

Investing in Young People

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Cross-sector partnerships aim to match skills and jobs

Governments and business are coming to realise that educating future workers and consumers is critical for global stability, writes *Sarah Murray*

The numbers of young people across the world without jobs have reached alarming levels. Governments, companies and civil society organisations are aware of the need to reverse this trend. Yet more collective action – across regions and industrial sectors – will be essential if countries are to prevent youth joblessness from causing a downward spiral into poverty, instability and civil unrest.

“The youth bulge is a dividend in the making economically, if countries get it right,” says William Reese, president of the Baltimore-based International Youth Foundation (IYF). “And a liability if, for whatever reasons – economic or political stagnation – they get it wrong.”

When it comes to youth unemployment, the figures look stark. Young

people are almost three times more likely to be unemployed than adults and globally almost 75m youths aged 15-20 were seeking work in 2011, up 4m since 2007, according to the International Labour Organisation.

In Africa, which has the youngest population in the world, young people make up 37 per cent of the working-age population, according to the World Bank, but constitute 60 per cent of the total unemployed.

Even if the result is not crime or unrest, joblessness and prolonged inactivity bring stress, social risks and diminished confidence – all of which further damage young people’s employment prospects.

Opportunities do exist. With food security a global concern and long-term trends pointing to higher prices for agricultural commodities, young



Left behind: girls still lose out to boys when it comes to getting the education they need to find jobs

Alamy

people could play a role as farming entrepreneurs.

Yet with many leaving rural areas to seek jobs in cities, work needs to be done to provide the training and technology needed to generate higher yields and to persuade young people that agriculture is a promising career.

Sluggish global growth continues to have a significant effect on youth unemployment. However, lack of jobs is not always the problem. In some cases, a mismatch exists between employment opportunities and the availability of young job candidates in possession of the right skills.

Moreover, joblessness is not the only challenge facing young people. Gender inequalities persist, with girls still losing out to boys when it comes to getting the education they need to move into employment. Progress has

been made in shrinking the proportion of girls not attending primary school – the number halved between 1999 and 2010, while the number of teenage girls out of school fell by more than a third. Yet keeping girls in school is a battle yet to be won, with many still marrying and having children at a young age. About 16m girls aged 15-19 give birth every year, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO).

While practical, economic and cultural factors combine to create barriers to many young people receiving the education and training they need to enter the workforce, girls have an added disadvantage, particularly in poor communities, argues Nora Fyles, senior education adviser at the UN Children’s Fund.

“When there is a resource choice, the issue of gender equality and the

role of girls and women in society is the driver behind the decision as to whether or not the girl should go to school,” says Ms Fyles, who is head of the UN Girls’ Education Initiative.

Health risks are also among the challenges. Young people are often at greater risk of disease, with those between the ages of 15-24 accounting for 40 per cent of all new HIV infections, according to the WHO.

Yet health problems often have their roots in lack of economic opportunity. Joblessness, combined with lack of family support and social exclusion, can lead young people into the sex trade or drug use, increasing their risk of HIV infection.

“Across the wide range of issues affecting young people today, increasing economic opportunities is the one

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Combating poverty

Team activities can teach vital skills to poor children, says *Sarah Murray*

It is not often you find a game of football with no referee and “three halves” in which pre- and post-match discussions are as much a part of the game as field tactics.

But the scheme football3, developed by Street World Football, is not only designed for enjoyment, it is also being used as a tool to build confidence and skills in disadvantaged young people.

Street World Football, which supports a global network of organisations, is one of a number of ways in which sport is being used as a force for change in young people’s lives, from boxing academies that combat youth violence to team games promoting girls’ empowerment.

“The main advantage of sport is that because interest in playing sport already exists, it acts as a bridge that kids willingly cross to reach other impacts, whether that’s health, education or peace building,” says Clare Zurawski, head of partnership development at Street Football World. “It’s not like you have to twist anybody’s arm to reach those resources.”

This is a principle embraced by a growing number of organisations devoted to fostering the potential of young people living in difficult conditions.

The International Cricket Council, for example, has joined forces with Unicef (the UN children’s agency), UNAids and the Global Media Aids Initiative to highlight the plight of young people living with and affected by HIV-Aids and to combat discrimination against them with the Think Wise project.

The first component of this is to raise greater

awareness, with top international cricketers acting as advocates, broadcasting messages about HIV that are delivered through announcements, publications and online media.

At the same time, the project is developing local “cricket for development” projects designed to help young people reduce their vulnerability to HIV by boosting their confidence, skills and knowledge.

In slum areas, the UN Human Settlements Programme has been working with sports organisations to find ways of building confidence and skills in young slum dwellers.

Meanwhile, in Mexico, the *Deportes para Compartir*, or Sports for Sharing initiative, is taking the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and turning them into games and physical activities.

As well as raising awareness of the MDGs, the initiative also aims to foster healthy lifestyles and introduce young people to cultural diversity.

Using similar principles to football3 – such as the absence of a referee –

Sports for Sharing teaches values such as the importance of gender equality (which relates to MDG 3, targeting gender equality and women’s empowerment) through games in which mixed-gender teams have to create strategies to reach a common goal.

“And at the end of the game, there’s a circle of reflection where they can talk about what they learnt

‘What sport does for those under troubled clouds is allow them to escape’

about gender equality and what they can contribute their community,” explains Dina Buchbinder Auron, director of the programme.

She believes sport is one of the most effective ways of developing values in young people. “Instead of teachers telling children why it’s important to have gender equality, children

are learning for themselves why gender equality is important to their lives,” she says.

Sports for Sharing trains teachers across Mexico to deliver the programme, which now reaches 63,000 young people. And the organisation is looking to expand, through partnerships both inside Mexico and internationally.

Sport is also seen as a way of helping some of the world’s most underprivileged young people – refugees. As well as living in desperate conditions, young refugees escaping situations of conflict are often suffering from trauma resulting from loss of family members, violence or rape.

“A refugee camp is a horrible place,” says Claude Marshall, refugee sport coordinator and a full-time volunteer consultant at the UNHCR, the UN refugee agency. “They may live in a hut they build themselves, they get a food ration, medical help and education – but after the age of 12 these kids have nothing to do.”

Sport can fill the gap. Games can also provide displaced young people with a sense of normality when they are living in very unfamiliar surroundings.

“Play is natural and sport is part of that,” says Mr Marshall. “And what sport does for those living under troubled clouds is allow them to escape from that in a way that very little else will do.”

Whether in refugee camps or poor neighbourhoods, games such as football have another advantage – they are relatively cheap. “In the case of football, it doesn’t require a lot of gear and it can be done on the street,” says Ms Zurawski.

The other big advantage of sport is that it is popular with almost all young people and it can even break through income and ethnic divides. “We work in a wide range of contexts – cities, jungles, mountains – and every group of children is invited to participate,” explains Ms Buchbinder Auron. “Sport is a universal language.”



Common goals: the Sports for Sharing initiative in Mexico

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Investing in Young People

Obstacles still block path to girls' schooling

Education When there are choices to be made in poor families, it is usually females who suffer, reports *Sarah Murray*

Pictures of Malala Yousafzai leaving hospital this month served as a reminder of both the threats to girls' education from extremists and the courage of activists such as Ms Yousafzai, the young Pakistani shot last year by Taliban militants.

However, extremist views are just one of a complex web of barriers that prevent girls from getting an education. Some obstacles are easier to fix than others. These include practical issues, such as the distance from home to school and the vulnerability of girls.

John McLaverty, an education campaigner for Oxfam, remembers meeting a young girl in Sierra Leone who had to walk almost four hours to and from her village to school every day, which meant setting off before dawn and arriving home after dark.

"That's a major barrier," says Mr McLaverty. "And the solution is to have schools closer to where people live and to provide some transport, such as bicycles."

Some barriers are less obvious. Lack of toilets and sanitation affects girls more than boys, particularly as girls reach puberty, with menstruation often forcing them to miss a week's schooling each month.

When Water Aid, a non-governmental organisation, studied groups of girls from schools in Nepal it found the main reason they were absent during menstruation was lack of waste disposal facilities, lack of privacy and water shortages.

"There are these factors that we don't always think of," says Shalini Nataraj, director of advocacy and partnerships at the Global Fund for Women, which makes grants that support and strengthen women's rights groups.

Ms Nataraj stresses the need to gain intimate knowledge of families and communities in order to identify and remove such obstacles to girls' education, particularly when it comes to culturally sensitive issues.

"Some of our grantees make sanitary napkins available to girls," she says. "But to do that, you have to work at the community level and know the context and chip away at all



Symbol of struggle: Malala Yousafzai leaving hospital earlier this month **AP**

the barriers that are keeping them from gaining an education."

Poverty, of course, is at the root of many of the barriers to girls' education. But when lack of funds forces families to make choices about their children's education, cultural views of the role of girls and women in society shape the decision, argues Nora Fyles, senior education adviser at the United Nations Children's Fund and head of

the UN Girls' Education Initiative. She cites the hypothetical example of a poor family with one boy, two girls and two chickens. When it comes to schooling, and the family must sell one of the chickens to buy a school uniform, the boy is invariably chosen.

"Among all the barriers – distance from school, burden of chores, unsafe environments, lack of latrines – at the end, when there's a decision to be

made, the girl is disadvantaged," says Ms Fyles.

And while progress has been made in getting more girls into school, experts stress the need to keep them there. In the developing world, except China, one in seven girls will be married before the age of 15, while half of all first births are to adolescent girls, according to the Nike Foundation, funded by the sportswear group, whose Girl Effect initiative invests in girls as a poverty reduction strategy. "We know that as girls remain in school, the rate of return on the investment can be as high as 15 per cent," says Ms Fyles. "But when they come out of school as young adults for marriage we lose that."

When girls remain in school the broader benefits are significant. Studies show, for example, that the longer girls spend at school, the less likely it is they will contract HIV, malaria and other diseases. And it has long been recognised that funding girls' education has a high social and developmental return, giving more women access to labour markets and boosting their eventual wages.

It was for this reason that the Nike Foundation launched its Girl Effect initiative. "In 2004, when we were looking at ways to end intergenerational poverty, the investment with the highest rate of return was adolescent girls," explains Howard Taylor, the foundation's managing director.

Mr Taylor argues that it is important to reposition girls in society by educating those taking decisions about the resources allocated to girls, whether policy makers, community and religious leaders or parents.

However, attention also needs to be paid to the quality of education being delivered, including teacher training and textbooks. "There's been success in expanding the numbers," says Mr Taylor. "But if you don't then have a quality education that leads to life changes for girls, then quite quickly that cycle breaks."

For Ms Nataraj, investing in this way is money well spent. "Getting girls to school and keeping them there pays off in the long run in trillions of dollars saved or added to economies," she says.

'The solution is to have schools near where people live'

Cross sector effort needed

Continued from Page 1

unifying issue," says Zeenat Rahman, special adviser for global youth issues at the US State Department.

The department recently launched the Startup Youth initiative to work with the private sector to foster youth employment and entrepreneurship opportunities. It is one of a number of cross-sector partnerships emerging as governments recognise the need to work with the corporate sector to increase not only job opportunities but the employability of young people.

"There are many ways to partner with government," says Akhtar Badshah, senior director of community affairs at Microsoft, one of the companies participating in the Startup Youth programme. "Some are direct, between a company and a government, and in other cases, it's being part of a broader initiative."

One example of a broad-based alliance – in which Microsoft is also involved – is New Employment Opportunities (NEO), an alliance of companies, governments and civil society organisations led by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the IYF.

With the aim of expanding job training and placement opportunities for 1m young people across Latin America and the Caribbean, the NEO alliance is one of the first examples of an initiative involving leading organisations across an entire region.

For the private sector, powerful business incentives exist to join such programmes – young people are their future consumers

Exodus raises fears for future of commodities

Farming

Companies are trying to increase the industry's appeal, writes *Sarah Murray*

While child labour remains a cause for concern in coffee and cocoa production in the developing world, global buyers of these commodities are also worried about the ageing workforce. Many smallholder farmers are growing older and their offspring are abandoning rural areas, and the question is how to make commodities farming appealing to younger people.

Most statistics point to a demographic shift in rural areas. In one study for Cadbury, on cocoa farmers in the Ashanti, western, south and eastern regions of Ghana, the average age of the farmers was 51.

The research also found significant differences in productivity by age, with older farmers producing lower yields per acre than younger farmers, who were more likely to use modern farming techniques and introduce innovative production methods.

"When we look at our growth and how we can supply demand going forward, that's a big challenge for us," says Roland Weening, vice-president of marketing and sustainability for the coffee business of Mondelez International, the global snacks group (formerly Kraft Foods).

A number of reasons lie behind the changing demo-

graphics of coffee and cocoa farming. For a start, poor diets and lack of access to services can drive the children of coffee farmers to seek a better life elsewhere.

"As a young person, food security is a problem, as well as access to education, healthcare and clean water," says Rick Peyser, director of social advocacy and supply chain community outreach at Green Mountain Coffee Roasters (GMCR). "A lot of fundaments are just not there."

With the International Centre for Tropical Agriculture, GMCR conducted research into conditions in farming households in Latin America. It found all families experienced food scarcity, particularly after the harvest period.

Even if basic needs are being met, the low earning potential of smallholders is also driving young people to leave rural areas, often with parental support. In the Cadbury study, many farmers said they were reluctant to have their children to work in the cocoa sector because it was seen as low-status, dangerous and labour intensive.

"There's also an image problem of farming, which is about people not viewing it as a good profession," says Mr Weening. "It's about people's pride, being respected and feeling they're leading a satisfying and worthy life."

With the long-term sustainability of supplies in mind, cocoa and coffee buyers are taking action to reverse the youth exodus.

In November, Mondelez announced an investment



Crop growth: smallholders can be taught to increase yields

of \$400m over the next decade in measures designed to improve livelihoods and living conditions for more than 200,000 cocoa farmers and about 1m people in cocoa farming communities.

Much of the emphasis of the Mondelez investment is on fostering the next generation and helping turn cocoa farming villages into places people want to live.

Of course, part of this involves raising incomes by helping farmers adopt tech-

'Food security is a problem, so are education, healthcare and clean water'

niques that allow them to become more efficient and productive. "Through education and training we can, in many cases, double or triple their yields," explains Mr Weening.

Agricultural training and support also helps farmers move beyond being labourers to becoming agricultural entrepreneurs skilled in everything from effective pruning to water management. "That provides them with economic prospects but it's also more interesting when you're not just a picker but an agronomist," says Mr Weening.

An equally important strategy is helping farmers diversify sources of income by adding new crops or other cash-generating activities, such as bee keeping.

Mr Peyser cites the example of a farming couple with an acre-and-a-half of coffee growing land in Nicaragua. The couple, who have been participating in one of GMCR's food security programmes, started planting fruit trees and processing the fruit into marmalade for sale in the local market, and cultivating passion fruit, which has added \$700 a month to their income.

Such strategies not only increase farmers' revenues but protect them against falls in global coffee or cocoa prices. "The idea is not to pull farmers out of coffee but to supplement their coffee production and help them get more out of farming," says Mr Peyser.

However, Solitaire Townsend, co-founder of Futerra, the sustainability communications firm, says companies may need to look for the less obvious factors deterring young people from farming.

"The little secret of every marketer is that your audience tells you the answer," she says. "What needs to be done is to ask young people what they want from farming. The assumption is that they'll say good schools and income – but they might also say internet connections and football."

Challenge is to create an appealing career option

Case study

Stryde programme

Sarah Murray looks at an innovative way of encouraging a new generation to work the land

One way of preventing young people from leaving rural areas is to provide them with opportunities to become more than farm labourers.

This is the aim of a programme funded by the MasterCard Foundation and run by TechnoServe, a US-based non-profit organisation.

The programme will be rolled out across three countries – Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda. And, with youth unemployment a growing problem in all three, especially in rural areas, the challenge for the programme is to change a culture in which young people see farming as career of last resort.

"Historically you didn't make much money in farming," says Bruce McNamer, TechnoServe's president and chief executive.

To change this, MasterCard will invest \$11.5m in the four-year Strengthening Rural Youth Development through Enterprise (Stryde) programme.

Running the programme is TechnoServe, which equips entrepreneurs in the developing world to establish businesses that create jobs and reduce poverty.

The goal of the Stryde programme is to provide about 15,000 young people living in rural areas with skills training, business development and mentoring to help them take up agricultural value chain opportunities.

"The aspiration of the programme is commercial and it will be measured that way," explains Mr McNamer.

Impact assessment, he says, will focus on how many small businesses have been established and

how many jobs created as a result, as well as the longer-term effect of making rural areas places in which young people can make money.

Opportunities for entrepreneurs might include starting small businesses supplying agricultural inputs, providing logistics, warehousing facilities or offering packaging, irrigation or crop spraying services.

"It's looking at a broader set of ways that you can make life in a rural area more attractive by extending beyond farming to enterprise creation," says Mr McNamer.

This, he says, means

'Make life in a rural area attractive by extending beyond farming to enterprise creation'

helping develop robust commercial agricultural models that enable young people to think about farming as a business proposition. The next step is to provide skills training and access to the capital needed to finance those businesses.

In the countries targeted by the Stryde programme, few such opportunities have been taken up by young people, largely because of lack of training or lack of access to capital.

For this reason, the scheme has a strong emphasis on education. Participants will embark on a three-month training

programme designed to develop entrepreneurship and career skills and they will receive an additional nine months of mentorship and counselling from a youth trainer.

They will also be able to participate in business plan competitions and can attend job fairs, at which they will meet representatives from local businesses.

"Not everyone is going to be an entrepreneur," says Mr McNamer. "But to the extent that there's an emerging set of agricultural value chain opportunities, there is also potential for starting small companies that have job creation opportunities around them."

He stresses that these kinds of skills training programmes need to be accompanied by efforts to change young people's perceptions of prospects in rural areas.

"It's not as if they're moving to leafy suburbs – they're moving to slums," he says. "The movie is predicated on stories about getting rich quick and most of the time that doesn't bear out. So there is a marketing dimension to this, too."

However, Mr McNamer believes that by presenting young people with economic opportunities that go beyond agricultural production, programmes such as Stryde can contribute to stemming the

flow of young people to urban areas.

"There are increased incentives for kids to stay down on the farm because they are making money," he says.

'Five or 10 years ago, you wouldn't have had an office focusing on youth issues'

and employees. "It's imperative to work with the private sector on this," says Ms Rahman. "They are the ones who create the [paths to] jobs, particularly for young people."

But while it might not be surprising that the IDB and the IYF are engaged in youth initiatives, the involvement of an organisation such as the US State Department – which now has an Office of Global Youth Issues – represents something of a departure.

It shows growing recognition of the link between the ability of the world's young people to lead economically productive lives and global political stability. "Looking at the history of diplomacy this is a new development," says Ms Rahman. "Five or 10 years ago, you wouldn't have had an office focusing on youth issues."

Yet despite a range of public and private sector initiatives, painfully slow economic recovery means that, in many places, governments and companies are struggling to reverse youth unemployment.

Mr Reese believes the response of governments to youth unemployment remains inadequate. "By and large, governments want to do the right thing," he says. "And it's not that there's no money for education – it's that it's being poorly spent, with vocational training falling even further behind public education in high schools and colleges."

The danger is that when youth unemployment is not addressed, countries and regions are at greater risk of instability, as the Arab uprisings showed. In areas affected by conflict and violence, surveys conducted for the World Bank's 2011 Development Report found unemployment and idleness were cited as the most powerful factors driving young people to rebel movements. "Young people will make their societies either grow and become more stable if they're employed and good citizens," says Mr Reese, "or more difficult if they're unemployed and not engaged socially, politically or economically."

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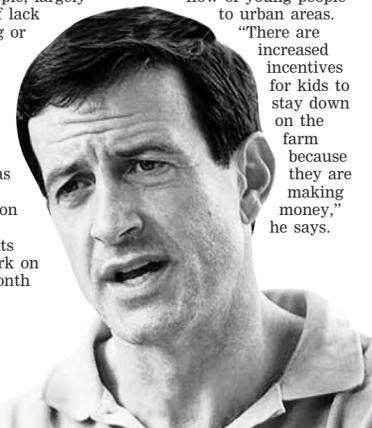
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Investing in Young People

Latin-American scheme offers hope for future

Life skills A project to train and create job placements for the under-30s is spreading across the region, says *Andres Schipani*

In a city where shanty towns of red cinder block bricks spill down the hills, being a hard-working and intellectually curious youngster is not easy. Here displaced people, victims of the continuing armed conflict in the jungles and mountains, seek refuge, employment and hope, but instead find only poverty and drug-fueled gang violence.

"The options for me were simple: join a gang, leave, or die," says Néstor Pérez, 25. "Studying or getting a decent job was never an option."

His story is like that of many young people in Medellín – once infamous for being the world's kidnapping, murder and drug trafficking capital.

But Colombia's second city has turned the page, and is no longer stigmatised by the cocaine trade and its violence. This is partly thanks to Sergio Fajardo – the governor of Antioquia, former mayor of Medellín and a US-trained mathematician – who increased the spend on education. He argued that, with this investment, youngsters would develop the skills they needed to compete in education. For him, entry or re-entry into society requires a broad approach, comprising psychological attention, social educational and vocational training, so people such as Néstor can succeed.

One of those programmes, which bore the motto "being good pays", was developed with the International Youth Foundation (IYF) and Néstor was one of its beneficiaries. In 2008, after queueing for hours to fill in an application, he was accepted. After a year of basic training in business administration he found a job at a company that provides health services, and he is finishing a bachelor's degree. He is married to another participant and hopes to be able to earn a

master's degree in law. "I haven't just learnt the technical tools to find and manage a job. I learnt how to have a life plan," says Néstor.

Schemes such as this have served as launch pads for more ambitious regional plans. Inspired by similar experiences in several countries, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), with IYF and some private corporations based around the region, launched New Employment Opportunities (NEO) in April last year, during the Americas Summit in the colonial city of Cartagena.

This alliance aims to create a regional partnership that works with governments, civil society organisations and companies to expand job training and placement opportunities for 1m young people aged 16-29 in the next decade across Latin America and the Caribbean. The focus is on 32m youngsters around the region, one out of every five of whom is neither working nor studying, so they have much higher unemployment rates than adults, 13 per cent against 5 per cent. And about 50 per cent of those who have a job are in an informal one.

"Through NEO, companies, governments and development institutions will work together to address two of the most urgent issues facing our region: youth unemployment, and unmet demand for skilled workers," Luis Alberto Moreno, the IDB's president, told the Financial Times.

NEO aims to achieve job placement rates of at least 50 per cent for its graduates while strengthening the capacities of about 200 job-training providers. Nancy Lee, general manager of the Multilateral Investment Fund, or MIF at the IDB, says this can be achieved without the need of overhauling the education system of each

Rugby Minority sport has proved to be a game-changing way out of poverty and despair

At 27, José Manuel Diosa is already a legend at a brand-new sports complex that is an oasis among the shacks and shanties that drip off the mountains.

Mr Diosa's family moved to the outskirts of Medellín after being violently displaced by armed conflict. He was a rough and problematic child who was heading for a life of crime – a local criminal gang had already targeted him as a potential member.

Then one day, 12 years ago, someone showed him something he had never seen before: an oval-shaped ball.

"If not for rugby, I'd be dead in a ditch by now, shot in the head or something," he says, before kicking a drop during a training session inside the Andean country's only rugby pitch.

The \$2m field was built by the government of the city of Medellín, which supports the promotion of rugby as a way of providing a second chance to children without opportunities.

Mr Diosa, a scrum-half, is now the captain of Colombia's national team and was named South American player of the year. With support from the regional government he also received a scholarship to study physical education and now works as a coach.

Many have followed in his footsteps. "What would it be if these guys were without rugby? They would be running around the hills selling drugs or shooting people," says Andrés Gómez, head of the Colombian Rugby Federation. "They fell in love with something, and that's what they needed: to fall in love with something."

Rugby started in Colombia in the late fifties and early sixties imported by staff of British oil companies in the Andean country. Derbies used to be Royal Dutch Shell v BP, but the sport never really took off.

However, it experienced a renaissance in 2004 thanks to a handful of amateur



Life-enhancing conversion: Colombian captain José Manuel Diosa

local rugby players. Backed by a French rugby coach and Mr Gómez, then a physical education teacher working for the regional government, the sport has increased from 500 players to more than 10,000. Unlike other South

American nations such as Argentina, Chile and Uruguay, where the sport established itself as an institution in the upper echelons of society, more than 75 per cent of Colombia's rugby players come from the most impoverished and

violent backgrounds, such as Mr Diosa.

The Colombia national team's first rugby coach, Mauricio Henao, says: "At first, we had to negotiate with gangs in order to be able to show the sport around schools in some shanty towns. Some people, especially football fans, saw it as a threat."

"But the children who adopted rugby managed to isolate the combative aspects of the sport from the internal armed conflict and the hardship of their everyday lives."

After having watched the Clint Eastwood-directed film *Invictus* about the still apartheid-torn South Africa rallying together behind its national rugby team, Colombia's anglophile president, Juan Manuel Santos, tried to emulate the experience, in a country divided by a 50-year internal armed conflict, with football.

The attempt did not work. So the country's foreign ministry suggested rugby and the amateur players started to receive some help from the national government.

If South Africa has the antelope-like Springboks, Australia the Wallabies, and Argentina the Pumas, Colombia has chosen a tropical animal that fits the bill, the Toucans. The next step is to get up to 15,000 players in the next two years and participate in the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro in 2016.

"Rugby teaches values such as discipline and structure," says Andrew Wright, a Newcastle-born banker and rugby player who has worked to spread the gospel of the game in Colombia since the decade began. "That has proved key not only for the success of the sport in the poorest sectors of Colombian society," he adds, "but for the overall life success of these kids as well."

Andres Schipani

country. The programme was initially developed to work in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Panama, Peru and Uruguay.

Ms Lee's MIF contribution to NEO was 18 years of private sector experience, which allowed her to offer youth training models that have achieved between 50 and 70 per cent job placement rates by mixing life and technical skills training with internships and job placement support.

Private sector companies currently involved include Walmart, the convenience store group, Caterpillar, the construction vehicle maker, Microsoft, the software company, Cemex, the building materials group, and Arcos

Dorados, the world's largest franchise of the McDonald's fast-food group. Yet up to 1,000 other private companies could help with funding, or provide internships, mentoring, or entry level jobs, as well as advice on training for specific industries.

"NEO is trying to change the mindset of companies and governmental programmes of these kind," says Clara Restrepo, Colombia's deputy director of IYF.

"By providing training and jobs in the areas we operate in, we as company will benefit. The youngsters will benefit, the state will benefit, the civil society will benefit," says Ms Herrera. "The region as a whole will benefit."

'Companies, governments and institutions will work together to address two of the most urgent issues facing our region'

Employability is key component of a strategy to solve jobs crisis

Public-private projects

Training is essential to address the skills shortage facing employers, writes *Sarah Murray*

While governments play a critical role in fostering job development and youth empowerment, they cannot work alone. As a result, some are establishing initiatives with the private sector. Given the role of corporations as employers, this might seem obvious. Yet some argue governments could be doing more to work with companies on youth employability.

Both have compelling reasons to tackle youth unemployment. For companies, this is about more than "doing the right thing". Despite rising unemployment levels, many sectors struggle to find qualified candidates for the jobs they need to fill – particularly as a growing number of their older workers are retiring.

For governments in countries with rising youth unemployment, the need for action has taken on a new urgency.

In some west African countries, for example, where youth unemployment has remained at about 12 per cent for the past decade according to the UN, youth demands for economic opportunities have led to civil unrest and rising crime. "If we don't figure out pathways for young people to get meaningful employment they remain idle and frustrated and are going to protest for change," says Jamie McAuliffe, president and chief executive of Education for Employment (EFE), a network of non-profits working to create economic opportunity for youth in the Middle East and north Africa.

Some governments are taking action, not only at a local level, but on the global stage through their diplomatic and international development agencies. For the US, expanding

opportunities for young people is seen as a way to secure greater stability and global economic growth. With this in mind, the US State Department recently hosted the launch of the Youth Livelihoods Alliance – a partnership of global companies and others working to promote youth employment worldwide.

In Latin America – where one in every five young people is neither working nor in school – an initiative harnessing private sector capabilities is New Employment Opportunities, a programme developed by the Inter-American Development Bank with the International Youth Foundation. Its goal is to increase job entry among poor and low-income young people.

Corporate participation in the programme involves an initial investment from sponsors of \$37m in cash and in-kind resources and the promise of employment opportunities and training. Arcos Dorados, the world's largest McDonald's restaurant franchisee, for example, will provide more than 30,000 jobs and an average of 500 hours of annual training over the next five years.

But, while many public-private partnership programmes are focused on job

creation, often what needs to be addressed is a mismatch between employment opportunities and young people's employability.

This was the conclusion of the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the private sector arm of the World Bank, when it investigated why the Arab world had the world's highest youth unemployment rates.

"One of the main issues facing youth in the region

'If you don't listen to young people and provide them with hope, they will agitate for change'

was a skills mismatch," says Dahlia Khalifa, regional head of IFC, an IFC-World Bank Group programme investing in youth employment in the Middle East and north Africa.

"The education systems were failing to produce youth with the right skills to match what was needed by the marketplace."

The cost of youth unemployment in the region is staggering. The IFC study

estimates the level of unemployment in the region represents up to \$50bn a year.

Some barriers to youth employability do not need massive government investment but simply a more strategic approach to regulatory requirements.

Ms Khalifa cites Egypt's legal requirements for private sector investment in university education. "To invest in a private university if you see a market need, you need to get a presidential decree," she says. "But only five such decrees have been given over the past 10 years."

Governments can also make facilities available to companies to use for youth training. In Morocco, for example, EFE has secured training and employment commitments from a consortium of the country's largest businesses while the government is providing free access to more than 400 youth centres.

Even so, says Mr McAuliffe, governments are not making investments commensurate with the scale of youth unemployment. "We're still not seeing the commitments needed at national policy level in many countries," he says.

Woods Staton, president and chief executive of Arcos Dorados, argues that while governments can offer tax incentives to companies providing youth training and employment opportunities, they also need to interact more regularly with the corporate sector.

"Our communication with governments has been on an ad hoc basis," he says. "There's not enough going on between the private and the public sectors."

And if governments should listen to what companies need in the way of skills, all sectors need to remember not to ignore their most critical stakeholders – young people themselves.

"One of the things policy makers, business and educational leaders need to do is listen to young people," says Mr McAuliffe. "If you don't listen to young people and give them hope, they will agitate for change."

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Investing in Young People

'City of death' emerges from shadow of gang war

Urban violence

Juárez starts to write a new chapter as murder rate falls and employment picks up, writes Adam Thomson

Two years ago, when armed gunmen opened fire on a party of teenagers in a poor neighbourhood of Ciudad Juárez, the city on Mexico's northern frontier reached its lowest point. The massacre, which left 16 dead, was part of a turf war between two drug cartels that turned Juárez into the world's deadliest city.

The bloodshed – the murder rate reached 224 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2010 – coincided with a sharp fall in employment as the US economic crisis gutted Juárez's manufacturing-for-export (*maquila*) sector, which lost 20 per cent of its jobs, according to the Amac, the local *maquila* association. "It was the perfect storm," says José Luis Armendáriz, Amac's president.

The effect of both phenomena on the city's youth – half of Mexico's 112m inhabitants are under 29, according to HSBC – was traumatic. Not only did the violence curtail any sort of nightlife but the resulting lack of jobs from the US crisis made the prospects of finding factory work much harder.

To make things worse, successive local governments in Juárez had largely ignored, or underestimated, the effects of the lack of green spaces and social infrastructure in the city. Nowhere was this more glaring than in Villas de Salvárcar. Rodrigo Cadena, who grew up in the neighbourhood, was a fanatical American football player. But even though he had a team, he never got to play on a pitch that was surfaced with anything other than uneven dirt: he was one of the victims of the shootings.

"The government abandoned us," says Adrián Cadena, Rodrigo's father. "They used to call this 'the city of death'. They didn't go far enough."

The inevitable consequence of the lack of investment and lack of access to opportunities for Juárez's youth was a growth in the city's gangs, membership of which at least provided young people with a way of making money and, more important, perhaps, a sense of belonging in a city in which all too often children are left at home – or to wander the streets –



Seeking justice: red shoes symbolising missing women are left by their relatives in Ciudad Juárez. Hundreds have disappeared, many without trace, since 1993 Getty

Community focus Campaign provides children with alternatives to crime, violence and drugs

For many years, children and adolescents growing up in the Francisco I. Madero neighbourhood of Ciudad Juárez had little to do but to roam the many dusty and often dangerous streets. There were no playgrounds and the only open spaces were a couple of vacant lots overgrown with desert scrub.

Today, they have a community centre that provides not only a safe place to go after school while their parents return from work but also a space in which they can develop interests and learn new skills.

The facility is one of 48 similar centres that have sprung up over the city of about 1.5m on Mexico's arid border with Texas in the past few years as part of a government strategy to provide opportunities for youths who had few options previously.

According to Maurilio Fuentes, the local government's community centres' director, more than 3,000 people use

the facilities each week, taking part in activities ranging from sport to catching up on basic education. "The centres have become community hubs," says Mr Fuentes. "They provide spaces in which young people who might be enemies on the streets come together and make friends."

What is novel about these oases of recreation and learning is that they are the product of an agile co-ordination and co-operation between Mexico's federal government, which provides the funds through its *Todos somos Juárez* (We are all Juárez) programme, the local state and municipal governments and non-governmental organisations.

The Pedro Zaragoza Vizcarra Foundation, for example, a local group that helps provide essential services to the poor, has helped out by supplying food.

Meanwhile, the International Youth Foundation (IYF), which provides

learning and job training facilities to youths all over the world, is working with local authorities to give young people in Juárez the possibility of acquiring the skills needed to compete in the jobs market.

That course is then followed by six months of training to teach them the sorts of skills that will help them get a job. Mr Acosta Estrada says that about 900 youths have taken the courses so far, and that more than 65 per cent of them found full-time jobs after completing the six months.

Gaining employment in a city such as Juárez, where a drugs war sent the murder rate rocketing in 2009 and 2010, is not only the first step to economic solvency but also the chance to escape what could otherwise be a life of crime and violence.

In addition to being a principal stop on the route of illicit drugs travelling from South America and Mexico into the US, Juárez in recent years has become an important centre of drugs consumption. The growing presence of drugs in the local marketplace has, in turn, led to a growth of smaller local gangs, which often try to recruit children from poor neighbourhoods who traditionally lack legal opportunities.

"It's a critical and violent situation," says Mr Acosta Estrada. "Without strategies for creating legal and healthy options in life, the youth of Juárez is at serious risk of joining gangs."

Adam Thomson

until their parents return from work. Today, Juárez is starting to write a new chapter. In the year to the end of September, there were 658 murders in the city compared with 2,305 in the same period of 2010, according to the state attorney-general's office. There are now entire days without any murders, which would have been inconceivable a couple of years ago.

Many attribute the drop in violence to the common view that the Sinaloa cartel, one of the drug organisations operating in the city, has emerged triumphant in its war with the Juárez cartel. But they admit a huge social investment push since 2010 by the federal administration and increased security spending by the municipal government has also made a difference.

Called *Todos somos Juárez* (We are all Juárez), former president Felipe Calderón's programme has so far funnelled about \$400m – roughly twice the city government's annual budget – into areas such as education, health and community. In the past two years, federal ministers have made more than 70 visits to Juárez.

In Villas de Salvárcar, for example, there are now proper sports facilities, including an American football pitch with artificial turf. And on any night of the week, it is full of children and adolescents. "Before all of this, they had nowhere to play except the street," says Mr Cadena.

Aside from *Todos somos Juárez*, which is funded from Mexico City, the local government is raising spending on the municipality's police force and security equipment. The city purged its police force of about 2,300 members, and reorganised it to cover the area more efficiently and respond to crimes more quickly. The total cost of the re-engineering is about 1bn pesos (\$79m), or more than one-third of the local government's annual budget.

The change of federal administration in December last year could produce an end to *Todos somos Juárez* – local authorities say they do not know if the programme will continue.

Another concern is that the relative recovery of the US will fizzle out, plunging export-dependent Juárez into another recession.

But for now, the murders are about 70 per cent down on what they were at the height of the troubles and the number of jobs in the *maquila* sector is growing rapidly. "Green spaces are helping to win back a lot of kids who took to the gangs," says Mr Cadena. "But we need a lot more of them if this is going to change for good."

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Travel sector is in need of next generation staff

Tourism

Industry needs to throw off outmoded perceptions, writes Charles Batchelor

The tourism industry has grown enormously since the early 20th century. Back then Murray's *Handbook to Central Italy* advised visitors to the country's remotest towns: "If travellers will be content with simple fare, and treat innkeepers with civility yet with firmness, they will often find much real hospitality."

Travel and tourism are now the world's largest employer, accounting for 255m jobs, according to Datamonitor. The industry is expected to generate 73m new jobs by 2022.

Given the high levels of recession-induced unemployment in large parts of the developed world and a severe shortage of jobs in developing countries, you might think the industry should have no difficulty filling those vacancies. Think again.

In the UK the hospitality sector, an important chunk of the tourism market that includes hotels, pubs and restaurants, often struggles with an image of being the career of last resort. In the developing world employers often have to work with education systems that do little to give pupils the life skills they need for such jobs.

"There are lots of career openings for young people at below university graduate level and you can climb through the ranks to become chief executive or managing director," says Suzy Jackson, executive director of the Hospitality Guild, a UK cross-industry body set up in 2011 to harmonise standards and improve recruitment. "But we have never really got that message across."

The hospitality sector has

to contend with negative perceptions of low wages, unsociable hours and the lack of career opportunities beyond entry-level jobs. Despite supportive comments from ministers, government still underestimates the contribution the sector makes to the economy, says Ufi Ibrahim, chief executive of the British Hospitality Association.

"International tourism is the third-largest UK export sector and is forecast to generate 475,000 more jobs by 2020," she says. "The challenge for us is to open the government's eyes to what the industry can do for economic recovery."

In developing countries, with fast-growing populations but few jobs, there should be no shortage of young people seeking work. But there are problems facing employers here, too.

"Historically we have always gone in as pioneers, taking people with limited skills and educating and training them," says Chris Nassetta, chief executive officer of Hilton Worldwide. "We can train them in the technical and vocational

'There is a need for 30,000 new managers a year because of growth and the retirement of many people'

skills but it is harder to give them the life skills – dealing with people, communicating, being part of a team and leading. We are not set up to deal with that but we are working with governments and NGOs."

Because the hospitality industry takes so many young people with minimal formal qualifications, who are often the customer's first and only point of contact with the business, it devotes a lot of time and money to training.



Cooking lessons: demand for hotel skills exceeds supply

Hilton last August launched a UK Apprenticeship Academy to provide training for more than 100 job-seekers a year in a range of skills, including professional cookery, front office, food and beverage service and sales.

This forms part of global development programme providing 5m hours of training annually through the Hilton Worldwide University and partnerships with schools and colleges around the world.

Accor, a French hotels group, trains 135,000 students a year at 17 academies in cities including Bangkok, Dubai and Milan for its 4,100 hotels worldwide. On a smaller scale the Edge Foundation, Essex University and Kaplan Open Learning last year launched two-year BA (Hons) degree courses in hotel and culinary management based at a 40-room hotel on the university campus. Senior staff at the hotel are professionals but students fill all other positions while gaining practical experience of management.

"It is an intense experience for the students that reflects what happens in the industry," says Alan Jenkins, principal of the Edge Hotel School. "Our students can fast track into a job because they have the theoretical skills as well as the practical experience."

Although as many as 80 UK colleges run hotel management courses, Mr Jenkins believes the school will be the first in the UK since the restyling of polytechnics as universities in the 1990s saw the closure of hotel schools and the absorption of teaching into general business studies programmes. Edge Hotel School will take in 75 students a year.

"The demand for hotel skills in the UK exceeds supply," says Mr Jenkins. "There is a need for 30,000 new managers a year because of industry growth and the retirement of many people who came in in the 1970s. This means this is a good industry for a young person to go into."

Most of the Edge Hotel students have previously worked part-time in the hospitality sector but a problem faced by the industry is a lack of awareness in schools and among careers advisers of the career opportunities. Part of the problem is the bewildering array of organisations representing the industry and the plethora of qualifications employees can earn.

The Hospitality Guild has been set up, with £1.75m of government backing, as an umbrella industry organisation and to reduce confusion. It is working to create a single industry portal, www.hospitalityguild.co.uk, that will bring employers and would-be employees together.