as having a 'very high' prevalence of under nourishment. An estimate of 110 million youth in hunger is based on the incidence of the child population malnourished applied to the youth population who are living in countries with a high or very high prevalence of their country's population living on an under nourished diet. The middle range estimates of the number of youth in poverty is the 238 million young people surviving on \$US 1 a day, representing 23 per cent of the total youth population. The high end of the estimates of the number of young people aged 15 to 24 years in extreme poverty in 2000 are 462 million based on those surviving on less than \$US 2 a day and 497 million, based on the proportion of children in their country who are underweight. The figures represent nearly a half of the youth population in the world.

The broader definition of absolute poverty based on the \$2 a day measure (462 million) is said to reflect the national poverty lines more commonly used in lower-middle-income countries.³⁴ This estimate is confirmed by its similarity to the number of young people identified as being under nourished based on incidence of child malnutrition applied to the youth population (497 million). The smaller headcount of poverty based on the \$1 dollar a day measure delivered an estimate of 238 million. When compared with the above two figures based on the \$2 dollar a day estimate and the incidence of child malnutrition applied to the youth population, the lower figure of 238m appears to underestimate the number of young people who could be regarded as being in extreme poverty. On the other hand, more specific measures of poverty can also be derived. These more narrowly focused estimates of 38 to 110m young people in hunger are based on the imputed incidence of malnutrition among young people in particular countries which are rated as having an overall high prevalence of malnutrition.

³⁴ World Bank, 2001, *World Development Report 2000 /2001 Attacking Poverty*. Oxford University Press and the World Bank, p 17.

Young people at risk of poverty

Are young people more at risk of entering or being in poverty than other age groups in the population? Easily accessible evidence on youth in poverty is difficult to find. None of the recent ten country reports on Millennium Development Goals Reports produced by the UNDP, for example, mention youth as a specific focus on their reporting of progress on Goal 1: the eradication of poverty.³⁵ Only two reports provide any data on young people at all. The Mauritius report notes the unemployment rate among youth aged 15 to 24 years at two points in time.³⁶ The Albanian report provides data on the literacy rate of 15-24 year-olds.³⁷

On the other hand, of the 24 country or regional Human Development Reports produced by the UNDP between the years 1998 and to mid 2002, seven have had a major focus on young people.³⁸ For example, *The Arab Human Development Report 2002: Creating Opportunities for Future Generations* highlights the connection between youth unemployment and poverty.³⁹

Identifying young people in poverty

The 17 completed Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers provide a valuable source of evidence about whether youth are seen by the governments of low-income countries as a specific target poverty group. The Papers are produced by the governments of heavily indebted countries based on input from domestic stakeholders as well as external development partners, including the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. An important new feature of the PRSP process is seeking the participation of a range of major stakeholder groups, including the poor.⁴⁰

Eleven of the 17 papers provide information about which stakeholders were consulted in their preparation. Where the information was included, nearly all of the Papers mention young people, classified as youth or students, as being participants in the consultation process (see Table 4).

Table 4: The extent to which youth were consulted in the formulation of completed Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, to August, 2002, number and per cent

| Were youth groups consulted? | | | |
|------------------------------|-----|---------------------------|-------|
| Yes | No | Information not available | total |
| 10 | 1 | 6 | 17 |
| 58.8 | 5.9 | 35.3 | 100 |

Source: author's analysis of completed PRSPs, papers available from IMF web site

However, involvement in the consultation process did not necessarily result in the identification of young people as a major group affected by poverty. Only two countries of the 17 countries with completed Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers identified youth as a major group in the population

³⁵ These countries are: Albania, Bolivia, Chad, Cameroon, Cambodia, Nepal, Tanzania and Viet Nam - see <http://www.undp.org/mdg/countryreports.html>

³⁶ Mauritius National Millennium Development Goals Report, December 2001, p 46 .

³⁷ The Albanian Response to the Millennium Development Goals Prepared for the United Nation System in Albania by the Human Development Promotion Center (HDPC) Tirana, May 2002; p 21.

³⁸ The UNDP Human Development Reports where youth are a major focus are: Arab Nations, 2002; Lithuania, 2001; Bosnia Herzegovina, 2000; Latvia 1999; Kazakhstan, 2000; Maldives 2001 and Jordan 2000.

³⁹ UNDP. 2002, *The Arab Human Development Report 2002*. p93-94.

⁴⁰ 'In September 1999, the objectives of the IMF's concessional lending were broadened to include an explicit focus on poverty reduction in the context of a growth oriented strategy. The IMF will support, along with the World Bank, strategies elaborated by the borrowing country in a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) which will be prepared with the participation of civil society—including the poor—and other development partners'. – www.imf.org

experiencing poverty (Malawi and Zambia). Four countries accord youth a minor focus in their PRSPs (Nicaragua, Honduras Rwanda and Burkina Faso) (see Table 5). Nearly a quarter of countries with completed Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers mention youth in passing as one of several groups experiencing poverty. However, some 41 per cent of the completed Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers do not refer to youth as a group in poverty at all. Possible reasons for this lack of identification of youth as a group in poverty are discussed in the section below in relation to static and dynamic views of poverty.

Table 5: The extent to which youth are identified as a specific group in poverty in completed Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, up to end August, 2002, number and per cent

| Youth identified as a group in poverty | | | | |
|--|-------------|----------------------------|------------|-------|
| Major focus | Minor focus | One of several groups only | No mention | |
| 2 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 17 |
| 11.8 | 23.5 | 23.5 | 41.2 | 100.0 |

Source: author's analysis of completed PRSPs, papers available from IMF web site

What forms did the identification of youth as a major or minor focus in the PRSPs take? The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper for Zambia notes that 'the most affected by poverty and environmental degradation are women and youths as they have limited access to land, other productive resources, as well as limited employment in the formal sector'.⁴¹ A more detailed mention is made of the problem of child poverty which is interpreted to refer to youth aged 12 to 19 years (see Box 3).

Box 3: Who Are the Poor?

Children: Child poverty is a conspicuous and growing phenomenon in Zambia. It takes a variety of forms: orphans, street children, working children, and children who head households. 16 percent of the children in Zambia are orphans. In addition, the number of orphans is higher in the rural areas, in small-scale-farming households, and in low cost areas where the incidence of poverty is the highest. Some 20 years ago, street children were unheard of but today they are a visible lot. Current estimates are not available. In 1996, they were estimated at 75,000 and the numbers have probably grown since then. Child headed households and child labour are also phenomena indicative of children in distress. Child headed households are the results of the death of both parents, leaving a trail of children and the responsibility on the eldest child, often a teenager, to look after the younger siblings. The conditions in child headed households are worse than those obtaining in female-headed households. Child labour is an offshoot of the declining economic conditions. In 1998, 28 percent of the persons in the age group 12-19 years were part of the labour force. These are children one would have expected to be in upper primary and secondary schools in normal circumstances.

Source: Government of Zambia, 2002, Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, March 31, p 24.

Nicaragua's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper in a section on human capital and poverty notes that its adolescent fertility rates are the highest in Latin America and represent an increasing share of all births. According to the Paper, by age 19, almost half of all women in Nicaragua have experienced at least one pregnancy. The Paper goes on to note that 'poor women are less able to plan families; they have less access to information on family planning and face higher reproductive risks'.⁴²

⁴¹ Government of Zambia, 2002, Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, March 31.

<http://www.imf.org/external/np/prsp/prsp.asp> , p116.

⁴² Government of Nicaragua, 2001, Strengthened Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy, July 31, p 10.

A similar issue concerning adolescent maternity and poverty is raised in Honduras' Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers.

*Fertility rates in adolescent women (between 14 and 18 years of age) are of particular concern, reaching levels of 2.2 children per woman in rural areas, which contributes to the fact that around 15% of all births nationwide are accounted for by adolescent mothers. Maternity in adolescent women is also linked to an increase in women as heads of the household, which seems to relate significantly to income level. This happens both in urban areas (due to marginalisation processes and family disintegration) and in rural areas (due to differences in migration patterns and destinations between men and women).*⁴³

The Government of Rwanda's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper notes that:

*Much underemployment is found among young men who have not yet married. Whether or not this group is poor in consumption terms, they suffer from the lack of employment opportunities. Hence the generation of employment opportunities needs to be an important objective of the poverty reduction strategy.*⁴⁴

Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper for The Gambia, one of the poorest countries in Africa, presents the results of a national household survey conducted in 1998 (see Table 6). The survey results throw light on the relative poverty status of young people compared with other age groups.⁴⁵

Table 6: Population distribution in Gambia by poverty status, per cent, 1998.

| Age group | Extremely poor | Poor | Total Population |
|-----------|----------------|-------|------------------|
| 0 to 4 | 15.0 | 14.9 | 14.4 |
| 5 to 9 | 18.0 | 17.2 | 16.1 |
| 10 to 19 | 25.9 | 24.8 | 23.4 |
| 20 to 39 | 24.2 | 26.3 | 28.5 |
| 40 to 59 | 11.0 | 10.9 | 11.9 |
| 60 + | 5.9 | 5.9 | 5.7 |
| | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: Republic of Gambia, 2002, The Gambia: Strategy for Poverty Alleviation, p 25

These survey results show a slight tendency for young people in The Gambia aged 10 to 19 years to be over represented among the extremely poor and the poor compared with this age group's share of the total population. It is the age group 20 to 39 years that is under represented among the poor compared with their share of the population. However, it should be noted that these are trends evident at the margin only. They show overall the extremely poor and the poor have age distributions which are close to the total population. These data suggest that while age is associated with poverty, other more encompassing factors applying to the total population are also at work.

⁴³ Government of Honduras, 2001, Honduras: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper.

⁴⁴ The Government of Rwanda, 2002, Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, June 30, p 20.

⁴⁵ The Republic of The Gambia, 2002. The Gambia: Strategy for Poverty Alleviation (SPAII) (PRSP). Department of State for Finance and Economic Affairs, April, p25. Extremely poor households are defined as those with expenditure less than the cost of a basket of food providing 2,700 calories. Poor households are defined as those with expenditures above the poverty line but includes the cost of additional items to food such as clothing and travel (p23).

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper for Bolivia also offers an age specific comment on the impact of poverty and notes it is likely to be related to the person’s stage in their lifecycle.

*Poverty levels are significantly higher (56 percent) in households headed by young persons—under 25 years of age—than in those headed by older persons. This factor reflects the fact that households accumulate more assets during the life cycle, and that older households generally have a lighter burden of family responsibility.*⁴⁶

Young people as a target group for PRSP action plans

The next level of recognition of young people in the PRSPs is whether they are highlighted as a target group in PRSPs’ action plans. A content analysis of the sections of the Papers detailing the action plans reveals that youth are a major target group in nearly half of the 17 countries, and a minor focus in nearly a quarter of the completed Papers (see Table 7). Youth were not mentioned in the action plans in five countries (29 per cent). The countries where youth are a major focus of the PRSPs are: Malawi, Nicaragua, Mauritania, Honduras, Mozambique, The Gambia, Burkina Faso and Zambia. Youth are a minor focus in the PRSPs of Guinea, Rwanda, Yemen, and Albania. They failed to rate a specific mention in the PRSPs of Bolivia, Niger, Tanzania, Uganda and Vietnam.

What is significant about this list of countries is that different countries in the same region can vary greatly in terms of the importance they accord to youth as a focus for attention. Countries as close as The Gambia and Guinea in West Africa, or Rwanda and Uganda in East Africa, for example, give youth a different priority in their action plans. This suggests that the availability of appropriate data sources and the differing capacities of representative youth groups may be important influences on whether youth are identified as a target group in the action plans.

Table 7: The extent to which youth are identified as a target group in a completed PRSP action plan in completed Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, to August, 2002, number and per cent

| Youth identified as a target group in action plan | | | |
|---|--------------------|------------|-------|
| Major target group | Minor target group | No mention | Total |
| 8 | 4 | 5 | 17 |
| 47.1 | 23.5 | 29.4 | 100.0 |

Source: author’s analysis of completed PRSPs, papers available from IMF web site

Actions taken to improve the situation of vulnerable young people

The PRSPs of five countries (Malawi, Nicaragua, Honduras, Mauritania and Mozambique) stand out in terms of their focus on youth. These countries have not only highlighted specific attention in the form of particular initiative or initiatives. They have also referred to youth as a group likely to benefit from efforts to achieve outcomes that go beyond the delivery of simple program outputs.

Malawi’s PRSP highlights the fact that about 300,000 people leave the formal education system in Malawi every year but only 30,000 enter formal employment annually, ‘leaving a balance of 270,000 people who enter the labour market annually and seek some other source of income other than formal wage employment’. For those school leavers not in wage employment, the problem is a ‘lack of skills development due to inappropriate education curricula at all levels and low access and intake into technical, entrepreneurial and vocational training institutions’.

⁴⁶ Republic of Bolivia, 2001, Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper; March, p 37.

A more comprehensive and person-centred approach to achieving policy outcomes is evident in the range of issues highlighted by the Malawian PRSP for attention in relation to the reform of the technical, entrepreneurial vocational education and training system. The range of initiatives include the innovative use of 'mobile village polytechnics' to promote self-employment through skills development for the poor in the informal sector in rural areas, and expanding multipurpose youth centres with appropriate resource and educational information, trained youth leaders and provision of vocational training. Also to be introduced is new competency-based curricula for the vocational education and training in primary, secondary and technical education, backed by rehabilitated infrastructure and equipment and strengthen management and financing systems for the vocational education system.⁴⁷ Some 11 performance indicators are also identified to reflect progress on the changes sought.

The Nicaraguan PRSP highlights the problem of early pregnancy among poor adolescent girls due to 'cultural patterns of early fertility, high school drop-out rates, abuse of women, and limited options in the job market'.⁴⁸ The proposed set of integrated responses to the plight of vulnerable adolescents involves improved family planning, access to better reproductive health services together with safe water and basic sanitation to reduce mortality rates. There is also to be an emphasis on strengthening the social fabric by reducing violence in the family through formal and non-formal education programs involving NGOs, community leaders and municipalities. The intention is to encourage self-esteem, responsible paternity and maternity, and family unity. Activities to prevent or penalise family violence and assist victims are also being developed.⁴⁹

The Honduras PRSP, in its goal of support for the growth of micro, small and medium enterprises as a source of employment generation and income for poor families, aims to 'stimulate the birth of young entrepreneurs, incorporating different models and education levels for project design and management, and providing favourable finance conditions'. The indicator for the policy objective is: 'Number of youth incubating enterprises operating'.⁵⁰ In addition, the section on education reform specifies the objective of strengthening middle technical-productive education, both formal and non-formal, with the one of the performance indicator being the 'percentage of young workers graduating from technical education'.

Mauritania's PRSP has two aspects with direct relevance to young people. One is a special vocational training program for more than 5,000 people, mainly targeting women and young people. The second initiative is a program which provides training tailored to specific training needs of unemployed graduates and then seeks to place them in the workforce, in partnership with the private sector, local communities, and NGOs. The program also is to provide women who are seeking self-employment with skills to enhance their income-generating capacity.⁵¹

The final PRSP with a significant emphasis on youth in poverty is that of Mozambique in relation to the health care needs of 'youth and adolescents'. The main objectives of the initiative are to improve the health, and knowledge of health issues amongst young people and adolescents, through school health activities by training personnel to work with adolescents in relation to family planning, complications arising from abortion, and the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS. Other related key measures include creating health services that serve the reproductive health needs of adolescents.⁵²

⁴⁷ Government of Malawi, 2002, pp56-57.

⁴⁸ Government of Nicaragua, 2001, *A Strengthened Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy*. July, p 34.

⁴⁹ Government of Nicaragua, 2001, p 34.

⁵⁰ Government of Honduras, 2001, *The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper*, p 120.

⁵¹ Islamic Republic of Mauritania, 2002, *Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper Implementation Report*, p 15.

⁵² Government of the Republic of Mozambique, 2001, *Action Plan for the Reduction of Absolute Poverty (2001-2005) (PARPA)*; p 52.

Youth disadvantaged by static views of poverty

The above analysis of the information provided by governments and other stakeholders through the PRSP process on the extent and nature of poverty suggests that young people, in many instances, are not seen as a traditional marginal group in poverty. This may be due to several reasons. First, youth are often defined as young males. Young males who are poor are not as easily identified by officials as being part of the visible poor because they are likely to be more geographically mobile. Second, young males are not seen by authorities as economically or socially dependant in the same way that children or old people are. Third, young males are not likely to be regarded as socially vulnerable in the same way as young women are likely to be. This has now changed somewhat with the spread of HIV/Aids but even here young males are more likely to be seen as perpetrators rather than victims.

However, the under reporting of young people in the poverty statistics may also be due to more complex factors shaping how researchers view poverty and the methodology they use to collect data based on this view. Young people are less likely to be identified as a separate poverty target group where a static definition of poverty prevails.⁵³ This static definition focuses on cases of persistent poverty among the long-term poor. The static view of poverty highlights how people experience difficulties on a continuing or persistent basis. These difficulties are likely to be caused by entrenched structural or cultural factors such as regional location and lack of access to basic services related to education and health. The poor are often seen as victims, born into poverty or otherwise trapped due to where they live.⁵⁴ This type of poverty is relatively easily measured through household surveys because the population is stable and all age groups are equally affected.

However, a more dynamic definition of poverty can offer a different starting point for understanding and researching youth and poverty. This alternative approach acknowledges that poverty may be more situational than inherited, and more prone to short-term durations. The latter are likely to be associated with difficulties negotiating a particular stage in the lifecycle such initially developing a regular source of livelihood or coping with the birth of a child. A more dynamic view of poverty also emphasises the active role the poor do play in seeking to get themselves out of poverty largely by their own efforts. This perspective is illustrated in the following quote from the Nicaraguan PRSP (see Box 4).

Box 4: Better protection for vulnerable groups: Nicaragua

Work is also being done to differentiate between transfers the government should make unconditionally, such as for poor households facing generalized crises, and more targeted interventions to relieve those vulnerable groups undergoing temporary reversals. Clear income and exit mechanisms for social protection programs are being designed, so that support and capacity-building go hand-in-hand when a crisis affects the poor, avoiding regression to paternalism and dependency. Future efforts will then be directed towards programs to better predict some disasters (earthquakes, hurricanes, droughts) and to ameliorate their impact more effectively.

Source: Government of Nicaragua, 2001, A Strengthened Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy. July, p 35.

One way the poor help themselves is to work out ways to manage risk in their lives. This can vary from saving money to tide one over periods of low income generation to seeking ways to lower

⁵³ The Tanzanian PRSP consultation process focused on the 'poor at the village level' and notes that: 'In retrospect, the coverage of the poor could have been broadened even further, to include unemployed and under-employed youths, and the informal sectors. It is also possible that with a different sampling of the poor, the emphasis placed on certain views and concerns could have been somewhat different.' (p 4). The PRSP goes on to note that efforts will be made in the future to seek 'fuller representation of the poor and other stakeholders'.

⁵⁴ The following quote from the Nicaraguan PRSP highlights this perspective: 'One of the salient perceptions [of the poor] is a sense of despair and resignation. The poor believe that poverty is a vicious circle from which they cannot escape since it is inherited and perpetuated through generations ...Para 51, p 13.

one's risk profile by investing time and resources in further education and training. Another proactive way the poor reduce their risk profile is by improving their access to supportive social networks in the community to provide assistance if and when needed. These social networks, broadly defined, can include unions, regional associations and community-based support agencies. Supportive social networks also provide access to opportunities to use 'weak ties' to obtain information about decent work or other opportunities to gain a sustainable livelihood in a market economy.⁵⁵

Both perspectives are important for understanding poverty. However, in relation to understanding the significance of poverty for young people, this chapter contends that the dynamic view offers a better starting point. However, this is not to deny that some young people such as single mothers or young people in general resident in rural areas may be better understood from a static poverty perspective. If the dynamic view of poverty is a better starting point, what follows from this in terms of how poverty is measured and the type of policy interventions needed.

New approach to measuring youth in poverty needed

A reliance on household surveys to record who is in poverty will perpetuate a bias against youth. Household surveys usually focus on easily enumerated households identified by a dwelling and a family. Young people are likely to be under represented in such settings if they have left the parental home and are in precarious circumstances which is likely to include temporary accommodation or even being without any accommodation at all.

Collecting data on young people who are poor using the dynamic perspective on poverty is a more complex task than the methodology required for recording poverty from a static perspective.⁵⁶ It requires information that does more than recording the 'incidence' of poverty. It also requires information about income generated over time for particular age groups, the subjective perceptions of those affected and its biographical significance.⁵⁷

This dynamic view of poverty requires going beyond aggregate cross sectional data to collect information about individuals or specific groups experiences of poverty over time. Longitudinal data, even if only from small but representative sample surveys, is likely to yield better information about the economic needs and prospects of individuals and groups at risk of poverty than large scale and expensive household surveys. Micro level data will provide better insights into what forms of assistance are likely to be effective.⁵⁸ Data collection from a dynamic perspective on poverty needs to start by identifying separate potential crisis events in a person's lifecycle – eg birth, completing a minimum level of education, obtaining a good job, losing a job, birth of children, and death and developing a risk profile of those most likely to have difficulties.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Weak ties refer to links with people outside one's immediate social circle. Because they are ties based on more tenuous relationships, they are more extensive in their coverage and hence better sources of information about jobs and other opportunities. M. Granovetter, 1973, 'Strength of weak ties', *American Journal of Sociology*, (78):1360-- 1380, .

⁵⁶ The World Bank's World Development Report on Poverty notes that: 'Measuring vulnerability is especially difficult: since the concept is dynamic, it cannot be measured merely by observing households once. Only with household panel data—that is, household surveys that follow the same households over several years—can the basic information be gathered to capture and quantify the volatility and vulnerability that poor households say is so important. Moreover, people's movements in and out of poverty are informative about vulnerability only after the fact. The challenge is to find indicators of vulnerability that can identify at-risk households and populations beforehand.' , p19.

⁵⁷ Leisering, Lutz, and Stephan Liebfired. "Paths out of Poverty: Perspectives on Active Policy." Pp. 199 -209 in *The Global Third Way Debate*, Anthony Giddens. Cambridge: Polity Press

⁵⁸ OECD. "When Money is Tight: Poverty Dynamics in OECD Countries." Pp. 37 -87 in *OECD Employment Outlook June 2001*, anonymous. Paris: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

⁵⁹ Leisering, Lutz, and Stephan Liebfired. "Paths out of Poverty: Perspectives on Active Policy." Pp. 199 -209 in *The Global Third Way Debate*, Anthony Giddens. Cambridge: Polity Press, p 201

Different policy focus

The policy prescriptions that follow from the static and dynamic views of poverty are also notably different. Policy prescriptions based on the former are more likely to focus on geographically targeted poverty alleviation efforts and applied to the whole population within a particular area. Specific measures likely to be implemented from a static poverty perspective will seek to overcome the poor's marginal status and social exclusion.

On the other hand, a dynamic view of the poor as a risk taker will emphasise policies which help to reduce the individual's exposure to risk and enhance the capacity of the most vulnerable to find ways to manage risk better and to shape their own lives, individually and collectively. These policies can vary from providing a more equitable access to education and opportunities for skills upgrading to offering easier access to credit. Other policies can range from access to preventive health care, availability of temporary welfare assistance to longer-term measures to build up social capital such as increased opportunities to participate in the wider society through membership and involvement in organisations in civil society.

One specific policy recommendation, from this perspective, to help overcome the apparent bias against young people in their access to micro credit is for governments to collect the data on young people's risk profile and develop an assessment tool for use by individual micro credit providers. The purpose of the assessment tool would be to enable credit providers to identify the degrees of risk entailed in offering a loan to a young person. If it is acknowledged that only about 20 per cent of young people have the potential to be entrepreneurs, a filtering process to select those most likely to succeed is justified.⁶⁰

This assessment tool should include information on the range of factors known to be associated with success in self-employment and sustainable income generation in the informal sector. These are likely to include age (eg 20 to 24 years or 25 to 29 years), previous experience in wage employment, existing amount of capital, the viability of a business plan - even if only verbally presented, access to a mentor and social network support.⁶¹

Conclusion

This paper has presented several estimates of the number of young people in poverty in the world and their distribution by region and country. It was noted that the bottom range of estimates of youth in extreme poverty span from 38 million to 110 million. The estimate of the 38 million young people is based on the number of young people in hunger who are living in the 23 countries designated as having a 'very high' prevalence of under nourishment. The estimate of 110 million youth in extreme poverty is based on the number of youth in hunger living in countries with a high or very high prevalence of under nourishment.

The middle range estimate of the number of youth in poverty is 238 million surviving on \$US 1 a day. The high end of the estimates of the number of young people aged 15 to 24 years in extreme poverty in 2000 are 462 million based on those surviving on less than \$US 2 a day and 497 million, based on the incidence of children in their country who are underweight applied to the youth population.

The use of a broader definition of absolute poverty based on the \$2 a day measure (462 million) appears confirmed by its similarity to the number of young people identified as being under nourished based on incidence of child malnutrition applied to the youth population (497 million). The narrower definition of extreme poverty based on the \$1 dollar a day measure delivered an estimate of 238 million young people. When compared with the above two figures based on the \$2

⁶⁰ Street, R, 2002, presentation to the Youth Employment Summit, Alexandria, Egypt, September.

⁶¹ Chigunta, F, 2002, 'Youth Entrepreneurship: Meeting the Key Policy Challenges', Youth Employment Summit, Alexandria, Egypt, September, pp 6-7; McGrath, S, 1999, 'Education and training for the informal sector: reflections on an international research project,' *Transformation* 39: 26-46.

dollar a day estimate and the incidence of child malnutrition applied to the youth population, the lower figure of 238m appears to underestimate the number of young people who could be regarded as being in extreme poverty. On the other hand, more specific measures of poverty were also derived. These more narrowly focused estimates of between 38 and 110 million young people are based on the imputed incidence of malnutrition among young people in particular countries which are rated as having an overall high prevalence of malnutrition.

This paper notes the contrast between the high proportion of all young people (about half) who can be identified as being at least nominally in poverty and the lack of more direct evidence of young people in poverty. The latter was evident from the information provided in the completed Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. The paper also highlighted the fact that youth were a major focus in only a half of the completed Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers with a further quarter according them a minor focus. Some 29 per cent of the PRSPs did not mention youth at all in their action plans.

Reasons for the relative neglect of youth were discussed. In particular, the need for a different perspective on poverty was argued, one that was more relevant to the situations many young people are likely to encounter. A view of poverty as a dynamic phenomenon in which young people experiencing poverty strive to reduce their risk will also require different forms of data collection.

Attachment

Table A1.1: The countries with the largest poverty gap ratio, region, youth population and youth population below the poverty line of \$US1 a day, 2000

| Country | Poverty gap ratio | Region | Youth population | Youth population below poverty line |
|--------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Sierra Leone | 39.5 | Sub-Saharan Africa | 924,540 | 526,988 |
| Central African Republic | 38.1 | Sub-Saharan Africa | 717,080 | 477,575 |
| Mali | 37.4 | Sub-Saharan Africa | 2,386,210 | 1,737,161 |
| Nigeria | 34.9 | Sub-Saharan Africa | 24,726,912 | 17,358,292 |
| Niger | 33.9 | Sub-Saharan Africa | 2,042,145 | 1,253,877 |
| Zambia | 32.7 | Sub-Saharan Africa | 2,036,659 | 1,297,352 |
| Gambia | 28.8 | Sub-Saharan Africa | 220,188 | 130,571 |
| Burkina Faso | 25.5 | Sub-Saharan Africa | 2,387,286 | 1,461,019 |
| Lesotho | 20.3 | Sub-Saharan Africa | 461,094 | 198,732 |
| Madagascar | 18.3 | Sub-Saharan Africa | 3,444,210 | 1,691,107 |
| Ghana | 17.3 | Sub-Saharan Africa | 3,925,816 | 1,758,766 |
| Namibia | 14 | Sub-Saharan Africa | 343,134 | 119,754 |
| Botswana | 12.5 | Sub-Saharan Africa | 348,085 | 115,912 |
| India | 12.0 | South Asia | 191,286,300 | 84,548,545 |
| Mozambique | 12.0 | Sub-Saharan Africa | 3,736,533 | 1,416,146 |
| Honduras | 11.9 | Latin America & Caribbean | 1,335,910 | 324,626 |
| Cameroon | 11.8 | Sub-Saharan Africa | 3,010,671 | 1,005,564 |
| Colombia | 10.8 | Latin America & Caribbean | 7,314,140 | 1,440,886 |
| Venezuela, RB | 10.8 | Latin America & Caribbean | 4,713,150 | 1,084,025 |
| Total | | | 255,360,063 | 117,946,897 |

Table A1.2: Countries with the highest prevalence of under nourishment, and estimated youth population under nourished, 2000

| Country | Incidence of under nourishment, 1997-99 | Under nourishment category | Region | Youth population | Est. youth pop under nourished |
|-----------------------------|---|----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| Somalia | 75 | 5 | Sub-Saharan Africa | 2,179,170 | 1,634,378 |
| Burundi | 66 | 5 | Sub-Saharan Africa | 1,373,878 | 906,759 |
| Democratic Rep of Congo | 64 | 5 | Sub-Saharan Africa | 9,780,561 | 6,259,559 |
| Afghanistan | 58 | 5 | South Asia | 4,427,416 | 2,567,901 |
| Eritrea | 57 | 5 | Sub-Saharan Africa | 723,710 | 412,515 |
| Haiti | 56 | 5 | LA & Caribbean | 1,524,315 | 853,616 |
| Mozambique | 54 | 5 | Sub-Saharan Africa | 3,736,533 | 2,017,728 |
| Angola | 51 | 5 | Sub-Saharan Africa | 2,428,390 | 1,238,479 |
| Ethiopia | 49 | 5 | Sub-Saharan Africa | 12,110,025 | 5,933,912 |
| Zambia | 47 | 5 | Sub-Saharan Africa | 2,036,659 | 957,230 |
| Kenya | 46 | 5 | Sub-Saharan Africa | 6,826,500 | 3,140,190 |
| United Repub of Tanzania | 46 | 5 | Sub-Saharan Africa | 6,771,087 | 3,114,700 |
| Central African Republic | 43 | 5 | Sub-Saharan Africa | 717,080 | 308,344 |
| Liberia | 42 | 5 | Sub-Saharan Africa | 647,944 | 272,136 |
| Mongolia | 42 | 5 | East Asia & Pacific | 566,352 | 237,868 |
| Niger | 41 | 5 | Sub-Saharan Africa | 2,042,145 | 837,279 |
| Sierra Leone | 41 | 5 | Sub-Saharan Africa | 924,540 | 379,061 |
| Madagascar | 40 | 5 | Sub-Saharan Africa | 3,444,210 | 1,377,684 |
| Rwanda | 40 | 5 | Sub-Saharan Africa | 1,649,910 | 659,964 |
| Zimbabwe | 39 | 5 | Sub-Saharan Africa | 6,559,138 | 2,558,064 |
| Cambodia | 37 | 5 | East Asia & Pacific | 1,882,776 | 696,627 |
| Malawi | 35 | 5 | Sub-Saharan Africa | 2,196,800 | 768,880 |
| Chad | 34 | 4 | Sub-Saharan Africa | 1,388,570 | 472,114 |
| Guinea | 34 | 4 | Sub-Saharan Africa | 1,501,451 | 510,493 |
| Yemen | 34 | 4 | MEast & N Africa | 3,460,538 | 1,176,583 |
| Bangladesh | 33 | 4 | South Asia | 30,152,850 | 9,950,441 |
| Namibia | 33 | 4 | Sub-Saharan Africa | 343,134 | 113,234 |
| Congo | 32 | 4 | Sub-Saharan Africa | 578,508 | 185,123 |
| Nicaragua | 29 | 4 | LA & Caribbean | 1,018,598 | 295,393 |
| Lao PD Republic | 28 | 4 | East Asia & Pacific | 1,047,512 | 293,303 |
| Mali | 28 | 4 | Sub-Saharan Africa | 2,386,210 | 668,139 |
| Uganda | 28 | 4 | Sub-Saharan Africa | 4,491,800 | 1,257,704 |
| Papua New Guinea | 26 | 4 | East Asia & Pacific | 947,767 | 246,419 |
| Cameroon | 25 | 4 | Sub-Saharan Africa | 3,010,671 | 752,668 |
| Dominican Republic | 25 | 4 | LA & Caribbean | 1,614,050 | 403,513 |
| Lesotho | 25 | 4 | Sub-Saharan Africa | 461,094 | 115,274 |
| Burkina Faso | 24 | 4 | Sub-Saharan Africa | 2,387,286 | 572,949 |
| Philippines | 24 | 4 | East Asia & Pacific | 14,857,326 | 3,565,758 |
| Senegal | 24 | 4 | Sub-Saharan Africa | 1,899,000 | 455,760 |
| Botswana | 23 | 4 | Sub-Saharan Africa | 348,085 | 80,060 |
| India | 23 | 4 | South Asia | 191,286,300 | 43,995,849 |
| Nepal | 23 | 4 | South Asia | 4,772,012 | 1,097,563 |
| Sri Lanka | 23 | 4 | South Asia | 3,745,379 | 861,437 |
| Bolivia | 22 | 4 | L America & Caribbean | 1,624,155 | 357,314 |
| Guatemala | 22 | 4 | L America & Caribbean | 2,481,066 | 545,835 |
| Honduras | 21 | 4 | L America & Caribbean | 1,335,910 | 280,541 |
| Sudan | 21 | 4 | Sub-Saharan Africa | 6,441,768 | 1,352,771 |
| Thailand | 21 | 4 | East Asia & Pacific | 11,433,555 | 2,401,047 |
| Venezuela | 21 | 4 | LA & Caribbean | 4,713,150 | 989,762 |
| Total youth under nourished | | | | | 110,129,920 |

