



YOUTH, GLOBALIZATION AND POLICY STRATEGIES

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“Youth can be characterized as a transition from childhood to adulthood – a developmental journey during which one gains independence and begins to participate fully in society. This period is fraught with enormous challenges for young people themselves and for the rest of society. It is imperative that societies invest in their youth, as they are especially vulnerable to the increasingly complex problems facing the world today.”(United Nations World Youth Report: 2003).

Introduction

Globalization can be depicted as increasing global interconnectedness. It is primarily an interchange of economic, social, cultural, political, technological attributes that takes place between societies when different societies come into contact with each other. Though this interchange is going on for times immemorial, this process was termed as “Globalization”. Globalization is a multifaceted, multidimensional and comprehensive phenomenon having its potential impact on a whole range of contemporary social, political, cultural and economic relationships. Globalization considered as a positive result of WTO and GATT agreements, has its influence on the youth of India especially that between the age group of 19-25 years. Globalization has pushed the gates wide open for the developed countries to offer their technology, research and industries to India. For instance, computer technology, internet improvements, and online business or consultancy services have shown their pros and cons on the behaviour, culture and attitude of the Indian youth. These drastic developments of technology have improved the skills and qualities of the youth besides increasing their employment opportunities in the field of technology. The software entrepreneurs accessing the universities and colleges to recruit thousands of graduated every year in an evidence to show the increasing employment opportunities in the country. Globalization has great impact on the world today, as it is more interconnected than before. Changes in information technology and communication, money movement



and increase of trade, are all part of globalization. Increase in the movement of goods, labour and services have thinned national barriers, resulting in the emergence of 'global village' (Albrow Martin: 1992). Globalization has several dimensions such as human, cultural, political, technological and environmental. In this context, exchange of information among people gives them logical thinking, which helps them to develop ways for a better living. Today, the youth are fast adopting the gadgets of information exchange-mobile phones, which is an emblematic technology. Youth tend to see mobile phones as liberating and expressive personal technologies.

Over time, the roles of the youth in national development have been acknowledged. As they continue to play pervasive roles in nation building, the youth by definition have been regarded as that segment of the population from 18-35 years who are characteristically active, vibrant, daring and with useful energies. The development of the nation from pre-colonial to independent and post-independent era has been attributed to vital contribution of the youth. Despite their positive roles in national development, they constitute the most critical and volatile segment of the society. General unemployment, lack of consistent policy framework for youth development, general economic hardship among others have thrown the youth into joblessness, agents of social vices and general idleness. As their conditions worsen, they have been used as agents of political thuggery and general misadventure. Moreover, they have become the major agents in social conflicts with diverse and devastating consequences in the nation. As their negative and pervasive roles continue to impact on the economy, several strategies of youth empowerment have been evolved over time (UNESCO Brazil Editions: 2002). The strategies have, however, yielded little or no results as their activities have consistently imposed serious threats to social security, truncated economic activities and severe drainage of national income. In this context, this article analyses the causes of youth restiveness and what are the strategies needed for youth empowerment in the era of Globalization.

Globalization and Young People: A Process of Intensification

The current process of globalization resulted in the globalization of national policies and policy making mechanisms of national government. National policies including economic, social, cultural and technological areas, which are till now under the jurisdiction of states and people within a country, have increasingly come under



the influence of international agencies and the big private corporations. India adopted a new economic policy that included the elements of “globalization”, “liberalization” and “privatization”. The two central components of these neo-liberal policies adopted by the Indian government have been the liberalization of India’s private sector and reform of the public sector. Globalization integrated the Indian Economy with the global economy through reduction in import duties and export restriction, promotion of foreign investments and permission for free flow of foreign technology and skills, etc.

“Youth” is defined as people in the age group of 13-35 years. Youth in India constitute 40 percent of the population of India. India has embarked on economic, social, and political changes. Youth in India are affected by globalization of media, travels, fashions, and economic changes. Our productivity has increased a lot, but we are not keeping up with our population growth. The economic growth has helped our upper and middle class grow, but the poor still remain poor, and there is a large group of young people in this category. The relationship between the globalization and young people is ambiguous. Globalization in the broader sense refers to the process of extending the range of activities which may be economic, political, social and cultural throughout the world (Vasanthi Rajendran; Balamurugan and David Paul: 2005). Hence, it is a process of intensification of worldwide social relations between the territories. Globalization is an economic process and therefore the impact of it should be analyzed from the purely economic point of view. Hence the economic impact of globalization is the central to the subject of the youth study. The impact of the global culture and the global society is immense on so-called global economy. Since globalization takes place in different historical contexts has the different impacts on different parts of the world. Young people may not be fully integrated members of global culture. In both developed and developing countries can be marginalized in terms of economic power, their judicial status and the day to day experience of economic and social inequality (Lambretchs and Garth le pere: 1999). Loss of community and rise of mass society is the major challenge posed by globalization to the young people in transitional societies. George Ritzer (2000) addresses this issue in terms of ‘McDonaldisation’, with its dehumanizing effects, resulting into loss of human interaction and loss of community.

Strategies for Global Citizenship

In many respects the power of globalization make the young people’s global citizenship unavoidable passive in nature. The following elements are recognized as



strategies to make the youth empower with regard to their responsible towards national development.

a) Education and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

An increase in technical, technological, material and financial support through the establishment of an Education and ICT, which promotes co-operation, national, regional and international networking, and government and private partnerships of ICT training centers, and support specific youth voluntary services in the fields of both formal and non formal education. The creation of peer education and exchange programmes and policies to encourage and improve the equitable, free and easy use of ICT in underdeveloped rural, urban and remote areas. The establishment of vocational schools at a community level, the creation of internet cafés, distance learning centers, the training of trainers, the development of re-training programmes and the enhancement of existing mass media and interconnected radio, television and internet for improved education processes.

In order to empower young people and close the digital divide, it is necessary that youth understand ICT. ICT must be used as media for the dissemination of information about such important issues as HIV/AIDS prevention and de-stigmatization, personal hygiene and maintenance of sanitary conditions, environmental problems and matters of cultural and social nature having a practical impact on the every day life of young people.

b) Employment

Unemployment and underemployment among youth is a problem everywhere. It is, indeed, part of the larger struggle to create employment opportunities for all citizens. The problem has worsened in recent years because of the global recession which has affected developing countries the most seriously. The disturbing fact is that economic growth is not always accompanied by growth in employment. The difficulty of finding suitable employment is compounded by a host of other problems confronting young people, including illiteracy and insufficient training, and is worsened by periods of world economic slow-down and by overall changing economic trends. In some countries, the influx of young people into the employment market has brought with it acute problems. According to estimates of the International Labour Organization, more than one hundred million new jobs would have to be created within the next twenty



years in order to provide suitable employment for the growing number of young people in the economically active populations of developing countries. The situation of girls and young women, as well as of young people with disabilities, refugee youth, displaced persons, street children, indigenous youth, migrant youth and minorities warrants urgent attention, bearing in mind the prohibition of forced labour and child labour. International Labour Organization (ILO) figures show that youth unemployment in the world increased from 11.7 per cent in 1993 to an historical high of 14.4 per cent (88 million) in 2003. In 2003, youth unemployment was highest in Western Asia and North Africa (25.6 per cent) and sub-Saharan Africa (21 per cent) and lowest in East Asia (7 per cent) and the industrialized economies (13.4 per cent). In India, still it is worsened as per the estimates of national reports. Recognizing the urgent need to create decent work for young people, national governments plan to develop national reviews and action plans on youth employment, and to ensure strong involvement of young people in this process (Fabrice Lehmann: 2005).

The unemployment rate for the educated in 1999-2000 is three times more than unemployment rates for the population as a whole. As the level of education improves, unemployment rates also increases. The logic is that illiterate and literate up to primary level are prepared to take up any job that comes their way, but this is not the case with educated. The main cause of educated unemployment is the mismatch between the job expectations generated by educational system and the job opportunities available in the labour market. Educated unemployment in 1993-94 among educated youth was 18.5 percent and it declined to 14.8 percent in 1999-2000. But incidence of unemployment among the educated youth with some technical education was much higher at 27.3 percent in 1993-94 and slightly declined to 23.7 percent in 1999-2000 (NSS Survey, 43rd round, 1987-88; 50th round, 1993-94 and 55th round, 1999-2000). This indicates that absorption capacity of the economy to provide jobs to technically educated manpower is low. The employment in organised sector usually refers to employment in the public sector and the private sector establishment employing 10 or more persons. Organised sector provides greater job security, wages and other benefits. Within the organised sector, the job seekers prefer the public sector as it provides greater job security and other benefits. In the organized sector, employment was 24.01 million in 1983 and increased to 27.73 million in 1994, indicating a growth rate of 1.20 percent per annum during 1983 - 94. However during post reform period (1994-2000)



organised sector employment grew slowly from 27.37 million in 1994 to 28.22 million in 1999 - 2000 indicating a growth rate of 0.53 percent per annum (Jugale: 2004). The decline in the growth rate of employment in the organised sector was mainly due to stagnation of employment in the public sector during 1994 - 2000 for which growth rate was - 0.03 percent per annum but private sector employment showed a small increase from 7.93 million in 1994 to 8.70 million in 1999 - 2000 indicating a growth rate of 1.87 percent per annum. The growth rate of enterprises during 1998 – 2000 declined from 2.26 percent to 2.23 percent while the growth rate .of employment in these enterprises also came down.

Computerization has helped the middle class youth in India get more jobs in that field. Many people are migrating to other countries where job opportunities are better. India has been one of the leading countries for supplying programmers to many other countries for computer Y2K problems. India has computerized every field or work to be a global competitor. IBM, Hewlett Packard, and Compaq have established extensive networks in India. Computers have flooded the market and prices have dropped drastically in recent months. Internet and e-mail facilities are easily accessible in all work places, and for homes it is just becoming possible, though at a price”. Liberalization has helped in reducing unemployment for middle class and upper class young people to some extent, but not enough.

c) Health and population

In terms of health issues, the recognition of youth as a unique group in society due to the many aspects of vulnerability it contains reveals some shocking truths. One-third of the 20 million people throughout the world who have already died as a result of HIV/AIDS-related illnesses particularly young people and another 6,000 are infected every day. Young people continue to lose their lives to acute respiratory infections and vaccination-preventable diseases and malnutrition. With regard to AIDS in India, “The first group of sero-positive individuals in India, detected in April 1986, included many prostitutes. Within a short span of 18 months, it became obvious that the sero-positive rate was low (4/1000) and that heterosexual promiscuity was the major mode of transmission of AIDS in India”. Pune Plus in The Times of India, November Globalization and Youth – Background Paper 11 28, 1991, reported that 5,131 persons were found to have AIDS and 17 were women. There are a lot more untested people with AIDS in India. Most of the spreading is happening through



heterosexual activities. Women are the main victims in this situation. Women and men need to be educated on prevention and care of AIDS. Abuse of women was prevalent in India before globalization. But globalization has caused the increase of it because of the stress and strain of the community and the changes in the traditional life style. In the joint family system there were social control systems, which helped women in these issues. But in the individualistic life styles now, women suffer more (Falendra K. Sudan: 2005).

Violence and suicide are growing problems in some communities, as is drug dependency among the young. Youth all over the world thus increasingly emerges as a specific social category which is laden with risk and uncertainty. The pronounced difficulties young people experience in terms of their socio-economic, political and cultural inclusion in an ever more volatile world are the subject of wide-spread concern at both the national and international level. Since the ways in which these challenges are addressed by policies will not only shape the present but profoundly determine the future of any country, the need for an adequate policy relating to young people arises as one of the highest priorities of society. Young people play an active role in conceptualization, decision-making, implementation and evaluation of health policies, and organize themselves at various levels to create effective networks and develop skills to mobilize resources.

d) Capacity Building

Governments and the United Nations system for access to national and international resources in order to establish formal and informal programs of education on HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, sexual and reproductive health and mental health and improve and recognize the role of peers through reinforcement of capacities of intervention of young people at the same time on a technical, material and financial level. Affirm the important role that families in all forms, peers and communities play in creating an environment conducive to the development of skills leading to healthier lives.

e) Advocacy

Young people are actively participated in the conceptualization, decision-making, implementation and evaluation processes (Fabrice Lehmann: 2005). In spite of this, the following elements are to be effectively implemented in creating youth-focused



networks:

- Creation, development and support of free disease assistance for everybody (including care, treatment and vaccinations);
- Prepare and disseminate statistical data which illustrate the health situation of young people to NGOs, local and national governments, international bodies, and youth themselves;
- Demonstrate to the system of the United Nations, governments and NGOs the positive impact of youth participation in the promotion of healthier behaviours and practices.

Governments to commit themselves to implementing participatory policies that ensure:

- Free access for young people to health information, education, health sector [in particular sexual and reproductive health and mental health] services in order to avoid STIs and HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancies, to prevent illegal abortion, substance abuse and mental illness and implementation of policies that can promote a multi-sectoral approach to health that responds better to the specific needs of young people;
- Equal opportunities and rights to all children and youth without distinction as to age, gender, race, religion, ethnicity, and socio-economic status and mobilization of resources to implement the recommendations adopted by UNGASS on HIV/AIDS of 2001, especially those recommendations pertaining directly to rights and needs of young people;
- To consider the fight against HIV/AIDS, substance abuse and suicide as a priority in promoting the health of young people and
- To combat female genital mutilation and violence against women

f) Awareness Rising

NGOs, local and national governments, international bodies, and youth themselves to support and sustain youth-empowering, community-based peer-education activities to raise awareness on questions regarding the health of young people [on HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, sexual and reproductive health] in both formal and informal sectors, and this with special attention to taboos and traditional socio cultural



beliefs that have negative effects and to traditional socio-cultural beliefs that have positive effects. We need to recognize the fundamental role that young people, families, teachers, and communities play in raising youth awareness on all health, including mental, sexual and reproductive health, issues and recall to mind that awareness-raising campaigns should reinforce positive behaviours and seek to transform negative practices in a constructive and positive way in all young people including marginalized and excluded youth.

g) Hunger, Poverty and Debt

In order to empower young people in rural and urban areas to combat hunger and poverty especially of youth, they need to be provided with the necessary resources and capacities in order to create employment and raise an income for their own sustainable livelihoods. The gravely concerned with the accumulation of international debt, particularly by developing countries, which create a burden to be borne by young people and future generations. We call for continuing the process of debt cancellation by bilateral and multilateral creditors, and in that context, for ensuring social development, are substantively addressed by Poverty Reduction Strategies developed by Highly Indebted Poor Countries, and also that young women and men are fully consulted in the development of these strategies. Therefore, we call for the allocation of a portion of the corresponding resources from the reconversion of developing countries' debts to funds to be co-managed by young people that will be used to better integrate young women and men into labour markets and to programmes to create job opportunities.

Education, training and capacity building of youth are of paramount importance in the provision of a long term strategy to minimize the effects of hunger and to eradicate poverty. To combat illiteracy free basic education has to go along with the creation of an enabling environment that accommodates the needs of young people. Curricula for both basic education and training should not only cover the intellectual aspect of human development but also practical and social skills. Special programmes should be designed for illiterate out of school youth. Capacities should be built for youth to effectively respond to the challenging global problems like climate change, land degradation, loss of biodiversity, HIV/AIDS, increasing marginalization of vulnerable groups, the growing gap between the rich and the poor, the instability of the international financial systems and the predominance of the neo-liberal paradigm.



Governments, in collaboration with youth organizations should design, implement and monitor policies to meet the needs of young people in terms of education, training and capacity building. Youth organizations shall be involved in this process at all levels. To fight effectively against hunger and poverty a comprehensive approach needs to involve all parts of civil society, especially youth, in the policy making and implementation areas of hunger, poverty and debt at all levels. The cancellation of external debts is not only a precondition for any effective fight against hunger and poverty; it also frees funding for investment in education, health and youth. The monitoring of the use of this funding and the implementation of poverty eradication strategies shall be monitored by civil society and youth organizations. In the process of globalization, more and more decisions are being taken at the international level (for example by the WTO, IMF and World Bank) having a strong impact on national policies without the installation any system of checks and balances. Governments and the United Nations must ensure full and comprehensive representation of civil society, youth organizations and developing nations in all global and multilateral decision-making forums. For ensuring the minimum standard of life for everyone governments shall install social safety nets and give social assistance for young people in need facing difficulties beyond their control (Checkoway: 1995).

h) Human Settlements and the Environment

Recognizing the need for stronger involvement of young people in the United Nations system, there should be more cooperation between UNEP, UNCHS and UNDP to properly address the scope of the issues involved. To start with, UNEP Youth Advisory Council and Youth for Habitat International Network should become more closely integrated. As a result of this cooperation, national action plans and national reports for youth contributions to the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and Agenda 21 should be prepared. The development and dissemination of a youth-friendly version of the Habitat Agenda should also be undertaken. Nation states must also fulfill their commitment to Agenda 21 and Habitat Agenda, by including young people in official delegations to Rio+10, the Commission for Human Settlements, follow-up meetings to Habitat II Conference and other important meetings at all levels. The potential role for national and regional youth platforms to monitor the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Habitat Agenda. Sub-committees in national youth platforms and regional bodies should be created to monitor the implementation of global agendas such as Agenda 21



and Habitat Agenda. Communication between these sub-committees and regional bodies should also be encouraged. The need for youth capacity-building in sustainable development in order to increase participation. There should be a number of training centers for Agenda 21 and Habitat to build capacity in young people. These centers should focus on training tutors to return to their nation states, emphasizing peer education in issues of sustainable development. These centers should also develop and supply training methods and multimedia materials for young people to bring to their communities. One way to implement these training centers could be to send young people to different nation states for an extended period (e.g. 3 months) to carry out the training. There should be follow-up and monitoring of the training sessions, and indigenous and traditional knowledge should also be respected in the training. Recognizing the ecological debt of the North to the South, sustainable development indicators, that adequately measure environmental services, and that take into account the current eco-systems of the countries of the South and the impact of their consumption patterns on the environment, need to be utilized in order to develop, in an integrated manner, policies of equity among the regions of the world. We also call for a halt to the exportation of waste and polluting consumer products (World Social Forum: 2003).

i) Social Integration

Technical, human and financial support must be focused on assisting marginalized and vulnerable youth to organize themselves in order to address their own needs and interests, and make their particular contribution to social progress. Training in and access to ICT for marginalized and vulnerable youth through means such as programmes of agencies and bodies of the United Nations system can then become, amongst other methods, an integral tool for networking, to develop awareness of programmes and legislation that is of benefit to marginalized youth, to facilitate exchanges, pressure groups and support. Young people and youth NGOs are the best agents for delivering change for other young people, with volunteerism being a key tool that should be promoted among youth organizations in order for them to take the lead in peer-to-peer training to stimulate, support and facilitate the role of marginalized and vulnerable youth in the wider society. The United Nations system becomes a truly partnership organization. Partnerships should develop skills within three spheres: Economical, Technical, and joint decision-making. Exchanges should be used to develop the capacity of young person NGOs by facilitating the interchange of information both



between themselves and with the United Nations agencies and programmes. The free flow of people between nations should be facilitated. Share among the organizations of marginalized and vulnerable youth the various ways in which they can collaborate within the United Nations system. This should include opportunities to work with field offices and to learn about the processes and criteria required to obtain consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council and the specialized agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system. Youth organizations should organize themselves to ensure that governments are effectively adopting and implementing resolutions adopted during the Copenhagen social summit and its + 5, and hence strengthen their social integration policies and programmes, including rehabilitation, health, education, entertainment and vocational training programmes. Youth organizations should mobilize the channels of social integration family, media schools, youth NGOS, religious groups to promote awareness about the causes and cost of social exclusion and to promote programmes that foster social integration (Donso Clark: 2000).

j) Culture of Peace

Peace is not just an absence of war, but also a state of mind, individual or collective, a social cultural, political and economic harmony. Peace is also a way of being, a way of living. Hence, to build a true culture of peace we need to develop justice, respect of human rights, to fight against poverty. We need to favour intercultural dialogue, which should be among civilizations, and to empower minorities and fight marginalization and exclusion. As youth, and bearing in mind the above, it is our challenge to be determined to increase our influence and our out spoken conclusion to our governments concerning the dialogue to build a culture of peace. Hence, we need to recognize a true culture of peace by combating the number of existing obstacles of armed conflict, trafficking, circulation of weapons; the interference of outside economic and financial interests in developing countries as causes of conflict and exploitation; intolerance, illiteracy and discrimination in all areas.

k) Youth Policy, Participation and Rights

The United Nations system should improve its way of communicating with youth organizations, guaranteeing that any meeting or consultation fulfils the criteria of being affordable, respecting the existing democratic and legitimate channels of



youth, and should grantee implementation and evaluation. We reiterate the call for national governments to include youth representatives, selected by youth in an open and democratic manner, in their delegations to the United Nations General Assembly and all other intergovernmental meetings. The United Nations Youth Unit, with the assistance of youth organizations experienced in this area, should serve as a clearing-house for information for youth organizations to lobby their governments for these youth representative positions. There should be increased representation of youth within the Youth Unit itself through a system of placements of members of youth organizations, as well as increased status for the Youth Unit within the United Nations system to coordinate all youth participation in the United Nations system. National governments should implement legislation to protect human rights, as they relate to youth, including protecting rights to participation in decision-making, access to quality education fostering responsible citizenship, and access to human rights education. The rights of the youth living in countries under occupation, embargoes and wars to be given international protection in this scenario (Eccles and Gootman: 2002).

1) Young Women and Girls

Women are denied opportunities of availing education and it is found that half, as many women are literate as the males. However this is true for the younger age group of 10 to 14. At higher ages the girls drop out of the school and for 100 literate males in ages 15 to 19 the numbers of literate girls is only 45. Similar patterns are seen for urban-rural populations, with urban population having more literates than the rural ones. This is true for both the sexes but more so for the girls. Relatively more girls go to school now than they did earlier and the gap between the two sexes is gradually narrowing, however much has yet to be achieved. All stakeholders to invest in compulsory and free education at all levels for girls, adolescents and young female, both in formal and non-formal environments. There is a need to involve girls and young women in the design, implementation and evaluation of policies and programmes that target youth. The demand for cost reduction for contraceptives and AIDS treatment and prevention/treatment for STDs are increasing. We call for the improvement of knowledge, research and data, qualitative and quantitative, on the needs of adolescent's girls and young women.

There is an increase in information and media coverage of issues related to girls and young women at local and international levels, using traditional and modern



media. It is necessary to introduce skills and content related to sex education, family life education and human rights at all levels. Violence should be combated, and we call for the creation of youth and female friendly activities and services for young women and girls, offering life skills counseling, shelters for at risk young women. We call for an increase in training for peer counseling, respecting and focusing on gender balance. There is also a great need to ensure access to livelihood activities, such as income generating activities micro-project management training et cetera. It is crucial to break stereotypes in education by raising awareness the role and contribution of girls and young women in society. Youth organizations should mobilize governments to offer economic incentives or policies to increase girls' education. Young women's positive image should be enhanced by encouraging young women who have education in science and math to be used as role models and mentors.

m) Youth, Sports and Leisure Time Activities

Sports, leisure activities, such as leisure sports, cultural leisure activities and traditional forms of leisure, socio-educational leisure activities, and even paid entertainment allow individuals to manage their free time without constraints. Even in difficult situations, these activities give young people the opportunity to entertain themselves, to relax, to play, and to find cultural enrichment. Furthermore, sports and leisure activities give young people the possibility of self-expression, personal fulfillment, and personal development as an individual and as a member of a group. In addition, sports and leisure activities can raise awareness in young people that can inspire them to contribute to the improvement of their living conditions through volunteerism. These activities should be available to all young people without exclusion based on gender, religion or social condition. It favours social inclusion, including for young people with special needs. Youth structures and associations should be granted by the United Nations organizations and others with human, material and economic assistance, necessary for the realization of different activities especially those related to the development of sports, leisure time activities, and socio-educative activities. The United Nations are also encouraging to the international organizations and NGOs to work directly on grassroot levels through youth associations for the development of sports; culture, traditional activities and socio-cultural activities (UNESCO Brazil Editions: 2002).



Youth Involvement in Violence Prevention

Young people across the country, in partnership with adults in their communities or by themselves, are organizing to promote violence prevention and to meet the needs of other youth where services are not available. Violence takes many forms: It is defined as “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or a community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation”. It is among the leading causes of death, injury, and disability for young people, who disproportionately suffer the consequences as witnesses, as victims, and as perpetrators.

It is a fairly recent phenomenon that youth have become acknowledged leaders in violence prevention. In the late 1970s and 1980s the public health model—with a focus on prevention, intervention, and treatment began to be systematically applied to a range of youth problems, including violence. A public health approach brought emphasis and commitment to identifying policies and programs to prevent youth violence. The idea of primary prevention reaching young people earlier, before violence occurs—helped move violence prevention curricula and services into schools, often down into the middle and elementary grades, and into community-based organizations. It also led to a greater acceptance that youth violence is preventable among health and other youth - serving community professionals and the general public. Deriving from a tradition of collaboration among a broad spectrum of scientific disciplines, organizations, and communities to solve the problem of violence, the model legitimized much of the non-academic focused work in the youth field (Erikson: 1968).

Youth Participation as Social Justice

Youth participation is a process of involving young people in the institutions and decisions that affect their lives. It includes initiatives that emphasize educational reform, neighborhood improvement, and other issues; that involve populations distinguished by class, race, gender, and other characteristics; and that operate in rural areas, small towns, suburbs, and neighborhoods of large cities. It is found in developing areas and industrial nations worldwide.

Young people are mobilizing resources around issues; organizing groups for social action; planning programs at the local level; and advocating their interests in public agencies. They are raising consciousness and educating others about their



common concerns, and providing services of their own choosing. No single strategy characterizes all approaches to practice.

These initiatives have the potential to produce outcomes at multiple levels. Youth participation has the potential to increase individual involvement, and build organizational capacity. It can strengthen personal confidence, contribute to civic competencies, and serve as a source of leadership development. These initiatives can strengthen social justice in the ways that improve conditions for all people while emphasizing resources and opportunities for those lacking in both, and expanding the mechanisms of representation and accountability of traditionally excluded people in the institutions that affect them (UNESCO Brazil Editions: 2002). They have the potential to address poverty and racism as factors in society and to reduce disparities between rich and poor.

Youth Engagement Makes a Difference in Addressing Community Violence

Concerns about the increasing involvement of many adolescents in high-risk behaviors have prompted a search for strategies and approaches that can guide youth away from unhealthy and unsafe practices and engage them in becoming productive members of society. This search has revealed many uncertainties in understanding how teenagers negotiate critical transitions, such as from school to work and from child to parent, the formation of self-identity, and the selection of life options. In situations in which communities must struggle with the problems of poverty, crime, drugs and other negative influences, some youth are able to connect with social and economic networks that can help them become successful and productive adults. Others never gain access to or turn away from such networks (World Bank: 2003). Our approach to community and youth development views youth as resources and agents of change, rather than as a collection of problems in need of prevention.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Every country thus needs effective strategies able to help young people to make the right choices, protect them from exploitation and neglect and ensure their participation in all spheres of society. To address some of these issues and, more importantly, to take a strong stand in support of their young people, each country is urged to develop a long-term, consensus based, integrated and cross-sectoral youth policy. National youth policy strategies that are effective and beneficial for youth are



thus, above all, those empowering young people to actively influence and shape the political agenda. A progressive national youth policy obliges traditional decision-makers to work not only for young people, but with them and let their experiences inform the development of appropriate interventions and services. It is the essential role of governments to ensure that the concerns of young people are taken into account in all areas of government policy and decision-making, and not just those deemed to be 'youth issues', and that young people's views, priorities and desires are encouraged, listened to and acted upon. The following recommendations are the proposals to the youth activities for creating conducive environment in the Society:

- “ To form a youth network which could generate mechanisms to ensure the participation of young representatives in reconciliation process, negotiation and peace building and demand for compensation and justice for slavery, colonization and marginalization as crimes against humanity and to develop and support the education of a culture of peace in programmes of schools in all levels.
- “ Improve the quality and access of education and ICT by means of giving a priority to education and ICT and waving of taxes on ICT materials intended for free community use, create government and private partnerships, global cooperation and regional strategies to promote ICT in education and increase the budget for education and ICT in the respective national budgets, expressed as a percentage of the GDP and also create policies to address the special needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups.
- “ Priority should be given to rural youth greatly affected by hunger and poverty through specific programmes and funding involving the provision of production resources such as land, water and seeds, of appropriate technologies and the training on sustainable farming, life skills and natural resource management.
- “ The establishment of a social floor for young people by improving their working conditions, promoting their rights at work and recognizing their voice and representation at work, and guarantee a minimum income which covers life costs to protect the working poor. There is a need to guarantee the freedom of association and the right to strike for young working people. There is also a need for taxes to be imposed on large international financial flows of



multinational companies between countries.

- “ Taking into consideration that HIV/AIDS is decimating our generation, that lack of education and information, stigmatization and negative taboos have increased the vulnerability of youth, and that the public and private sector, national governments and the international community, including bodies such as the United Nations and all NGOs must take action in stopping the HIV/AIDS.
- “ Nation states must give real and sufficient funding to youth activities by contributing significant amounts to the United Nations Youth Fund, which must become more transparent and accountable to target beneficiaries.
- “ The Government must provide sufficient political, financial and technical support for further world youth forums, based on a broad, representative and democratic process in which criteria are identified.
- “ The Government should encourage sport programs that are especially for disabled people and encourage the participation of disabled people in the regular sports activities at all levels.
- “ The United Nations system should encourage promote, and find ways to recognize the participation of young voluntary workers in different organizations, NGOs and youth associations. Moreover, the United Nations should take care of the security of young volunteers and promote all training facilities and technical assistance for their work.
- “ The United Nations, United Nations bodies and agencies, governments and regional organizations should make decisive efforts to establish a fund for the development of youth, to be managed by youth and geared towards youth.

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