

Youth Vulnerabilities and Adaptation

Exploring the Impact of Macro-Level Shocks on Youth: 3F Crisis and Climate Change in Ghana, Mozambique and Vietnam

May 2011

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We acknowledge and appreciate the participation of all respondents in the three countries for taking the time to talk to the research teams. We are also grateful to Lucia Chipoco and Hanna Alder for their useful research assistance for this study, and to Rachel Marcus for her valuable comments.

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Executive Summary

This report presents a synthesis of the methods and findings of a participatory study in Ghana, Mozambique and Vietnam, which aims to fill the knowledge gap on the social impacts of crises on youth, and to ascertain their perspectives on their vulnerabilities and coping mechanisms, with a particular focus on those resulting from the global triple-F crisis and climate change. The youth population (aged 14-25) is critical to the progress of all three countries, and understanding how their social and economic development are affected by global shocks and how they can be better equipped to cope with them is crucial for policy development.

An initial, desk-based literature review formed the basis of the conceptual framework for the country-based research component, leading to a study that explored vulnerabilities and coping mechanisms in the following dimensions of young people's lives: employment, education, health, and emotional and social well-being, as well as some of the key policies and programmes that have been designed to improve young people's situations. A smaller component¹ of the research explored how climate change impacts on young people's livelihoods, economic opportunities and other aspects of their development, as well as understanding how they mitigate, and adapt to, these impacts due to the similarity between economic and climate shocks. Critically, the study incorporated a 'peer-to-peer' research methodology undertaken by young people with no prior experience.

Methodology

The methodological approach utilised for undertaking research for this study is as important as the content of the findings. The choice of a multi-faceted, peer-to-peer approach, with a strong emphasis on capacity building and mentoring for young researchers, was aimed at encouraging open and honest answers from interviewees, as well as creating a space for them to communicate their intimate concerns and aspirations.

Research findings

1. Youth vulnerabilities in relation to the economic crisis

Research findings in Ghana and Mozambique had many similarities across thematic areas, due to a comparable context and similar respondent populations. In Vietnam, it was more difficult to identify neighbourhoods with a significant number of vulnerable young people, and interviews were instead concentrated in 'poverty pockets' where young people had specific challenges in common, such as migration from rural areas. An overall finding in the three countries was that, although some specific challenges have recently emerged in relation to the 3F crisis, many problems identified by youth are

¹ From additional funding to complement the main component

seen as challenges that have affected young people for many years. Importantly, many respondents were not aware of the 'economic crisis' at all, but could still identify ways in which it was reflected in their lives.

1.1 Employment and economic activities

Unemployment, under-employment and income

Youth in all three countries identified unemployment and under-employment – that is, lack of formal, long-term, safe employment – among their main concerns. Respondents linked the problem to several factors including: higher labour supply than demand; incomplete or poor-quality education; and inadequate qualifications or work experience. Other key obstacles included the need for 'connections', insufficient funds to pay bribes (Ghana and Mozambique) and lack of political will to improve conditions for youth (Ghana).

In the two African countries, unemployment and under-employment were seen as persistent problems over the years, rather than the result of the current crisis, although respondents made a direct link between the crisis and increased school abandonment due to an inability to pay fees. In Vietnam, the labour market was perceived as particularly slow over the past two years. In Ghana and Mozambique, most young people find work in the informal sector, while young people in Vietnam tend to have more access to formal jobs.

The general perception in all three countries was that real incomes have gone down over the past two or three years, as prices of food, transport and other basic goods have risen.

Working conditions

Some respondents stated that employers' attitudes toward young employees had hardened, with young people being less respected than adults due to increased competition for jobs. In Ghana and Mozambique, sexual harassment of female workers by employers was reportedly widespread and accepted, given the demand for jobs. Other abuses ranged from being forced to work long hours without additional pay and the stoppage of work without warning. In Vietnam, where formal work is more common, young people were unhappy with working conditions, the threat of losing their jobs or having payments unjustly deducted. Migration (mainly to cities) was universally identified as a phenomenon that has increased in recent years, and was blamed for increased job competition (Vietnam) or identified as a condition of particular deprivation (Ghana and Mozambique).

Gender issues related to employment

In Ghana and Mozambique, several respondents said it was easier for young females to obtain jobs than young males and that employers (usually men) tended to hire women more readily because they are more flexible to work with and they may 'have a

relationship' with them. Many respondents in Ghana and Mozambique reported that women use sexuality to procure income through prostitution, the granting of sexual favours to gain employment or transactional sex.

In all three countries, the types of activities young men and women engage in tend to be gendered, leading to differences in wages. In Vietnam, almost as many young women as young men migrate to urban areas, and they generally share the same challenges. Fewer opportunities and increased competition often caused young people to accept work they disliked or which was harmful, and many complained of being mistreated or disrespected, all of which had been exacerbated by the crisis.

1.2 Poverty, hunger and coping strategies

Changes in real income and expenditure

The reduction in real household incomes in Ghana was linked to adjustments in expenditure, most critically in relation to food consumption and education, with several interviewees skipping meals or sleeping in the afternoon to stave off hunger. Younger respondents said they were no longer given enough money to buy food at school. Similarly, in Mozambique, many explained that they had needed to cut back on basic foodstuffs and services (mainly water, school and transport). In Vietnam, young migrants were most affected by cutting back on food consumption and accommodation.

Coping strategies

In Ghana and Mozambique common coping strategies include: dropping out of school to pursue an income-earning activity; relying on families for economic support; engaging in risky forms of employment, such as sex work; or petty crime, such as internet fraud or selling narcotics. In Vietnam, young workers living together reported: cutting expenses for leisure and entertainment; cooking meals together; buying cheaper and lower-quality food to reduce costs; or sharing accommodation as a way of meeting the increased costs of rent and electricity. Formal loans, either to pay expenses or set up businesses, were not accessible to young people due to lack of collateral or poor credit rating, and a perception that loans were reserved for those in formal employment. However, some youth in Ghana reported that they had accessed informal loans from friends or family to cope with hardship.

1.3 Education

Payment of school-related costs

The affordability of education was reported as having been aggravated by the fall in real incomes in the past year or two, making fees and other school-related costs more expensive. In Ghana and Mozambique, increased drop-out rates were reported at secondary and tertiary levels. The causes cited include poverty, high school fees, school-related costs, adolescent pregnancy and lack of parental support. However, there is a perception among youth in Mozambique that young people demonstrate a lack of

interest in attending school, partly because of cost, but also because they prefer to earn 'easy money' through odd jobs, including prostitution. In Vietnam, the situation is somewhat different. Higher school costs were unrelated to crisis impacts but resulted in some families being unable to pay the schooling costs of all their children, leading to a high level of post-secondary school abandonment by the oldest children to work and contribute to family incomes.

Gender-related education challenges

Throughout the three countries, there is a clear gender difference in access to education. In Ghana, many respondents noted that a higher number of girls dropped out of school due to early pregnancy or increased domestic responsibilities. Some young interviewees in Ghana and Mozambique were single mothers who worked to support their children, with their parents as informal carers. In rural areas of Vietnam the percentage of female drop-outs was higher than males, given a preference for girls to stay at home in preparation for marriage. Many of these obstacles were not seen as specifically related to the crisis, but affected youth human capital development on a permanent basis.

1.4 Health

Youth in all three countries mentioned the high price of health care, although interviewees in Ghana and Mozambique neither prioritised it in their conversations nor felt the need to access health services. In Vietnam, however, young interviewees said they would like to seek health care for work-related conditions, but could not afford them. In most cases, they sought out local healers or relied on self-treatment.

Sexual and reproductive health

Discussions around sexual and reproductive health were very limited. In Ghana and Mozambique, most respondents knew about contraception and the prevention of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI), and could purchase affordable contraception easily. However, with one exception, respondents did not use contraception for family planning. This is important, given the high level of adolescent pregnancies among young single mothers. Some attributed adolescent pregnancy to traditional customs, while others linked it to young women's lack of opportunities. HIV/Aids prevalence was not widely discussed during interviews.

Overall, the research found little evidence from respondents about changes in the provision of related health services as a result of the crisis. Some risk behaviour, such as prostitution, has been linked with the crisis and young women tended to downplay the risks they face from unprotected sex with clients.

Substance abuse and mental health

Consumption of narcotics and alcohol has increased in all four sites in Ghana over the years due to peer influence, idleness and financial problems. Young people saw a clear link between substance abuse and mental or other health problems. Alcoholism and

drug abuse among youth in Mozambique and Vietnam were commonly reported as a problem, although respondents tended to attribute it to idleness rather than the worsened economic situation.

1.5 Emotional and social well-being

Stress and tension

Poor working conditions, job insecurity, unemployment and precarious wages were seen as factors causing young people stress and generating tensions within households and communities, with some of these factors aggravated by the crisis. In addition to the irritation some young people expressed about abuse or disrespect from employers, those without work blamed their frustration on lack of employment.

Domestic violence

Domestic violence was cited as a problem in Ghana and Vietnam, with some respondents feeling it had worsened because of rising stress and economic pressures.

Social capital

There are diverse opinions in each country – and between research sites within countries – about the availability and use of social networks by youth. In Ghana, while some interviewees reported having access to social networks, such as families, friends and youth clubs, others did not or said they had little time for linking with formal social networks. In Mozambique, those who spoke about social networks said they were useful for providing young people with access to economic resources and expanding opportunities, but some sensed that the number of youth groups had fallen in the past two years. Some Vietnamese interviewees considered Youth Unions and the Women's Union useful support providers that could be instrumental in accessing government programmes.

Crime and insecurity

In Ghana and Mozambique, crime and insecurity were seen to have risen in the past two to three years. In Mozambique, young people felt the rise endangered the security of the community. Some reasons why young respondents thought youth tended to become involved in crime were poverty, frustration, and lack of parental support and guidance.

Citizenship

Young people's citizenship or participation in decision-making spaces was not perceived to have changed as a result of the economic crisis. In Ghana, there were mixed opinions in the different sites regarding the spaces for young people to participate in policy making, while Vietnamese respondents commonly said that they participated in local-government, decision-making processes.

2. Policies and programmes for youth

While it was possible to identify several youth-oriented policies and programmes through documentary review and interviews with key informants, few participants in the study had heard of them and none had benefited. In cases where they did know such programmes existed – such as Ghana’s National Youth Employment Programme – respondents mentioned important barriers to entry, such as bureaucratic processes, invisible costs and lack of transparency in selection. In general, young people were disappointed with the support or spaces provided by their governments, including by local politicians whom they perceived as chasing after young people’s votes without following through later. Poor information about existing programmes, or how to access them, was another significant limitation. Local NGOs and some youth groups were seen as more active, and their initiatives were more frequently mentioned, but their smaller scale and scope made them difficult to access. Additionally, young people were not very interested in, or had no time to join, community-based activities, perhaps because of their limited understanding of how they might help them in their everyday lives, whether by emotional support or generating networks that might lead to work.

Although there was no evidence from the data that public services had been reduced as a result of the crisis – with the exception of increased transport costs linked to rising fuel charges – discussions suggested that these services had been unavailable or limited before the crisis, except for support to schooling in Ghana and Mozambique. The latter was perceived as having improved and become more accessible, at least up to secondary level. Tertiary education or technical and vocational training, in particular, were more limited and/or unaffordable.

3. Youth vulnerabilities to climate change

Findings from the sub-component analysing the effects of severe weather on youth had an important common thread with the main component of the study: in rural areas where the impact of these phenomena (flooding, drought, growing sea levels and typhoons) were studied, the most salient impact on young people’s lives was loss of livelihood options and reduced incomes. In this sense, the most common adaptation strategy was for young people to migrate in search of alternatives – exposing many to the same challenges young people mentioned in the main component. Income shocks related to these hazards had triggered lower food consumption and increased school drop-out. In one research site, where an NGO was working to develop adaptation strategies, young people had found alternative activities to generate income, decreasing their dependence on less reliable livelihoods.

4. Lessons learned from youth peer-to-peer research

The peer-to-peer approach utilised, involving young researchers in focused interviews with other youth, was generally positive. Young researchers felt they had been able to encourage respondents to open up in a way that would have been unavailable to adult researchers. They collected important information and undertook analysis that

indicated their growing understanding of the factors affecting young people's lives when in situations of poverty or precariousness and without access to opportunities.

However, this approach meant that there were gaps in information and less depth to the analysis. The young researchers' lack of experience meant an over-reliance on research instruments, which they often used as structured questionnaires rather than semi-structured guides on how to probe for richer information on why some respondents were facing the situation they were, or how they were able to overcome it. Their lack of expertise in the analysis of qualitative data meant that some nuances and insights were lost, or were not transmitted in reporting. Nevertheless, the support and engagement of the adult national focal points meant that much rich information and analysis were generated, and that the young researchers constantly improved their skills.

At the end of the process and after contributing to three national reports, the young researchers are interested in finding new ways to convey their research findings and promote better responses to young people's needs, whether from government or other stakeholders.

5. Policy recommendations

1. More careful targeting and planning of youth-centred policies and programmes are required to ensure roll-out is achieved more effectively, and with better information so that there is clearer understanding about the purpose and selection criteria, reducing young people's distrust.
2. A well-developed strategy that attempts to channel the gains of the recovery toward employment generation, as well as identifying new economic niches, is paramount. For example, youth in Ghana have found a niche in internet fraud – an illegal activity, but one that illustrates their creativity in the use of information technology. Thinking about how to stream these talents to take advantage of the increasing momentum of information technology can open new doors for some young people.
3. Better information about the relevance of non-politicised youth networks and groups needs to be more widely disseminated to enable young people to find motivation and support in overcoming their frustrations.
4. Ministries or agencies in charge of youth issues should more pro-actively seek synergies with sector agencies, such as trade, agriculture, tourism, industry and education – as well as with the private sector – to seek ways in which new spaces and opportunities can be created for youth through more effective and better-targeted training and entry-level, work-based programmes.

5. Better protection of young people's labour conditions by promotion of reporting mechanisms and credible sanctions against employers who commit labour-rights infractions – including in the informal sector – to reduce the incidence of exploitation.

1 Introduction

This report presents a synthesis of methods and findings of a participatory study to ascertain the perspectives of youth about their vulnerabilities and coping mechanisms, with a particular focus on those resulting from impacts of the global food, fuel and financial crisis (3F) and climate change. The research project aimed at addressing a knowledge gap on the social impacts of crises on youth. It explored how young people, particularly the poor, experience and try to overcome challenges in search of a more socially and economically stable present and future.

The research was carried out in three countries: Ghana, Mozambique and Vietnam. The economies of all three countries have experienced impacts from the 3F crisis and have large youth populations. In Ghana and Mozambique, young people account for approximately 33% of the population, while in Vietnam they are 31%,² approximately one third of their total populations. The youth population is thus critical to these countries' progress, and so understanding how their social and economic development can be affected by shocks, and how they can be better equipped to cope with them, is crucial information for policy development.

This study uses the UN definition of youth - individuals aged between 14 and 25 - although the national definition of youth in each of the three countries where the study was conducted varies slightly. Research was designed by a team at the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) with significant input from focal points in each country - local researchers who coordinated research and mentored young researchers in the three countries. The study consisted essentially of 'peer-to-peer' research, that is, it was undertaken by young people who were identified to participate in this project because of their involvement in youth networks and from universities - without having prior experience in research. The methodology was a critical aspect of this project, therefore, in addition to the collection of important data about youth vulnerabilities. A further key feature of this report relates to its methods and the advantages of carrying out research about youth in developing countries, utilising local young researchers.

The main component of the study, for which research was undertaken from July 2010 to February 2011, focused on understanding how the 3F crisis impacted on different areas of young people's lives and development, mediated through macro- and meso-level processes at the national level. More specifically, the study explored vulnerabilities and coping mechanisms in different dimensions of young people's lives: employment, education, health, and emotional and social wellbeing. The study also analysed some of the key policies and programmes that have been developed to improve the situation of young people - including in relation to the impacts of the crisis - examining whether

² 2006 data from the Population Reference Bureau (PRB), youth defined as aged 10 to 24, <http://www.prb.org/Datafinder/Topic/Bar.aspx?sort=v&order=d&variable=23>

young people interviewed perceived any benefits from them. This research consisted of four to five rounds of participatory and qualitative data collection in each country, with young people living in the capital city and surrounding urban and peri-urban areas.

A smaller component of the research, conducted between February and March 2011, explored how climate change impacts on young people's livelihoods, economic opportunities and other aspects of their development, and how they mitigate and adapt to these impacts. This component drew on the vulnerabilities approach used for the main component and the same peer-to-peer methodology was used. In this case, young researchers conducted fieldwork in two rural areas in Ghana and Vietnam that experience severe weather events, triggered by climate change. Its objective was to get a different view of the impact of macro-level shocks on youth, as well as contributing to the limited literature on climate change and youth.

The report is structured as follows: section 2 presents the conceptual framework and review of the literature, while section 3 outlines the methodology utilised. Section 4 provides a brief overview of some key dimensions of the impact of the 3F crisis in each of the three case-study countries, followed by research findings in section 5. Section 6 has a discussion of the lessons learned by the project from undertaking peer-to-peer research with youth, and lastly, the conclusions and recommendations are in section 7.

2 Review of the literature and conceptual framework

The UN definition of youth covers a broad age group, from people who are essentially children, supported by adults and with limited decision-making power, to autonomous adults with independent livelihoods, who have formed their own families. Overall, this period can be conceptualised as a continuum towards increasing economic independence, autonomy and the exercise of adult responsibility, changes which may continue past the age of 24.

There is scarce literature exploring the impact of the current crisis on youth, although more analysis is available on the social and economic effects of prior crises on this population group. Marcus and Gavrilovic (2010) examined the available literature as a starting point for the conceptual framework underpinning the current study. The main findings from the literature review examining the ways in which economic crises impact young people, as well as the coping mechanisms they have adopted in different contexts in response to them is presented in the table below.

2.1 Youth vulnerabilities and adaptation in the context of economic crisis³

From 2007 onwards, the current economic crisis that originated in the United States and Western Europe has spread to much of the developing world. Although the effects of the crisis and processes of recovery have been uneven,⁴ very few countries were left unscathed by the immediate and knock-on effects of declining demand for exports, reduced remittances, reduced opportunities for migrant workers and declining aid budgets. Projections by the IMF (2010) suggest that recovery is taking place at different rates in different regions, making the overall picture highly uncertain, and projections concerning recovery, and thus those regarding the numbers of people and different social groups particularly affected, are 'subject to a greater than usual margin of error' (Harper et al., 2009). Studies that combine insights from analysis of macroeconomic and sectoral trends and qualitative research with affected communities and vulnerable groups suggest that while the overall impact has not been as deep, widespread or long-running as was initially feared (McCulloch and Grover, 2010; Green et al., 2010), certain vulnerable groups (including some groups of young people) have been hard hit and have experienced very limited recovery (Green et al, 2010; Hossain et al, 2010).

The relatively short timeframe since the crisis erupted, and the mitigation and post-recovery policies that were adopted and put in place, mean that many of the social effects have not been fully identified. Additional reasons for this are: because they are not covered by monitoring systems; because they unfold over a period of time; and because there is a time lag between events unfolding, trends being noticed and finally being documented in internationally accessible media. As with other population groups, there is limited available evidence of the impacts of the current crisis on young people. However, there is substantial evidence from past crises of the effects of recession and price rises, as well as of policy responses such as changes in fiscal policy such as public spending cuts, on young people's education, health and employment, and sufficient indicative evidence about the effects on crime and young people's social well-being, to inform an assessment of the likely effects of the present crisis on young people. An analysis of such impacts was used as the basis for the conceptual framework for this research study monitoring effects of the crisis on youth.

Based on this retrospective evidence, there are good reasons to believe that the 1.2 billion young people aged 15-24 in the world today may be particularly vulnerable to deprivation and lost opportunities. Between the ages of 15-21, young people are still maturing biologically and neurological development continues throughout adolescence and into early adulthood (World Bank, 2007). Emotional immaturity can lead young people to turn to substitute sources of support, such as gangs or military organisations, in times of family breakdown triggered by economic crises (IRIN, 2007, in UN DESA, 2007). Young people are already disproportionately likely to be poor (UN DESA, 2007).

³ This section presents a synthesis of the literature review prepared by Marcus and Gavrilovic (2010) as background to this research project

⁴ For example, whereas in 2009-10 the average growth rate for the European Union (EU) was 0.1% and 0.3% for the US and UK, China's average growth rate was 8.7% (Weeks, 2010).

Economic hardship triggered by crises can impact on and exacerbate difficulties already faced in different areas of youth development, including education, potential job opportunities, nutrition and health. Young people's frequent lack of a political voice compounds this vulnerability.

Recognising these challenges, there are fundamental reasons why it is important to address them. The 'demographic dividend' to be gained from harnessing the energies of the youth bulge group can make a major contribution to development, while failing to invest represents a lost opportunity and undermines current well-being and future opportunities (UN DESA, 2007). For example, youth exclusion in Jordan cost an estimated 7.2% of GDP in 2007, and 17.2% of GDP in Egypt (Chabaan, 2007, in Dhillon et al., 2009).

The many strengths and the resilience of young people can – but should not be assumed to be – a force in the opposite direction, helping them cope and work towards realising their aspirations, even in an unpromising context. Young people are often more determined, creative and energetic than their older counterparts, driven by a desire to make something of their lives. They are usually healthier, more mobile and may be less constrained by adult obligations than the next generation (World Bank, 2007). These qualities may all help mediate the effects of crisis on young people, although these positive generalisations should not obscure the fact that many of these coping resources are largely structured by the same inequalities that determine young people's life chances in the first place.

The table below summarises the key findings from the literature review by Marcus and Gavrilovic (2010), which examined evidence of past crises on youth, focusing on five spheres of their lives: access to employment; education; health; social wellbeing and citizenship. These findings were the basis of the conceptual framework for the research presented in this report.

1	Impacts on young people's access to decent employment	
1.1	Risk of unemployment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic and labour shocks have typically resulted in major rises in youth unemployment; • In post-crisis recovery periods, youth unemployment levels have often remained stubbornly high;
1.2	Risk of deteriorating working conditions and increasing informal employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employed young people experience underemployment and declines in income or wages during the economic downturn; • Youth are often forced to shift to irregular employment, predominantly in the informal sector; • Workers are often forced to accept precarious working conditions, as new jobs tend to be temporary and lack formal sector benefits; • Threat of layoffs may lead to increased risk of sexual harassment and abuse in the workplace
1.3	Groups of young people most vulnerable to employment shocks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New labour-market entrants; • Depending on contexts and sectors affected, low-skilled and better-educated youth face different obstacles • Evidence mixed on whether older or younger workers are most severely affected; • Young people in a household can have a protective effect on household incomes; • Strain on households can lead to increase in adolescent labour in some contexts • Women's net work hours increase as they combine domestic and increased paid responsibilities • Inconclusive evidence on young women being most affected by employment shocks - depends on sectors most affected • Young migrants can face challenges to access services and adequate living conditions
1.4	How young people cope with employment shocks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find new and/or additional work through outsourcing, contract work or jobs in the informal sector; • Growth in the informal sector • Engage in high risk activities e.g. sex work and transactional sex (women), petty or more serious criminal activity (men); • Economic support from informal or social networks; migration
2	Impacts on young people's education	
2.1	Effects on secondary school enrolment and attendance, drop out and progression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In poorer countries and more deeply affected middle-income countries, educational enrolment declines during periods of crisis, due to schooling costs and need for young people to contribute economically to their households; often converse in upper middle income countries • Dropout rates increase for similar reasons; • Increased proportion of youth combining school and work

2.2	Effects on gender, rural/urban and socioeconomic inequities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depends on the cultural context although these are more affected in poorer socio-economic contexts
2.3	Changes in household spending on young people's education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private education spending declines; • Decline in HH spending on education (fees and associated costs)
2.4	Impacts of public expenditure on education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed picture - often governments have had to cut public expenditure on education although most attempt to protect it in comparison with other sectors
2.5	Impacts on quality of education and learning outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased costs of materials may affect quality of education; increased teacher absenteeism; • Low teacher morale; • More likely to suffer in longer-term crises; • Quality of education more affected by poor attendance rather than funding cuts
3	Impacts on young people's health	
3.1	General health of young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No systematic relationship between economic downturn and youth mortality although cases exist of increased death rates from suicide, alcohol poisoning, homicide and STDs; • Newly unemployed more likely to develop new health problems; • Declined use of health systems combined with increased self-medication or non treatment; • Public health budget cuts could have bigger effect on youth (reproductive services, emergency and substance abuse treatment)
3.2	Impacts of crisis on diet and nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many households shift to cheaper and less nutritious foods; • Cases of individuals going hungry (girls more likely than boys); • Unhealthy eating can lead to obesity
3.3	Demographic impacts and reproductive health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people tend to delay marriage; • No evidence of contraceptive use patterns changing; • Maternal mortality rates linked to longer-term economic stagnation rather than short-term crises; • Increased rates of women giving birth at home; • Fewer pre-natal checkups; • Higher rates of infant mortality; • Little or no evidence on abortion; • HIV/AIDS budgets often cut impacting on access to treatment

3.4	Mental health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased levels of reported stress and clinically diagnosed mental health problems such as anxiety and depression; • Increased emotional and behavioural problems among young people and adolescents; • More likely to be affected by parental stress; • Young women tend to adjust better to underemployment than young men; • Funding for mental health particularly vulnerable; • Increased levels of suicide (particularly among young men)
3.5	Use of harmful substances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crisis does not usually triggered increased substance abuse, rather it may exacerbate existing tendencies during periods of economic stress
4	Impacts on young people's social wellbeing and citizenship	
4.1	Intra household tensions and domestic violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationships between spouses subject to tensions; • Associations between economic crisis and increased levels of domestic violence; • Very little evidence on effect of crisis on young people's voice and decision-making power within the household
4.2	Social capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declining levels of trust due to higher competition for jobs; some examples of increased civic action to assist most vulnerable; • Fewer opportunities to participate in organised leisure activities; decrease in social contact activities could increase isolation and decrease social capital of young people
4.3	Social exclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of increased social tensions over distribution of resources; • Evidence of minorities being discriminated against in social protection schemes; • Existing structural inequalities can be exacerbated by economic crisis
4.4	Citizenship and political engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possibility of increased alienation from political engagement due to unemployment; • Evidence of young people participating in protests and uprisings
4.5	Crime and security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rising youth crime directly related to economic crisis; • Increased incentives for theft and robbery; • Increased gang membership due to breakdown of traditional support networks; • Evidence of increases in property crimes, homicides, rape and sexual assault, drug-related crime and human-trafficking.

2.2 Conceptual framework: Transmission pathways: macro-level economic shocks and micro-level impacts on youth⁵

Drawing on the evidence discussed above, the conceptual framework presented below in the form of a flow diagram highlights the different transmission pathways through which macro-level shocks, going through intermediate factors, have been found to impact on the micro-level dimensions of young people's lives, rendering them vulnerable or exacerbating existing vulnerabilities. These are areas where young people's agency, and the coping mechanisms available to them (formal or informal), become particularly important: positive coping strategies can serve as a springboard for youth to overcome the challenges they face, while negative coping strategies can lead them further into a situation of risk and vulnerability. The conceptual framework pays particular attention to government policies that have direct or indirect effects on young people's well-being, and how they might be shaped by these macro-level shocks.

⁵ This conceptual framework was developed by Rachel Marcus and Caroline Harper, based on a review of the literature on youth vulnerabilities in relation to economic shocks.

Economic Crisis – Food, Energy and Finance

Dimensions of macro-environment

Remittances Trade/prices (commodities) Aid and FDI flows Indebtedness

Fiscal space Exchange rates

Meso-level crisis effects

Reduced access to credit Declining investment in public services Rising prices of food, energy and other key household goods Poorer working conditions: rising un/under employment and declining wages

Affecting youth through:

Household economies and responses: Management of assets, consumption of goods and services, household labour allocation, household composition, reproduction (including nurture and care), protection (physical, emotional and promotion of well-being)

Access to quality of services Effects on social capital and cohesion

Mediating factors

Generic factors:

- Vulnerability of overall economy and specific sectors
- Household socio-economic status (including household composition, social exclusion)
- Environmental vulnerability

Youth-specific factors:

- Age, position in household, and stage in life course
- Broader social position of youth
- Gender

Political Economy Dynamics

Public policy responses and CSO provision

Generic: Support to specific sectors, employment stimulation, cash transfers, nutritional support to vulnerable groups

Youth-specific: health and nutrition, education, employment, citizenship

Impacts on youth

Education and training Health Emotional and social well-being Security Citizenship

Access to decent work

2.3 Youth, climate change vulnerabilities and their economic impact⁶

In addition to the main component of the research, focused on vulnerabilities in the context of economic crisis and reflecting the growing need for information about how climate change impacts on specific, vulnerable population groups, the study broadened its scope beyond shocks related to economic crisis to look at impacts from severe weather events on youth, particularly how they relate to economic and livelihoods changes, and adaptation strategies. This sub-component of the research was framed within the following premise:

Extreme weather events, which damage infrastructure, lives and livelihoods, resemble economic shock, with knock-on social impacts. Some vulnerabilities to, and impacts of, climate change on young people are similar to those of economic crises, with some impacts being cumulative.

Some of the most significant areas of overlap between economic crises and climate change concern employment impacts, education, health, social well-being and citizenship; examples of these linkages are presented in the table below.

Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people, especially those facing structural disadvantages, suffer disproportionately in labour markets in times of crisis, and these impacts are likely to be exacerbated by climate change • For example, youth from the poorest families cultivating the most marginal areas are most likely to be forced to seek employment in the informal sectors, in which young people are already over-represented, and therefore become vulnerable to low-paid, low-quality jobs, more so if they have migrated in search of employment
<i>Education</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extreme weather events have been shown to reduce participation, especially female, in education since the burden of schooling costs becomes higher and the need for adolescents and young people to contribute economically to households becomes greater.
<i>Health</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate crises can increase malnutrition among adolescents – through food shortages resulting from lower agricultural yields or loss in livelihoods opportunities - with potentially long-term health consequences, such as complications with pregnancy, leading to increased levels of reported stress and increased exposure to water- or vector-borne diseases
<i>Social well-being</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the principal adaptations to climate change is migration. • Unskilled migrants are often the first to lose jobs in times of crisis.

⁶ This section draws on Hazell, J. (2010); 'The Overlap between the Effects of the Economic Crisis and Climate Change Vulnerability,' Background Note.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are also vulnerable to impaired social capital and psycho-social development due to breakdown of family and social support, increasing their vulnerability to future shocks. • They are also more likely to seek alternative support networks, such as gangs or military groups.
<i>Citizenship</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given that today's young people will be most affected by climate change and mitigation and adaptation policies, they should be closely involved in policy development, especially as young people have been identified as being well suited to awareness raising and promoting sustainable practices. • Despite this, young people are generally not seen as an important political constituency. • Youth in some contexts have also more pro-actively sought to generate these spaces for participation.

Given these similarities in the effects of climate change and economic shocks on young people, the climate-change sub-component of the research utilised a similar conceptual framework to the one presented above.

3 Methodology

The methodological approach utilised for undertaking research is as important to this study as the content of the findings. The choice of a peer-to-peer approach was aimed at encouraging more open and honest answers from interviewees, as well as creating a space for them to communicate their concerns and aspirations. Interviewers, in turn, could understand and relate to respondents' answers more easily, and encourage more candid responses. At the same time, in working with local young people with limited prior experience in research, the study had a strong capacity-building element centred on two areas: firstly, developing the research and analysis skills of a team of young researchers in each country; and, secondly, increasing their awareness of the challenges faced by young people who, like them, come from more impoverished backgrounds, in order to promote greater social awareness and encourage them to use the evidence gathered over a year of work to promote policy change through their networks and channels. This methodological approach came with challenges, examined in section 6 on lessons learned, but it generally achieved positive outcomes.

3.1 Participatory research with youth

In order to contextualise the findings we begin with brief review of participatory research, which is understood as 'a family of approaches, behaviours and methods for enabling people to do their own appraisal, analysis and planning, take their own action and do their own monitoring and evaluation' (Chambers, 2002). Participatory Action Research (PAR) shares the belief that the research process can empower populations to see multiple realities, generate new knowledge and solve their own problems. Rights-based approaches to development have highlighted that young people and communities not only stand to gain in terms of empowerment, but that ensuing projects and programmes are likely to enjoy better outcomes as a result (Fraser et al., 2003).

PAR is uniquely suited for use with young people: it can be adapted to the age, experience and social position of youth, and allows them to define and contribute to issues that impact on them. Group work, central to PAR, encourages reflection and debate, enables the creation of consensus and sets the limits of dissent, which is especially important when working with peer-conscious, young people (Chakraborty, 2009).

Despite the 'friendliness' of these techniques, multiple methodological and ethical considerations are important for conducting participatory research with young people in developing countries.⁷ Informed consent and ensuring that young people are not put at risk by participating are clearly vital: some 'youth' are legally children and therefore

⁷ The General Comments to UNCRC Article 12 lists nine standards for the ethical and meaningful participation of children and young people, although they are not specifically relevant to research.

entitled to particular consideration; but even legal adults from marginalised populations – regardless of whether they are marginalised due to economics, ethnicity, gender or age – have few opportunities to say ‘no’ without risk of implications (Ahsan; 2009). Other important ethical considerations for undertaking research with youth include avoiding conflicts their other activities (e.g. school, work); ensuring the research focuses on issues that are appropriate and relevant to young people; and fostering the transparency of the research purpose and process (adapted from Marcus, forthcoming).

It is also important that researchers consider where in the research-cycle space can be made for young people’s participation. The research topic itself, while typically ascertained in advance due to funding cycles, must be open to youth inputs

Training youth to be researchers is a vital part of the peer research process. Young people may need to be taught, for example, how to listen and probe effectively, while avoiding the use of leading questions. Robson et al. (2009) note that adult researchers should be careful not to see their youthful counterparts as a panacea for guaranteeing a better research process with youth; ‘differences in age, class, gender, education and religion’ make for very complex situations that may sometimes be difficult even for other young people to interpret, and they need to be supported in their analysis.

This said, after adequate training, older adolescents and young adults often make strong researchers – particularly when the subjects are other youths. The higher level of trust that may accompany peer research can elicit data that are more valid and reliable. Young people are also more able to use the lingua franca of their generation – and local environment – making it possible to accurately capture what their peers are trying to say. Engaging young people in research invests them in their communities – and themselves – in a new way, encouraging their commitment to democracy and their feelings of personal efficacy (Chakraborty, 2009).

3.2 Methodological approach

The project entailed a youth peer-to-peer research process with a strong emphasis on capacity building and mentoring for young researchers. Emphasis was placed on ensuring a gender balance among both the youth researchers and youth respondents. Youth researchers in the three countries were largely selected from youth groups or youth-focused programmes within NGOs or university settings – identified by country focal points – but they generally had no prior experience of undertaking research. This was to ensure they were similar to their peers, although young researchers in all cases had a minimum of secondary education, so they could more easily take part in a more standardised system of analysis and reporting. Young researchers were paid a stipend during the research, and the project was understood to be providing them with useful, technical, research-capacity development, as well as the opportunity to undertake analysis to be presented to national and international audiences. In most cases, the young researchers carried out data collection in parallel to their private studies.

Young researchers participated voluntarily in the project and agreed with each of the country focal points on feasible schedules for carrying out fieldwork and reporting that would not negatively affect their studies or other activities. The instruments for the first phase of the research were discussed with young researchers, and their comments were addressed to ensure they better reflected ideas and concerns of the local research team. During the second phase, research instruments were entirely re-shaped to focus on the issues that the young researchers identified as most relevant for youth, based on their work during the initial four months of the project. Young researchers built rapport in the communities where they worked, with one researcher (Mozambique) or a pair of researchers (Ghana and Vietnam) returning to the same site repeatedly to develop trust among respondents. The research team had to adapt their schedule to the availability of young respondents, frequently visiting a site multiple times to locate respondents at their own convenience, rather than interrupt their activities. All respondents participated on a voluntary basis.

Research on youth vulnerabilities in the context of economic crisis

This component of the research was undertaken during an eight-month period (August 2010 to March 2011). At the outset, the ODI team, in close collaboration with country focal points in each of the three countries – who were responsible for coordinating and supervising in-country research – conducted a week-long, interactive training workshop. The young researchers subsequently received mentoring support from adult facilitators throughout the year, including monthly debriefings, a mid-term ‘taking stock’ workshop and a final project debriefing. During the process, young researchers were encouraged to provide their inputs regarding research techniques and instruments, and during the last phase of the research, the instruments were reshaped to collect information that young researchers in each country identified as most important after five months of research, ensuring they actively contributed to the research process as a whole.

Drawing on the conceptual framework, a set of indicators (annex 1) was developed and became the basis of the qualitative-research instruments utilised for data collection. These included questionnaires for in-depth, semi-structured interviews, life history interviews, focus group discussions and key informant interviews (annex 2). These were developed to explore different aspects of youth vulnerabilities and coping mechanisms in relation to shocks across five thematic areas: employment and economic activities; poverty, hunger and coping strategies; education; health; and emotional and social well-being. Additionally, researchers undertook a mapping and analysis of some of the youth-focused policies in place in each country, including those promoted in the context of the crisis.

Research was carried out in four localities around the three capitals in each country. These were selected as poor or marginalised, according to national data, as well as presenting diverse livelihoods and characteristics that could provide a mixed sample of youth. All sites were urban, although some sites in Ghana and Mozambique contained

households reliant on farming or fishing as their main source of livelihood (semi-urban). The sites chosen were as follows:⁸

Ghana

Osu	Urban. Commercial area located in the centre of Accra.
Maamobi	Urban. Located in East Ayawaso Sub-Metropolitan Area, one of Accra's most densely populated communities.
Pokuase	Semi-urban. Located in the West Municipal Assembly, populated mainly by the Ga ethnic community. Farming as main livelihood.
Ckokor	Semi-urban. Coastal area close to Accra, where fishing and fish-trading are the main occupations.

Mozambique

Mafalala	Urban. One of Maputo's oldest neighbourhoods, built through immigration during the colonial period. Close to city centre.
Polana Caniço 'B'	Urban. Comprises populations from Maputo, the south of Mozambique and Zambezia. It has experienced many different stages, influenced by adverse events, such as civil wars and natural disasters.
George Dimitrov	Urban/semi-urban (transitional). Further from the city centre. Active market through which most inter-provincial buses and goods transit.
Hulene	Urban. Further from the city centre. The rubbish dump plays a crucial role in employment generation.

Vietnam

Ba Dinh	Urban. Central Hanoi. Main livelihoods include trade, such as selling fruit and/or clothes, and services such as porters and drivers.
Luong Son	Semi-urban. 50 km north of Hanoi. Mainly subsistence agriculture or work in nearby industrial park. One of the poorest areas around Hanoi. Many ethnic minorities, including Muong, Hmong and Dao.
Me Linh	Urban/semi-urban (transitional). 30 km from central Hanoi. Previously rural, now has industrial parks and factories.
Thuong Tin	Semi-urban. 24 km south of Hanoi, it has agricultural livelihoods, as well as tourism and services.

Research teams visited each of the four sites three times over eight months to 'monitor' changes in key dimensions of well-being throughout the year, as well as to establish rapport with respondents. Half of the in-depth interviews were conducted with the same individuals, using different components of the in-depth interview questionnaire.

⁸ Characteristics of each of the sites can be found in the individual country reports

Frequent visits and the time spent in each locality helped by the research teams to develop trust, which was important for promoting participation by young respondents.

In addition to qualitative data collection, the research team took photographs to illustrate different aspects of the situation of young people; they worked on a media scrapbook throughout the year that tracked relevant information in the media (newspapers, radio and television) on youth policy and programming, as well as on issues related to the crisis; and developed detailed fieldwork diaries to monitor the progress and main findings of their research.

Research on youth vulnerabilities, adaptation and mitigation to climate-change impacts

The sub-component, looking at the impact of climate change, adaptation and mitigation strategies on youth, consisted of one round of data collection between February and March 2011 and drew on a similar methodology to the main component. It was carried out in Ghana and Vietnam by two young researchers in each country with a similar profile to researchers in the main component, but with some prior experience of climate-change studies. For the smaller component, research was conducted in two rural localities. The overarching questions of the research aimed to explore the level of youth awareness of climate change – both general awareness and in terms of their experience of weather events – and what influence, if any, this had on their livelihood decisions. The conceptual framework and instrument from the main component were adapted to explore social and economic effects on young people of severe weather events and related adaptation strategies; that is, the shock studied in this case was climate change, although several transmission pathways related to economic impacts are comparable.

Project communications and dissemination

The project had internal and an external communications components. Internal communications were based on a Facebook page, aimed at providing a forum in which young researchers from the three countries could share experiences by internet about the research process and findings, and comment on findings in other countries. Researchers additionally uploaded photographs taken during research to share images that could better convey the situation of young people in their countries. The Facebook page was a useful tool once launched, although this took place in the second half of the study. Participants explained that it would have been useful to have had it in place from the outset.

Internal research communication and dissemination was based on the national reports developed in each of the three countries in the case of the component on youth vulnerabilities to the 3F crisis. These were compiled by national focal points, drawing directly on research findings and analysis by young researchers. In the case of the climate-change component, findings were presented in the form of poster presentation.

These outputs captured key findings, and are being used with peers and policy stakeholders. In each country, a national event to disseminate findings is planned, working closely with key youth-focused agencies – such as the National Youth Council in Ghana and the Youth Observatory in Mozambique – to ensure a good platform from which young researchers can advocate for improvements in youth policies based on their findings.

4 Overview of the impact of the crisis on the three case-study countries

Below is a brief overview with the main characteristics of the impact of the 3F crisis on the case-study countries, as a backdrop to findings presented in section five.

4.1 Ghana

In 2009, the Ghanaian Ministry of Finance disclosed that inflationary pressures had built up and accumulated throughout 2008 and 2009. Inflation rose from 18.1% in December 2008 to 19.9% in January 2009 and to 20.5% in March 2009 – the highest level since 2005 – up from 10.5% in mid-2007 when the financial crisis started (Government of Ghana, 2008). Since then, the government has reiterated its objective of reducing inflation to single-digit figures, and important progress has been achieved, with inflation declining to a record low of 11.6% in April 2010 (*Ghana Daily Graphic*, 2010), as the impacts of the global crisis eased. However, the prices of many basic goods and services have not decreased at the same pace. During the same period, the growth rate of the Ghanaian economy slowed from 6.4% in 2007 to 4.7% in 2009.⁹

Government spending increased to mitigate some of the impacts of the crisis, pushing the budget to over 14% of GDP while public debt rose sharply in 2008 (Government of Ghana, 2008). As a result, the policy objectives of the 2009 budget were to reduce the budget deficit to sustainable levels, to improve the exchange-rate regime and to work towards the attainment of single-digit inflation. The main strategies used included enforcement of fiscal discipline by a substantial reduction in unproductive recurrent expenditures, improvements in tax collection and better planned fiscal spending.

The effect of global price rises on the local price of fuel (petroleum-product prices increased by 30%) and therefore on transport was one of the critical ways in which the crisis impacted on the population. This indirectly affected the price of goods and services in the country, especially in urban areas. Transportation fares failed to come down to their previous levels when fuel prices dropped. Additionally, because Ghana is highly dependent on wheat and rice imports, for which world market prices rose sharply during the 2007–08 food crisis, high food prices have significantly impacted on Ghanaians. The World Food Programme (WFP) (2009) estimated that Ghanaian households spend about 52% of their incomes on food, with the urban poor spending as

⁹ <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG>

much as 67%: food-price rises crowd out other expenses, or force a switch to other products. The WFP (2009) study showed that some households in the cities and the south of the country have temporarily switched from grain to locally produced tubers and root crops. However, some households, especially in the north, consume proportionately more grains than root products, and find it difficult to adjust their consumption pattern by switching to other staples (Cudjoe et al, 2010). Studies show that, because of food price increases, some households that are not poor according to their current income may fall into poverty – and hence the total number of poor Ghanaians may increase – with the poorest of the poor hit most because they spend such a sizeable proportion of their incomes on food. However, accurate figures have not been published about changes in the poverty level over the past two to three years.

In an attempt to soften the impact of the global food and fuel crisis on the purchasing power of the average Ghanaian, the Government of Ghana introduced mitigation measures, such as spending some GH¢150 million to support the removal of import duties on rice, wheat, yellow maize and crude vegetables for soap and food manufacture (Government of Ghana, 2008). There have also been reports of government efforts to strengthen social protection programmes in order to maintain and improve their coverage, and better target poverty-reduction expenditures (Ackah et al, 2009) although no analysis has yet been made of the effectiveness of these mitigating measures.

4.2 Mozambique

In Mozambique, the macro-economic context has remained relatively solid throughout the global crisis: real GDP growth showed only a small decrease, from 6.5% in 2008 to 6.2% in 2009. Although still robust, these rates are below the average of 7.6% attained in the previous five years. The heaviest impacts of the crisis have been felt through soaring fuel and grain prices, triggered by the global crisis but aggravated by internal factors, including fires that have destroyed crops, and natural disasters.

Despite tardy recognition of the crisis in Mozambique, the government announced in 2009 that its negative impacts were already being felt in some sectors of the economy, particularly the external sector, where falling exports and prices reflected falling demand. Tourism, transport, communications and mining all recorded significant slowdowns in growth, and further de-acceleration was expected in real GDP growth.

Although the majority of poor in Mozambique live in rural areas, urban food insecurity has been identified as a significant and visible problem stemming from the crisis. According to the Plan for the Reduction of Absolute Poverty II (PARPA II), 51.5% of the urban population is poor, with the level in Maputo City reaching 53.6%. Furthermore, data from the IAF (2003) highlights that the level of poverty reduction has been slower in cities.

In this sense, the impact of the crisis at the level of the family and the individual became most visible in urban areas. Increased prices for fuel and food in the past two years, combined with devaluation of the local currency, the *metical*, have worsened living standards for most citizens. In February 2008, protests erupted in the country's main cities for the first time. On 5 February 2008, and again on 1-2 September 2010, young people in several Maputo City neighbourhoods staged violent protests against increases in the prices of transport and foodstuffs, such as bread.

According to the National Statistics Institute (*Instituto Nacional de Estatística*, INE), the market price index in recent years has grown at an average of 9.4%, while in 2007 cumulative inflation in Maputo City was 10.3%. In May and June 2010 the price of oil recorded two consecutive rises amounting to 17.27%. This has had significant impacts on the population: according to a WFP (2009) study, households in some clusters of urban areas (Maputo and Matola) spent their entire income on food costs, energy and transportation (70% + 20% + 10%). The same study noted that the continuing rise in prices of those products, at constant levels of income, will challenge survival strategies and have a short-term risk of creating food insecurity in Mozambican cities.

Young people form a substantial proportion of the urban population. In Mozambique, about 25% of the population in urban areas is aged 15-24. Given their vulnerability, particularly to economic shocks, they are at severe risk of being one of the groups most negatively affected by the global crisis.

Despite increasing recognition of the impacts of the crisis, preventive and mitigation measures by government are still insignificant, focusing primarily on a medium-term strategy of strengthening food production. However, since 2009 a Monitoring Group for the International Situation (GASI) was formed in the Council of Ministers to report on the impacts on the national economy of the international economic situation.

4.3 Vietnam¹⁰

The global economic crisis has had important negative impacts on enterprises, workers and families in Vietnam, and has contributed to the country's worsening economic situation. In particular, the global fuel and food price crisis has negatively impacted on inflation: inflation in 2008 was 23% (GSO, 2009) – the highest level in the last 17 years – eroding household disposable income, and the pace of GDP growth slowed to 6.2% in 2008 after three years of real GDP growth above 8% percent (GSO, 2009). This slower performance resulted from both fiscal tightening and the slowdown of the global economy.

¹⁰ This analysis of the effects of the economic crisis on the Vietnamese economy draws largely from Ngoc, P.Q. (2009) 'Impact of the Global Financial and Economic Crisis on Viet Nam, A Rapid Assessment'. Policies Research Center, Viet Nam. Prepared for the ILO.

Growth in government spending was around 8% in 2008, approximately one percentage point below the growth rate in 2007 (EIU, 2008). This decline resulted from significant fiscal tightening to rein in inflation and higher oil prices for most of 2008. However, part of these savings were offset by raising salaries for state employees, reforms of state-owned enterprises and banking sectors, and heavy spending on health and education. As a result, the overall fiscal deficit for 2008 was close to 5% of GDP, a fall from 5.6% in 2007.

High inflation resulted from a combination of high fuel and food prices, and strong domestic demand for both intermediate and final goods. Given the high level of oil exports, fuel prices in Vietnam closely reflect changes in international prices. Moreover, the government removed retail fuel subsidies in July, which further impacted on inflation. Further, the global, food-price boom contributed to high inflation in Vietnam. According to Nghieu (2009), food-price inflation, triggered by rising prices for rice, peaked in June 2008 at around 32%, compared to January 2008, and year-on-year food-price inflation peaked at 74.3%. A stabilisation package introduced in March 2008 helped to control rising inflation.

The global financial crisis has had a negative impact on many manufacturing sectors, resulting in job losses for many workers and declining real wages. According to the Ministry of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) (Thanh and Quynh, 2009), as of 23 January 2009 67,000 labourers in enterprises had lost their jobs due to the economic downturn. Rising unemployment has been widespread, but had a particular impact in Vietnam's three main economic zones: Da Nang, Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. In Hanoi, MOLISA reported that 9,600 workers had lost their jobs and more than 1,000 labourers had been idle for over three months (Khanh, 2009).

With 23% inflation in 2008, real wage growth was negative, reflecting the fact that nominal wage growth did not grow in line with double-digit inflation. As real wages eroded due to inflation, many workers in Hanoi's industrial parks had to stop working temporarily, or were given work at only 70% of their normal pay (CIEM, 2009).

As part of the government's response, the Prime Minister emphasised the need to assist dismissed workers, considering it an urgent task. This was followed by Decision No. 30/2009, to regulate policies to assist retrenched workers during the economic downturn. Under these policies, all enterprises in difficulties could take interest-free loans for a maximum of 12 months from the Vietnam Development Bank to pay salaries, social insurance and unemployment benefits to workers. Additional resources were set aside to provide preferential interest rates for job creation.

After tight monetary policy was implemented in 2008 to curb inflation, stabilise the economy and ensure social security and sustainable growth, the government faced a further slowdown in growth. This required a change in policy to increase liquidity in the banking sector, and fiscal loosening to counter the negative impact of the slowing

external economy. This, in turn, led to a stimulus package focused mainly on supporting investment by assisting small- and medium-sized enterprises to access capital for the next 12 months. Additionally, the minimum wage – which includes youth – will be raised each January until 2012 in order to equalise the minimum wages in local and foreign-invested enterprises.

5 Research findings

The following section presents the main findings from the research conducted in the three case-study countries. It starts by exploring key dimensions of youth vulnerabilities and coping mechanisms in relation to the economic crisis in the five thematic areas outlined in the conceptual framework and indicators (employment and economic activities; poverty, hunger and coping strategies; education; health; and emotional and social well-being). It then examines the main policies and programmes in place in each country to respond to the crisis, and analyses the extent to which they impact on youth. The analysis then shifts to findings from the sub-component on climate change, followed by a brief analysis of policies and programmes in this area, and the extent to which they have incorporated youth in relation to impacts and young people's capacity to contribute to change.

5.1 Youth vulnerabilities in relation to the economic crisis

Research findings in Ghana and Mozambique had many similarities across the thematic areas. This is partly related to a more comparable context and customs, as well as similar respondent populations: young people living in impoverished urban and peri-urban neighbourhoods. In Hanoi, it was harder to identify neighbourhoods with a significant number of vulnerable young people, compared to the two African countries; instead respondents were found in 'poverty pockets' where they had specific challenges in common, such as having migrated from rural areas, which means that their responses were focused on more specific constraints.

An important overall finding in the three countries was that, although some specific challenges have emerged in the past two to three years in relation to the 3F crisis, many problems identified by youth are seen as challenges that have affected young people for a long time. Therefore, although the transmission pathways identified in the conceptual framework are relevant in areas such as employment, expenditure, schooling and security, they aggravated pre-existing challenges. The crisis seemed to have impacted less in other areas, such as health and emotional and social well-being, where challenges existed before the crisis and remain. Importantly, many of the respondents were not aware of the 'economic crisis' as such, but could still identify the ways in which it was reflected in their everyday lives.

5.1.1 Employment and economic activities

Some statistical information available for the three countries indicates a growth in unemployment from 2008 to 2010, but complete data is not available for this period, making it difficult to analyse trends in youth unemployment. In Ghana, official unemployment statistics are published every three years, making it difficult to measure the effects of the crisis on unemployment and wages, however, some studies have indicated it is a major problem: according to research by WFP (2010) unskilled wage rates in 2010 declined by 21% compared to March 2009, and estimated unemployment and under-employment were higher than in 2009. In particular, the study points out that deterioration in the urban unskilled labour market is affecting youth who rely on these activities for their incomes.

In Mozambique, annual data from Ministry of Labour on Labour Market Statistics show the total number of registered unemployed in 2008 growing substantially compared to 2005. Similarly, recent data published by the National Institute of Education and Vocational Training (INEFP, 2009) indicate that unemployment rates have further increased annually as a result of the 300,000 school leavers seeking employment. According to INEFP, many youth who are absorbed by the employment market work under difficult conditions. Most do not have formal work contracts and end up in the informal sector.

The situation in Vietnam is similar. Even prior to the crisis, half of the unemployed population (52.5%) in 2007 were young people aged 15-24. Female youth face higher unemployment rates (6.3%) than male youth (5.8%). Unemployment is higher in urban areas. Impact assessment surveys looking at the effects of the crisis indicate that it has taken a toll: enterprise surveys report that many firms have scaled back production, resulting in shorter working hours and the loss of jobs. However, other enterprises concurrently expanded their workforce, and total unemployment levels are therefore estimated not to have increased substantially. However, results from surveys in four rural provinces indicate that the crisis has led to an increase in the number of returning migrants retrenched from jobs in urban industrial zones (Institute of Labour Science and Social Affairs, 2010).

In line with this contextual information on unemployment and working conditions, this sub-section focuses on research findings on employment and economic activities as reported by respondents.

Unemployment and under-employment

Youth in all three countries identified unemployment and under-employment – that is, the lack of formal, long-term and secure employment – among their main concerns. Respondents linked the problem to various factors, including: higher labour supply than demand; incomplete or poor-quality education; inadequate qualifications; and

insufficient work experience. Another key obstacle was the need for ‘connections’ that might help young people to access a job:

‘If you don’t know anybody in the place, it is difficult to get a job. If you do nursing or something like that, you need to know someone in the ministries. Maybe you have good grades but they won’t take you. But someone who had worse grades will be taken just because he or she knows somebody at the place.’ Young female, FGD, Maamobi, Ghana.

‘It may be due to the economic crisis that there is less of a recruitment need in some companies and that their requirements are higher. There are limited job opportunities for those like me who have just left school.’ Young male, in-depth interview, Me Linh, Vietnam.

The scarcity of jobs in Vietnam, linked to slower production at industrial plants, has meant that many recent graduates ended up in unskilled jobs at industrial parks,¹¹ as reported by interviewees.

In addition to these trends, several young respondents in Ghana and Mozambique reported that they sometimes had to give bribes to secure jobs. This was difficult since they do not have resources, which is a further obstacle to them exiting the poverty cycle. Some Ghanaian youth blamed the government and local political leaders for not doing enough to promote employment opportunities for youth.

In the two African countries, most respondents saw youth unemployment and under-employment as persistent problems over the years, rather than the results of the economic crisis, whereas some respondents in Vietnam described the labour market as particularly slow in the past two years. This may reflect the structure of their economies. Vietnam produces manufactured exports for hard-hit Western countries, and its young people are disproportionately concentrated in the manufacturing sector. In Ghana and Mozambique, the effects of the crisis on employment are more indirect. Respondents in Ghana and Mozambique saw a direct link between economic shocks and the availability of education. Young men and women reported higher levels of school abandonment due to an inability to pay school-related costs; and because they perceive education as critical to obtaining a good job, they fear that this will damage their future work prospects

Given the lack of opportunities in the formal sector, most young people interviewed in Ghana and Mozambique worked in the informal sector, generally from the age of 16. This is in line with the large informal sector in the two countries as a whole. Their activities include petty trading, food vending (mainly women), selling iced water, selling phone recharge cards, opening game centres, etc. In Vietnam, young people have more

¹¹ An industrial park is an area zoned and planned for the purpose of industrial development. In Vietnam, they generally focus on producing for export markets.

access to formal jobs, often in markets and industrial parks, although those interviewed for the study commented on the poor working conditions and wages of such activities.

Perceptions of informal and formal employment varied according to the characteristics of the locality visited. In Mozambique, youth in two research sites, Mafalala and Polana Caniço, aspire to formal jobs that offer income security. In two other research neighbourhoods – Hulene and George Dimitrov – young people said they preferred to work in the informal sector because they received money up-front and could better manage their expenses.

In all countries, social networks are critical to obtaining employment. In Ghana and Mozambique, youth report that it is easier to find employment if you know ‘somebody’. In these cases, ‘networks of acquaintances’ play key roles. In Vietnam, family seemed to be a more important source of employment: many mention working for parents, siblings or relatives.

However, the young researchers noted – and it was later confirmed by key informants – that a large number of youth is ‘doing nothing’: neither working nor studying, and with no apparent interest in productive activity. This phenomenon was observed by respondents to have grown in past two to three years although no data was found in Ghana or Mozambique that looks at trends in this phenomenon.

‘...There are many youth now who are CD,¹⁴ who do nothing, do not work or go to school and sit around the whole day...’ Young woman with child, in-depth interview, Hulene, Mozambique.)

Wages

The general perception in all three countries was that real wages had gone down, because of lower sales volumes in petty trading, lower demand for services, and lower real salaries for those in regular jobs. More importantly, people’s incomes have fallen as prices of food, transport, and other basic goods and services have risen. This was seen as having worsened in the past two to three years.

In Vietnam, companies reduced production, leading to lower wages and fewer jobs. A young unskilled worker at Thang Long industrial park in Me Linh explained: *‘Our company has about 700 people. One hundred people had to leave work. Some people are on a two-to-three months’ probation period; those people, along with the ones who have seasonal or short-term contracts, were fired first.’*

¹⁴ CD – *Come e dorme* (eat and sleep), a derisory term for the unemployed or those with no economic activity.

Interviewees, in general, did not note wage differences between young men and young women, although employment in different activities implies differences in pay despite the crisis.

Working conditions

As a result of increased competition for jobs, it has become easier for employers to dismiss employees. Some respondents said that employers' attitudes toward young employees had deteriorated, with young people being less respected than adults.

Reports of working conditions varied between countries, depending on the type of work involved. Some young people worked in hazardous settings, such as rubbish dumps, without protective equipment, but other respondents, including the self-employed, said their working conditions were adequate.

One of the most commonly reported difficulties for female workers in Ghana and Mozambique was sexual harassment by employers. Given limited work opportunities, some female respondents said that there was little they could do about it if they wanted to keep the job.

'...Yes, because some of the bosses would like to sleep with you before they hire you. If, for instance, you cannot go to work, they will request sex before they accept your request to be absent. That is what they have been doing.' Young female, in-depth interview, Maamobi, Ghana.

As mentioned above, most youth work in the informal sector with no job security or protection of rights. Given the lack of monitoring, interviewees reported abuses, including being forced to work long hours without additional pay to cessation of work without prior warning. Although this is common amongst adults in the informal sector, young men and women said that they felt more vulnerable to such abuses.

'Most youth work without a contract ... because most of their activities only last for 90 days maximum.... In jobs, for example, quite often they are bullied and forced to work hours with no overtime pay, and their contracts can be terminated at any time without prior warning.' Young man, in-depth interview, Hulene, Mozambique.

Although work in the formal sector is more common in Vietnam, young people there are unhappy with working conditions, the constant threat of losing their jobs or having payments deducted. A young female worker from a garment factory in Me Linh, Vietnam explained: *'If you are a minute late for work, your payment will be cut by one hour....'*

Migration (mainly to cities) was identified by young respondents in all three countries as a phenomenon that has increased in recent years. In Vietnam, unemployment was also seen as a consequence of migration, with young migrants finding it difficult to obtain

jobs. In Ghana and Mozambique, working conditions for young migrants were reportedly poor; in Maamobi, Ghanaian respondents mentioned that migrants, mostly young people, slept on the streets and had no access to healthcare or other basic services.

In Mozambique, migration between neighbourhoods was reportedly rising as a result of increased rents. This was seen to be moving many young people into poorer and more marginalised areas with fewer resources, services or access to transport: *'When someone can no longer afford to pay rent, s/he moves and searches for a cheaper house,'* said a young woman from Polana Caniço.

Gender issues in employment

Several employment-related gender issues were identified in discussions with young people in the three countries. In Ghana and Mozambique, respondents mentioned that it was easier for young females to obtain jobs than young males: this response, however, was commonly enunciated by young men who are perhaps more threatened by women's more active participation in the labour market. Respondents gave several reasons for this alleged state of affairs. Firstly, in Ghana more women were reportedly involved in petty trading – which many see as a 'woman's job' – and men are frequently reluctant to undertake it, even if unemployed. Secondly, in both African countries interviewees indicated that employers (usually men) tend to hire young women more readily because they are more flexible and may 'get into a relationship' with them. Several respondents believed the practice has increased, but others believe it is unchanged.

'The possibility of a lady getting a job is very high. You and I know the kind of society we are in. Immediately a lady comes to look for a job and she is beautiful, the guys are left out.' Young male (24 yrs), in-depth, Osu, Ghana.

Many respondents in Ghana reported that women use sex to procure income, either through sex work, sexual favours in exchange for employment or relationships with men who will take care of them. In Ghana and Mozambique, it was reported that young women engage in prostitution to earn a living, often with the consent of their families, because there were few other income-generating options.

'Many girls are now engaged in prostitution, with the full knowledge of their parents, who remain silent because the money they bring home helps the household....' Mixed focus group, Hulene, Mozambique.

In all three countries, the activities young men and women engage in tend to be gendered, leading to a difference in wages. In Mozambique, opportunities for young men include construction, small businesses, carpentry, mechanics, blacksmithing, fare collection in public transport, and the collection and sale for recycling of iron and other scrap metals. For women, the most common activities mentioned were selling in market

stalls or on streets, tailoring, hairdressing and domestic work. A male respondent in Mozambique said that women could more easily find work because the activities they undertook were simpler and more common – for example, domestic work – while men had to look for ‘more demanding’ jobs.

In Vietnam, nearly as many young women migrate to urban areas as young men, and generally share the same challenges.¹² However, respondents noted differences in regard to income. Since women do physically less demanding jobs (e.g. in garment factories), they earn less. When asked about income differences between men and women, a 19-year-old male migrant in Ba Dinh said: *‘Yes, very different. The women are weaker and slower than men. I think people still prefer male labourers to female, especially with cargo carriers. That’s why a man’s income is often higher than a woman.’*

In line with the conceptual framework, research findings indicated that increased competition for jobs was forcing young people into work they disliked or which was harmful, or where they were mistreated or disrespected. Similarly, the crisis had exacerbated the long-term lack of job opportunities, particularly affecting young people in Ghana and Mozambique.

5.1.2 Poverty, hunger and coping strategies

The reduction in real incomes, resulting from increases in the prices of basic foods and services, was consistently identified by young respondents as a problem in all three countries. Conditions were perceived as having worsened in the previous two years, forcing young people to make adjustments in expenditure and find alternative coping strategies in the context of limited job opportunities.

Changes in real income and expenditure

To contextualise the analysis of impacts on real incomes and expenditure by young respondents in the three countries, it is useful to look at some of the data and analysis of poverty available for the period. In Ghana, research by the International Food Poverty Institute (IFPRI) at the end of 2008 indicated that urban consumers were more negatively impacted than rural consumers in terms of declines in consumption of staple foods. This can be explained by the fact that the share of purchased food in total staples consumed by urban households is much higher than for rural households (Cudjoe, et al., 2008). According to household income surveys in Mozambique in 2009, most households in Maputo City perceived their economic condition in the last year to be worse or much worse (over 53% of households said it has worse, or much worse). Data from these surveys suggest that a large number of households from the poorest income quintile, compared to other quintiles, had a perception that their economic situation had worsened. Reports in Vietnam indicate that, in addition to the purchasing power of real wages eroding due to inflation, many workers in Hanoi’s industrial parks have had

¹² Locke, Nguyen and Nguyen (2009). Paper for presentation at IUSSP, Marrakech.

to stop working temporarily or been given periods of work at 70% of their regular pay (CIEM, 2009), imposing major constraints on their consumption capacity.

In line with the above, young interviewees in Ghana generally linked reduction in real household income to adjustments in expenditure, most critically in relation to food consumption and to education. As explored later in the report, approximately one in every four young people interviewed mentioned that they, or young people they knew, had stopped going to school because it had become difficult to pay school-related costs.

Reduced capacity to purchase food was reported as a significant problem by youth in all sites in Ghana. Several respondents spoke about having to skip meals, while two said they slept from afternoon to evening because they could not afford lunch, and were too hungry to remain awake. Younger respondents said they were no longer given money to buy food at school. In addition to forcing youth into adverse coping strategies, others said that the situation had negative effects on family relations.

In Mozambique, respondents in all four neighbourhoods reported difficulties in meeting food requirements, and of being compelled to make adjustments to individual and household budgets because of the rising prices of food, transport and basic services, such as water and electricity. Many explained that they had had to cut back on basic foods and services (mainly water, school and transport).

'Now I have to walk to work and I have reduced the quantities of tomato, maize flour and oil because my salary is no longer enough....' Young female domestic worker with one child, in-depth interview, Hulene, Mozambique.

In Vietnam, adjustments to expenditure impacted mainly on food consumption and accommodation. Among the young people interviewed, migrants were the most affected. A poor male migrant in Me Linh explained: *At the moment our salaries stay stable but market prices are dramatically increasing. All kinds of services and items, such as house rent, electricity, water and food, have increased. This makes us poorer and directly affects our daily meals.'*

Coping strategies

In face of falling incomes, young people resort to different coping strategies. Dropping out of school to find an income-earning activity was reportedly common in Ghana and Mozambique. Many respondents said that some relied on families and relatives for economic support.

'In recent years we had no important opportunity ... now for us to survive my sister aged 16 does hairdressing, my brother aged 12 does odd jobs, but that is only enough for bread and a bit more ... we depend on family help and support.' Young orphan, elder sister caring for two brothers, life history, Polana Caniço, Mozambique.

Several young interviewees reported engaging in harmful forms of work, such as 12-hour shifts in Vietnam and working in rubbish dumps without protection in Mozambique, and others in Ghana had become involved in robbery and other illicit activities, such as internet fraud.

In Maamobi, Ghana, a majority of respondents spoke about male youth practicing internet fraud. Because Maamobi is an urban district with internet cafes, this has attracted many, who speak candidly about it. Some young men say it is the only available income-earning activity and that they do it to sustain their households, while others consider it an easy way to make money. Internet fraud was not identified in other research sites in Ghana, particularly in Pokuase and Chorkor, where there is no internet access.

Other illicit activities in which young people participate include the sale of narcotics (male) and prostitution (mainly females). Sex work was reportedly common in Ghana and Mozambique, although it was not mentioned at all by respondents in Vietnam. In-depth and focus group discussions with young women in Ghana revealed that it was not a preferred activity, but that they saw no other way to make money, particularly in the case of single, adolescent or young mothers who are out of school and work, and need to raise their children.

The coping mechanisms reported by interviewees in the research sites in Vietnam, mostly by unskilled young migrants in the industrial park in Me Linh or the markets of Ba Dinh, were quite different from those reported in the two African studies. Respondents spoke of cooking together as a way of reducing the cost of meals. A male labourer at Dong Xuan market said: *'In the past, cooking a meal for three of us cost each of us VND17,000 VND [US\$0.80], so in total it was about VND50,000 [US\$2.40]. Nowadays rice, oil, vegetables, everything is more expensive; so, cooking a meal for three people needs around VND70,000 to VND100,000 (US\$3.35–4.80).'* Other interviewees reported that they no longer ate out because cooking at home saved money. Another way young people reported adapting to higher food prices was by buying cheaper and lower-quality food:

'We don't have money to buy food. We just have vegetables.' Disabled male (23 yrs), Luong Son, Vietnam.

These changes in food-consumption patterns, reported in all three countries, are important as young people – particularly those aged 14-18 – have high nutritional needs as part of their development, while under-nutrition in pregnant and lactating young mothers can affect their own and their child's health.

Vietnamese interviewees reported that sharing accommodation with other people was a way of coping with the rising prices of rent and electricity. For young people working in industrial parks or markets, accommodation is often inadequate and in a polluted

environment. A young, unskilled migrant labourer in Dong Xuan market said: *'I share with others and then I pay much less. However, it's too cramped. You know, how small a room for 4-5 people living together is?'*

Vietnamese respondents said that they had also cut expenses for leisure, such as buying clothes, going out with friends and meals. This decline in socialising means they have fewer opportunities to develop relationships with peers.

Formal loans, either to meet expenses or to set up small businesses, were not available to young people in the research sites. Most young people had never even considered applying for a loan and those who had noted it was very difficult because young people, particularly those living in poverty, do not have collateral and cannot demonstrate their creditworthiness. Furthermore, they believed that lending institutions only gave loans to those who were 'meaningfully employed', excluding the majority of young people in the informal sector. None of the interviewees in the three countries said they had access to government credit schemes targeted at youth; in Mozambique, for example, there is a perception that access to credit is politicised and does not benefit those most in need. A young man from George Dimitrov said: *'Only card-holder youth are able to get access to credit,'* referring to the political influence and privilege that membership of the ruling party confers. However, respondents in Ghana acknowledged that some young people had accessed informal loans from friends or family to cope with hardship.

5.1.3 Education

To contextualise the analysis of research data in this section, it is useful to first look at some trends in the education sector in the three countries. Vietnam's education budget continued to increase (Bender and Rompel, 2009) and there was an overall positive trend on enrolment and attendance rates from 2008 to 2009/2010. Although effects on schooling of particularly poor or marginalised groups have not been studied through disaggregated statistics, national trends would not indicate a negative impact of the crisis.

On the other hand, some challenges have emerged in the two African countries. The effects of the crisis on the national budget started to be felt in 2010, particularly after the September riots led the government to implement generalised food subsidies, financing them with resources from other sectors, including education.¹³ Although this gap was then covered by the World Bank, it illustrated the potential threat to the sector's budget. On the demand side, there is a lag in national education statistics on enrolment and dropout rates that could shed light on the effect of the crisis on schooling, with the latest national data available from 2008.

¹³ http://www.join1goal.org/news_intern.php?page=1&NewsID=139

Analysis of Ghana's education budget in 2010 (UNICEF, 2010) indicates no reductions from its 2008 level as a result of the crisis. Data on enrolment comparing the 2007-2008 school year with the 2008-2009 school year is similarly positive, indicating a rise in enrolment for both males and females from junior to senior secondary schools. However, information about dropout rates is unavailable.

Given changes in enrolment and attendance are likely to vary significantly across localities, insufficiently disaggregated data in the three cases under analysis would not enable an examination of those trends, useful to understand possible inequitable outcomes in education resulting from the crisis. Qualitative findings from this study presented in this section help unpick some of the challenges to schooling of young people living in a situation of poverty and vulnerability that might be difficult to capture with national trend data.

Payment of school-related costs

The affordability of education was a concern for youth in Ghana and Mozambique and, to a lesser extent, in Vietnam. This concern is not new but was reportedly aggravated by the fall in real incomes in the past year or two, making fees and other school-related costs more expensive. Most interviewees said that parents and young people themselves make significant efforts to pay for school, even in conditions of hardship, although there are limits to their capacity. As mentioned in the previous section, in addition to the direct cost of schooling, there is an important opportunity cost, which causes many youth to leave school, either temporarily or permanently, to work and generate money for the household and themselves. Although this was more prevalent in the two African countries, it was also reported by Vietnamese youth, several of whom had abandoned school and migrated to the city in search of jobs.

Respondents in Ghana and Mozambique reported fairly high drop-out rates among youth in their communities. In Ghana, however, interviewees noted that since the inception of a 'capitation grant', whereby the government transfers funds to schools to cover student fees and some school-supply costs, more young people attend school from primary to junior-high levels, the only levels covered by the programme. The numbers of those attending school fall off at secondary and tertiary levels, however, when the only available support must come from students' families.

Overall, the number of young people dropping out, or not completing their cycle of education, has reportedly increased in the past two or three years in both Ghana and Mozambique. Causes cited include poverty, high school fees and adolescent pregnancy. The latter was perceived as a problem in all African sites, and also mentioned by a few respondents in Vietnam. A further obstacle to remaining in school, reported by some young people, was the lack of parental support, which in some cases was related to reductions in household incomes. In Ghana, youth in the 15-18 age group were most concerned about not continuing their education and commonly expressed a wish to receive assistance.

'In terms of education, there was no support; that was why I dropped out ... I did not get enough support for education due to financial problems.' Young female (20 yrs), in-depth, Osu, Ghana.

Some interviewees in Mozambique reported that young people do not attend school regularly because of school-related costs other than fees, in particular food and transport. This has become more problematic in Mozambique as transport costs continue to increase. To illustrate this challenge, a respondent mentioned that some girls engage in sexual relationships with *chapa* (local public transport) drivers in order to secure their transport or other benefits that enable them to attend school.

However, there is a perception among some youth in Mozambique that young people do not demonstrate an interest in attending school, partly because of costs, but also because they prefer to earn 'easy money' through occasional jobs or prostitution.

The situation is somewhat different in Vietnam. Although several respondents did complain about higher school fees, they explained that these were related to investment in schools, which had contributed to a higher quality of education. The higher costs were unrelated to crisis impacts. They have, nevertheless, resulted in families being unable to afford schooling costs for all their children. Consequently, many leave after secondary school to work and contribute to family incomes. Interviewees in Luong Son reported that the oldest child (regardless of sex) tends to leave school early to help support the family. One respondent did mention, however, that young people from poor families can often access a reduced tuition fee.

Gender-related education challenges

Although significant progress has been made on gender parity in education, the gender parity index for secondary education for gross enrolment in secondary education is still relatively low in Mozambique, at 0.82, while the ratio for Ghana is slightly higher – 0.89 – but still away from achieving gender parity. In Vietnam, it is 0.92.¹⁴ The study found no evidence of the crisis worsening this trend, but did highlight the significant challenges faced by young women in a situation of poverty that contribute to keep them out of school.

The research with youth found clear gender differences in access to education in the three countries. In Ghana, many respondents felt that a higher number of girls than boys dropped out of school and early pregnancy was cited as the primary reason. A number of girls said that domestic chores often interfered with education. Many admitted they had dropped out in the last two to three years due to incompatibilities between domestic work and paying school-related costs. Since domestic work and the

¹⁴ <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/tableView.aspx?ReportId=3337>

search for income create stress among young women, respondents said they had chosen not to give priority to school.

Some young mothers interviewed in Ghana and Mozambique were single parents who needed to work to support their children. Many have informal, child-care support from their mothers, and no respondents mentioned formal, affordable, alternative options. Most young mothers who became pregnant in school have not returned. This is a more structural issue, however, and the research found only limited links to the crisis. Only a few respondents linked higher adolescent pregnancy to idleness, related to not going to school and not working. Nevertheless, it is a critical factor in triggering disparities in educational attainment among young women.

'I know some girls who dropped out of school due to teenage pregnancy. Immediately they got pregnant, their parents told them to stop schooling.' Young female (20 yrs), in-depth, Chorkor, Ghana.

In Vietnam, the research found that in rural areas around the city (e.g. Luong Son) the percentage of female drop-outs was higher than males, due to a preference for girls to stay at home to get married. Although this pattern was common in rural areas, some young women continued to receive parental support for their studies so they could achieve a better life.

With regard to education, the research found evidence that the impact of the crisis on prices of basic goods meant that households had less disposable income to spend on school-related expenses, causing many students to reduce attendance or drop out altogether. Although some responses (particularly in Mozambique) referred to the worsening quality of education, this was perceived as a structural problem. In Ghana and Vietnam, some respondents referred favourably to government investment in education despite the crisis, notably the capitation grant and investment in school infrastructure, respectively. Nevertheless, these investments were seen as insufficient given the number of young people out of school.

Many of the obstacles hindering young people from continuing in school, such as school fees, the need to work and adolescent pregnancy, were not seen as specifically related to the crisis, but rather as permanent barriers to young people's human capital development.

5.1.4 Health

Youth in the three countries regarded health care as costly, although in Ghana and Mozambique it is not an issue that young people prioritised and many did not feel the need to access health services. In Ghana, some respondents referred to the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), a subsidised health programme that people can join on payment of a small fee. There were mixed opinions about its quality and service, but no respondents linked these deficiencies to the economic crisis.

In Vietnam, young people interviewed – many of whom work under harsh, physical conditions – said they would like to seek health services at hospitals for work-related ailments, but could not afford them. In most cases, they sought the help of local healers or relied on self-treatment. As such, reductions in real incomes have affected their ability to access health services.

Sexual and reproductive health

Discussions concerning sexual and reproductive health were limited, despite the inclusion of related questions on the instruments. In Ghana and Mozambique, most respondents knew about contraception and STI prevention, and interviewees said that, while not free, contraception was available and affordable to young people. On the other hand, however, responses indicated that contraceptive methods were not commonly used, particularly by young women. This is important, given the high level of adolescent pregnancies.

Some respondents, particularly in Ghana, connected adolescent pregnancy with traditional customs, while others, in Mozambique and Vietnam, linked it to young people's lack of opportunities: they argued that when young people are not studying or working, girls see having a child as 'something to do', despite the challenges of raising a child single-handedly.

A few young people spoke about HIV/Aids prevalence in their communities – particularly in Mozambique – but it was not widely discussed during the interviews.

In Vietnamese sites, by contrast, interviewees did not talk about programmes to address reproductive health for youth, and one respondent mentioned that those that do exist focus mainly on married young women.

Overall, although sexual and reproductive health issues are important for young people, the research found little evidence from respondents about changes in the provision of related services as a result of the crisis, perhaps because the respondents did not consider these issues as urgent as work and consumption, and so had not noticed any changes, if there were any. Some sexual risk behaviours, such as prostitution, have been linked to the crisis and have important health implications that are not specifically addressed by existing services. Additionally, young women appeared to downplay the risks they face from engaging in unprotected sex with clients, suggesting that the information available does not have sufficient depth or is poorly communicated.

Substance abuse and mental health

Consumption of narcotics and alcohol has increased in all four sites in Ghana over the years, according to most interviewees; they attributed the problem to peer influence, idleness and financial problems. Young people saw a clear link between substance abuse, and mental and other health problems.

'You see young males drunk and making noise in the area. They drink during funerals and other occasions.' Young female (25 yrs), in-depth, Chorkor, Ghana.

'They go mad, they get wasted. They become armed robbers.' Young female (22 yrs), in-depth, Osu, Ghana.

Alcoholism and drug abuse among youth in Mozambique and Vietnam were commonly reported, often linking it to idleness and young people's tendency to engage in risk behaviour. Many respondents related increasing idleness to the crisis, which suggests an indirect relation to substance abuse. Many young people in all three countries saw substance abuse as a factor contributing to deteriorating communities

5.1.5 Emotional and social well-being

Stress and tension

Poor working conditions, job insecurity, unemployment and precarious wages were all seen as factors causing young people significant stress, and generating tensions within households and communities. As discussed earlier, some of these factors have been aggravated by the crisis, so that it is possible to say that economic challenges in the past two years have contributed materially to young people's sense of frustration and distress.

For example, young unskilled workers in industrial parks in Me Linh and Luong Son found their work surroundings stressful. They complained of having few or no opportunities to rest or take short breaks. Since most of their pay is productivity-based, they spoke about the immense pressure to perform in order to receive adequate pay.

In addition to the expressed irritation about abuse or disrespect by employers, frustration among those without work was mostly caused by the lack of employment. Young people in all research sites in Mozambique said that social tension arising from lack of employment had become more perceptible in recent years as opportunities continued to diminish. Similarly in Ghana, the reduction in the money available to young people and their households reportedly triggered anxiety, with youth worried about what might happen the next day.

Domestic violence

Domestic violence was cited as a problem in Ghana and Vietnam (young people mentioned it less in Mozambique). While some respondents felt that it had worsened because of increased stress and financial pressures, others spoke about it as a persistent problem, so its link to the crisis remains ambiguous. Nevertheless, the problem clearly exists and affects young people.

Social capital

There were diverse opinions in each country, and between research sites within countries, about the availability and use of social networks by youth. In Ghana, some reported having access to social networks, such as families, friends and youth clubs, while others did not mention having access to them, or said they had too little time to link with a formal social network. More support from social networks was mentioned in Maamobi and Osu, the more urbanised research sites in Ghana, where some young people identified formal and informal networks. However, respondents were not able to identify the advantages from joining such groups.

In Mozambique, those young people who spoke about social networks said they were useful for accessing economic resources and expanding opportunities. While some respondents could identify youth groups in their communities, none were active members, although they did not explain why. Some respondents said that the number of youth groups had decreased in the past two years, perhaps because young people had become more preoccupied with finding work. One problem, according to respondents in Mozambique, was that many such groups are politicised along party lines, which was not attractive to young people who want to remain neutral.

Vietnamese interviewees referred to the Youth Unions and the Women's Union as important groups that provide support, and which could be useful in providing access to government programmes, but few were members.

Crime and insecurity

In Ghana and Mozambique, crime and insecurity were seen as having increased in the past two to three years. In Mozambique, young people felt that crime endangered the security of the community. In one site, Mafalala, the creation of a police precinct along with a community-policing initiative were praised for helping to reduce crime and drug-related behaviour, but their occurrence in the other three sites was on the rise. Young males were commonly identified as those most involved. A focus group participant from Polana Caniço said: *'From 19:00 hours you cannot walk along the streets of the neighbourhood. If you are not robbed, you may be raped or killed.'*

In Vietnam, young people in Luong Son explained that: *'There are a number of unemployed people. This leads to their involvement in drug addiction, gambling and stealing.'*

Some reasons why respondents thought youth tended to be involved in crime included poverty, frustration over lack of opportunities, and lack of parental support and guidance:

'Finding myself in a situation whereby my parents don't take care of me, I'll involve myself in whatever my friends are doing to earn money.' Young man, FGD, Chorkor.

As indicated by evidence from past crises, young people's involvement in crime and insecurity is one of the consequences of adverse economic impacts and frustration with lack of opportunity.

Citizenship

Young people's citizenship, or their participation in decision-making spaces, were not seen to have changed as a result of the crisis. In the research areas, young respondents did not speak of activism as a way of promoting change, although several complained about the government's inadequate response to the situation of youth. During the period of the study, riots in Maputo in September 2010 in protest at the rising price of transport were indicative of the level of frustration felt by young people, but few respondents spoke about other ways through which they would express their opinions or press for change. In Mozambique, young people spoke of youth groups affiliated with the party in power that engaged in activism at the local level, but those not aligned with their ideas found it difficult to form an opposition movement.

In Ghana, there were mixed opinions in the sites regarding spaces for young people to participate in policy making. In Pokuase, where traditional authorities are powerful, respondents said that their opinions were not canvassed because of their youth, while respondents in Maamobi held an opposite perception: they felt they were consulted by the traditional authorities. In the four Ghanaian sites, some interviewees mentioned that politicians were quick to speak to youth and make promises during electoral campaigns, but never followed up after entering office, and communication with young people had halted. Some young people saw electoral periods as opportunities for accessing money or jobs, but few opportunities had materialised and they are seldom interested in more long-term change. One or two interviewees held a more positive view of politics and thought they could best exercise their citizenship by becoming more active – or, at least, that it was a way they could achieve a position of power.

Vietnamese respondents more commonly mentioned that they participated in local government, decision-making processes, including decisions related to public works. However, this participation occurred in the communes from where they had originated, and not where they currently live.

5.2 Policies and programmes for youth

This section provides an overview of the main policies and programmes (government and non-government) in the three countries that focus on youth, particularly in regard to economic challenges. It draws on an analysis of documents by each of the research teams, complemented with analyses of key stakeholder interviews and responses by young interviewees.

5.2.1 Ghana

Various policies were introduced in Ghana in mid-2008 to mitigate the impact of the economic crisis on the population. These were not targeted at any specific group. As explained in section 4, these policies mainly consisted of tax relief and subsidies on intermediate products (for example, flour for bread) in a bid to reduce pressure on prices – not all of which have had the desired impact.

With regard to policies and programmes specifically designed to address the challenges facing youth, Ghana's National Youth Policy (NYP) recognises the many differences among young people, and promotes equal opportunity for, and treatment of, all youth, both male and female.¹⁶ It recognises the problems that confront Ghanaian youth and proposes suggestions about how they could be resolved. It also promotes young people's participation in democratic processes, as well as in community decision making and development. It advocates that youth development services and programmes should be youth-driven and youth-centred. Youth development should be recognised as an important mandate for all government agencies, NGOs and development institutions. However, when the NYP was launched in August 2010, it was criticised by opposition parties and youth stakeholders on the grounds that it was not accompanied by an action plan to render it operational. The action plan is currently in the pipeline, although some key informants interviewed maintained that the new action plan is essentially the same as the old one since the priority areas are alike, which would suggest that no consultation was undertaken in developing the new one.

According to a key informant interview from the National Youth Council (NYC), the elaboration of the youth policy was a participatory process involving all political party youth wings, youth stakeholders and many youth organisations. However, none of the respondents in the four sites had heard of the NYP, its launch or an action plan to take it forward.

During interviews with young people, the research discovered that very few knew about existing programmes for youth, or even those that addressed their problems indirectly. The only one identified by several respondents was the National Youth Employment Programme (NYEP), introduced by the government in 2006 as an initiative to address high youth unemployment. The NYEP was intended to provide jobs in essential social services, such as health and education, and promote good governance through the maintenance of law and order, with the goal of empowering youth to contribute more to the socio-economic development of the nation.

The programme is divided into several modules, including agri-business, trades and vocations (non-agriculture services), information and communication technology, community protection services, waste and sanitation management corps, rural education (teaching assistants), auxiliary nursing (healthcare assistants and extension

¹⁶ A detailed mapping of youth policies and programmes in Ghana can be found in the national report.

workers), internship and industrial attachments (paid internships), vacation jobs and voluntary services. New programmes have been added to the NYEP, including Youth in Road Repairs, Youth in Oil and Gas, and Youth and Disability. One year after the programmes were launched, NYEP claimed to have created 100,100 jobs.

Though none of the interviewees has participated in the programme (which is meant to have universal coverage), those who do know about it complained about the complex process for registering and joining, which deters many potential participants. Several young people perceived that the registration process was not transparent, favouring preferred applicants on political grounds or because of nepotism. Other young people complained that the programme's target included men and women above 35, effectively excluding the young people for whom it was designed. On the other hand, based on discussions with key informants involved in the programme's implementation, it emerged that adults are often registered only because young people do not want to do the work, which they do not find sufficiently compelling. The reasons for this disinterest appear to include a general focus on manual labour, poor pay rates and the lack of guarantees of enhanced employment opportunities after participation in programmes. Youth were also concerned about the design of the programme, which only provides work for a maximum of two years, without developing sufficient skills to allow young people to find more permanent employment after that period. The programme's National Coordinator maintained that there was a plan to enable youth to be employed permanently, but it has not proved successful insofar as the majority of young participants were not absorbed by the formal economy.

One of the programme's limitations was budgetary, making it difficult to invest in improving the quality and relevance of the skills it provides youth. While the budget has expanded in the past two to three years, it has done only marginally¹⁵, despite a growing needs faced by young people. Resource constraints for youth-focused programmes are not confined to the NYEP. The NYC, the agency in charge of youth issues at regional, metropolitan and district levels, is also inadequately resourced, which has limited its work over the years, although it tries to carry out some youth projects in partnership with the private sector and civil society organisations (CSOs). According to a key informant from the NYC, the Ministry of Youth and Sports allocates most of its budget to the promotion of sports, and neglects other critical developmental issues for young people, including employment.

More generally, concerning young people's perceptions of government programmes, the research found that the majority of interviewees felt that state programmes have been politicised and gaining access depends on whom you know. Most young people are unaware of the NYEP, or how to access it. More educated respondents knew something of the programme, although none had participated.

¹⁵ Some news articles indicate this marginal reduction in the programme's budget, see for example <http://www.modernghana.com/news/329817/1/mills-cuts-spending-on-social-programmes.html>

CSO and NGO programmes to support youth

Programmes and activities implemented by CSOs, including youth groups, and NGOs were more common in the research sites. For example, youth associations and clubs in Pokuase and Chorkor are involved in neighbourhood-cleaning exercises, football competitions and social get-togethers. Members contribute money to help each other during naming ceremonies, marriages and funerals. Their aim is to build unity and help each other in times of financial distress.

One NGO-designed and implemented programme for youth is the locally-based Women Trust, which has given scholarships to over 129 female senior high school students in Pokuase. Beneficiaries found it useful and effective, although some respondents said they did not know of its existence or how to access it. Other NGOs focus on HIV/AIDS education and how to reduce the stigmatisation of those infected. These programmes are not targeted specifically at youth, however, but given that young people are significantly affected, they are among its main beneficiaries. In Chorkor, a few respondents mentioned the Adventist Development Relief Agency, which provides assistance to youth for skills and vocational training. In Osu, youth and key informants had difficulty in identifying any youth-focused NGOs or associations in the community, other than the ruling party's youth wing.

A cluster of youth organisations in Maamobi/Nima have come together under the umbrella name, Federation of Youth Clubs (FYC), to organise leadership seminars, debates on national issues and other capacity-building programmes. They also organise neighbourhood-cleaning operations and peace walks. Some youth associations organise free classes for junior high school students in their communities.

CHF International, a youth-focused NGO, has partnered with local youth organisations in Maamobi on a sanitation and recycling programme, and the FYC works with Harvard University on a slum-clearance programme in Maamobi/Nima. Right and Voice, another youth-focused NGO, is partnering with FYC to create a 'mouthpiece for youth'. The FYC also works with the community's Legal Resource Centre (LRC) to educate young people on citizenship and children's rights, among other topics. The LRC provides legal representation to vulnerable people, especially youth. The FYC has been active in creating awareness of government programmes and civic responsibilities, and has trained many public speakers.

International NGOs, such as the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), Voluntary Services Organisation (VSO), German Development Cooperation (GTZ) and UNICEF, also work on youth issues in the country, mainly in collaboration with the NYC. UNFPA works on health and reproductive issues; VSO focuses on youth voluntarism; and GTZ on football. These programmes are not nationwide due to lack of funds. Some programmes, such as

the UNFPA-sponsored African Youth Alliance Project, have halted due to lack of funds. The programme ended in 2006.

Despite the number of CSOs and NGOs identified, the frustration of many young people about the lack of opportunities and inadequate information, access or willingness to join these programmes – perhaps because they spend their time trying to find income opportunities – suggest that there is space for strengthening the way the organisations connect to youth, and how they can develop better networks that reach, and respond to, the needs of many vulnerable young people

5.2.2 Mozambique

The 2006 National Youth Policy recognises the challenges faced by youth in their daily life and fosters the increased participation of youth in economic, social, cultural and sports development; the promotion of youth associations; and youth participation in government decision-making bodies. Various programmes and policies have been created to achieve these objectives, for example, the Youth initiatives Support Fund (FAIJ) which funds young women’s microenterprise projects; the government’s Mozambique Youth Organisation (OJM) which promotes implementation of community activities and cleaning campaigns, and the Employment and Vocational Training Strategy.¹⁶ However, the most important challenges facing youth policy are lack of funding, and limited implementation and monitoring to find out if its objectives are being achieved. In the field, it is widely agreed that youth programmes hardly reach their target group. Young respondents almost unanimously agreed that there is poor communication about programmes and policies for youth; young people have little interest in joining– for instance, in the case of cleaning campaigns or community development -without some form of remuneration; when youth do display interest, obstacles arise that make access difficult,, such as the need to be affiliated to the ruling party or have good connections. Further programmes often require documentation, which pushes up the cost of participation for the most marginalised youth.

As a 24-year-old woman from Mafalala said: *‘Government programmes or services in the community practically don’t exist.’*

With regard to policies to mitigate the impacts of the crisis, limited support mechanisms had been created in Maputo City as of mid-2010. Initially, the government said the crisis would not affect Mozambique and that everything was under control at the macro-economic level (Bank of Mozambique, 2008). However, continuing increases in the prices of goods and services in the past two years, combined with the devaluation of the currency, triggered popular protests. After the last such protest in September 2010, the government attributed the current situation to the international crisis. In September, it introduced subsidies on electricity, water and some basic goods – including bread - to mitigate the immediate effects of the crisis on households. These price reductions relief

¹⁶ Detailed information about these programmes can be found in the national report.

some pressures from consumptions for young people and the households where they live, however, the cost of transport and secondary goods which has increased is still a challenge that is not addressed by these subsidies. In light of the protests and the results of the recent household survey that indicated lack of progress in reducing poverty, the government decided to use the drafting of the new poverty reduction strategy to assess options to make economic growth more inclusive and strengthen social safety nets (IMF, 2010), although the process is ongoing.

In 2010, the government endorsed a four-year Strategic Programme for Urban Poverty Reduction. Targeted at municipalities, the policy focuses on three main areas:

- 1) Job creation. In this component, self-employment will be encouraged through vocational training, the promotion of producers' associations and increased access to funding; and the promotion of small and medium-size enterprises, industries and labour-intensive services.
- 2) Facilitating short-term hiring so that employees can supplement their incomes with short-term employment and promote the business environment in general.
- 3) Social protection. Expanding the impact and coverage of basic social protection to vulnerable people, including the aged, disabled, chronically sick and groups in a transitional condition of vulnerability, through social action in schools and health facilities.

Following through with this policy, the government introduced a special budget provision in 2011. Geographic criteria were identified for resource allocation to the country's municipalities. Individual criteria for access to state resources were also defined and prioritised for the poor, aged 18-60 years, who are economically active but without access to loans or grants from formal institutions. This group includes young people, female heads of households, entrepreneurs and disabled people who are fit to work. Eligibility criteria were also identified for associations, micro-enterprises and individuals, and the type of economic activities envisaged. Policy implementation is expected to begin in 2011, so it is still too soon to judge how the programme is being implemented and whether it actually addresses the vulnerabilities of young people.

While policies, strategies and programmes directed at youth are now in place, accessing them has proven difficult, as highlighted by respondents and some key informants. The few youth organisations that exist are closely linked to political parties. The youth coalition associated with the ruling party has benefited most from the government's efforts, but excludes the large number of young people not affiliated with it. As a result, most youth do not feel part of the new programmes and do not accrue benefits.

CSO and NGO programmes to support youth

NGOs are involved in various activities in all four study neighbourhoods. These include:

- Vocational and technical training programmes.
- Environmental programmes, from cleaning campaigns to education about environment.
- Socio-educational programmes.
- Incentives to sports.
- Entertainment and leisure.
- Promotion of health practices.

Access to these activities is generally easier than to government programmes. However, they involve a limited number of young people and are far from meeting the scale of need due to resource scarcity.

In the four neighbourhoods of Maputo City, the NGO-run programmes have limited coverage. This can be partly remedied by increasing funding, which has tended to prioritise activities in rural areas. The extension of NGO initiatives, particularly to monitor – and create youth capacity to monitor – public programmes, is critical as the state increases investment in urban areas.

Several private-sector initiatives, leading to employment, are already up and running within the framework of Corporate Social Responsibility. Companies, such as Vale do Rio Doce, Millennium bim, Standard Bank and others provide placements for new graduates, allowing them to prepare themselves for future employment. Such initiatives should be expanded to include youth with technical and basic training

5.2.3 Vietnam

In Vietnam, most national and local youth programmes are directly implemented by the government, local authorities or mass organisations, such as the Women’s Union or the Youth Union.

The main national programmes for poor and vulnerable young people¹⁷ focus mainly on support for education in the form of exemptions, complete or partial, from tuition fees. Other programmes focus on vocational training to enhance young people’s job prospects. Most poor young people receive financial support from the national government for the *Tet* holidays so they can buy tickets to visit their families at this special time. Generally, researchers struggled to find concrete information about the performance and impact of these programmes because evaluations, if they exist, were hard to access.

In Vietnam, migrants do not usually have access to local government programmes in the places they move to, only to the programmes, loans and grants in their hometown or province. In fact, one reason why many migrants return home so often is that their

¹⁷ A detailed list of these can be found in the Vietnam country report.

needs are neglected in the areas where they work. This means that many young migrants working in difficult conditions in Hanoi are unable to access government support that might help them increase their skills or education.

An additional constraint to accessing programmes is that unskilled workers work long hours and have little time to explore the other opportunities that might be available (e.g. by NGOs). Hence, interviews indicated that young unskilled migrant in Ba Dinh and Me Linh knew very little about government or NGOs activities to support them. *'I only do my work,'* said a 19-year-old male migrant in Ba Dinh, *'so I have no idea.'* Similarly, a 20-year-old female migrant in Ba Dinh explained: *'Yes, labourers like us really need them [policies and programmes to support them]. However, the state's support cannot happen to us because many state policies are unknown to us. If we do not search the internet, we don't know about them.'*

Vietnam's crisis response consisted in a mix of fiscal and monetary policy and social security measures. Monetary policy was gradually eased and a stimulus package of US \$6 billion was announced in December 2008 to revive the slowing economy with tax cuts, interest rate assistance, as well as spending on infrastructure, housing, schools and hospitals (Le, 2009). In addition, on January 1, 2009 the government launched an unemployment insurance scheme to provide financial assistance to unemployed workers.

The Government of Vietnam also expanded total coverage of regular social assistance, which primarily targets the elderly and persons with disabilities (Bender and Rompel, 2009). Authorities also estimate that almost 4.2 million poor households received preferential loans and almost 2.1 million of the poor were provided with business development training and technical transfers; 30 thousand people were supported in vocational training each year and vocational training costs were exempted and reduced for 60 thousand poor people (Ibid).

Some of these anti crisis measures – namely the unemployment insurance and the support to vocational training - have the potential to benefit youth, as they make up a significant part of the working population, particularly in export industries which were particularly affected by the crisis. However, given that the unemployment benefit was provided only to those with more than 12 months in the same job, many young people who are given short contracts and who therefore only work for short period of time with the same employer, this measure might have resulted in insufficient protection for young people, although no studies have assessed this impact in particular. Respondents did not mention having received unemployment support or other types of assistance, probably because most were able to work and were able to keep their job, albeit in worsened conditions.

CSO and NGO programmes to support youth

Only a few organisations focus explicitly on poor, vulnerable youth aged 15-25. International NGOs, like UNICEF, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and Action Aid, mostly target children but do include some beneficiaries in the above-mentioned age range. As part of its child protection activities, UNICEF implements ‘case management’, including children up to the age of 16, and helps with housing, health care, food, employment, education and legal support. Action Aid includes youth in its programmes to increase young people’s involvement in governance (e.g. support for building a self-governance group for young people) or in its ‘End Poverty Together Year 2009’ campaign, which explicitly addressed female workers in Hai Phong.¹⁸ CRS implements programmes for youth infected, or impacted, by HIV/AIDS: children whose parents are HIV-infected are often discriminated against by communities.

Even when young interviewees were aware of these programmes, however, they noted their ineffectiveness in reaching the target population. Most young people were missing out on programmes that could help them to develop their skills or to access better employment opportunities. This also applies to programmes relating to youth-related health issues.

5.3 Youth vulnerabilities to climate change

The sub-component on the vulnerabilities of youth to climate change in Ghana and Vietnam, and their participation in adaptation and mitigation strategies explored how young people understand climate change, the impacts it has on their livelihoods, and whether they participated in any adaptation or mitigation strategies in relation to these impacts. Interviews took place in two rural sites. In one site (intervention site), an NGO (CARE) is working to develop adaptation and mitigation strategies among youth to reduce the adverse effects of extreme weather events; in the other (control site), there was no such intervention. This was to explore differences in the way young people cope with these phenomena in the two different scenarios. The analysis below explores some of the main findings in each of the two countries.

Ghana

In Ghana, research took place in two sites in West Mamprusi District, Northern Region, one of the poorest regions in the country, which is which is regularly affected by floods and droughts.

Young people in both sites understood climate change to mean different things, for example:

- The absence of trees, causing heavy wind storms.
- Indiscriminate burning of the bush, leading to soil infertility.
- Emission of gases into the atmosphere from bush burning.

¹⁸ A city about 100 km northwest of Hanoi.

- Drought (dry streams) and floods, resulting in displacement and migration.
- Changing weather patterns, affecting farming.

Respondents were aware of the effects of climate change on their livelihoods in the short term and were concerned about the possible, long-term consequences on their lives. Most young people in these areas are involved in rain-fed agriculture and rely on good weather for their activities, which includes food production. They are very vulnerable to the effects of extreme weather conditions.

A young male respondent noted during an FGD in Mimima (control): *'We experience early rain, but it does not rain as it should; we experience more drought.'*

A young female in Bonyini (intervention) noted: *'The impact of flood halts all farming activities, which reduces produce from the farm.'*

Effects of climate change identified as most important by young people

Most respondents viewed the main impact of climate change as lower agricultural production, leading to diminished incomes. This has triggered several consequences. Some of the most relevant ones identified by young people were:

- Inability to pay school-related costs, resulting in school abandonment. A young woman in Minima explained: *'v Climate shocks affect household economic activities and parents find it difficult to pay school fees.'* Young male, FGD, Mimima.
- Seasonal migration to the south to find short-term jobs, such as a porter, work on cocoa farms and surface mining.

'As a result of drought there is poor harvest, leading to reduced food consumption. This increases migration to the south to work and earn money for the family.' Young male, FGD, Bonyini.

According to respondents, migration can have many negative implications for unskilled young people, including living in sub-standard housing, loss of home social networks (which erodes their social capital) and low earnings. These observations from the field should be analysed alongside other studies of young migrants in Ghana, which indicate that young people observe the challenges faced by migration while recognising that it opens important opportunities that they would not have had in their own villages (Hashim, 2006)

Because many households rely on subsistence agriculture, low yields following extreme weather events cause hunger among young people during the lean season. This impact is not particular to this age group, but is a major concern, particularly for younger youth and children, leading to permanent developmental problems.

In addition to lower yields from farming, young people spoke of the reduced production of wild fruits, such as cashews and Shea nuts, after drought; many young people (particularly girls) rely on them to supplement their incomes.

Adaptation and mitigation strategies employed by youth

In addition to understanding the effects of climate change and their main consequences – mostly related to reduced incomes as a result of lower yields – an important dimension of the study was to understand how young people participated in adaptation and mitigation strategies in one locality with an NGO intervention, and one without.

The NGO CARE works with youth in Bonyini, the intervention site in Ghana, to reduce the negative impacts of desertification and climate change on poor rural communities by enhancing community land-use management for greater resilience, and enabling the community to engage in livelihood activities that build and manage the natural resource base over the long term, thereby strengthening their resilience to climate change.

Young respondents explained that these interventions have had significant effects on their capacity to improve their communities. Youth have participated in several adaptation and mitigation activities:

- Raising or creating ‘earth bunds’, whereby heaps of sand or stones are laid along the contours of a slope to reduce the speed of running water, minimise soil erosion and increase moisture retention on farm land.
- Preparation of fire belts on the edge of farms to prevent the spread of bushfires into farms.
- Tree planting and agro-tree planting to improve vegetative cover and promote a better micro-climate, as well as to strengthen livelihoods options.

CARE has also supported young people in their search for alternative livelihood activities, such as livestock rearing, beekeeping, dry-season gardening and batik, tie and dye, and fabric manufacture, with CARE key informants highlighting that there is some indication that these new activities are contributing to better livelihoods through diversification. *‘Climate change has affected the decisions made by young people on migration and employment. The youth are taking training in batik and tie and dye as an alternative source of employment in the community.’* Young female, in-depth, Bonyini.

By contrast, young people in the control site mentioned only two mitigation strategies. One was tree planting, but the most common one was ‘praying to the gods to reduce the effects of climate change on communities’. A young female in Mimima noted during a life-history interview: *‘My family contributed money which was given to the chief priest for prayers to be said to reduce the effects of climate change...’* Adaptation strategies in the control site, that is young people’s shifting to new activities as a result of challenges in typical agricultural livelihoods, were also more limited, consisting mainly

of young men doing paid work, such as weaving or the repair and construction of houses.

Evidence from the research in the two sites indicates that with adequate knowledge and motivation – and resources to support alternative livelihood options – young people can be active participants in mitigating the challenges caused by extreme weather events, while young people without that knowledge have much more limited alternatives. This is likely to render them more vulnerable to these climatic effects.

Youth participation in programming to reduce effects of climate change

Ghana's National Youth Council (NYC) recognises the importance of youth and environment, but there is no specific mention of the relationship between youth and climate change in the National Youth Policy because it is a new area of interest. According to interviews with the NYC, there are no government programmes that work with young people to promote their involvement in adaptation and mitigation strategies, which might reduce current negative coping mechanisms and adverse effects experienced as a result of extreme weather events. This task is in the hands of a few international agencies and NGOs. In communities where NGO interventions are not in place, young people are less able to contribute to climate-change adaptation programmes given insufficient information about how it can be done. The research found that many young people are negatively influenced by their perception that they have no experience in mitigation or adaptation against severe weather events as typically there have not been environmental improvement initiatives and training in alternative sources of livelihoods available to their communities, which limits their interest in the types of programmes that might have an important bearing on their livelihoods. This suggests that it is important to extend and improve the reach in the provision of livelihood diversification options, and communicating these better to young people.

Vietnam

Research in Vietnam was undertaken in the eastern coastal district of Hau Loc, Thanh Hoa Province, which is notorious for its vulnerability to natural disasters. The two coastal communes chosen for the survey were Da Loc (intervention site) and Minh Loc (control site), both of which experience typhoons, floods and droughts on an annual basis.

When asked about the effects of climate change, young people in the two localities referred to the following issues:

- Local climate has become more unpredictable compared to five or 10 years ago. Respondents in both sites had noticed that temperatures seem to be higher and droughts more frequent.
- Water shortage and salt intrusion were identified as problems.
- The typhoon season arrives earlier and typhoons are bigger.

- Sea levels have risen in the last few years, encroaching on land, as explained by a key informant from a local NGO: *'The local people ... who are doing aquaculture here said that the tide is higher than in the past ... They usually banked their ponds at around one metre. In the past water did not overflow the banks, but in recent years it has started to do so.'* NGO key informant, Da Loc.

Effects of climate change identified as most important by young people

Young interviewees at both sites explained that unexpected weather changes and extreme events have caused many problems for young people and their families, especially in regard to agriculture production and fisheries. The most negative impacts in the recent years are salt intrusion and drought, deteriorating soil fertility and water shortages for agriculture and household use. This has resulted in the abandonment of crop lands and crop failure. Hurricanes and floods exacerbate these problems, causing long-lasting damage to agriculture and livelihoods.

'Ever since the storm went through my house and flooded the area here in 2005, when we grow crops, the productivity is not as good as in the past years.' Female youth (23 yrs), Da Loc.

Respondents understand that extended or extreme cold periods in winter and prolonged droughts in summer are the main factors delaying cropping schedules and causing crop failure. Climate hardships have generated many economic difficulties for households, including the young people who are often the ones who engage in coping strategies. In interviews, young people talked about the pressure they experience from families faced with weather-induced difficulties to find ways to increase income.

'Because my parents are farmers, they have no extra income. And I still have siblings who are at school age. That's why I have to go to work to support my siblings' schooling and help the family. I'm now working as a tailor, and earning money is the first priority. So maybe other workers only work eight hours per day, I must work for 12 hours.' Female (24 yrs), Da Loc.

However, while young people regard extreme weather events as significant, they also consider them inevitable, and are more concerned with their own employment and education.

Adaptation and mitigation strategies employed by youth

In Da Loc, CARE has been helping the community to plant a mangrove forest in the coastal area as a sustainable way of protecting the sea dyke against the effects of typhoons. All dykes were destroyed by the heavy waves of the 2005 typhoon, except a 500-metre section behind a mangrove forest that remained untouched; this was identified as a good intervention. Apart from protecting coastal villages, mangrove forests provide shelter for growing fish, mussels, oysters, shrimp and crabs; filter coastal

pollution; and provide local people with timber for construction and other purposes.¹⁹ Planting more mangroves mitigates one extreme weather event, while providing alternative livelihoods through fishing. Mangrove planting has not been practiced at Minh Loc, the control research site.

There were many similarities in the young people's understanding of climate-change effects in both sites and few variations in the mitigation strategies employed.

Some mechanisms identified by young people in Da Loc to adapt to adverse effects of severe weather events on their livelihoods include:

- Migrating to find jobs in other places.
- Saving electricity and water.
- Raising the awareness of the community to protect the environment.
- Building and maintaining irrigation systems to prepare for droughts and floods.
- Shifting to more appropriate crops and changing crop schedules.
- Strengthening home construction and moving properties to safe places when there are typhoons.
- Storing food for livestock.
- Being aware of weather conditions, regularly updating information in storm season through weather forecast.
- Listening to local radio for updated information about agricultural activities and about extreme weather.

Some adaptation activities reported in the control site were similar, but others were specific to Minh Loc:

- Migrating to other places to find jobs, or inland to avoid typhoon damage.
- Desalinising soil to improve fertility.
- Following weather forecasts regularly.
- Shifting to more appropriate crops and changing the crop schedule.
- Strengthening dykes and maintaining irrigation systems to cope with droughts and floods.

The contrast between intervention and control sites was not as striking in the two communities in Vietnam as in Ghana, indicating that there is probably more information and support at commune level in relation to climate risks and adaptation mechanisms, in addition to the work done by CARE.

Migration is the most common adaptation mechanism reported by youth, as it is seen as a way both to earn money and obtain skills, in response to the loss of income and livelihoods resulting from crop failure and loss of cultivable land. Additionally, low-

¹⁹ See

http://www.careclimatechange.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=24%3Amangroves-barriers-reduce-damage-from-increasingly-frequent-and-intense-typhoons&catid=5%3Aadapt&Itemid=29

income status and unstable farming and fishing conditions imply limited diversification options, further compelling young people to migrate. Nevertheless, young migrants from the region reported that they understand the challenges they will face at their destinations: many have to settle for jobs in the informal sector, working overtime and with low pay, particularly those with poor qualifications and experience. Young people with better educational backgrounds expect to have a better chance of finding a stable job, although this is not always the case.

For those who remain at home, typical adaptation responses include shifting to crops more appropriate to the changed conditions, such as from rice to sweet corn, raising livestock (e.g. pig and poultry) or aquaculture (e.g. shrimp and oyster farming). These adaptation measures, however, face both new and old problems, such as animal diseases and water shortages.

'Our commune had to convert 30 hectares of land into husbandry patterns because of salination problems. If we don't change, the land will be left uncultivated.' Community leader, Minh Loc.

Youth participation in programming to reduce effects of climate change

After the 2005 typhoon, the government provided financial support to strengthen the sea-dyke and roads systems, which improved conditions in both sites, especially at Da Loc. Young people, like others in the community, are aware of the changes in climate and weather patterns in recent years, and their impacts on people's livelihoods. As such, youth's active participation in response measures are recognised as important by the community in the intervention site.

Young people are considered adept at organising propaganda campaigns for awareness-raising activities and for participating in community efforts to prevent and mitigate natural disasters. In the two communities, the Youth Union has developed entry points for young people to participate in decision-making processes at commune level, including in relation to adaptation and mitigation strategies.

6 Lessons learned from peer-to-peer research with youth

The research approach used in this study generated positive outcomes and rich information, and proved an interesting process for all participants, particularly the young researchers.

For many youth respondents, it was the first time that they had been consulted about their views, and they were eager to share their experiences and perspectives. In the absence of an age divide, they opened up to researchers about the challenges they faced, especially with regard to social vulnerabilities. As one young researcher from

Ghana noted: *'They shared their misery, without feeling shy or hiding a single problem, unlike what would happen when talking to an adult-.'*

These are areas where the study's objectives were achieved. However, there were important lessons to be learned for future research projects that use the same approach.

Time and resource investment

Working with youth researchers to conceptualise and internalise an understanding of the transmission pathways from macro-level phenomena to micro-level realities was not easy, and necessitated significant support. This included an inception training and a mid-term review from the international coordinator consisting of four-day intensive workshops in each case. During the eight month research process, bi-weekly contact and monthly meetings between young researchers and focal points were instrumental to keeping research on track. Focal points accompanied young researchers to the field on each round to provide guidance and invested time to go through individual outputs (recorded interviews, field notes and research diaries) to provide constant feedback to young researchers. Additionally, focal points provided close supervision to analytical outputs and had an important role in report writing, while the international coordinator provided feedback and comments on the process and outputs on a regular basis. This suggests that although encouraging youth voices in development dialogues is critical, experience from this study underscored the time- and resource-intensive investment needed to provide youth researchers with sufficient understanding of the issues as to equip them to explore youth-specific experiences.

Capacity building and mentoring needs

While working with young researchers offers the opportunity to provide new insights into a development problem, careful attention needs to be paid to their capacity-building and mentoring needs if the process is to be genuinely empowering. This was the case in all three countries where the researchers were specifically chosen to have limited to no prior research fieldwork experience, no academic training on research methodologies and the thematic areas explored with the purpose of having a more authentic peer-to-peer approach. In this case, pro-active adult facilitators proved instrumental in supporting young researchers through the process of learning to become empathetic, probing listeners and maintain motivation across the duration of a multi-stage project. Their role entailed accompanying the researchers to the field so as to ensure familiarity with local context specificities, providing detailed feedback on interview transcripts, monthly reports and diaries, as well as being sensitive to the schooling, work and family demands that the young researchers were simultaneously juggling. Adult facilitators also played an important role in smoothing access to local communities, especially in contexts characterised by strong socio-cultural age hierarchies and/or pressures from a ruling political party, to actively manage popular dissent.

Peer-to-peer learning and communication

In terms of peer-to-peer interaction, the experience yielded positive dividends for both the young researchers and youth respondents. The gains identified by young researchers were broadly three-fold. In terms of content-related lessons, young researchers reported that they developed a more nuanced appreciation of both the way that global forces may affect local youth and the ways these impacts often differ markedly among different youth groups. They also gained insights into how the coping strategies adopted by young people could be better supported by governmental and non-governmental policy and programming.

The research process itself was equally important. Young researchers noted that they gained confidence in their research skills and their ability to converse with young people across socio-economic divides. In a number of cases they cemented a commitment to advocating for pro-youth development approaches.

The third positive project component – albeit considerably less developed than other components – was the opportunity to communicate with young researchers from other developing countries through the social networking site, Facebook. The project’s Facebook page enabled young researchers to exchange images and impressions of the research locales in which they were working, and to see some of the commonalities and differences in the experiences of the global shocks faced by young people in different contexts. However, language barriers, time constraints and limited connectivity, combined with inadequate embedding of the cross-country communication dimension in the project design from the outset, limited the potential of the Facebook site as an in-depth communication tool.

Creating expectations

Despite the enthusiasm of young respondents at being consulted about their opinions and concerns, with repeated field visits over the course of the project, managing youth respondent’s expectations of the impact of participation in the project became more challenging as the project progressed in some instances. Although the project position was that participation would help to convey young people’s views to key policy stakeholders locally and nationally, this was understandably not as tangible an outcome as some participants would have liked. In some cases, this caused loss of interest by interviewees toward the end of the project, as they felt that they had nothing to gain from spending their time on these discussions.

7 Conclusions and recommendations

This report presents a synthesis of the findings from a three-country study in Ghana, Mozambique and Vietnam that explores the different ways in which young people’s well-being has been impacted by global macro-shocks, specifically the 3F crisis and extreme weather events linked to climate change, by looking at the different transmission pathways through national and household levels. The analysis also focuses

on the coping mechanisms – positive and negative – that young people utilise to mitigate and adapt to the effects of these challenges, as well as the extent to which there are formal and informal mechanisms in place to support them.

The study utilised an innovative peer-to-peer methodology whereby young researchers aged 19-24, without prior experience of research undertakings, were trained and mentored during an eight-month period to conduct qualitative and participatory data collection with young people in four marginalised localities in each of the three countries. The aim of this approach was twofold: to develop the research capacity of young people and to foster their interest in the development issues facing youth so as to engage with decision makers and youth activists using first-hand evidence of the challenges facing young people; and, secondly, to encourage more candid and open discussion by young interviewees, hypothesised to be more able to discuss details about their experiences and concerns with researchers of the same or similar age group.

The conclusions presented here focus on two areas, the research findings and the research methodology. The section also presents some policy recommendations.

Research findings

The component exploring the impact of the economic crisis on young people focused on youth living in urban and peri-urban localities, classified as poor or marginalised, close to the capitals of the three countries. Evidence from interviews and discussions with young respondents indicated that macro-level shocks were mainly transmitted to young people through higher prices for basic goods and services (mainly food and transport), fewer work opportunities and lower real incomes, related both to loss of purchasing power or lower revenues linked to lower sales and/or reduced wages. As a consequence, young people's lives were impacted in different ways.

In terms of employment, there was widespread frustration at the lack of opportunities, unemployment and limited prospects for both skilled and unskilled youth. For those with a job, levels of competition for work were manifested in employers' abuse of young employees, ranging from sexual harassment for girls and young women (Ghana and Mozambique) to longer working hours without additional pay (Vietnam), and a perception that youths were treated differently to adults. For those working in petty trade, sales had dropped. Higher prices for food and transport were blamed by many interviewees for reductions in the quantity and quality of food they consumed. For many youth, lower real incomes had important repercussions on their studies: many had dropped out of school entirely because school-related costs had become unaffordable, or had reduced their attendance because of the need to find income-earning opportunities to supplement the family budget or pay school fees. Many respondents expressed concern at their deteriorating employment prospects, as a result of lower educational attainments.

Another key area where the study found evidence that youth were affected was in relation to their propensity to engage in risk behaviour. Many young women, mainly in Ghana and Mozambique, mentioned prostitution or transactional relationships with older men as the only way of earning an income, while few used contraception or protection against STI. Many reported an increase in alcohol consumption and substance abuse – mainly among young men, but also a few women – attributing it to frustration, idleness and lack of work opportunities. Similarly, respondents linked adolescent pregnancies to idleness and the lack of opportunities for young women. Crime and insecurity were seen to be on the rise, particularly in Mozambique and Ghana. Although many of these issues had long been problematic, research findings indicated that the crisis in the past two to three years had made them worse. Young people, on the other hand, perceived impacts on their health in relation to the crisis, to be limited.

Despite these challenges, some interviewees demonstrated resilience and spoke of always finding ways to deal with these challenges and to go forward, usually by relying on their own resources, and the support of families and friends. In this sense, informal networks were found to be critical for young people.

An important aspect of the study focused on identifying the types of formal support mechanisms available to youth in the context of economic crisis, from grassroots organisations to government-supported policies and programmes. While it was possible to identify several policies and programmes through a documentary review and interviews with key informants, few participants in the study had heard of them, and none had benefited. In cases where they knew these programmes existed, such as with Ghana's NYEP, respondents spoke about important barriers to entry, such as bureaucracy, invisible costs and lack of transparency in the selection processes. In general, young people were disappointed with the support offered by their governments, including local politicians whom they regarded as only chasing after votes without long-term commitment. Poor information about existing programmes and how to access them was an additional limitation. Local NGOs and some youth groups were seen as more active, with their initiatives more frequently mentioned, although their limited scale and scope makes them difficult to access. Additionally, young people did not seem interested in, nor had time to join, community-based activities, perhaps as a result of limited understanding about what help they could bring to their everyday lives, including emotional support. This lack of interest was perceived both in cases in which young people were working long hours (such as in the case of migrants in Vietnam) as well as amongst unemployment and underemployment youth in Mozambique and Ghana, who had little motivation to join such activities.

Although there was no evidence that public services had been reduced as a result of the crisis – with the exception of increased prices for public transport due to rising fuel costs, as in Ghana and Mozambique – group discussions suggested that these services had been unavailable or limited even before the crisis, except for support to schooling in

Ghana and Vietnam, which was seen to have improved and become more accessible up to the secondary level. Tertiary education or technical and vocational training, however, were limited and/or unaffordable.

Findings from the sub-component analysing the effects of severe weather impacts on youth had an important common thread with the main component of the study: in the rural areas where the impact of these phenomena (flooding, drought, growing sea levels and typhoons) were studied, the most salient impact on young people's lives was identified as the loss of livelihood options and reduced incomes. In this sense, the most common adaptation strategy was for young people to migrate in search of other alternatives – which exposed them to many of the challenges found in the main component. Income shocks related to these hazards also triggered lower food consumption and accelerated school abandonment. Interestingly, in one research site where an NGO was working to develop adaptation strategies, young people had found alternative activities to generate income, decreasing dependence on less reliable livelihoods.

In summary, findings indicated that there were multiple ways in which declining incomes and the loss of livelihood options impact on young people's economic, emotional, social and physical well-being, as well as illustrating that they can adapt and find positive and negative ways in which to cope with these challenges. In the sample of youth interviewed, living in impoverished contexts and with limited formal support mechanisms, many saw themselves as having limited options and being 'abandoned' by the state. Interestingly, because the young researchers came from contexts with much better opportunities, they expressed real surprise and concern at the challenges faced by their peers, indicating important inequalities in the opportunities faced by youth, which can perpetuate cycles of poverty and inequality in adulthood.

Research methods approach

The peer-to-peer approach, utilising young researchers to interview and engage in focused conversations with other youth, was generally positive. Young researchers felt they had been able to encourage respondents to open up in a way that would have otherwise been unavailable to adult researchers. They collected important information and undertook some analysis that indicated their growing understanding of the factors that affect young people's lives in situations of poverty or precariousness.

However, this approach meant that there were gaps in information and the overall depth of analysis. Lack of experience among the young researchers resulted in an over-reliance on research instruments, which were often used as structured questionnaires rather than semi-structured guides to techniques on how to probe for richer information that would explain why some respondents faced the specific situation they were trying to explain, or how they were able to overcome it. Their lack of expertise in analysing the qualitative data meant that some nuances and insights were lost, and were not necessarily transmitted through their reporting. Nevertheless, the support and

engagement of the adult national focal points ensured that much rich information and analysis were generated and that the young researchers constantly improved their skills.

At the end of the process, after contributing to three national reports, the young researchers are keen to find ways of conveying their findings and to promote better responses to the issues from government and other stakeholders.

Recommendations

Below are some policy recommendations based on the research findings:

- Although there were relevant policies and programmes for youth in the three study countries, their scope and scale are incapable of covering the needs of many young people who face deteriorating options. The study found important constraints to the implementation of such programmes, including lack of transparency in selection processes, which meant that the most vulnerable youth were often excluded in favour of those with better connections. This requires more careful targeting and planning to ensure roll out is done more effectively, and with better information so that there is clearer understanding among stakeholders about the purpose and selection criteria for programmes, reducing young people's distrust.
- Most respondents coincided in their main concerns: affordable education (up to the tertiary or technical level) and opportunities for adequate jobs. Although it is clear that the effects of the crisis on productivity present important challenges for employment generation in the economy as a whole, a well-developed strategy that includes how to garner the gains of the recovery and focus them on employment generation, as well as identifying new economic niches adapted to the abilities of young people, both male and female, is paramount. For example, youth in Ghana have found a niche in internet fraud, an illegal activity but one that nonetheless illustrates their creative adaptability in the field of information technology. Deciding how to channel these talents in order to take advantage of the momentum of the development of information technology may open new doors for some youth in urban areas. In particular, it is important to work on combating gender stereotypes related to employment that cause a gendered division of labour whereby young women are marginalised to lower-skilled and less-paid jobs.
- Better information about the relevance of youth networks and groups needs to be disseminated among the target groups. These are spaces where young people can find motivation and support to overcome frustrations that often push young people into risk behaviour. Although these groups are not necessarily the immediate solution to income-earning challenges, they can provide a platform for identifying such opportunities, or bringing young people together to think creatively about solutions. Networks that are not politicised would better avoid excluding young people who are not inclined to be linked to government.

- Ministries and agencies in charge of youth issues should look more pro-actively for synergies with sectoral agencies in trade, agriculture, tourism, industry, education and with the private sector to find ways in which new spaces and opportunities can be created for youth through better-targeted training and the promotion of entry-level, work-based programmes.
- Better protection of young people’s labour conditions is required, including the promotion of better reporting mechanisms of, and credible sanctions against, employers who commit infractions of labour rights – including in the informal sector – to reduce the incidence of exploitation. This should include sensitisation among youth about their labour rights, despite differences in age, gender and educational background.

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Annex 1:

Monitoring the Impacts of Crisis on Youth – Desirable Indicators List 1²⁰

Note:

1. The objective of monitoring these indicators is to understand where significant changes have occurred/are occurring as a result of the crisis. The focus is therefore on changes since the onset of the crisis, and over the monitoring period, by comparing indicators at various points in time.
2. Where relevant and possible, information should be disaggregated by gender, age (15-19, 20-24), rural/urban residence, or other locally relevant factors.
3. For some issues both qualitative and quantitative indicators are suggested and for others, only one type of indicator is suggested. Where only one type of indicator is suggested, this should not preclude developing the other kind of indicator and using both. Generally, only one kind is suggested for reasons of economy. Quantitative indicators are suggested where there is likely to be quantitative data, qualitative indicators to complement or expand the qualitative indicators, or sometimes provide contextual detail. They may also help with interpreting trends in the quantitative indicators. However, teams may consider that for some issues where both are suggested, either a qualitative or quantitative indicator may be sufficient.
4. Furthermore, some of the qualitative indicators are not strictly indicators – rather issues, from which more locally relevant indicators can be derived.

Domain	Issue	Quantitative indicators	Possible sources ²¹	Qualitative indicators
1. Employment/economic activities	1.1 Impacts on youth formal sector employment	Youth employment/unemployment rates in 15-24 age group Proportion of laid-off workers aged 15-24	Administrative data Labour Force Surveys LSMS/other multipurpose household surveys	Young people's perceptions of ease/difficulty of obtaining employment Scale of young people working in multiple jobs/activities
	1.2 Impacts on informal sector employment	Proportion of 15-24s working in informal sector	Labour Force Surveys, multipurpose household surveys	
	1.3 Self-employment	Proportion of 15-24s self-employed	Labour Force Surveys, multipurpose household surveys	
	1.4 Youth not in employment, education or training²²	Proportion of 15-24s not in employment, education or training	Labour Force Surveys, multipurpose household surveys	

²⁰ This is derived from a review of internationally available literature (currently in progress). Clearly some issues will be more or less relevant in particular country contexts, and each research team will probably identify additional important indicators in their context.

²¹ Data from common international surveys are generally not collected frequently enough to monitor changes over the next year. However, if surveys have been carried out in, say 2006/7 and 2008 or subsequently, they may be revealing of the impacts of the crisis on youth to date.

²² Known as 'idle' youth in some contexts

	1.5 Adolescent (child) labour	Proportion of 15-17s working	Labour Force Surveys, multipurpose household surveys, MICS	15-17s working in specific occupations
	1.6 Wage levels/returns to enterprise	Average wage/profit in various sectors		
	1.7 Working conditions			Young people working without contracts Young people working extended hours Young people working in dangerous conditions Young people experiencing greater pressure/harshness from employers Perceptions of job insecurity (employed youth) Sexual harassment at work
	1.8 Migration	% internal migrants aged 15-24 % international migrants aged 15-24	Administrative data LSMS/other multipurpose studies	Main sources and destination areas of young migrants Migrant youth living in poor-quality housing ²³ Migrant youth unable to access key services
	1.9 Domestic work	Average hours of domestic work carried out by 15-24s	Time-use surveys	Young people reporting changing kinds of/hours of work in domestic responsibilities
	1.10 Position of socially excluded groups	% disabled 19-24s unemployed % ethnic minorities 19-24s unemployed		Changes in employment opportunities of disabled people, ethnic minorities, etc.
2. Poverty, hunger and coping strategies	2.1 Insufficient disposable incomes to meet food	% youth 15-19, 20-24 below national poverty line	LSMS/multipurpose household survey	Young people cutting back on food/receiving insufficient

²³ According to local definitions of good/poor quality, and relevant services.

	needs	% young people with insufficient calorie intake ²⁴		food/switching to less nutritious food. Adolescents not having sufficient money to pay for food at school.
	2.1 Changes in access to credit and credit use	% loans (formal sector, microcredit) made to youth % households with indebted youth % defaulters aged 19-24	Administrative data	Young people stating they have difficulties in obtaining and repaying credit Young people contributing to repaying household's loans (i.e. not contracted by them)
	2.2 Changes in asset-holding	Households with youth reporting dispossession of assets (land, livestock, jewellery, etc.)	LSMS/multipurpose household survey	Youth reporting that families have sold off assets (land, livestock, jewellery, etc.)
	2.3 Changes in household caring activities	Changes in duration of breastfeeding Proportion of mothers 15-24 working Proportion of adolescents caring for younger siblings/elders/disabled/sick household members	MICS, DHS	Young parents leaving pre-school children with grandparents/adolescent siblings or other carers while working Young parents taking pre-school children to work with them (and/or in dangerous conditions) Adolescents caring for younger siblings/elders/disabled/sick household members
3. Education	3.1 Adolescent uptake of education	Enrolment rates (at different levels of education system) Drop-out rates (at relevant levels of education system (junior secondary, high school, etc.) % youth leaving school without qualifications Rates of student absenteeism by age	Administrative data MICS Administrative data	Young people of different ages dropping out and reasons Young people attending school/university irregularly
	3.2 Education sector	Changes in budgets for primary,	Administrative data	

²⁴ Using local reference norms as these vary between countries.

	budgets	secondary, tertiary, vocational and adult education		
	3.3 Quality	Teacher absenteeism Availability of teaching materials Opportunities to learn skills with high returns in labour market	Administrative data	Young people reporting teacher absenteeism at different levels of educational system Opportunities to learn skills valued in labour market (e.g. English language, ICT, etc.)
	3.4 Costs of accessing education	Costs to families (fees, uniforms, supplies)	LSMS/multipurpose household survey	(covered under reasons for drop-out/irregular attendance)
4. Health	4.1 Health sector budgets	Changes in budgets for reproductive health, STI and HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment, substance abuse, mental health	Administrative data	
	4.2 Nutritional wellbeing	Adolescent BMI Proportion adolescents with specific micro-nutrient deficiencies	Specialised health and nutrition surveys. May be covered by DHS but adolescent BMI not usually covered.	
	4.3 General health	Rates of 15-24s using health care facilities Adolescent morbidity and mortality rates, including accidental injury rates	Administrative data DHS	Young people's perceptions of affordability and youth-friendliness of health services
	4.4 Costs of accessing health care	Costs of accessing public facilities Prices of ARVs, condoms, other contraceptives, important medicines (antibiotics, anti-TB medicines, etc.)	Administrative data, , LSMS/multi-purpose household survey Specialised studies, DHS	
	4.5 Reproductive health	Age of sexual debut % sexually active 15-24s using any contraception, % sexually active 15-24s using condoms % births to 15-19s, 20-24s	DHS, MICS	Changes in average desired and actual age of starting a family Changes in extent of adolescents and young people having sex for money (on ad hoc basis or as commercial sex workers)

		Spacing of children among 15-24s Maternal mortality among 15-19s and 20-24s; and infant mortality disaggregated by age of mother Number of young women having unsafe abortions STI and HIV/AIDS incidence rates among 15-24s ²⁵		Changes in young people using contraception (esp. condoms) Changes in extent of young people having unsafe abortions
	4.6 Substance abuse	15-24s regularly taking tobacco, alcohol, drugs, solvents ²⁶ Mortality rates from substance abuse	Administrative data	Changes in substance use behaviour of 15-24s (frequency, substance, etc.)
5. Emotional and social wellbeing	5.1 Stress	Incidence of mental health problems among youth Youth suicide rates Youth homelessness/street living ²⁷	Administrative data	Changes in intra-household conflict Young people leaving parental home due to intra-household conflict
	5.2 Forming adult relationships (marriage²⁸ and divorce)	Proportion of 15-19s and 20-24s married (<i>de facto</i> or <i>de jure</i>) Proportion of divorces among married 15-24s	Administrative data	Young people marrying earlier because of crisis-related pressures Young people postponing marriage because of crisis-related pressures Young people in forced marriages
	5.3 Social capital and connectedness	Changing frequency of social contacts of young people Receipt of financial and social support from	May be covered in social capital module of LSMS Ditto	Changes in frequency and/or kind of young people's social contacts with kin and friends Receipt of support from

²⁵ Changes in HIV/AIDS incidence, in particular, may have a longer lag time than can be captured by this research. However, this research could form a useful baseline for future research so would be worth including from this perspective.

²⁶ Insert relevant drugs for country context.

²⁷ Included because it is more usually an outcome of conflict in households than a direct outcome of poverty.

²⁸ In contexts where formal marriage is not common the term 'marriage' is intended to cover consensual unions.

		community/social/religious organisations by households with 15-24s		community/social/religious organisations
	5.4 Voice within household decision making			Perceptions of changes in young people's influence within household
6. Security	6.1 Youth as victims of violence	Proportion victims of sexual assault, grievous bodily harm, homicide aged 15-24	Administrative data	Vulnerability of young people to different crimes ²⁹ Young people committing crimes
	6.2 Youth as perpetrators of violent crimes	Proportion of violent crimes carried out by 15-24s Membership of gangs	Administrative data Specialised studies	Treatment of suspects by police/justice system ³⁰
	6.3 Youth as perpetrators of property crimes	Proportion of thefts carried out by 15-24s		Young people committing property crimes
	6.4 Domestic violence	Youth as victims of domestic violence		Perceptions of changes in domestic violence
	6.5 Involvement of youth in political violence (militancy)		Specialised studies	
	6.6 Socially excluded groups as victims of discrimination or violence			Discrimination and violence against young disabled people, ethnic minorities, etc.
	6.7 Young people in dangerous forms of work	Numbers of 15-24s engaged in commercial sex work, trafficked, drug trafficking	Specialised studies	
7. Citizenship	7.1 Access to communications	% of 15-24s who have used phone in previous month % 15-24s who have used internet in previous month		Use of phones (landline or mobile) Use of internet

²⁹ Priority crimes may vary locally.

³⁰ May be harsher in recession as attitudes harden, or more forgiving if there is greater recognition of economic/social causes of crime. This is more a background issue than an indicator, but is flagged because it would be interesting to investigate.

	7.2 Engagement in decision-making structures			Young people involved in local decision-making structures
	7.3 Youth involvement in social or political organisations			Young people involved in social or political organisations
8. Policy responses	8.1 Youth-focused employment programmes	% unemployed youth engaged in employment creation programmes	Administrative data	
		Budgets for youth employment programmes	Administrative data	
		Effectiveness of youth employment programmes		Young people perceiving programmes as effective
	8.2 Cash transfers	% poor households with youth members receiving cash transfers (CCTs, school scholarships, etc.)	Administrative data, LSMS/multipurpose household survey	Young people perceiving cash transfers as effective support in crisis
	8.3 Nutritional support	% 15-19 girls receiving relevant micronutrient supplements ³¹	Administrative data, specialised surveys	
	8.4 Childcare/early education³²	Availability of child care for young working/studying parents Children of 15-24s aged 3+ plus enrolled in pre-school ³³		
	8.5 Initiatives of youth organisations/CSOs			Knowledge of youth-focused initiatives by youth organisations/CSOs Participation in youth/CSO youth-focused initiatives

³¹ Where micronutrient deficiencies are a serious problem, insert relevant micronutrients here (anaemia, folic acid, vitamin A, etc.).

³² May be omitted if this is not important obstacle to young people (especially young women) working in study contexts. However, it may be a useful indicator of how the impacts of crisis on youth are transmitted to the next generation.

³³ Suspect this data will not be available; also depends if this is relevant in contexts studied.

Annex 2:

In-depth, semi-structured interviews with young people

Block 1 + monitoring questions

- 1) Explain the purpose of the research and what you will be using your answers for.
- 2) Explain that you will ask the interviewee questions and that he/she can respond with what they think and know (not only 'yes' or 'no' answers); and that they can also reply that they don't know, when that is the case.
- 3) Explain that this research intends to monitor changes that might be occurring as a result of the economic situation, so that you would like to interview them again in approximately four months to see if anything has changed.
- 4) The interview will take between 45 minutes to 1 hour.
- 5) Ask the person's name, contact details (mobile phone number or address) so you can contact them again in four months, but explain that the information will remain confidential and not be used to link them to what they say.
- 6) Ask him/her the following details:
 - His/her first name
 - Activity (work, and what kind; school, and what level; both work and school/house wife; caring for children/not working, studying nor of caring for family)
 - Age.

Issue	Questions
1. Employment/economic activities	
1.1 Impacts on youth formal sector employment	How do you spend your time? What about other colleagues your age, how do they spend their time?
1.2 Impacts on informal sector employment	Are young people in the community able to find work when they are looking for it? Have you noticed any changes in the past two years in the employment available for young people in the community, including for yourself? If yes, why do you think this is? Do you think that young people have different access to employment opportunities than adults? If yes, how?

	<p>Are there young people in the community who neither work, study nor have domestic/care responsibilities? If yes, what do they do?</p> <p>If there are young people in this situation, are there more in the past year or two than before?</p> <p>Who does this problem affect more, men or women?</p> <p>Are most young people in the community in formal jobs (they get social security and have a contract) or in informal jobs (without a contract or social security)?</p> <p>If they do not have contracts (informal jobs), why do you think that is? (e.g., young people don't ask for fear of losing job opportunity, employers don't want to provide contracts, young people prefer not to be tied to a job).</p> <p>What types of informal jobs do young people have? (e.g. domestic work in someone else's house, working in a shop, selling on the street, fixing things, etc.).</p> <p>Is there a difference between young women's and young men's job opportunities?</p> <p>Do you think this difference has changed in the past year or two? If so what do you think has caused that change?</p> <p>Do you know if young people in the community have been fired/lost their jobs? Or had to change jobs from the formal to the informal sector?</p> <p>Have young people started up more of their own businesses (including petty trading) to earn some money?</p> <p>If yes, what kinds of businesses are doing well and which ones are struggling?</p> <p>What do you think are the challenges young workers who lose their jobs face in finding a new job? (If respondent is unemployed, ask about the challenges he/she has faced, as well as those faced by others in the community).</p> <p>How do you think young workers are responding to this situation? (For example, looking for jobs in a new sector, accepting jobs with lower working conditions, migrating, returning to school). (If the respondent is unemployed, also ask specifically how he/she has responded).</p>
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	<p>What do you think influences these decisions about how to respond to these situations? (For example, young people's qualifications, household pressures or support, need for income, others).</p>
<p>1.3 Wage levels/returns to enterprise</p>	<p>Are there differences in wages between adults and young people working in similar jobs? And what about between young men and young women?</p> <p>Have young people's earnings changed here in the last couple of years?</p> <p>Are people able to buy less, the same or more goods and services, with the same earnings? Why?</p> <p>Are there differences in wages of young women versus young men? Do you know if this has changed over time (Have the difference increased or decreased)?</p>
<p>1.7 Working conditions</p>	<p>How are working conditions for young people in the community? Good, or not so good? (Good or bad in terms of: number of working hours, wage with respect to type of work, treatment by employer, risks faced at work).</p> <p>Have they become better or worse in the past year or two? (If respondent is employed, ask him/her specifically about his/her working conditions)</p> <p>Do you think young people in the community feel secure or insecure about being able to keep the jobs they have? Or about being able to obtain a job easily if they need one?</p> <p>Has this changed in recent times?</p> <p>Are working conditions for young people better or worse than those of adults?</p> <p>Do you know if there been a change in employers' attitudes toward young employees? (Are young employees treated differently in the last one or two years)?</p> <p>Do you know if young women have faced sexual harassment at work? Has it worsened over the past one or two years? (If it is a female respondent, you can ask if she has faced any situation of sexual harassment at work, and if so, whether this has happened over a short or long period of time).</p> <p><i>** Note: Respondents may not want to reveal this; women are often and wrongly made to feel they are to blame for such problems. If they don't want to answer, don't insist.</i></p>

	<p>Are young people in the community taking types of work that pose risks to their health (exploitative/potentially hazardous) because they cannot find work in better conditions? Do you think they do so knowing that this work has potentially harmful effects? (Collection of garbage without adequate protection, mining without adequate protection, etc.).</p> <p>Do you know of young people taking up illegal work (e.g. sex work, drug trafficking) to make money? <i>** Note: respondents might not want to reply.</i></p>
1.8 Migration	<p>Do young people in this community normally migrate to other places, or are there young migrants from other place living in the community?</p> <p>Do you know if there are more or less young people migrating in the past year or two? (Either from the community to other parts of the country or abroad, or from other places to the community).</p> <p>How are the living conditions of young migrants either in the places where they have gone to, or those young migrants in the community (in terms of housing, access to services, etc.)?</p> <p>Do families in this community receive remittances from migrants who have left? If yes, are there few or many in this situation?</p>
1.9 Position of socially excluded groups	<p>Do you think that any specific groups of young people are particularly affected by lack of opportunities? (Level of poverty/level of education; migrants, disabled, ethnic minorities, people with illnesses (HIV/Aids, TB)).</p> <p>If so, has this changed in the past year or two, or is it the same?</p>
2. Poverty, hunger and coping strategies	
2.1 Insufficient disposable incomes to meet food needs	<p>Do you think there has been a reduction in resources/income in households where young people live in the past year or two? <i>(** If the answer is 'no', move to the question about young people living on the streets)</i></p> <p>If so, what types of expenditures have been cut? (Education, health, food consumption, transport, recreation, etc.) (Ask respondent if this has happened in his/her household and if so, what have been the consequences).</p> <p>How have young people like you been affected by these cuts (direct/indirect impacts)? (For example, do they face impacts</p>

	<p>on accessing education, health; psychological/emotional well-being consequences; insufficient time to do all activities. including education).</p> <p>Has there been a change in the number of young people living on the streets, or in a situation of extreme poverty or vulnerability?</p>
2.1 Changes in access to credit and credit use	<p>Do young people in the community have access to loans?</p> <p>Have there been changes in access to loans/credit for young people in the last one or two years? (From money lenders, small credit groups, NGO programmes or sisu).</p> <p>Have young people been able to repay loans they owe? If not, what have been the consequences?</p>
2.2 Changes in asset holding	<p>Have young people or families with whom they live been forced to sell assets (land, property, jewellery, livestock, etc.) as a result of the economic situation in the past year or two? What are the consequences for young people?</p>
2.3 Changes in household caring activities	<p>Do you think the amount of time young men/women spend on domestic work (in their own household), or caring for someone (sibling/elderly/sick) has changed in the past two years? Why?</p> <p>If so, what has been the impact on their available time to work, study, play sports, other activities? How do young people feel about this?</p> <p>Are young mothers with children interested in earning income? If so, what type of work can they do to earn income? Do you think there are more or less working young mothers now than two years ago? Why?</p> <p>Who looks after the children of young parents while they work or go to school?</p> <p>Are there affordable childcare facilities? Has this changed in the past period? (If interviewee is a young mother with children: tell me how you earn income and look after your children? What are your concerns about their care?)</p>
3. Education	
3.1 Adolescent uptake of	<p>How many young people in senior secondary/high school (typically 15-18) in the community normally go to school?</p>

education	<p>(Half/quarter/less than quarter/10 %).</p> <p>Do you know if there has been a change in the number of young people completing their cycle of education, or dropping out of school in the past year or two? (If the person is in school, has he/she seen this happen with classmates? (If he/she has left school, ask why?))</p> <p>Is this different for young women and men?</p> <p>What about attending school/college irregularly (missing out classes)? Why?</p>
3.3 Quality	<p>If you are attending school, have you noticed a change in the quality of education/attendance of teachers to schools? (If not, does he/she know whether this is happening?) Why do you think this is?</p> <p>Are the education programmes teaching the skills that would be useful for young people to enter the job market? (ICT, English, practical skills)?</p>
3.4 Costs of accessing education	<p>Do you know if young people in the community can easily pay for school or do they have a difficult time? (Particularly secondary/tertiary/technical schools).</p> <p>Has paying for the costs of school become more or less difficult for young people? If so, why? What has happened as a result?</p>

Monitoring questions: To be asked every time

Summary of challenges and coping strategies	
Summary of challenges	<p>In summary, what are the main challenges that you, or other young people in your community, have faced in the last few months with respect to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employment - Education - Young people's health - Household income.
Summary of coping	<p>In summary, what have been the main coping or management strategies you or young people in your community have</p>

strategies	<p>used to mitigate the impact of these challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Looking for other forms of employment - Taking employment that does not offer good working conditions - Stopping going to school - Spending less on some goods and services - Other (specify)
Policy responses	
4.1 Overall service/programme provision by government?	<p>Do you think that government programmes or services in the community (education, health, recreation, sports, transport, employment, job counselling, any social protection services, water and sanitation) are good or bad? Are they sufficient or insufficient?</p> <p>Have young people witnessed any change in the number and types of government programmes or services that they can use (education, health, leisure, transport, employment, job counselling, any social protection services)?</p> <p>Do you think there have been any changes to the quality of services provided?</p>
4.2 Youth-focused employment programmes	<p>Are there programmes to promote youth employment (e.g. by government, NGOs)? If so, can you tell me what they are? (Their names)</p> <p>Who do these programmes target: young people with a minimum schooling and/or young people with no schooling/particularly vulnerable young people, or adolescents, women?</p> <p>If so, have they been helpful? What types of job opportunities have they created?</p> <p>Are there more or less youth programmes now than two years ago?</p>
4.3 Cash transfers	<p>Do you know of any cash-transfer programmes available in the community? If so, what population do they target?</p> <p>Have they been useful for families facing hardship in the past year or two?</p>
4.4 Initiatives of youth organisations/ CSOs	<p>Are there youth organisations in the community? What do they do?</p> <p>If so, how involved are young people? Have these been helpful for them in recent times?</p>

Block 2 + monitoring questions

Issue	Questions
1. Health	
1.1 Health sector budgets	<p>Do you have good access to health services you need?</p> <p>Have you been able to access health services normally in the past one or two years?</p> <p>If not, why?</p> <p>Have there been any changes in health services in hospitals/clinics in the past year or two?</p>
1.2 General health	<p>How has your own health been over the last two years? Has it been better or worse than in previous years? Why do you think this is?</p> <p>Sometimes, in tough economic times, people get depressed and anxious. Have you noticed this kind of change among young people in your community? What are the main reasons for this?</p> <p>Do you know of young people becoming too desperate and committing suicide because of the difficulties they have been facing?</p> <p>Sometimes young people who are stressed or depressed find it useful to have counselling services to talk to, or help from psychologists. Are there government or NGO services that stressed and depressed young people in your community can use?</p> <p>[</p>
1.3 Costs of accessing health care	<p>Have you been able to afford the costs of accessing health care? Any changes in recent times?</p> <p>What about the availability and affordability of medicines in general? Particular medicines, such as ARVs?</p>
1.4 Reproductive health	<p>At what age do you think women in the community have their first child? (Before 15, 15-18, 19-23, or 24 or older).</p> <p>Do you think that there has been a change in the number of young women/adolescents getting pregnant in the past two years? If there is a change, why do you think it is?</p>

	<p>Do young people of your age have access to contraception (family planning mechanisms), such as condoms or birth-control pills? Are they provided free or do you have to buy them? If they are freely distributed, has this continued to happen in the last year or so?</p> <p>Has there been any change in young people’s capacity to access/buy contraception methods?</p> <p>Are young women (or men) exchanging sex for money, or other things (like food)?</p> <p>Are they working as sex workers or are they at risk of trafficking (that is, when young women are sent to other places, including other countries, under false pretences, for the purpose of engaging in sex work)? Has this been the case in your community in the past year or two?</p> <p><i>**Note: respondents might find this difficult to answer; don’t insist.</i></p>
<p>1.5 Substance abuse</p>	<p>Has the consumption of drugs/alcohol by young people ever been a problem in the community?</p> <p>If yes, have you witnessed any change in young people’s use drugs or alcohol? Why do you think these changes are happening?</p> <p>What are the effects on young people of taking drugs or alcohol?</p> <p>What are the impacts on other people in the community of young people consuming more drugs or alcohol?</p>
<p>2. Emotional and social well-being</p>	
<p>2.1 Stress</p>	<p>Do you think there has been more conflict in households in the past two years (e.g. between parents and children, between spouses)? What kind of conflicts (arguments, or also violence)?</p> <p>Do you know if there is a situation of domestic violence among young couples, or of young parents against their children? More so than adult couples?</p> <p>Do you think there has been a change in this situation in the past year or two?</p> <p>Do you think that there has been a change in young people’s perception about their future in the past year or two? Are you more or less hopeful now? Why?</p>

2.2 Forming adult relationships (marriage³⁴ and divorce)	<p>At what age do young people normally separate from their parents (to marry or to live on their own)?</p> <p>Has there been any change in economic independence, with young people staying longer at their parents' homes?</p> <p>Have you seen any signs of young people getting married earlier or delaying marriage in the past one or two years? Why?</p> <p>Do you think these changes have been positive or negative for youth overall? Why?</p>
2.3 Social capital and connectedness	<p>Do young people in the community have access to social networks (friends, family, community members, formal or informal organisations)?</p> <p>If yes, do you think that in the past year young people have had more or less access to social networks for support?</p> <p>What types of social networks are available to young people?</p> <p>Do young people receive support from religious or other types of organisations?</p> <p>Have the kinds of support that young people receive from others changed in the last couple of years? (Financial support, guidance from parents/other older relatives, emotional support from friends, help in finding work, gifts/loans of money/food/other goods, etc.).</p>
2.4 Voice in household decision making	<p>Do young people in this community have a voice in household decision making when they live with parents? What sort of decisions do they usually make? (These decisions can include the following: education, marriage, expenditure of household income, etc.). (Ask the interviewee what is his/her case).</p> <p>Is this different for young women and young men?</p>
3. Security	
3.1 Youth as victims of violence	<p>Have you, or any young people you know, been victims of crime over the last couple of years?</p> <p>Thinking about young people involved in crime in this community, do you think it has increased, decreased or stayed</p>

³⁴ In contexts where formal marriage is not common the term 'marriage' is intended to cover consensual unions.

<p>3.2 Youth as perpetrators of violent crimes</p>	<p>more or less the same over the last couple of years?</p> <p>If yes, what type of crime are young people especially involved in?</p> <p>If so, what reasons do you think have contributed to this behaviour (e.g. lack of money and future opportunities, dissatisfaction/frustration, availability of weapons, lack of guidance and support from parents/ elders, etc.)</p> <p>Do you now feel more or less safe than you did two years ago? How does fear of violence make you behave differently? (Not go to school, not go to market, not get certain jobs).</p>
<p>3.4 Socially excluded groups as victims of discrimination or violence</p>	<p>Are certain groups of young people (disabled, migrants, people with illnesses, ethnic minorities, etc.) targets of discrimination and violence in this community? (By violence, we include physical violence, behavioural violence, name calling, social exclusion, and aggression in general).</p>
<p>4. Citizenship</p>	
<p>4.1 Access to communications</p>	<p>Do young people in the community have access to mobile phones and use the internet?</p> <p>Has there been a change in the access young people have of them in the past year? (For example, are they still able to pay for mobile phone cards and internet cafes?).</p> <p>Do young people have access to other sources of information, such as television, radio, journals, etc? If not, why not?</p> <p>Is it easy or difficult to access public libraries? Why?</p> <p>Are young people informed about the issues that happen in the community? (Problems, services provided, identity of main decision makers, etc.).</p>
<p>4.2 Engagement in decision-making structures</p>	<p>Are there spaces for young people's participation in community decision making, including political? (For example, discussions with members of the assembly, participation in town-council meetings, or equivalent?).</p> <p>Do you know what citizenship is? Do you think it is important for young people to exercise their citizenship?</p> <p>Are young people in the community aware of their rights?</p> <p>What do you think about the relevance of civic participation? What do your friends think?</p>

	<p>Are there mechanisms for young people to participate (particularly young people who are under-aged)? If yes, are you and the young people you know aware of the existing mechanisms/channels for civic participation?</p> <p>Has this changed in recent times? If so, why?</p> <p>Do you or your friends participate in the community? If yes, in what ways?</p>
4.3 Youth involvement in social or political organisations	<p>Do young people participate in social and political organisations? If so of what kind? (Youth wing of political party, for example).</p> <p>Has this participation increased or decreased in the past year or two?</p> <p>Do you participate in any youth groups? Do your friends participate? What is the objective of these youth groups? Why do you participate?</p>
5. Climate change	
5.1 Decline in agricultural productivity	<p>Are you aware of any impacts of climate change/weather events on your community? What have they been? (Effects of climate change include less/more rainfall, flooding, more risk of storms, drought, extreme heat, etc.).</p> <p>(Impacts: harder to make a living through farming, young people migrating from affected places, less products available in cities because of less production, etc).</p> <p>If so, how has it impacted young people in your community?</p> <p>Do you think there is awareness amongst young people in your community about the impact of climate change/weather events?</p> <p>If there have been impacts, have these added more pressure to economic hardships already faced by the community? If so, in what ways?</p> <p>In case your community has faced impacts of climate change/weather events, who are more affected, young men or women? Why?</p> <p>Do you know if there are any youth-led efforts aiming to reduce the effects of climate change/weather events in your community/country?</p>

	Has water scarcity impacted on young people in your community?
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Monitoring questions: To be asked every time

Summary of challenges and coping strategies	
Summary of challenges	In summary, what have been the main challenges you or young people in your community have faced in the last few months with respect to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employment - Education - Young people’s health - Household income
Summary of coping strategies	In summary, what have been the main coping or management strategies you or young people in your community have used to mitigate the impact of these challenges: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Looking for other forms of employment - Taking employment that does not offer good working conditions - Stopping going to school - Spending less on some goods and services - Other (specify)
Policy Responses	
4.1 Overall service/programme provision by the government?	Do you think that government programmes or services in the community (education, health, recreation, sports, transport, employment, job counselling, any social protection services, water and sanitation) are good or bad? Are they sufficient or insufficient? Have young people witnessed any change in the number and types of government programmes or services that they can use (education, health, leisure, transport, employment, job counselling, any social protection services)? Do you think there have been any changes to the quality of services provided?
4.2 Youth-focused employment programmes	Are there programmes to promote youth employment (e.g. government, NGOs)? If so, can you tell me what those are? (Their names).

	<p>Who do these programmes target: young people with a minimum level of schooling and/or young people with no schooling/particularly vulnerable young people or adolescents/women?</p> <p>If so, have they been helpful? What types of job opportunities have they created?</p> <p>Are there more or less youth programmes now than two years ago?</p>
4.3 Cash transfers	<p>Do you know of any cash-transfer programmes available in the community? If so, what population do they target?</p> <p>Have they been useful for families facing hardship in the past year or two?</p>
4.4 Initiatives of youth organisations/CSOs	<p>Are there youth organisations in the community? What do they do?</p> <p>If so, how involved are young people? Have these been helpful for them in recent times?</p>

Focus Group Discussion Questions

Introduce the project and its purpose and explain the objective of the FGD. Remind everyone to participate, not to interrupt what others say but to express their views one by one. Reiterate that all comments during the FGD will remain confidential.

You will use the following questions to guide the discussion:

1) What are some of the challenges young people face in this community?

For example, at the:

- Personal level (employment, education opportunities, health status, cost of living, loss of income, social exclusion, hunger, family relations)
- Household level (participation in decision making in the household; distribution of time doing tasks in and out of the household between brothers and sisters; expenditure decisions given many family members; forming their own family or, for those that are already parents, supporting their children, managing the need to work and the need to look after children)
- Community (participation in community decision making, availability of quality basic services; opportunities for young people; generational differences between old and young; violence or insecurity).

2) Are these challenges different for young women and for young men?

3) Did any of these challenges get easier or harder over the year or two?? If so, how? Why do you think this has happened?

4) In what ways do young people try to overcome or cope with these challenges?

(For example: borrowing money; looking for alternative forms of work (in a different sector, or work with less benefits/wages); migration for work; make different family arrangements – staying longer in the household to reduce expenses, or having more than one family come together to reduce costs – sell household assets; draw on government or NGO programmes; draw on social support mechanisms).

5) Are there currently programmes in place for young people? If so, which ones? Are they run by government, NGOs, religious organisations or private companies?

6) What is your opinion about these programmes?

7) What types of programmes or services would you like to see in place to help young people better to face challenges?

8) Do you think that there are any impacts of climate change in the community? If so, which?

(For example, less/more rainfall, flooding, more risk of storms, harder to make a living through farming, young people leaving places affected, etc.).

9) If so, are young people in the community taking any measures to mitigate these? Does the community think these changes are serious?

10) Do young people take them seriously? Would you/the community like more programmes to help with these environmental problems? What sort of actions? What could you do?

Social Impact of Economic Crises on Youth

Life History

Introduce the project and its purpose. Explain the objective of the life history interview and its format: you want the person to tell us about their life, and you will prompt them with some questions related to special areas of interest for the research. The interview will take from 60 to 90 minutes. Reiterate that all comments will remain confidential.

First, collect basic background information (first name, age, place of birth, living arrangements, position in the household).

Then, ask the following questions about the person's life:

Individual recent past

- Can you tell us what in your life has gone particularly well during the past one or two years? Have you had any important opportunities over that period?
- Can you tell us about any difficulties/challenges that have happened in your life over the past one or two years?

(For example, getting enough money, employment or work opportunities, education, health, social interactions (staying in touch with, being able to communicate with others), security, participation in the community).
- Have you always faced those challenges or only in these past couple of years? If so, why do you think this is?
- Have you/your family tried to overcome these challenges? If so, what strategies or actions have you used? How well have these strategies worked?
- How do you think your options/strategies have been similar or different to those from adults? What about to those from people your age of the opposite sex?
- In particular, have there been any government programmes or services that have helped you overcome these challenges? What about any programmes or services provided by NGOs?
- Who else has helped you overcome problems (family, friends, peer group, etc.)?

Longer past

- Thinking back to your life since you were a child until now, can you tell us what have been the key events (positive and negative) that have marked your life? This includes thinking about the things that have happened that have influenced the type of choices you have made, or the alternatives you have had since you were a child until now as a young person?
 - At a personal level (schooling, work, health, early sexual activity, deciding to get married/have child (if relevant))
 - Household level (livelihood opportunities; available household resources; decisions in the household to spend on your schooling, health or that of other members; changes in the family (birth, death, marriage, divorce etc.))
 - Community level (participation in community activities or discrimination/exclusion from community activities; participation or exclusion from participating in community decision making, situations of security / violence)

Future plans

- Given your present circumstances what are your plans in the next one or two years? What about your longer-term plans?
- Have these plans changed with respect to the plans you had one or two years ago? Why?
- Do you know if there are any programmes (to promote employment opportunities, education, health, participation, etc.) that young people in the community use? Have you ever made use of any of them? If so, how do you think that youth programmes in this community can be improved to better achieve your objectives?

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Key Informant Interview Questions

The following guide for key informant interviews is a general set of questions for the different types of key informants to be interviewed (national and local government officials; local CSO/NGO leaders). Prior to the interviews, a selection of questions will be chosen (and perhaps additional specific questions added) that correspond to the individual to be interviewed.

Questions correspond to the variables in the revised matrix.

Variables	Questions
General indicator of economic shock	<p>Do you think that the economic crisis has had any impacts in the country/community?</p> <p>If so, what have been the impacts of the crisis in the country/community?</p> <p>Do you think there have been specific impacts on youth? If so, what are these impacts?</p>
Employment/economic activities	
Young people's perceptions of ease/difficulty of obtaining employment	<p>Do you believe there is a problem with youth unemployment in this community/at the national level?</p> <p>Is this a problem that has resulted from the economic crisis or recent economic difficulties faced by the country/community, or has it been an ongoing problem?</p> <p>Have there been layoffs particularly affecting young people?</p> <p>Are there differences in wages between young women and young men? If so, has this gap widened or narrowed?</p> <p>What has been the government's response to the problem of youth unemployment? Has this response intensified as a result of the crisis?</p> <p>Has this response been effective? In what ways?</p> <p>Are there NGO/community-based organisations/private businesses supporting youth employment?</p> <p>Who are programmes targeted to? How do they aim to help young people?</p>
<p>Young people working without contracts</p> <p>Young people working extended hours</p> <p>Young people working in</p>	<p>With respect to young people (in the country/community), are they generally working in formal or informal employment? (That is, in jobs for which they have contracts and receive social security benefits, or jobs with no benefits and no contracts).</p> <p>What are some of the challenges to gaining access to formal employment?</p>

<p>dangerous conditions</p> <p>Young people experiencing greater pressure/ harshness from employers</p> <p>Perceptions of job insecurity (employed youth)</p> <p>Sexual harassment at work</p>	<p>What are some of the work-related risks (informality, long hours without compensation, dangerous conditions, harshness from employers, job insecurity) young people face in the country or community? Have these risks changed in the past year or two? If so, why?</p> <p>Are there any public, NGO or private interventions in place to improve the conditions of working youth?</p> <p>Is there any evidence of cases of sexual harassment against young women at work? Has it changed in the past two years?</p>
<p>Main geographical sources and destination areas of young migrants</p> <p>Migrant youth unable to access key services</p>	<p>Are young people over represented amongst migrants in the country / the community?</p> <p>What are the main places of origin / destination of migration?</p> <p>Are young migrants able to access key services in the same way as local youth? (for example, health, education, water/ sanitation, housing, utilities, government support or benefits)</p>
<p>Changes in employment opportunities of disabled people, ethnic minorities etc.</p>	<p>Do vulnerable youth (disabled, ethnic minority, etc.) have the same employment opportunities as other youth?</p> <p>Are these opportunities likely to have changed as a result of the economic situation?</p> <p>Are there any specific government/NGO programmes aimed at offering employment opportunities to vulnerable youth?</p>
<p>Poverty, hunger and coping strategies</p>	
<p>Young people cutting back on food/ receiving insufficient food/ switching to less nutritious food.</p>	<p>What are some of the ways that households and young people have tried to cope with not having enough money?</p> <p>Where the crisis has meant people have less money, has the government or NGOs put in place any programme to help those people? (e.g. cash transfers, others)</p>
<p>Young people stating that they have difficulties in obtaining & repaying credit</p>	<p>Have people, particularly young people, had more difficulties in getting credit or repaying loans over the last 2 years?</p>
<p>Young parents leaving preschool children with grandparents/ adolescent siblings other carers while working</p> <p>Adolescents caring for younger siblings/ elders/ disabled/ sick household members</p>	<p>Do you think that combining care and work responsibilities poses a particular challenge to young people? If so, how does it affect their capacity to continue working and/or going to school?</p> <p>Do you think that childcare arrangements have changed as a result of the economic situation? (for example, relying more on unemployed relatives, including young people/older siblings; leaving children to look after themselves at a younger age)</p> <p>Are there any free or subsidised childcare facilities available, including for young parents?</p>
<p>Education</p>	

<p>Young people of different ages dropping out and reasons</p> <p>Young people attending school/ university irregularly</p>	<p>Do young people seem to be dropping out of school/ college/ university earlier as a result of the economic situation?</p> <p>What about attending less regularly? Why?</p> <p>Are there any programmes to help young people stay at secondary school/ college? Are they run by the government or by NGOs?</p>
<p>Young people reporting teacher absenteeism at different levels of education system</p> <p>Opportunities to learn skills valued in labour market – eg English language, ICT</p>	<p>Has the current economic situation impacted on education sector spending? If so, what have been the sub-sectors or areas to be more affected?</p> <p>What does this mean for the quality of education that young people get?</p> <p>In the context of a challenging labour market, have any measures been taken to increase the availability of technical training, particularly including areas that can increase young people's employability?</p> <p>If so, what have been these measures? Are they government, NGO or private sector led?</p>
<p>Health</p>	
<p>Young people's perceptions of affordability & youth-friendliness of health services</p>	<p>Do health services provide specialised attention to young people, particularly with regards to areas (such as reproductive health)? If so have the kinds of specialised services for young people changed in the past year or two?</p> <p>Has the current economic situation impacted on health sector spending? If so, what have been the sub-sectors or areas to be more affected? (Prompt: has the affordability and availability of medicines changed? What about ARVs?)</p> <p>Has the budget for health prevention services for young people been affected by possible budget cuts?</p>
<p>Changes in young people using contraception (esp condoms)</p>	<p>Have there been any changes in the governments' actions towards sexual and reproductive health targeted at young people (information & communication activities, distribution of condoms and other forms of family planning?)</p>
<p>Changes in substance use behaviour of 15-24s (eg frequency, kind of substance)</p>	<p>Is there any evidence of a change in the patterns of substance abuse (eg drugs, alcohol taking) amongst young people, particularly in the past year or two?</p> <p>Has this pattern worsened?</p> <p>If so, are there any measures being put in place at the national/community level (government or NGOs) to mitigate the consequences of this problem?</p>
<p>Emotional and social Wellbeing</p>	
<p>Psycho-social / emotional impact of economic hardship on youth</p>	<p>Are you aware of any emotional/psycho-social wellbeing consequences of the economic situation (such as unemployment, lack of opportunities, loss of schooling, on young people (stress, depression, suicide, etc)</p> <p>Are any counselling services provided (government or NGO) to youth?</p>

Security	
Vulnerability of young people to different crimes ³⁵ Young people committing crimes	<p>Is there any evidence of a change in crime / insecurity rates in the past year or two? If so, is there any evidence to link it to the economic situation?</p> <p>Are youth particularly affected by these problems? What types of violence are young people more vulnerable to?</p> <p>Is there any evidence to suggest that young people are increasingly perpetrators of these crimes?</p> <p>Are measures being put in place by government or NGOs to reduce the incidence of violence?</p> <p>If so, are any of these measures focused specifically on youth? What are they?</p>
Treatment of suspects by police/ justice system ³⁶	<p>Is there a specific treatment for youth offenders?</p> <p>Have attitudes of the public, or the judiciary to young offenders changed since the economic downturn? (e.g. got harsher, become more understanding)</p>
Perceptions of changes in domestic violence	<p>Is there any change in the pattern of domestic violence in the past year or two?</p> <p>If so, are there any measures being taken to reduce its incidence?</p> <p>Is there evidence to link this change to the economic situation and its consequences?</p>
Discrimination and violence against young disabled people, ethnic minorities etc.	<p>In a situation of economic hardship, do young people in particularly difficult circumstances (disabled, ethnic minorities, etc) face discrimination and/or violence?</p> <p>If so, are there any mechanisms to support these vulnerable groups of youth?</p>
Citizenship	
Use of phones (landline or mobile) Use of internet	<p>Are there any actions being taken to promote the use of information technology by young people? (e.g. internet)</p> <p>If so, have such actions been affected by budgetary pressures resulting from the crisis?</p>
Young people involved in local decision-making structures	<p>Are there opportunities for young people to participate in local decision making?</p> <p>Have the voices of young people been heard in discussing ways to promote economic recovery?</p> <p>If so, through what mechanisms?</p>
Policy responses	
Young people perceiving programmes as effective	<p>What youth programmes are in place (by government or NGOs?) (mention all, across sectors)</p>

³⁵ Priority crimes may vary locally

³⁶ May be harsher in recession as attitudes harden; or more forgiving, if there is greater recognition of economic/ social causes of crime. This is more a background issue than an indicator but flagged here as it would be interesting to investigate.

	<p>From these, which are most highly prioritized by the government (including in term of budget allocation)?</p> <p>What does this prioritization respond to?</p> <p>What is the youth population targeted by these programmes? (all youth / vulnerable youth / females / males)</p> <p>How effective have these programmes been? (Impacts?)</p> <p>Were any of these programmes introduced as a response to the economic situation and the impact on youth?</p> <p>Has there been any changes in the budgetary resources / quality of these programmes in the past two years? (as a result of budget reductions, if these have occurred?)</p>
<p>Young people perceiving cash transfers as effective support in crisis</p>	<p>Are any of the government's cash transfer programmes reaching young people?</p> <p>If so, are there any assessments of the impact on young people?</p>

Annex 3:**Plan of interviews to be conducted per country, vulnerabilities in relation to economic crisis**

Instrument	Number of interviews
Key informant interviews	16 over the total research period, including national and local stakeholders
Focus group discussions	6 per site (2 with young men, 2 with young women, 2 mixed, different age cohorts) – total of 24 FGD
In depth interviews	20 per site, 10 with young men / 10 with young women, spread across different age cohorts between 14 and 25. . 80 total during the whole period
Life histories	4 per site, 2 with young men / 2 with young women – identified to face particularly difficult circumstances. 16 in total

This was the original research plan, although some adjustments were made in each country based on the capacity to identify necessary respondents, duration of the interviews and time constraints faced by the young researchers. Details of this can be found in each of the individual country reports.

Plan of interviews to be conducted per country, vulnerabilities in relation to economic crisis

