



UN HABITAT

STATE OF THE URBAN YOUTH 2010/2011
LEVELING THE PLAYING FIELD



URBAN
YOUTH
SUPPLEMENT

URBAN YOUTH NEED TARGETTED SUPPORT

National and international laws must be passed and resources found at national and municipal levels if youth across the world are to have equal chances in economic, social, cultural and political spheres of their cities, a newly published UN-HABITAT report says.

The **State of the Urban Youth 2010-2011** report – the first of its kind by the agency – says policies, programmes, schemes and businesses solely aimed at youth are needed. Critics say city youth are grossly marginalized in the four spheres of life, leaving them idle, despondent, and viewing a bleak future.

Although various cities and countries provide such initiatives, the report says, these are often not broad enough to cover the array of deprivations in society. The report, whose theme is **leveling the playing field** for the youth, draws its conclusion from a UN-HABITAT survey, conducted in 2009, of the historical and generational determinants of youth opportunity inequality and deprivation in five selected cities in Latin America, Africa, South Asia and the Caribbean.

The survey shows that pre-determined circumstances, such as, gender and location as well as intergenerational factors such as parents' education and income status influence upward social mobility and equal opportunity.

National governments of the five cities surveyed already have programmes directed at the youth. Yet, the beneficiaries in some of these cities say adjustments to some plans are needed. In **Mumbai**, India, respondents to the survey say the nation's Youth Policy should be participatory and more programme-oriented. This would allow each state and city to develop complementary plans. India adopted the new National Youth Policy in 2003 focusing on youth empowerment, gender justice, cross-sector approaches and information and research networks. Most states are yet to formulate their own youth policy to reflect the national policy.

In the Brazilian city of **Rio de Janeiro**, the government hands over youth-dedicated resources to non-governmental organizations, yet youth there say the courses offered under government policies are either insufficient or sporadic, and out of touch with the market. Youth demand affirmative action in employment, as happens with some banks that set quotas for hiring people with disabilities and Afro-Brazilians. Youth-specific public policies are developed by various tiers of government – federal, state and municipal – but are implemented at local level through partnerships between public authorities and civil society.

Lagos youth, in Nigeria, say although planning takes place at all three tiers of government, whenever there are plans, monitoring and evaluation of the degree and extent of implementation are never carried out. Young people do not see any drop in urban youth poverty because initiatives and continuity in programmes are lacking, and because the government does not involve youth in programme design, leaving them with a bleak future. The National Youth Policy in Nigeria, which was last revised in 2001, is still to be endorsed and enacted in all the states of the Nigerian federation.

In **Kingston**, the Jamaican government developed a national Youth Policy in 1994, to empower 14 to 25-year-olds. A national survey is planned ahead of the development of a new 2010-2014 youth policy. The revision process includes youth organizations, NGOs and government agencies. Youth in Kingston are concerned about crime, violence, teenage pregnancy and parenting, gender disparities and their role in national unity. Jamaica inner-city youth say a major source of exclusion is the stigma attached to the place where they live. However, the survey findings show that part of the problem is with the youth who need to become more proactive in engaging with the government.

In **Nairobi**, Kenya, survey findings show that the difficulty of getting decent jobs is one of the major reasons for local youths' poor access to opportunities. The Kenyan government set up the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports in 2005 to promote young people's capacity to take part in national development through supportive policies and programmes. In 2009, the Ministry launched the '*Kazi Kwa Vijana*' (work for young people) initiative so that young people could be given work in community projects such as water harvesting, repairing boreholes

(World Population in Billions)

and roads, cleaning informal settlements and planting trees. However, the jobs are temporary and labour-intensive, and many females are at a disadvantage. The survey was conducted in 2009 and in January 2010 the President of Kenya finally signed a Law establishing the National Youth Council, which will ensure the inclusion of the youth agenda in formulation of policy by institutions.

BACKGROUND:

- **The United Nations** definition of youth as individuals between the ages of 15 and 24 years is not legally binding. The Convention on the Rights of the Child defines a “child” as anyone under the age of 18. National definitions of youth vary and can range from 12 to 35 years of age.
- **Rio de Janeiro’s** population is about 6.1 million. The city is host to approximately 1 million young people from 15 to 24 years old. [Source: National Homes Survey – PNAD, 2003 – IBGE]
- **Kingston** hosted 666,200 people in 2008, or one-quarter of Jamaica’s total population. The country’s youth (10-24 years) number 800,000, or some 30 per cent of the total population. [Source: Population Reference Bureau, 2009]
- **Kenya’s** youth (10-24 years) population is 12.2 million, or 35 per cent of the nation’s total. [Source: Population Reference Bureau, 2009]. The results of Kenya’s most recent census, concluded in August 2009, are yet to be published.
- **Nigeria’s** population is estimated at 158 million (UN DESA, 2008). Youth (10-24 years) account for at least 34 per cent or 45.3 million of the total (Population Reference Bureau, 2009). **Lagos** hosts 36.8 per cent of the country’s total urban population. Precise data for the city is highly controversial. The Federal Office of Statistics in 2006 put the figure at 9 million. The Lagos State Government maintains the city’s population is at least 17.5 million. The United Nations estimates that, at its present growth rate, the State will be the third largest mega-city in the world by 2015, after **Tokyo and Mumbai**, with a population of at least 25 million.

Gross Enrolment Ratio (Primary) 2007

Brazil	137
India	112
Jamaica	95
Kenya	106
Nigeria	97

Source: World Bank (2009)

Net Enrolment Ratio (Primary) 2007

Brazil	94
India	89
Jamaica	90
Kenya	75
Nigeria	63

Source: World Bank (2009)

Gross Enrolment Ratio (Secondary) 2007

Brazil	105
India	55
Jamaica	87
Kenya	50
Nigeria	32

Source: World Bank (2009)

Net Enrolment Ratio (Secondary) 2007

Brazil	79
India	Not available
Jamaica	78
Kenya	43
Nigeria	Not available

Source: World Bank (2009)

Gross Enrolment Ratio (Tertiary) 2007

Brazil	25
India	12
Jamaica	Not available
Kenya	Not available
Nigeria	10

Source: World Bank (2009)

Youth Population Aged 10-24 (% of total) 2006

Brazil	27
India	30
Jamaica	30
Kenya	35
Nigeria	34

Source: Population Reference Bureau (2009)