



Focus on Youth

Youth Violence – a Challenge for Development

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Foreword

In recent years, the problem of youth violence has been coming into sharper focus as a significant constraint to development in our partner countries. Above all in Latin American and many African cities, youth violence has become a daily reality - with glaring consequences, both for the victims and for the social, economic and political development of the countries as a whole. The outcome is often a strongly repressive approach to youth. Yet this fails to create a way out of the vicious cycle of violence. This makes youth violence a theme with which development research and practice must engage.

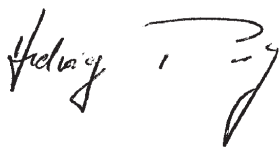
This is the background against which the symposium "Focus on Youth: Youth Violence – a Challenge for Development" was held at GTZ Head Office on 19 June 2008. The symposium was hosted by GTZ Division 43's sector project Implementing Children and Youth Rights, and Country Section 2130 – Central America, Eastern Latin America, Caribbean and Mexico. The symposium included graphic reports presented by various members of the high-ranking panel of researchers and practitioners and aroused keen interest among participants from GTZ and other institutions. In producing this publication we are delighted to meet the request expressed by many individuals for documentation of the informative discussion.

The symposium was held within the context of planning various new youth projects, on BMZ's behalf. The preparation of a regional project to promote youth and peaceful coexistence in Central America is particularly worthy of mention. The event was designed to broaden the debate to other regional contexts, network the actors, and identify points of entry for future work in this field.

GTZ is able to look back on more than ten years' experience of helping develop integrated and multisectoral approaches to youth promotion. In this context GTZ Division 43, and especially the Section for Education and Youth, in close cooperation with the regional divisions, have generated considerable impetus and numerous approaches. Projects focus on young people as the key agents of development processes. Building on this experience, we would like to mainstream the prevention of youth violence even more intensively in development policy and -practice.

The symposium once again confirmed that networked thinking and action are key to successfully preventing youth violence. Consequently, as we continue to develop innovative solutions we need to draw on the experiences and approaches of different sectors. Alongside youth promotion, a key role will be played here by the sectors education, good governance, conflict transformation and crisis prevention, public safety, urban development, vocational training and employment promotion. We look forward to productive cooperation in this process.

Our special thanks are owed to GTZ Regional Division 2130 for their excellent collaboration in planning the new regional project to prevent youth violence in Central America. We would also like to thank everyone who helped make the symposium a success and prepare this brochure.



Dr. Hedwig Petry
Director Health,
Education, Social Protection Division



Dr. Hans-Heiner Rudolph
Deputy Director of Division
Head of Section Education, Universities, Youth

Introduction

German development cooperation's partner countries are affected by youth violence in different ways. The problem is particularly pronounced in Latin America and many urban zones in Africa. Its impacts are immense. Where it achieves a certain order of magnitude, whole societies suffer negative social, political and economic consequences. Fear among citizens rises, and their trust in their fellow citizens and state institutions falls. The quality of life is severely impaired. Investment falls, and the costs of security measures rise. In some cases the state is no longer able to guarantee the safety of its citizens, and widespread impunity prevails. On the other hand, the often repressive responses of the state constrain citizens' liberty and human rights, as a result of which this situation also leads to a loss of trust and confidence in the rule of law. Particularly hard hit by these impacts are young people themselves, who are not only perpetrators of youth violence, but also – disproportionately often – its victims.

These far-reaching consequences make one thing clear: youth violence is a problem that cannot be considered in isolation, but must be taken very seriously as a constraint to sustainable development processes in many of German development cooperation's partner countries. This is why the theme of youth violence is moving higher up on their agenda.

Implementing Germany's four major development-policy goals – reducing poverty, securing peace, protecting the environment and building a fair globalisation – will not be possible where whole societies are paralysed by violence and crime perpetrated largely by young people. Where youth violence has become an everyday phenomenon, where entire urban districts - as in Central America for instance - are ruled by youth gangs, where the state has responded by abandoning the rule of law and literally trampling on children and youth rights, peaceful development of these societies is virtually impossible. At the same time, the indisputably positive development potentials of youth are not being utilised.

The symposium “Focus on Youth: Youth Violence – a Challenge for Development” attempted to trace the various causes of youth violence, presented successful examples of prevention work, and identified both points of entry for future work in this field and weak points currently evident. To this end the first part of the symposium involved a discussion conducted by a panel of researchers and development cooperation practitioners. The panellists were: Ulrich Burgmer, GTZ/IP Consult Stuttgart, Strengthening of Local Governance Programme, Community Peace Workers Project, South Africa; Dr. Peter Imbusch, conflict researcher, University of Bielefeld; Mattias Lundberg, World Bank, co-author of the World Development Report, working on the theme of youth violence; Dr. Ana Isabel Moreno Morales, GTZ, staff member of the regional project Promotion of Youth and Prevention of Violence in Latin America; Peter Peetz, political scientist, focusing on research into dynamics of violence in Central America, German Institute of Global and Area Studies (GIGA)/Latin America Institute Hamburg. The moderator of this and the second part of the symposium, which took the form of an open plenary discussion, was Dr. Sabine Kurtenbach, a researcher at the Institute for Development and Peace (INEF) at the University of Duisburg-Essen. She is currently working on “The role of youth violence in Cambodia and Guatemala.”

The present publication is a summary of the debate and the key issues discussed. It summarises the approaches pursued to date, and identifies future ways of dealing with youth violence. It thus provides a basis for further discussion in this field.

The panellists were ...

Ulrich Burgmer, manager of the GTZ Community Peace Worker Project



Served until 1993 as Deputy Assistant Commissioner in the Federal German Police Force, responsible for terrorism and organised crime. From 1992-1994 member and leader of the European Community observer mission in South Africa. As of 1996 worked in various GTZ projects for urban conflict management in South Africa.

Mr. Burgmer thus possesses many years of experience in the peace and security sector in South Africa, where he is currently managing the Community Peace Workers Project for IP-Consult on behalf of GTZ. This project offers young people an opportunity to work as volunteers in their communities for one year. Their task is to resolve conflicts and disputes together with the parties concerned. These young people also receive training to improve their prospects on the labour market. The project has been running very successfully in South African cities since 1997. Around 450 young people have already taken part in the programme.

PD Dr. Peter Imbusch, sociologist



1981-1986 studied sociology, politics, social and economic history, and economics; 1990 awarded a doctorate on the comparative analysis of social structures in Latin America; 2001 awarded postdoctoral degree for a dissertation on "Civilisation and violence".

From 2001-2005 Dr. Imbusch was research coordinator of the "Disintegrative processes" research association at the Institute for Interdisciplinary Research on Conflict and Violence of the University of Bielefeld. From 2003-2006 he held an endowed chair at

the Centre for Conflict Studies of the University of Marburg. Since 2008 he has been a fellow in the international research group "Control of Violence" at the Centre for Interdisciplinary Research of the University of Bielefeld. Focal areas of his work are: political sociology, analysis of social structures, development sociology, and conflict and violence research.

Dr. Sabine Kurtenbach, political scientist



1980-1987 studied politics; 1991 awarded doctorate for a dissertation on: "State organisation and war". Since 1993 Dr. Kurtenbach has been employed at the Institute for Latin American Studies of the German Institute of Global and Area Studies (ILAS-GIGA) in Hamburg.

On leave from this position, since 2006 she has been senior researcher at the Institute for Development and Peace (INEF) at the University of Duisburg-Essen in the project "Post-war political and social upheaval: youth violence in Cambodia and Guatemala". Alongside this research activity she also works as a consultant for German and international development cooperation. Her work focuses on conflict transformation, peace-building and democratisation. Regional focuses are the countries of Central America, the Andean region and South-East Asia.

Mattias Lundberg, senior economist at the World Bank



Matthias Lundberg has a degree in agricultural economics. He has been employed as senior economist at the World Bank for a number of years. There, he has among other things performed important work in the fields of impact evaluation, income distribution and health sector

reform. Mr. Lundberg was also the author of guidelines on poverty and social impact analysis, as well as public expenditure and good governance in the social sectors. He is currently senior economist on the World Bank children and youth unit. There he works primarily on the themes of transition from school to working life, and youth violence. In this capacity he was one of the responsible authors of the World Development Report 2007: "Development and the Next Generation".

Peter Peetz, political scientist



1995-2001 studied politics, history and Spanish. From 2001-2003 Mr. Peetz was programme coordinator of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in Honduras. He freelanced for various research and development cooperation institutions before joining the German Institute of Global

and Area Studies (GIGA) in 2005. Since then he has been employed there as a researcher on Latin America, as well as in a managerial capacity. He first worked as an advisor to the Director of the Institute, before himself becoming Head of the Department for Public Relations Work and Publications. His work focuses on issues of violence and security in Central America, and especially state policy to deal with youth gangs (maras) in El Salvador and Honduras.

Dr. Ana Isabel Moreno Morales, GTZ project coordinator



Dr. Moreno Morales studied medicine and public health in Honduras and Germany. Before joining GTZ she worked as a consultant for the World Bank, and taught at the Public Health School of the University of Costa Rica. Since then she has been involved in various projects

in the health sector. From 2004-2008 she was coordinator of GTZ's cooperation project with the Pan American Health Organization for youth promotion and violence prevention in Latin America. She is currently coordinating the GTZ-supported "Household Energy in Rural Areas" project in Peru.

In search of the causes

"I see no hope for our society's future, because certainly all youth today are reckless beyond words". This statement comes from the Greek poet Hesiod, who lived in the 7th century before Christ. It drew the following comments from Mattias Lundberg of the World Bank: "We have always believed that our young people are violent, reckless and dangerous. I'm not so sure that our situation today is completely different from the situation then. Or is it?"

Together with other development cooperation practitioners and researchers, he set out in search of the causes of youth violence.

Youth violence occurs in many forms. And the causes too are diverse. Nonetheless, Dr. Peter Imbusch did speak of an underlying pattern. According to this Bielefeld-based researcher, it begins with the individual's own experience of violence in the form of beating or abuse during early socialisation. Violence is learned. Children also grow up to become members of a society that offers them only few opportunities. Consequently, violence is one possible option for achieving something. Peers who have made a successful career out of violence then become role models. "And ultimately, quite banal factors are then sufficient to allow violence to become virulent in the youths concerned."

This view was shared by Ulrich Burgmer, manager of the Community Peace Workers Project in South Africa. He has been working in South Africa for more than 16 years, and is familiar with youth violence in all its facets. "South Africa is marked by an extremely low threshold of violence. If you grow up as a child in the townships of South Africa today, then you grow into a culture of violence". Children grow up in broken homes, are often left to their own devices for long periods day by day, and their role models are not their parents but older youths who have already attained a certain position on the career ladder of crime. "For these youths it is normal to go into the neighbouring community, break into a house and take whatever they want. They lack all sense of guilt." People in their environment, in their community, provide cover for these criminal acts, because they profit from the financial support that the youths provide them with. And more than that "...these youths enjoy high prestige", as Ulrich Burgmer well knows. To some extent this should be seen in the context of the fact that during apartheid, violent

resistance to the illegitimate power of the state was accepted among broad sections of the population, and these forms of protest not only became institutionalised, but also came to be used for non-political and criminal ends.

Peter Imbusch identified a further cause in the prevailing social and economic conditions in developing countries that do not allow youths to make a smooth transition into adult life. It is above all the social rules that prove to be a constraint here. To be able to get married and start a family, in some countries for example young people have to have a job and their own income. And these rules are respected to this day. In this context, the formation of a balanced personal and social identity is jeopardised. The social environment provides too little recognition, and the individual's sense of his or her own worth suffers. Young people therefore often seek other, deviant points of reference for their identity-forming process, and not infrequently find in violence a sense of reassurance and a feeling of power.

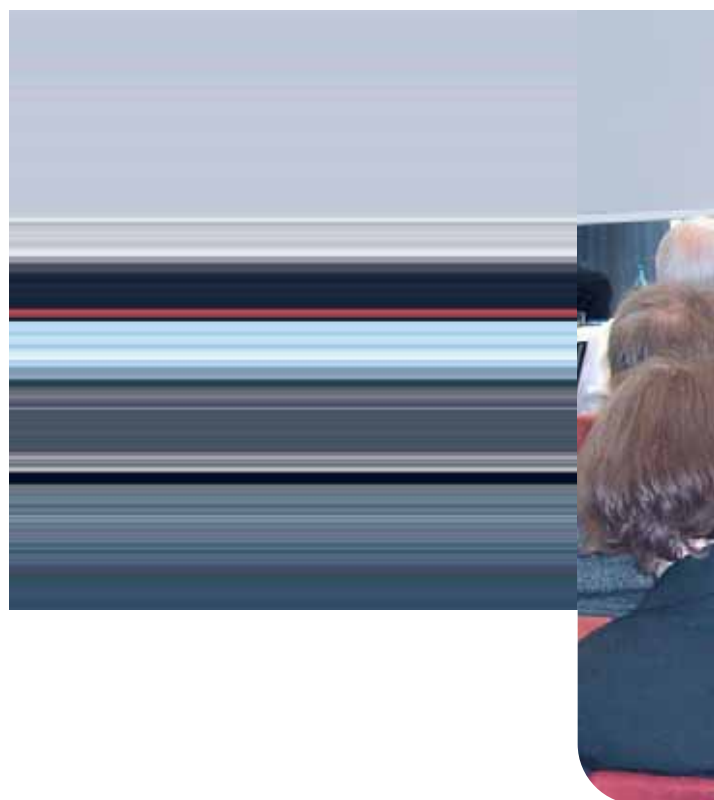
Violence as an outcome of culture and the way culture shapes role models was a further aspect of the debate on causes. At the same time, Peter Imbusch warned against attaching too much importance to the issue of culture in this context. As he put it, although there are cultures of violence, such as the mafia in Italy, we should not overlook the fact that for many people violence is simply "an established way of dealing with conflict. People don't opt for more civil forms of conflict resolution, they take care of things themselves. I might at this point quote the Bielefeld sociologist Niklas Luhmann, who was the author of the rather nice sentence 'Violence is a universal language'. People everywhere understand it. If you're being threatened with a knife it doesn't matter whether you're in South Africa, Latin America or Frankfurt – you understand what it means and you don't need any cultural explanations."

According to the political scientist and expert on Central America Peter Peetz, alongside poverty, social inequality and a culture of violence, other causes of youth violence include the structural socioeconomic upheaval caused by neoliberal structural adjustment policy. The consequence of this is that the state reduces its expenditure on social programmes, or that unemployment rises. The fact that

this argument is not always valid is demonstrated by the example of Venezuela; ten years ago that country abandoned neoliberal policy, yet still faces a massive problem of violence. Having said that, Venezuela still suffers from massive social inequality.

As well as these external factors that are conducive to the emergence of youth violence, the panel also identified as a further cause, and one that is becoming more common, the irrational element attached to violence – the enjoyment of conflict for its own sake, as Peter Imbusch put it: “Violence is never only instrumental. In order to get something, violence is applied to a degree that goes beyond what would be necessary.” Elisabeth Rohr, an educational scientist from the University of Marburg, stated that in her opinion a key cause of youth violence, especially in Central America, is the unresolved traumatic experiences of today’s post-war generation. As the discus-

sion continued, she added: “It is a known fact that traumatic experiences that are not worked through and healed in one generation may continue to affect a second and third generation. Where conflicts are not worked through in the first generation, they continue to damage that generation’s children and grandchildren. To me it’s quite clear that the post-war societies in Guatemala and El Salvador have not worked through their conflicts. And I believe that also explains the extremely high level of violence in those societies.”



Recognising the warning signs

The factors that can cause violence at the individual level have long been a topic of debate within the social sciences, in psychology for instance, or in social psychology or gender studies. Systemic models such as the ecological model offered by the World Health Organization explain youth violence in terms of a complex interplay of different factors in the socialisation of children and adolescents. As Peter Imbusch emphasised, “We just can’t predict when it will erupt. We’re not really very surprised that something happens, we’re just surprised that it happens at a particular point in time. And that’s the problem that we need to explain, because it’s always to some extent arbitrary.”

Dr. Hans-Heiner Rudolph, Head of the GTZ Education, Universities and Youth Section, also said: “We must become alert to the warning signs, and take preventive action. When things really go off, everyone understands that something’s going on. That’s the same whether you’re in Europe or in Latin America.” If the warning signals are recognised early on and monitored, and if potential

hotspots of youth violence are identified, then timely action can be taken and the outbreak of youth violence prevented. These warning signals include for instance high youth unemployment, a high incidence of domestic violence, loss of political cohesion and growing anonymity in society, erosion of family structures, slum formation, a reduction in the state’s capacity to exercise its monopoly on violence, and an extreme gap between rich and poor. Peter Imbusch claimed that on the other hand, contrary to what the youth bulge theory would suggest, the proportion of angry young men within the population of a country was of hardly any use as a warning signal. As he explained, this theory put forward by the sociologist Gunnar Heinsohn gives a too one-sided account of violent conflicts arising wherever an above-average number of (male) youths within a society have no prospects of finding an appropriate position within that society.



The available data

When figures on youth violence are produced, these usually involve numbers of perpetrators and victims. According to data of the World Health Organization (WHO), for instance, in the year 2000 an estimated 199,000 young people fell victim to violence, which is to say 565 young people every day. For each young person dying as a result of violence, a further 20 to 40 sustain injuries requiring hospitalisation.

Youth violence varies widely between regions, but also from country to country. One example that demonstrates this is homicide rates. According to WHO data, the homicide rate among youths in Western European societies as well as in parts of Asia and the Pacific states is 0.9 per 100,000 inhabitants. In Africa the figure reaches 17.6, and in Latin America 36.4.

The different scale within individual countries is illustrated by the following figures. In Colombia the homicide rate in 2002 was 84.4 per 100,000 inhabitants, while in El Salvador it was significantly lower at 50.2. Apart from the USA, which has a homicide rate of 11.0, most states with homicide rates above 10 per 100,000 inhabitants are either developing countries or countries in transition undergoing rapid socio-economic change. The countries with the lowest homicide rates are in Western Europe – France 0.6, Germany 0.8, UK 0.9 – or in Asia. In 2002, Japan for instance had a homicide rate of 0.4.

Ana Moreno Morales, however, doubts the reliability of the published data, regardless of the institution or organisation publishing them. "People talk about murder rates and identify youth as the victims, but the data that we have, at least for Latin America, are not reliable. What we do know is that most murder victims are young people, but we can't say that they're also the perpetrators. It's about time to start improving the information systems so that we know where counter-measures can be launched, where something can be done."

The available data on the costs of youth violence could also be improved. It is not known, for instance, what overall costs are incurred by a given country year by year as a result of youth violence. Some idea of the scale of the problem can be gained for instance from the fact that estimates for the continent of Latin America put the average costs for each country at 14 percent of GDP.

According to Mattias Lundberg of the World Bank, who researched this very topic in the course of his work on the World Development Report, the actual costs are difficult to calculate and quantify, since virtually no data are available. By contrast, the costs for specific elements, such as medical costs for the treatment of victims of violence, can indeed be calculated. Or the costs of damage to property caused by violence. Or the costs of policing. Or the costs of additional security measures carried out by private firms. Or the costs of human capital lost due to young people discontinuing their schooling or serving prison sentences.

Peter Peetz, who worked for several years in a youth violence project in Latin America, reported that since corresponding statistics are either lacking or are completely contradictory, other ways need to be found of obtaining the required information. "We took a qualitative approach to this. We went into schools and invited pupils first of all to write about their biggest problems. In a second step they were asked to answer the question: Do you yourself feel safe or unsafe? The results were as follows. The school students in El Salvador, for instance, described the country's biggest problem as being the lack of safety. Most answers to the second question could be paraphrased as: 'I trust my family, and in my school and my barrio I feel safe. Although I do know someone to whom something happened, things really are quite okay.' This rather put into perspective some of the sensational reporting, as well as the information that politicians quite deliberately disseminate, especially in the run-up to elections."

Youth gangs

In Latin America, though in Africa too, youth gangs are a major problem. They are amongst other factors a result of the extremely repressive policies put in place by many states in response to youth violence, according to GTZ staff member Dr. Ana Isabel Moreno Morales.

Mattias Lundgren of the World Bank put into words what it is about these gangs that make them attractive to youths:

“To their members, youth gangs are a surrogate family. They give the young person a feeling of belonging and a new belief, though they also give them items of everyday use. I once asked a young man in Sierra Leone why he had joined the rebels. His answer – they gave me shoes. It’s that simple. Youth gangs offer their members concrete benefits.” Yet they are also a way to kill the abundance of time young people have on their hands, as a study conducted by Demoscopia in 2007 demonstrated. The surveyed gang members in Central America spend more time on the streets, in bars and discotheques, and are significantly more likely to become involved in drugs and

gambling, than their peers. Peter Peetz concluded from this: “There is simply too little on offer for these young people in terms of meaningful leisure and recreational activities.”

According to the panel, this social dimension is exactly what politicians and development cooperation can utilise to “positively reorient” youth gangs, as Peter Imbusch put it. He went on to say that, in order to be successful in this, “it is crucial to know exactly why young people are members of these groups, what they expect from them and what they actually receive. It is often helpful to establish other people as role models to whom gang members can relate. For example, a key role can be played by formerly delinquent youths, because they can speak from their own experience.” According to Peter Peetz, another promising approach is to guide the group as a whole toward non-violent activities, for instance by means of an employment programme. This can harness the group’s potential and social cohesion, allowing these to be channelled into reorienting the group. By contrast,



separating individuals off from the group proves much more difficult.

According to the panel, this knowledge concerning the potential for reorienting groups can be utilised by both policymakers and development cooperation to create leverage against youth violence. Other levers are the age-dependent criteria by which the period of time spent in a youth gang, and the point in time at which a member leaves, are decided. Practitioners have observed that a gang member withdraws from the group when he has a girlfriend. The same thing happens when a member gets married or becomes a parent. These are all reasons for young adults to leave the gang and reorient their lives. Getting a sensible job also triggers this process. In the specific context of Latin America, Peter Peetz has identified a further trigger – joining a church. “Perhaps this doesn’t have so much to do with age, but rather with a person’s mental development.”

Many youth gangs are closely linked to organised crime. As Wolfgang Hees of Caritas international, who has experience in working with youth gangs in several Latin American countries, put it: “The drug trade, human trafficking, arms dealing – this is how youth gangs finance themselves. And when you ask them why they’re involved, they tell you straight-out: I get money from them, they get me the nicest girls, they give me power. These are the facts that count, and we won’t be able to supplant them with a general education programme.”

The Demoscopia study, however, calls into question precisely this close link between youth gangs and organised crime. Links and a growing degree of organisation yes; the long arm of organised crime – more likely no. It is true that there are also “independent” youth gangs that for instance operate within a certain district of a city and develop specific forms of organisation and communication. This is also what makes it so difficult to smash these groups through repressive measures taken against the “leaders”. The gang members themselves, the mareros, compare themselves to an army of ants. When one is taken out of action, four step in to take his place.

The moderator Sabine Kurtenbach summed up as follows: “What makes the problem in Latin America so virulent is the way these groups become institutionalised, and the mechanisms that then take effect. If the primary forms of prevention have only a limited effect, then we need to do more to tackle these mechanisms. This means that development cooperation must then pursue different levels of approach.” Turning an extremely violent, organised youth gang into a more moderate one is a very lengthy process. “This can only be achieved together with the residents of those parts of town where the gangs have their home base”, as Wolfgang Hees reported from his experience working for Caritas international. “We cannot eliminate youth gangs, because the attraction of money that is there as a result of organised crime is simply too strong. But we can move slowly toward change.”



Repression

Many governments attempt to subdue youth violence by means of repression and draconian punishment. This method is known by various names. In Latin America it is called *mano dura*, the policy of the firm hand. In the English-speaking countries the term of choice is zero tolerance, which translates into German as *Nulltoleranz*. The wayward behaviour of youth is sanctioned with police violence and imprisonment, often regardless of the severity of the offence. A highly controversial approach, as the heated in-depth discussion of the pros and cons demonstrated.

Youth crime rates or crime rates in general is an issue that concerns everyone, because everyone suffers as a result. This public interest, which is also continuously fed by the media, generates pressure on those in government to act. As Peter Imbusch knows, "Anyone who has ever lived in a violent setting will automatically feel relieved when firm action is taken against criminals. That explains the popularity of the zero tolerance policy".

Achieving what appear to be rapid, visible results in the fight against crime guarantees politicians popularity, and thus re-election after their time in office has elapsed –



this is how development-policy researchers and practitioners explain the fact that politicians worldwide continue to bank on the zero tolerance policy in the struggle against youth violence. In the opinion of the experts, changing this political economy is not easy. As Niko Schützhofer of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development put it, "...prevention needs to be made more attractive politically. When you look at government budgets you can clearly see that they also continue to prefer the *mano dura* policy." "We do not have sufficient financial resources to promote social development in partner countries", added Alexander Erich of Avedis, a consulting company for social development. "Do we have funds for street workers, social workers, youth services? The answer is no! As long as that remains the case, the zero tolerance policy is the only solution. And it is not only popular in Latin America. It was also popular in Kenya when the troubles broke out there early this year."

"Somewhere down the line the point is reached where many say let's get stuck in, so that the whole thing doesn't get completely out of control. The police then have no other option but to shoot back. Not with live ammunition, but with rubber bullets, as the South African police did during the massacres in the spring of this year", was Ulrich Burgmer's comment on the tough approach taken by the police. In the same breath he qualified this by saying: "Repression is only necessary because there was no prevention beforehand, and it will continue to be necessary. But there is no reason why we cannot have both, repression and prevention." GTZ staff member Dr. Jörg Freiberg-Strauss, who spent many years living in Guatemala, where murder can be committed with virtual impunity, issued the following call: "We have to strike a balance between prevention on the one hand, and the enforcement of society's demand that young murderers be punished on the other. Violence, even murder, has an almost positive image. Markets of violence like those we have in Guatemala offer youths significant and swift upward mobility; by committing acts of violence they are able to earn money and gain social prestige. The largest percentage of murderers in Guatemala is made up of adolescents and young adults". Citizens feel threatened by the rise in violence, "...at which point zero tolerance becomes the only way out".

However, there was a consensus among the discussion participants that bludgeoning or returning fire at the perpetrators is not a sustainable way of solving the problem of youth violence in the long term. Generally speaking, in those countries whose governments have taken a firm line against youths liable to punishment, it is evident that although this may help in the short term, it does not solve the problem in the long term. In El Salvador for instance, while the zero tolerance policy was being stepped up, the murder rate, which is considered an indicator of its effectiveness, continued to rise. "So the main result was not achieved", noted Peter Peetz, drawing attention to the secondary impacts. Some of the youths lose their lives in the police and military operations conducted under the zero tolerance policy, while others can look forward to a stay in utterly overcrowded prisons, where they often serve years without being sentenced because the judicial system is permanently overstretched. Overburdened courts need not necessarily lead to individuals who have not yet received a final sentence spending long periods in prison, however. Mattias Lundberg reported that the judicial system in the Philippines for instance is evidently dealing with the problem successfully through mobile courts that move from one urban zone to the next, dealing swiftly with the pending cases in order to get the youths on remand out of the prisons as quickly as possible. In South Africa, another practice is commonly applied, as Ulrich Burgmer explained. There, youths who have come into conflict with the law are taken care of by community courts. In this way less serious misdemeanours, such as simple theft, are punished wherever possible immediately, thus sparing the young culprits a long spell in prison.

This is also a form of prevention, because when young people are thrown into prison summarily, and incarcerated there alongside hardened criminals over long periods of time, by the time they come out again they have become "fantastically well-qualified criminals". As Ulrich Burgmer put it: "In South Africa, criminal youth refer to the penal institutions as universities". He was supported on this point by Ana Moreno Morales. She reported on a project in a Peruvian municipality run by the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), the police force and the Ministry of Justice. Here, young offenders must account for themselves before a team comprising a psychologist, a

judge and a police officer. The punishment involves not imprisonment, but community service. This procedure only applies for minor offences, however. Peter Imbusch added: "As well as avoiding imprisonment, it is also important to promote social control and social integration. This is increasingly being forgotten as the new punitiveness, as it is called in the USA and Europe, takes hold. The social control exerted through integration into specific groups is a very effective element. Youths involved in petty crime, who often regret their actions later on, need this social control and the prescriptions it imposes to give them orientation."

Scope for this is provided by work in the field of culture or sports. Street football for instance. "That's very good for conflict mediation", as Ana Moreno Morales noted, speaking from experience. "We worked in a street football project in Peru that involved mixed teams. This meant that the youths not only learned standards and rules, but also faced up to gender issues. It really does work very well, as the evaluation showed. And the method can be used anywhere."

The moderator Sabine Kurtenbach suggested that in the context of the punishment of offences committed by youths, we should speak of sanctions rather than repression. Mattias Lundberg added that the harsh punishment of youths was not appropriate at all, as was also evident in the USA. In his opinion, a more promising alternative approach would be a legal system based on resocialisation, as is already common practice in the context of juvenile delinquency in about a hundred countries around the world.

Anna Moreno Morales remained unchallenged when she stated that, "The repressive response to youth violence can be viewed as clear evidence that it constitutes a constraint to the development of countries. By responding with repression, governments forget to promote young people, thus giving them no opportunity to contribute to the development of their communities and countries. We can observe this throughout Latin America."

Possible approaches for development cooperation

In the opinion of Mattias Lundberg, “There are very few tried and tested approaches. And they are all long-term. It is a proven fact that measures tackling the problem during early childhood reduce the tendency of individuals to commit criminal acts as adolescents, which means they are less likely to face imprisonment. At the same time, this improves the likelihood that boys and girls will not discontinue their schooling prematurely. But these are investments that need to be made over a period of 15 or even 20 years.” This advocacy of preventive measures that are aimed at children rather than adolescents is also backed up by the experiences of Ana Moreno Morales. In light of her work in the supraregional promotion of youth and prevention of violence project in Latin America, she too concludes: “Youth projects must be aimed at children, and we must also work more with families.”

There have been no simple solutions to date, nor will there be any in the future. The problem of youth violence is too complex for that. Matthias Lundberg is convinced that “Public health, psychology, sexual frustration, participation, belonging, conviction, alternative lifestyles – the problem has so many aspects, and there are as many ways of solving it. But they are all interlinked, and different ways need to be combined to suit the given situation.”

Although the title of the conference was “Youth Violence – a Challenge for Development”, the question kept arising of which young people were actually relevant to development cooperation. All youths as agents of the future, or just those youths who constitute a risk factor for the development of their country, and who therefore require special attention? “There are approaches that aim to integrate young people with a criminal record into social structures such that they give up their delinquent behaviour. For this, however, they need role models and a family environment, because they won’t manage it on their own. This would also be a point of entry for development cooperation, where relatively speaking probably a great deal could be achieved at comparatively low cost”, was Peter Imbusch’s response. He pointed to corresponding experiences with youth projects in developing countries that successfully integrate boys and girls with criminal records through social work. He qualified this by saying “But only if there are opportunities beyond that”, and

concluded “For development cooperation this means that first of all alternatives need to be created for young people. And this is where development cooperation might begin a general approach toward the social situation of young people in developing countries, which it might do at the local and municipal levels. However, these would be investments whose return is not immediately evident. Only in the medium term will it be possible to say whether the money was well invested.”

Ulrich Burgmer sees another approach. In the light of his experiences in South Africa, he believes that all state institutions in a country that deal with youth-related issues urgently need to be networked. He believes that development cooperation could support this process, and help facilitate a clear definition of tasks for the respective institutions from the national down to the local level, through advisory inputs. He is convinced that “this would enable a significantly wider spectrum of youth violence to be addressed, and enable preventive measures to be implemented more successfully, than hitherto. A ministry for youth as the supreme coordinating body would be very helpful here.” This comment from South Africa by Ulrich Burgmer drew support from Ana Moreno Morales, who knows from experience that “By delivering advisory services development cooperation really can do a great deal to support the networking of institutions and organisations. This strengthens the exchange of experiences – in Latin America this means the exchange of experiences between different countries – and leads to a certain harmonisation of their youth policies. A regional approach of this kind does, however, presuppose an exact analysis of youth-related problems in those countries, because this is the only way to identify possible starting points. And these can be different in each country.”

Prevention through education and employment promotion

"There are a number of basic truths that are also empirically verifiable. One of them is, the higher the level of education, the less violence there is. This applies to all societies. The other basic empirical truth is that there is a link between a certain level of social security and the degree of violence or conflictuality of societies. In other words the more social security tends to be in place, the less violence and the fewer violent conflicts there are", as Peter Imbusch noted. In saying this he was supporting Dr. Rüdiger Blumör, responsible for the GTZ sector project Education and Conflict Transformation, which ascribes a key role to education and employment in the promotion of social cohesion and integration, for instance following civil wars or violent conflicts. According to Blumör it is only through education and employment that children and adolescents, including former child soldiers, can be integrated into society. "Education, education, education, jobs, jobs, jobs. These are the prospects for the future that must be created for children and adolescents. We must enable them to get into remunerative employment, and that means employment promotion and training programmes. And this is where those of us involved in development cooperation have a contribution to make."

The employment approach in particular was the subject of controversial debate, because in developing countries there are far too few jobs in the formal sector, as a result of which young people have no job to go to, despite being qualified. "What fields can young people enter in today's economy?" was the question rightly raised by moderator Sabine Kurtenbach. And Peter Imbusch added: "Where are the jobs supposed to come from? There are far too many young people for the jobs available. And given the current economic structures of the countries concerned, I see no prospect of how the problem might be solved satisfactorily in the foreseeable future. This will continue to be a source of social friction for a long time to come." To provide a counter-example to the claim that education and employment are an effective means of countering youth violence, the Latin American countries Nicaragua and Bolivia were highlighted, both of which

have the lowest murder rates anywhere in the region, even though compared with other countries in the region unemployment is very high and educational status relatively low. As Niko Schützhofer of BMZ explained, "That is not to say that improvements in these two areas do not help curb youth violence, but there are certainly many other factors."

The discussion of school education as a means of preventing violence was less controversial. Dr. Hans-Heiner Rudolph based his judgement on GTZ's experiences in the education sector: "Where educational subject matter is relevant to life and put across in an attractive way – e.g. by well-trained teachers – and where school policy is sensibly managed, it is also possible to pursue broad-based prevention of youth violence. And it is also effective and economically efficient, because everybody goes or should go to school. Here, boys and girls can develop life skills and values, and education gives them prospects."

Peter Imbusch summed up by saying that education and employment were "two basic measures that can help stem youth violence. They can only do so, though, in combination with other measures." Because just as there is no single cause of youth violence, there is no single approach through which to tackle it. Jobs and education are two bands along the possible spectrum; culture, and social and political participation, are others. As Anja Kramer of KfW Entwicklungsbank put it: "It is a broad and complex social problem, which is why our approaches need to be just as broad and complex."

Another participant who advocated taking a differentiated view of effective prevention strategies was Dr. Timo Weinacht, responsible for the GTZ sector project Implementing Children and Youth Rights: "Here in Germany we had the so-called losers of modernity theory as a way of explaining the phenomenon of neo-Nazi skinheads. This theory strongly influenced work to prevent right-wing youth violence in the late 1990s. Then it was dis-

covered that it was not only modernity's losers with no jobs and low educational status who were allowing themselves to be mobilised by violent elements, but also a good number of better educated individuals too. So the question would rather be, who is actually mobilised by these violent elements, and why? And in that context it would also be appropriate to raise the question of alternative offerings that other actors, such as development cooperation, need to make available to young people so that they can experience social recognition, and learn values and alternative forms of action to violence. This is especially important in their social environment and within the polity, where participation in social processes and participatory political education are what is required.”

GTZ takes account of the major importance of education and employment promotion in the prevention of youth violence and violent conflicts by promoting crisis-sensitive educational offerings that open up prospects for the future. One project among many others exemplifying this is the Promotion of the Development Capacity of

Youths and Young Adults in Sierra Leone. This project reintegrates disadvantaged youths and especially former child soldiers back into society, offering them alternatives to a life of violence. It does so by providing them with opportunities to catch up on the basic education they have missed, obtain job training and receive youth and community support.

The Programme for Economic Development and Employment Promotion (FORTALECE) in El Salvador is engaging particularly intensively with the link between youth employment promotion and the promotion of peaceful co-existence. Since 2007 the project has been linking targeted employment promotion measures with elements of violence prevention.



Prevention through police work

The discussion of the role of the police in preventing violence was opened by Dr. Uwe Kiewelitz, Head of the GTZ Prevention, Security and Peace Section, who made the following remarks: "Although we should be pursuing prevention, we should not neglect the re-establishment of the state or municipal monopoly on violence. This has nothing to do with either repression or sanctions; it is above all else the restoration and maintenance of law and order." He drew attention to GTZ's many years of experience in helping reform police forces in various countries, and in community policing. "It's very important to add that, but it's also important to add organisational development, the support of changes within the police apparatus, as well as the control of small arms and light weapons, which means the control of access to the main tools of violence. Our work in this challenging context is characterised by the constant search for agents within the institutions concerned who are willing to pursue change."

In many places, especially in Latin America too, prevention work by the police goes no further than throwing violent youths into prison, i.e. implementing the zero tolerance policy put in place by the state. Not so in Nicaragua. As Dr. Jörg Freiberg-Strauss reported: "This is related to the reorganisation of the Nicaraguan police force. That process began there 13 years ago and is now bearing fruit." This success story of community policing motivated the neighbouring country Guatemala to launch a reform of its police force. As Dr. Uwe Kiewelitz explained: "As well as the success story itself, there were also individuals who were able to communicate it authentically. The longstanding partnership between the two countries going back years was a key mobilising factor, setting an example that other countries might follow - and take well beyond just police reform."

Dr. Jörg Freiberg-Strauss took the debate further by saying: "I think we need to move away from these stereotypes of prevention on the one hand, versus policing and zero tolerance on the other. There are an increasing



number of police officers who no longer think that way, and we should be listening to them. We are so caught up in our own arguments that we aren't even noticing this." He was supported by Joanna Kotowski-Ziss of SUM-Consult, who in the course of helping prepare the forthcoming supraregional project to prevent youth violence in Central America has studied in detail the options for German development cooperation. She highlighted the prevention work in Germany, as well as the creation of the German Congress on Crime Prevention, which emerged from the prevention work of Germany's federal state police forces. "When preventive approaches were being developed in Germany, emphasis was placed on strengthening and promoting cooperation between the police, schools, municipalities and social workers. This is a very important aspect of prevention, because prevention is a broad area of work on concrete problems in local contexts. And the police are an essential part of this."

Yet until the 1980s, the German police still attached higher priority to fighting crime than to preventing it. Today it goes without saying that prevention is a task of the police. Roland Ullmann of the Western Hesse police headquarters in Wiesbaden pointed out that a debate on the role of the police in prevention similar to the one currently being conducted on youth violence in developing countries took place years ago in Germany. "In the 1970s and 80s we in the police force were also asking: police and social work – do the two fit together? In principle this question is now a thing of the past, though in practice the issue is raised for discussion from time to time. This may be legitimate, but should not lead to the networking that achieved in the meantime now being abandoned again. Today we have specialists in the police force who are responsible for cooperation with schools, which is to say that they work exclusively in prevention. But of course prevention is also a part of patrol duty and investigative work. In other words, we pursue a broad approach."

In many developing countries the police force is completely unprepared for a preventive mandate, either because of its history or because of the training of police officers.

This means that they are either overstretched, or completely unsuited, as is the case with the South African police force. There, a large proportion of the former freedom fighters were hired by the police after 1994. According to Ulrich Burgmer, who witnessed this at first hand, "These people sacrificed their youth for the freedom struggle, they didn't go to school, had no education, and therefore had no chance of getting a job. If the government had not taken care of them that would have created a huge potential for violence. Whether or not the right step was taken is certainly open to debate. Either way, the consequence is that South Africa today has a police system whose qualifications do not match what would actually be required." Police training currently takes from three to six months, which is to say only a fraction of the period that is standard for instance in Germany. And this remains the case, even though the potential for conflict in South Africa is far higher, so that police officers face far more dangerous situations. "That means they are not capable of keeping the situation under control." This is compounded by the fact that the illiterate former freedom fighters "cannot compete within the system, so they are extremely frustrated, resort to alcohol and drugs, and become susceptible to corruption. Right now the South African police force is so busy reorganising itself that its availability as a partner for prevention work, which we perform in our project, is limited."

According to Dr. Rüdiger Blumör, developing vocational training concepts for the police that also include broad scope for prevention work could be a point of entry for development cooperation. In this context he drew attention to GTZ's experience in supporting police sector reform in Afghanistan. There, most police officers are illiterate, "and the concrete challenge is to design and implement literacy measures for this target group. We can develop concepts for this and similar cases." Dr. Blumör, himself an education expert, felt certain of that.

Like education and employment, police work is only one possible means of preventing youth violence. It is always necessary to cooperate with several stakeholders on several levels, depending on which problem the work is focused on.

Possible ways forward

Develop open programmes

Participation, empowerment and orientation toward the needs identified by the population strengthen social cohesion and create scope to actively involve young people. As Anja Kramer of the KfW Entwicklungsbank put it, “In our work we must develop programmes that are open, that are determined by the population and that are appropriate to local conditions. For example urban rehabilitation programmes. These local examples that work can then be transferred to other municipalities and other countries in the region. Above all the approach.”

Launch an exchange of experience and information, network stakeholders

In Latin America a large body of experience with a wide variety of approaches is on hand. The problem is that these approaches are not known or not systematically recorded. The institutions and organisations concerned do not exchange experiences and information, or if they do, then only on a one-off basis. The regional level is eminently suited to launching this exchange of information and experience. Joanna Kotowski-Ziss said: “To achieve this we need capacity development for youth institutions and organisations.” An intermediary role can be played here by the new regional project to promote youth and peaceful coexistence in Central America, in cooperation with the System of Central American Integration (Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana – SICA).

At the local level too, capacity development is needed to support this exchange of information and strengthen systematic interplay between the key stakeholders. As Joanna Kotowski-Ziss well knows, “There are so many positive examples here – be they those of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, the Inter-American Development Bank or the World Bank. People need to be made more aware of all this. On the other hand, what is lacking is training for the staff of intermediary institutions and organisations. The GTZ regional project Promotion of Youth and Prevention of Violence has already achieved a number of results here, and has prepared training materials on which further work can be based.”

Identify strategic points of entry

Anja Kramer of the KfW Entwicklungsbank expressed the following view: “I see the contribution of development cooperation as being to identify strategic points of entry, and create opportunities at the various levels. Together with our partners we can document, analyse and evaluate the various approaches, and on that basis develop new programmes and approaches. But for us that means becoming more flexible and open, and thinking on a more long-term basis.”

Collect reliable data

One option for involving the World Bank more intensively in helping prevent youth violence was identified by Mattias Lundberg as collecting and supplying reliable data on the theme. He explained: “The World Bank operates on a sectoral basis. The issue of youth violence and how best to tackle it will only play a role where money is at stake and the costs of youth violence are reliably demonstrated. Secondly, it would be necessary to identify and document effective approaches.”



Conclusions

The discussion lasted almost four hours. To document its conclusions, participants formulated recommendations for future work in the field of youth violence and prevention of youth violence. These were broken down by level, as follows:

Project level:

- The exchange of information and networking at the regional, national and local levels must be intensified or initiated.
- Systematic training of staff of the relevant institutions and organisations must be made an integral component of prevention work. Key aspects here are monitoring and evaluation, as well as systemic cooperation management.

Planning level:

- The systematic involvement of families, neighbours and other key persons to whom young people relate in prevention measures must be mainstreamed in project work.
- A ranking of effective prevention methods, to communicate lessons learned
- Originality of approaches
- Options for disseminating innovative approaches
- Stronger orientation toward windows of opportunity for engaging with prevention measures

Policy level:

- Renewed emphasis of German development policy on youth participation and promotion, combined with orientation toward child protection



From the work of GTZ: Supraregional and Successful

Promotion of Youth and Prevention of Violence in Latin America

“In Latin America violence is not a national problem but a cross-border regional problem, which is why it can only be tackled regionally”, according to Dr. Ana Moreno Morales. She is a staff member of the regional project “Promotion of Youth and Prevention of Violence”, which GTZ has been implementing in Latin America since 2003 on behalf of Germany’s Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, in cooperation with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). The five countries involved are El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Colombia and Peru. The project will be brought to a conclusion at the end of the year.

Strong networks

The core element of the model developed by GTZ and PAHO is the involvement of all political levels in the youth promotion and violence prevention activities. This multi-level approach operates with national, regional and local institutions and networks. Consultancy, training,

exchange of experiences and situation analysis, especially in the field of violence prevention, have strengthened these networks. Over the years they have become denser and their cooperation closer, and they now participate actively and successfully in helping shape political frameworks that are youth-friendly and prevention-oriented. All the countries involved have now taken corresponding measures at the national level, be it in the form of guidelines, legislation, or the creation of a ministry for youth, as is the case in Honduras.

“We began our work at the national level, which made the problem visible throughout the country”, is how Dr. Moreno Morales described the approach. “We then focused on the local level. Through this multi-level approach we were able to involve the immediate environment of youth in our work. By doing so we created an enabling framework to ensure that projects become integral components of municipal family, health and social policy.”



Local projects

The results are impressive. The municipal administration of Bogotá (Colombia) for instance adjusted its district youth policy, taking into account the project's recommendations. And the municipal administration of Cali (Colombia) designed a project for the social and vocational training of youth to prevent violence. In Peru, there is now a demand among many municipal administrations for the training measures developed in the project to improve youth participation. In 2007 alone, staff members of 10 municipalities in Ayacucho and 16 in Lima were trained, and are now applying the violence prevention approach developed by GTZ and PAHO in their projects. Participation and violence prevention are also firmly integrated into the annual plan of Peru's Ministry of Women and Social Development and the National Commission for Development and a Drug-free Life (Comisión nacional para el desarrollo de una vida sin drogas).

Dr. Moreno Morales explained a key strategic element of the project as follows: "We didn't work directly with the young people, but with the intermediary organisations for youth promotion and violence prevention. We helped develop their communicative capacities, supported the creation of networks and helped design a theoretical framework for the work of the participating organisations. We also carried out various studies in the region to determine where good and successful methods of prevention already existed. We utilised good approaches for our own purposes."

From 2009, a new regional project to prevent youth violence will draw inter alia on the experiences of this cooperation between GTZ and PAHO. The project will focus on the three countries of Central America hardest hit by the problem – El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala.



From the work of GTZ: Volunteers on Patrol

Promotion of Youth and Prevention of Violence in South Africa

Since 1996, young women and men have been patrolling in various townships of South Africa's cities. That was when the Community Peace Workers (CPW) pilot project was launched. Three years later, positive results were already showing up in the statistics. In Nyanga and Crossroads the crime rate had fallen by an average of 30 percent.

The model has long since left the pilot stage. In the capital Tshwane for instance the community peace workers are now an established component of preventive work. Here, the project is integrated into the Tshwane Metropolitan Police Department's crime prevention unit, and the mayor has already announced her intention to send community peace workers onto the streets for the 2010 Football World Cup. Project manager Ulrich Burgmer notes that "Word is getting around that the strategy works", and casts his mind back to the beginnings of the project.

Part of the community

"During the first three months it was difficult for us to gain the needed acceptance of our model within the community. Many people thought we were police informants. The community peace workers then spent three weeks just introducing themselves to the community and explaining what they were there to do, but were not active. During this period they won people's trust." Not everyone can become a peace worker. The qualifications required include South African citizenship, a minimum age of 18 years, completed basic secondary school education and – very important – no criminal record. This may change, however. "We are currently considering also integrating young people who have already served prison sentences into this programme. Only a small percentage, of course, so that the balance isn't upset. We expect this to produce some quite positive results." The process of selecting the young women and men is conducted jointly with representatives of the communities where they will have to work, and from which they must originate. This too is a requirement.



For one year the community peace workers go out on patrol in their township as volunteers. They help resolve disputes, look after children whose parents spend their night in a bar, or take down the details of offences committed and pass them on to the police. The police have long since stopped seeing the volunteers as unwelcome competition. Because they are unarmed, the community peace workers always patrol in groups in order to protect themselves from violent attacks by criminal youths. And the fact that they are a firmly established part of the community is also a form of protection for the CPWs, as Ulrich Burgmer is well aware.

Future prospects are part of the package

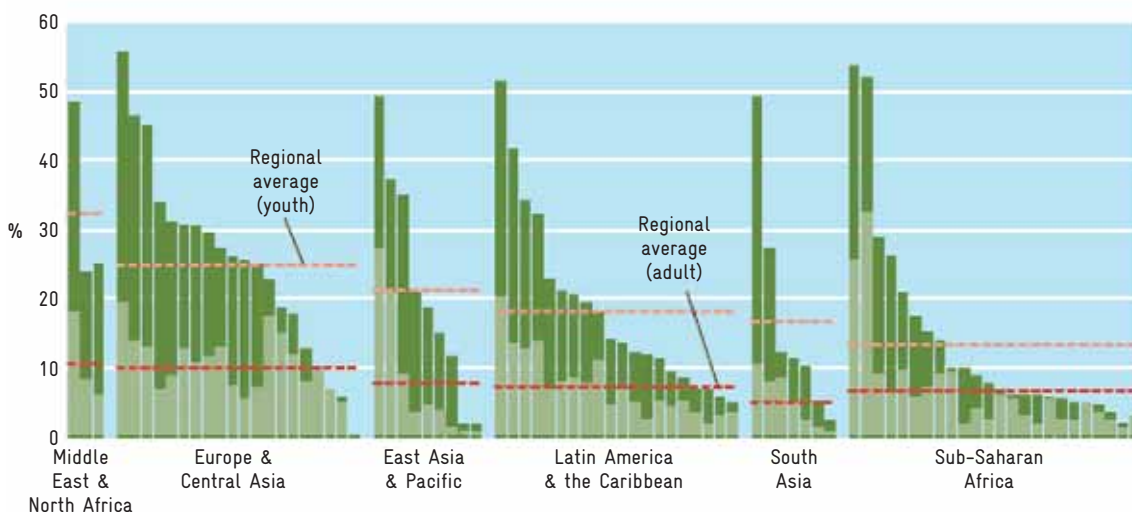
The demand to join the volunteer service is strong. When 50 posts in Tshwane were advertised, for instance, 4,000 unemployed young people applied. Applicants who are turned down do not give up so quickly, though, explains Ulrich Burgmer. “We know that many who didn’t manage it the first time round will apply a second or third time.”

Anyone who is a community peace worker also has a bright future. Because apart from their basic training in first aid, conflict management, investigative work and teamwork, after their year of service the young people receive six months’ vocational training. As the project manager explained, “Our project thus stands on two pillars. One is the fight against crime and crime prevention, the other is youth training. And our strategy is working. Potential employers know that community peace workers have basically been prepared for working life through voluntary activity and subsequent training. They possess more and better skills than other young people do on average, report for work on time and are motivated, to name just some of the points in their favour. Due to the fact that we have a corresponding monitoring system, we know that 80 percent of former community peace workers find a long-term job.”



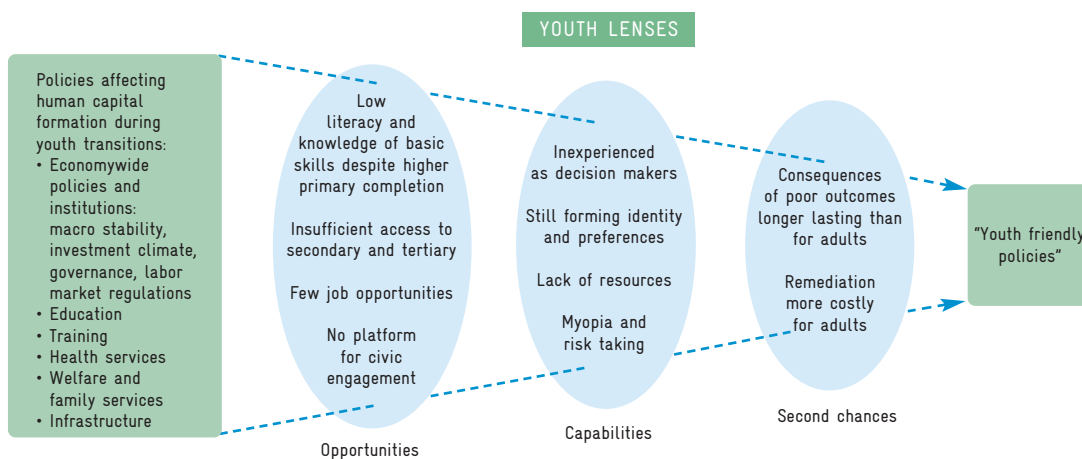
Annex

Unemployment rates are significantly higher among young people than older people



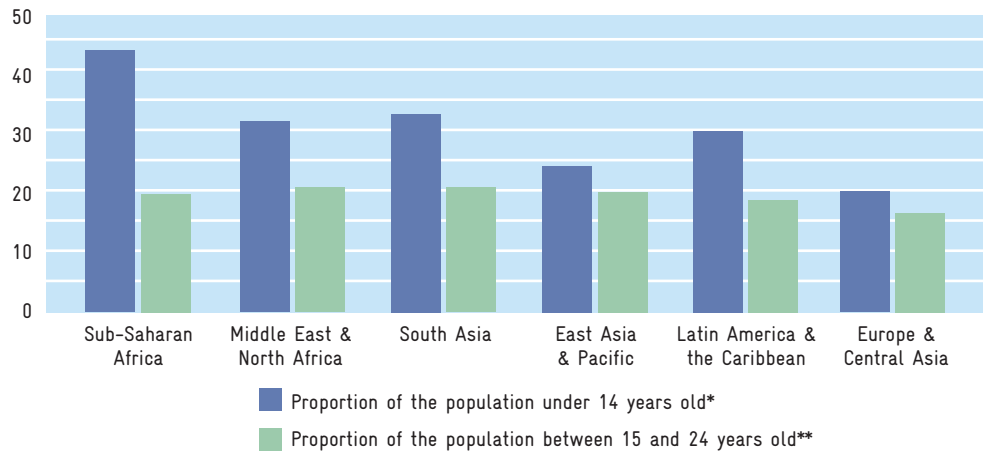
Source: World Bank: World Development Report 2007: Development and the Next Generation, Washington 2006, S. 8.

Aspects of 'youth-friendly policies'



Source: World Bank: World Development Report 2007: Development and the Next Generation, Washington 2006, S. 11.

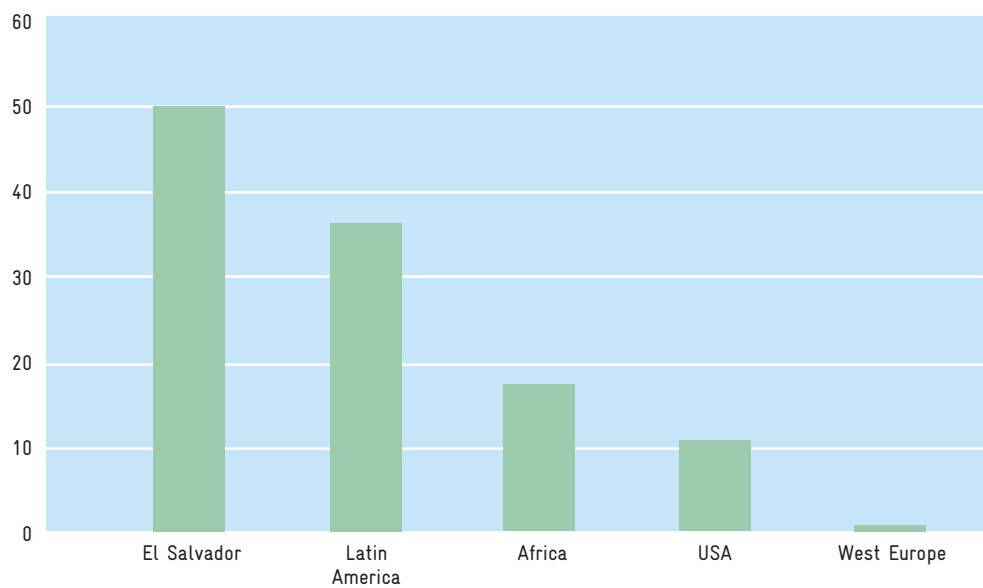
Proportion of total population accounted for by children and young people



* World Bank: World Development Report 2007: Development and the Next Generation, Washington 2006

**United Nations: World Youth Report 2007: Young People's Transition to Adulthood: Progress and Challenges, New York 2007

Homicide rates among young people (10 to 29 years old) per 100,000 inhabitants



Source: WHO: World Report on Violence and Health, S. 28f.

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