

JUVLANIA

YOUTH TALKING POINTS



This document provides some illustrative talking points and supporting evidence for why it is critical to engagement youth.

STRENGTHENING ECONOMIC GROWTH THROUGH INVESTMENT

- Countries that produce a skilled, healthy and productive workforce are better positioned in the global economy to achieve economic prosperity, political stability and social wellbeing.
- Investing in young people is important due to both their share in the population of developing countries (youth bulge) and the enormous economic potential (youth dividend) that can be realized through their full and productive employment in the workforce. Investing in youth is considered smart economics.ⁱ
- Failing to invest in youth risks economic costs resulting from negative outcomes such as early school drop-out, young people trapped in unskilled, low paid jobs, high levels of underemployment, prolonged unemployment, risky sexual behaviors, substance abuse and crime and violence.ⁱⁱ
- According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), an increase in youth employment has multiplier effects throughout the economy, boosting consumer demand and adding tax revenue. This is matched by a reduction in expenditure to counter risk behaviors, violence and crime.ⁱⁱⁱ
- For each additional year of education completed by young adults, their country's poverty rate falls by nine percent^{iv} and gross domestic product (GDP) increases 18 percent.^v
- Investing in young people generates changes that will last throughout their lifetime, with higher absolute returns than investing only in older adults. For example, investing in measures to promote employment for young people increases their access to better and higher paid job opportunities. In turn, investments in youth can help support older and future generations.^{vi}
- High unemployment, a mismatch of jobs and skills and political insecurity can make it difficult for youth to stimulate economic growth. The youth bulge can thereby become a net drain on resources.^{vii}

STRENGTHENING NATIONAL SECURITY AND STABILITY THROUGH INVESTMENTS IN YOUTH

- A growing body of evidence suggests a strong correlation between countries with a high relative youth population and the chances of experiencing conflict and instability.^{viii} The likelihood of violence is also linked to young people's access to education, employment and sense of exclusion, indicating that failure to address the needs of young people may expose a country to greater risks of conflict emerging.
- Young people are the principal participants in conflict and violence, as both victims and perpetrators.^{ix}

- The lack of productive work available for young people perpetuates cycles of poverty and is associated with high levels of crime, violence, substance abuse and the rise of political extremism.^x
- When large groups of youth aspiring to political positions are excluded from participating in political processes, they may engage in violent conflict in an attempt to force the government to democratize.^{xi}
- Young people who have experienced conflict, particularly protracted conflict, have specific needs to be addressed, including missed years of education, unemployment or loss of livelihood opportunities, social rupture, trauma and—especially for those involved as combatants—a loss of status and resources.^{xii}
- Young men are more likely to migrate in conflict, compared to women and older men. Alienation of young migrants can leave them vulnerable to potential recruitment by gangs and extremist groups.^{xiii}
- Investing in young people’s employment and education develops their ability to participate in social life beyond the family and promotes interaction with government and civil society, collective bargaining with employers and creativity in developing solutions to social problems.^{xiv}

STRENGTHENING GLOBAL HEALTH OUTCOMES THROUGH INVESTING IN YOUTH

- The disease burden between childhood and adulthood shifts during adolescence—for example, sexual and reproductive health problems, mental illness and injuries increase.^{xv} In addition, a lack of youth friendly services means that many young people die from largely preventable diseases as well as from non-communicable diseases. Despite major successes in infant, child and adult health, adolescent mortality has only marginally improved.^{xvi}
- Twenty percent of adolescents in any given year will experience a mental health problem, most often depression or anxiety, with implications for individual, family and community life.^{xvii} Depression is the third leading cause of illness and disability among adolescents, and suicide is the third leading cause of death among 15 to 19-year-olds.^{xviii} Suicide is now the leading killer of adolescent girls aged 15 to 19 years.^{xix}
- Engaging young people in structured activities that link them to each other and to institutions enhances their self-awareness and social achievement, improves mental health and academic performance and reduces rates of dropping out of school, delinquency and substance abuse—all linked to improved health outcomes.^{xx}
- Including empowerment components in programs, such as viewing youth as a resource, engaging them in group dialogue, and involving them as decision-makers in their social actions, has been effective in improving health outcomes.^{xxi}
- Young people face barriers to obtaining contraceptive services and products, and whether to delay, space, or limit pregnancy. Barriers include: provider bias against young people, lack of confidentiality and privacy, financial barriers, legal and policy barriers, and gender norms that idealize sexual ignorance for girls and sexual prowess for boys.^{xxii}

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- ^{vi} Perezniето, P., et al (2013). Investing in Youth in International Development Policy: Making the Case, ODI. Available [here](#).
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- ^{xi} Urdal et al (2016). *ibid*
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- ^{xx} World Health Organization (2006). What is the evidence of effectiveness of empowerment to improve health, Geneva: WHO. Available [here](#).
- ^{xxi} *Ibid*.
- ^{xxii} High-Impact Practices in Family Planning (HIPs) (2015). Adolescent-friendly contraceptive services: mainstreaming adolescent-friendly elements into existing contraceptive services, Washington D.C.: USAID.