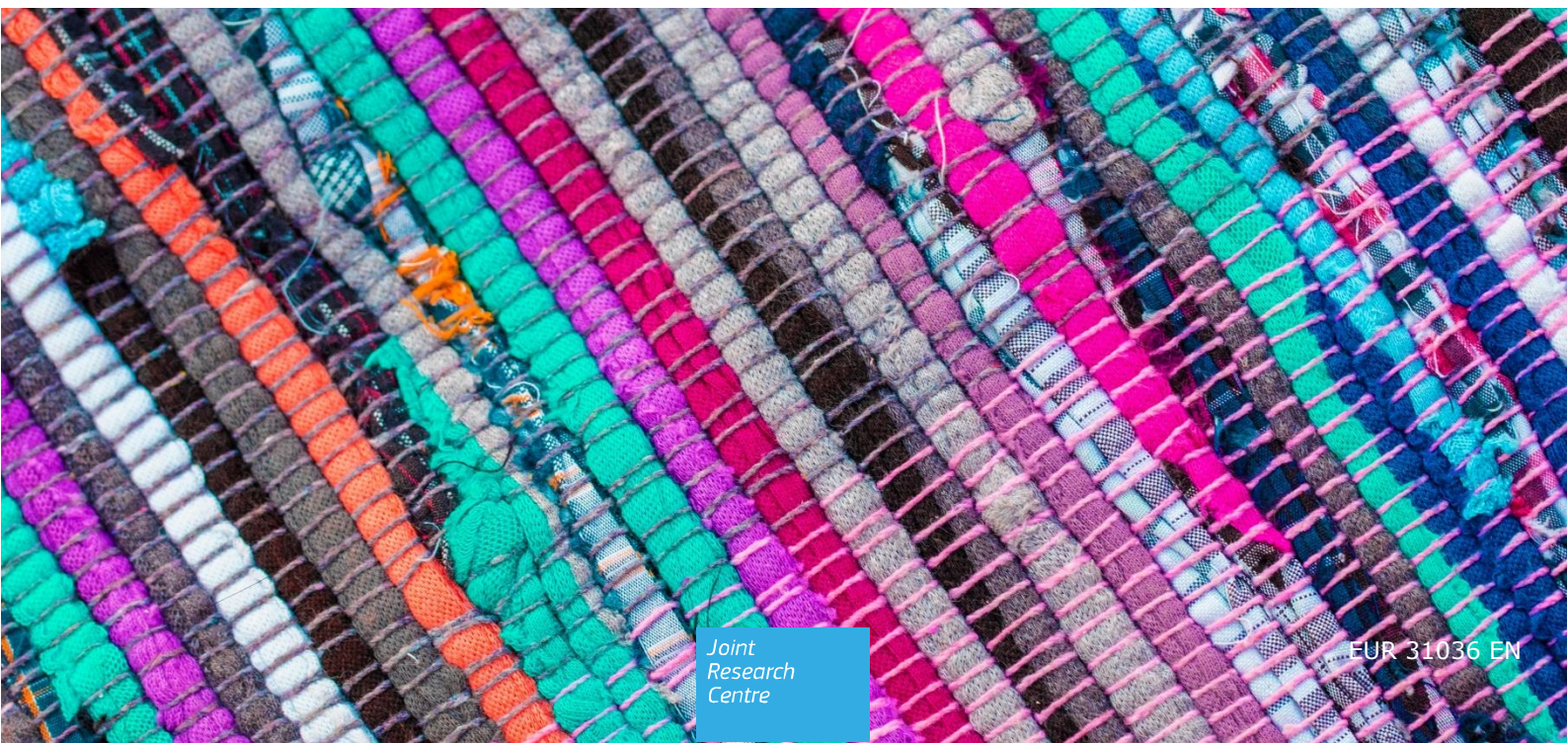JRC TECHNICAL REPORT

Patchwork

*Mapping international
data on youth*

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2022

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Contents

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Abstract

Over recent years, youth has become a policy priority for governments and international organisations around the world. The European Union (EU) recognises the importance of providing a positive and inclusive future for young people in Europe and around the world. The Council of the European Union has invited the European Commission, the High Representative and the Member States 'to devise, where appropriate, a coherent and comprehensive approach to youth in external action, one which seeks greater complementarity among all the relevant policies, programmes and instruments, and which ensures that youth is meaningfully involved in shaping EU policies and actions'. Against this backdrop, this report supports youth-related activities in the EU's external action by showing that there is a large and growing body of international data on youth across a range of thematic areas which can support policymaking, monitoring and evaluation, and research. And yet at the same time, it also highlights significant limitations in the available data.

Summary

Over recent years, youth has become a policy priority for governments and international organisations around the world. The world's youth population is larger than ever before, and the majority of its growth is in low and middle-income countries. The opportunities available to these young people as they transition to adulthood will have implications for sustainable development and the EU's relations with partner countries. The European Union (EU) recognises the importance of providing a positive and inclusive future for young people in Europe and around the world and has taken steps towards a coherent and comprehensive approach to youth in external action.

Against this backdrop, this report and its accompanying dataset[1] contribute to an evidence-based and data-supported approach to youth policy in the EU's external action. Specifically, they show that there is a growing body of international data on youth across a range of thematic areas which can support policymaking, monitoring and evaluation, and research. And yet at the same time, there are also significant limitations in the available data.

Specifically, the report finds:

- Governments and international organisations are paying greater attention to young people. International, national and non-governmental organisations and networks have produced a range of policy, programming and strategic frameworks to guide sustainable development actions which impact on young people's lives.

- Overall, we identify 157 indicators from official data sources which are relevant to international youth policies and programmes. In particular, there is a rich body of international data on youth education and employment. This is important given the centrality of education and employment to young people's transition to adulthood.

- But the international data landscape on youth is best described as a patchwork: indicators are provided by different organisations, sometimes using different boundaries to define the 'youth' age groups and with varying geographic and thematic coverage.

- There are also significant gaps in the available data. In contrast to education and employment, there is relatively little on other thematic areas. In particular, we identify no suitable indicators from official sources on environmental protection and climate change, and a very limited selection on peace and security, humanitarian action or fighting discrimination.

- Particularly concerning is a limited range of indicators which measure youth participation in its various forms. This is despite participation being underlined as a key dimension in all international policy frameworks on youth.

Based on these findings, the report recommends:

- Encouraging data providers to consistently disaggregate their data by age. This would avoid conflicting definitions of age groups and enable data users to build a youth cohort around the boundaries that are most relevant to them.

- Improving data coherence and accessibility through the development of an online international youth data platform or repository. Examples exist which could themselves contain, or provide inspiration for, such a platform.

- Exploring the opportunities provided by public opinion survey data across a range of themes related to youth outcomes and perceptions in development cooperation. This could work towards the harmonisation of regional surveys to produce a unified resource for international policymaking.

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[1] The dataset can be downloaded directly from https://migration-demography-tools.jrc.ec.europa.eu/static/Data/Mapping-international-data-on-youth-2022-03.xlsx

- Producing new indicators which are specific to the EU's external action. For example, cross-referencing population data with thematic indicators could give an indication of the extent to which young people are exposed to different social processes, such as climate change or conflict.

- Supporting research projects to address the thematic and/or geographic gaps in the available data. In particular, there is a major need for research and data focused on youth participation which records the ways that young people participate politically and shows how different youth groups with their own priorities, interests and vulnerabilities participate and why.

The study is based on an extensive review of international data on youth from official and non-official data sources in international and regional databases, dashboards and studies. This was used to produce a novel dataset recording information on relevant, accessible indicators which have a global or regional coverage.

1 Introduction

Over the last seven decades, the number of people under the age of 30 around the world has more than doubled, from an estimated 1.5 billion in 1950 to 3.8 billion in 2020.[2] Today's global youth population is the largest in history, and they are key to the planet's economic, social, political and environmental future. Young people are generally more likely than older generations to have a positive view of the world and optimism about the future,[3] but they also face significant challenges. They tend to have higher unemployment rates than older generations[4] and to be less satisfied with democracy, for example.[5] And for the last two years, the COVID-19 pandemic has provided further disruption to their education, employment and mental health.[6]

The European Union (EU) recognises the importance of providing a positive and inclusive future for young people in Europe and around the world. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has recently stated, for example, that 'from climate to social to digital, young people are at the heart of our policymaking and political priorities.'[7] Commissioner for International Partnerships Jutta Urpilainen has also said 'I want the youth to have a seat at the table where decisions are made. Whether we are talking about peace processes or political elections, starting companies or formulating our development work.'[8] And Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth Mariya Gabriel has said 'Our message to young people is simple: we want you to participate. And we are ready to invest in your right to shape your future.'[9]

Against this backdrop, the Council of the European Union has invited the European Commission, the High Representative and the Member States 'to devise, where appropriate, a coherent and comprehensive approach to youth in external action, one which seeks greater complementarity among all the relevant policies, programmes and instruments, and which ensures that youth is meaningfully involved in shaping EU policies and actions'.[10] This will result in a Youth Action Plan for the EU's external action, which will be aligned with the EU's commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

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[2] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division (2019) World *Population Prospects 2019, Online Edition. Rev. 1*, available online at
https://population.un.org/wpp/Download/Standard/Population/
[3] UNICEF (2021) Landmark intergenerational poll shows young people are 50% more likely than older generations to believe the world is becoming a better place – yet impatient for action on mounting crises, available online at https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/landmark-intergenerational-poll-shows-young-people-are-50-more-likely-older, accessed 14th February 2022
[4] Whereas an estimated 5.3 percent of the total world labour force was unemployed in 2019, for those aged between 15 and 24 years it was 15.3 percent. For more information see International Labour Organization, Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15-24) (modelled ILO estimate), available online at https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.1524.ZS, accessed 14th February 2022
[5] Foa, R.S., Klassen, A., Wenger, D., Rand, A. and M. Slade (2020) Youth and Satisfaction with Democracy: Reversing the Democratic Disconnect? (Cambridge: Centre for the Future of Democracy) available online at https://www.bennettinstitute.cam.ac.uk/media/uploads/files/Youth_and_Satisfaction_with_Democracy_lite.pdf, accessed 14th February 2022
[6] International Labour Organization (2020) Youth & COVID-19: Impacts on jobs, education, rights and mental well-being (Geneva: ILO) available online at https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/youth-employment/publications/WCMS_753026/lang--en/index.htm,accessed 14th February 2022
[7] European Commission (2021a) Commission kick-starts work to make 2022 the European Year of Youth (Brussels: European Commission) available online at
https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_21_5226, accessed 14th February 2022
[8] European Commission (2020a) Remarks by Commissioner Urpilainen at the virtual opening ceremony of the Africa-Europe Youth Meet-Up (Brussels: European Commission) available online at
https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2019-2024/urpilainen/announcements/remarks-commissioner-urpilainen-virtual-opening-ceremony-africa-europe-youth-meet_en, accessed 14th February 2022
[9] European Commission (2021b) Speech by Commissioner Mariya Gabriel at the EU Youth Conference, available online at https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2019-2024/gabriel/announcements/speech-commissioner-mariya-gabriel-eu-youth-conference_en, accessed 23rd February 2022
[10] Council of the European Union (2020) Youth in external action - Council conclusions 5 June 2020 8629/20, available online at https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-8629-2020-INIT/en/pdf, accessed 14th February 2022

and will build on a range of existing EU actions for young people, in particular the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027.[11]

Evidence and data are key to policy design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. This is also the case with youth policies. Indeed, the EU Youth Strategy already underlines how 'EU Youth Policy should be evidence-based and anchored in the real needs and situations of young people ... The collection of disaggregated data on young people is of particular importance to foster understanding of the needs of different groups of young people, particularly those with fewer opportunities.'[12] The UN also underlines the importance of evidence to track the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, specifically mentioning 'data which is high-quality, accessible, timely, reliable and disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, disability and geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts'.[13]

This report and its accompanying dataset[14] contribute to an evidence-based and data-supported approach to youth policy in the EU's external action. They present an extensive review of international indicators and data sources across a series of main thematic areas. In doing so we show how, despite increasing attention being placed on youth outcomes and data by international organisations, national governments and non-governmental organisations and networks, the availability of easily accessible, comparable, harmonised data with an international coverage is relatively limited. In particular, data is often widely dispersed across several providers, limited in its detail or incomplete due to gaps in its thematic and geographic coverage. Whereas there is ample data available in some fields, such as education and employment, there is very little in others such as youth participation or the extent to which young people are affected by climate change, discrimination, humanitarian emergencies, violence and conflict. In sum, the international data landscape on youth is a patchwork. However, there are opportunities to improve the situation, as discussed in the final chapter.

The report is structured around four main chapters. In Chapter Two, we trace the increasing salience of youth as a priority in international policies and programmes. This is followed by an overview of the data that we were able to collect for the study in Chapter Three and a more detailed description in Chapter Four focused on thematic areas. The subsequent chapter presents an overview of the findings and the implications of the study.

Finally, it should also be noted that the study is not an exhaustive summary of *all* data on youth worldwide. Rather, it gives an overview of the main contours of the current data landscape. It should also be noted that the data covered in this study only represents one part of the information which should be brought into effective policymaking on youth, alongside project-specific results-monitoring and participatory processes through which young people themselves can also voice their opinions, concerns, experiences and aspirations.[15]

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[11] European Commission (2018) Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, The Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Engaging, Connecting and Empowering young people: a new EU Youth Strategy COM/2018/269 final, available online at https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0269, accessed 14th February 2022
[12] Ibid.
[13] United Nations (2015) Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development A/RES/70/1, available online at https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/publications/21252030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainable%20Development%20web.pdf, accessed 14th February 2022, p.37
[14] The dataset can be downloaded directly from https://migration-demography-tools.jrc.ec.europa.eu/static/Data/Mapping-international-data-on-youth-2022-03.xlsx
[15] For an overview of lessons learned from youth programmes, see UNFPA (2021) What works to amplify the rights and voices of youth?, available online at https://evaluation.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl151/files/docs/resources/Youth_Metasynthesis_Brief_ENG.pdf, accessed 14th February 2022

2 Prioritising youth

As has been widely noted, the current global youth population is larger today than at any time in history. But demographic change has been unevenly distributed around the world (see Figures 1 and 2). The majority of the growth in the world's youth population is in low and middle-income countries. In contrast, the number of young people living in high-income countries is today getting smaller as population growth stagnates. As a result, youth has become a specific concern in approaches to sustainable development and is particularly significant to the EU's relations with low-and middle-income partner countries.

Figure 1. Estimated population under 30 years of age
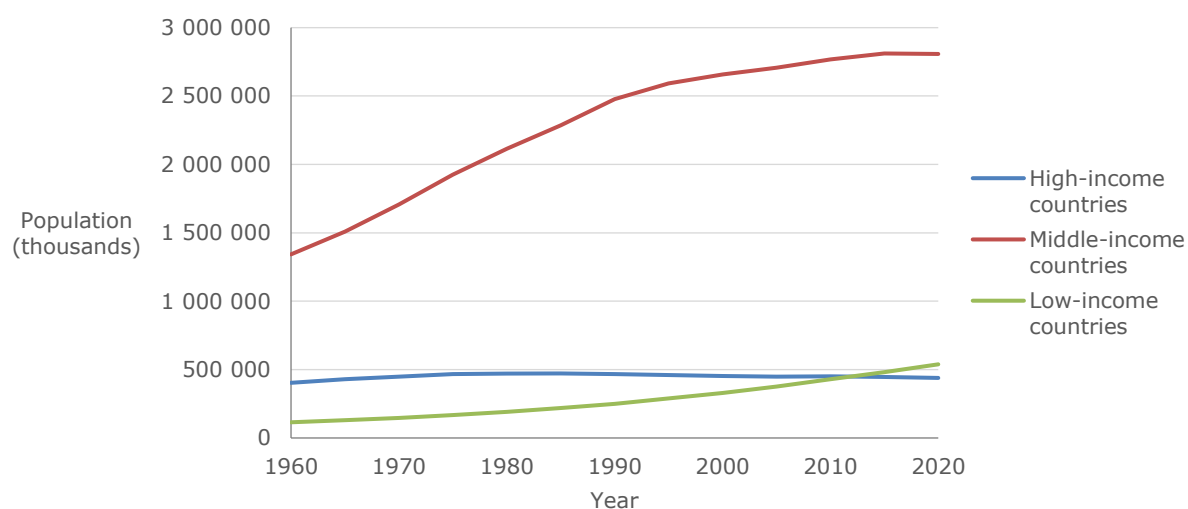
Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019). World Population Prospects 2019, Online Edition. Rev. 1. Elaboration by JRC

The EU has developed a broad spectrum of policies and programmes for young people based on the principles of active participation and equal access to opportunities, including youth-specific measures and actions on education, volunteering, employment and participation in democratic processes.[16] The over-arching framework for these is the EU Youth Strategy,[17] which aims to foster youth participation in democratic life and to support young people's social and civic engagement. It is supported by a range of statistics and other data sources, including a dashboard of 41 youth indicators,[18] a dedicated Eurostat database,[19] and other surveys and studies.[20]

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[16] Specific initiatives include the Erasmus+ programme, EUYouth Dialogue, European Solidarity Corps and others. For more information see the European Youth Portal, available online at https://europa.eu/youth/home_en, accessed 14th February 2022

[17] European Commission (2018) Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, The Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Engaging, Connecting and Empowering young people: a new EU Youth Strategy COM/2018/269 final, available online at https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0269, accessed 14th February 2022

[18] European Commission (2011) Commission Staff Working Document On EU indicators in the field of youth SEC(2011) 401 final, available online at https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/youth/library/publications/indicator-dashboard_en.pdf, accessed 14th February 2022

[19] Eurostat EU Dashboard, available online at https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/youth/data/eu-dashboard, accessed 14th February 2022

[20] For more information see the European Youth Portal, available online at https://europa.eu/youth/strategy/evidence_en, accessed 14th February 2022
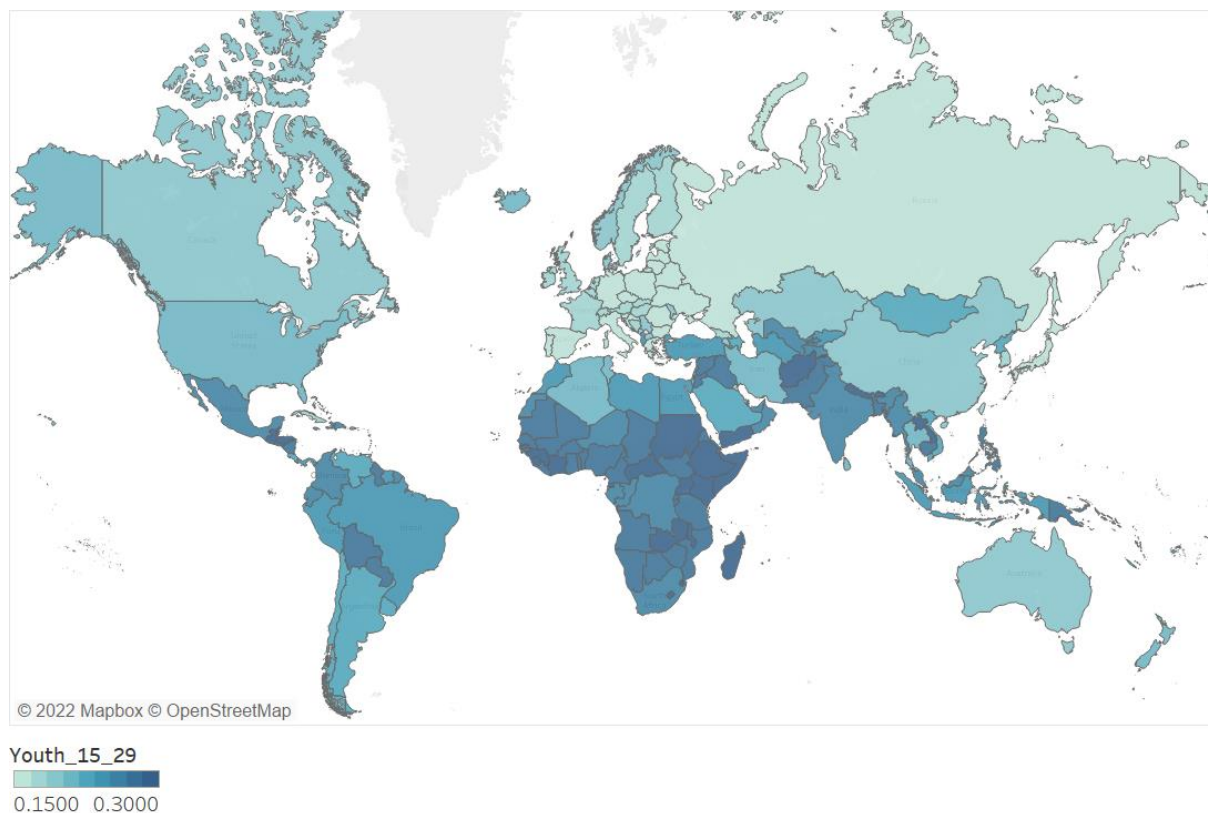
Figure 2. Percentage of youth (15-29) in total population in 2020

Youth_15_29

0.1500 0.3000

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019). World Population Prospects 2019, Online Edition. Rev. 1. Elaboration by JRC

However, so far the EU has tended to focus primarily on youth within the EU and its Member States. Although youth is mentioned in the European Consensus on Development[21] and there have been a range of youth-focused regional initiatives,[22] there is no over-arching approach to youth in the EU's external action. External action is an umbrella term referring to policies and activities which are implemented in contexts beyond the borders of the EU. It is comprised of commercial (trade) policy; development cooperation; economic, financial and technical cooperation with non-EU countries; humanitarian aid; Common Foreign and Security Policy and Common Security and Defence Policy; and the external dimension of other EU internal policies (such as migration, environmental protection, etc.).[23] In 2020, the Council Conclusions on Youth in external action[24] described a series of thematic areas on which the EU and its Member States should work with, by and for youth. These are summarised in Table 1.

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[21] For more information on the European Consensus on Development, see https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/european-consensus-development_en, accessed 14th February 2022

[22] For example, the AU-EU Abidjan Youth Declaration, the AU-EU Youth Cooperation Hub and the Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable invest and Jobs

[23] For a definition see: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/summary/glossary/external_responsibilities.html, accessed 14th February 2022

[24] Council of the European Union (2020) Youth in external action - Council conclusions 5 June 2020 8629/20, available online at https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-8629-2020-INIT/en/pdf, accessed 14th February 2022

Table 1. Thematic areas for youth in external action

Thematic area	Council Conclusions text
Participation	Promote the meaningful participation and engagement of all youth, without distinction or discrimination on any ground, in the political, social and economic decision-making processes that affect them and their future
Peace	Support the inclusion of young people, and in particular young women and girls, and their participation in all efforts to prevent conflict, and build and sustain peace
Education	Promote equitable access to inclusive quality education
Employment	Creation of decent jobs and entrepreneurship opportunities
Rights	Strengthen the enjoyment of all human rights including social and labour rights Eradicate child labour and all forms of exploitation and abuse, including trafficking of human beings Address the gender and age specific needs and rights of the child and young persons, including those with special needs and disabilities, in fragile contexts, crisis and conflict situations, humanitarian emergencies, and in relation to migration and mobility
Gender	Promote girls' and young women's empowerment and equal opportunities
Health	Access to healthier, more nutritious and more diverse diets Universal access to quality and affordable comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information, education and health-care services
COVID-19	Address the secondary effects that the COVID-19 pandemic has on youth

Source: Council of the European Union, Youth in external action – Council conclusions, 8629/20, 5 June 2020. Elaboration by JRC

Youth has also become the centre-point of a range of external affairs policies and programmes from a number of other international organisations, national governments and non-governmental organisations over recent years (See Figure 3 and a short review of each, highlighting their priority thematic areas, in Annex 1). To give just a few examples, at the international level there have been youth strategies devised by the United Nations, African Union and the Commonwealth. The national governments of Denmark, Germany, Netherlands and the USA have also set out a specific youth-focus within their development cooperation. Networks of youth organisations such as the European Youth Forum and International Youth Foundation have created indexes for assessing youth outcomes internationally and others such as the ASEAN Youth Forum act as platforms for voicing young people's interests.

Figure 3. Timeline of international youth programs and initiatives
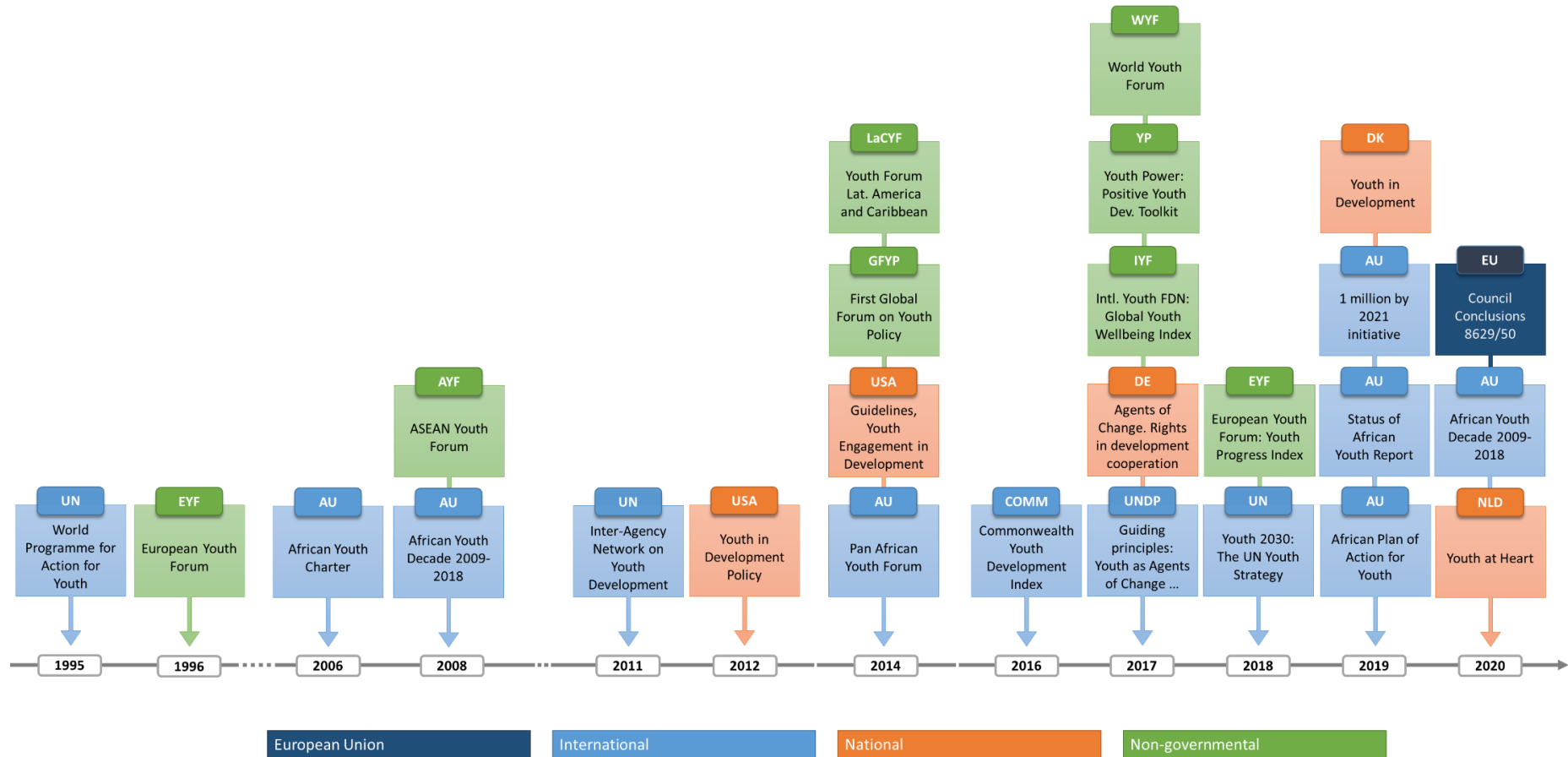
Source: JRC

Many national governments emphasise youth within their national development plans as well. Youth Policy Labs, a youth-focused think-tank, has listed over 130 countries around the world which have a dedicated national youth policy.[25] Several of them precede recent developments at the international level. For example, Bangladesh established its first youth policy in 1983, before updating it in 2003 and formulating its current national youth policy in 2017.[26] The mission of the policy is to 'ensure fulfilment of youth potential and youth empowerment in every sphere of life', and it is structured around seven priority areas.[27] Uganda has formulated dedicated youth policies which connect young people with sustainable development in 2001,[28] 2004[29] and 2016.[30] Nigeria introduced its first National Youth Policy in 1981, which was updated in 2009 and 2019.[31] It targets young people between 15 and 29 years of age and recognises the diversity within that group depending on gender, disability status, ethnicity, religion and socio-economic background. It specifically focuses on five priorities.[32] A list of tangible targets are formulated under each priority and governmental ministries and departments allocated for a cross-sectoral approach.

However, despite an increasing array of policy frameworks, programmes and indexes, international data on youth remains problematic. In part, this is because available data is often inconsistently defined and structured. For example, UN statistics define youth as the ages between 15 and 24 years,[33] but the African Union considers it to be between 15 and

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[25] For more information see online at https://www.youthpolicy.org/nationalyouthpolicies/, accessed 14th February 2022

[26] Ministry of Youth and Sports Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (2017) National Youth Policy 2017, Draft English version available online at https://dyd.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/dyd.portal.gov.bd/policies/21e565b2_252f_4f80_bfce_31a1cb33163d/Draft%20English%20Version%20of%20National%20Youth%20Policy%202017%20(1).pdf, accessed 14th February 2022
See also:
Centre for Research and Innovation (2019) Indomitable Bangladesh: Investing in Youth (Dhaka: CRI) available online at https://cri.org.bd/publication/2019/Aug/investing-youth-19/Indomitable%20Bangladesh%20Investing%20in%20Youth%202019.pdf, accessed 14th February 2022
Islamic Development Bank (2020) Country Youth Profile: Bangladesh (Jeddah: Islamic Development Bank) available online at https://www.isdb.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/2020-09/Bangladesh%20Youth.pdf, accessed 14th February 2022

[27] The thematic areas are Empowerment (including education, training, employment), health and recreation, Good governance (participation), sustainable development, equitable development, building a healthy society, globalisation, survey and research, see Ministry of Youth and Sports Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (2017)

[28] The Republic of Uganda Ministry Of Gender, Labour and Social Development (2001) The National Youth Policy: A Vision For Youth In The 21st Century, available online at https://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Uganda_2001_National_Youth_Policy.pdf, accessed 14th February 2022

[29] The Republic of Uganda Ministry Of Gender, Labour and Social Development (2004) The National Youth Policy: A Vision For Youth In The 21st Century, available online at https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/documents/tc_uganda_nyp_2004.pdf, accessed 14th February 2022

[30] The Republic of Uganda Ministry Of Gender, Labour and Social Development (2004) National Youth Action Plan: Unlocking Youth Potential for Sustainable Wealth Creation and Development, available online at https://mglsd.go.ug/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/National-Youth-Action-Plans-2016.pdf, accessed 14th February 2022

[31] Nigerian Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Development (2019) National Youth Policy: Enhancing Youth Development and Participation in the context of Sustainable Development, available online at https://youthandsports.ng/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Nigeria-National-Youth-Policy-2019-2023.pdf, accessed 14th February 2022
See also:
Islamic Development Bank (2019) Country Youth Profile: Nigeria (Jeddah: Islamic Development Bank) available online at https://www.isdb.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/2020-09/Nigeria%20Youth.pdf, accessed 14th February 2022

[32] The priority areas are: 1) Productive workforce and sustainable economic engagement of youth, 2) Health and health-promoting lifestyles, 3) Participation, inclusiveness and equitable opportunities, 4) A protective environment for youth recognising human rights and fundamental freedoms, and 5) Partnership-building and effective collaboration

[33] United Nations (2018) Youth 2030 Working with and for Young People, available online at

35 years old.[34] In the EU there is no official definition with an age range for young people, although reference has at times been made to those generally between the ages of 13 and 30,[35] and in statistics Eurostat defines young people as those between 15 and 29 years.[36] In Bangladesh a young person is considered to be between 18 and 35 years of age,[37] but in Uganda they are between 12 and 30.[38] The inconsistent use of age boundaries is a reflection of the way that being 'young' is not the same in all places and for all people because the transition to adulthood varies for different groups in different contexts. But too much inconsistency in data inhibits our ability to compare contexts and monitor change over time.

There are also significant gaps in the evidence. Although youth is a cross-cutting topic for the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), among the targets and indicators which specifically mention 'youth' or 'young people' there are only two with data which is ranked at the highest level of quality and availability (Tier I).[39] The other seven are classified as Tier II, which means that data is not regularly produced (see Annex 2).[40] Elsewhere, data gaps have been highlighted in relation to specific thematic fields as well. For example, the Institute for Economics and Peace has lamented the fact that there is no global data on youth involvement in peacebuilding.[41] There is also a lack of global data on migration flows and displacement which is disaggregated by age.[42]

As a result, it is hardly surprising if one recent review found that regarding youth in development cooperation 'policies often appear to follow current trends without sufficient data and thorough analysis … In the absence of evidence, policies addressing youth are often highly subjective and based on the relative merits of a number of general factors, without due quantification and clear policy targets, outputs and outcome indicators that can be objectively measured, monitored or evaluated'.[43] Against this backdrop, we support policies and programmes on youth in the EU's external action not by developing new data and indicators, but rather by providing information on what is already available, highlighting where there are gaps and putting forward some proposals to improve the situation.

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www.un.org/youthenvoy/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/18-00080_UN-Youth-Strategy_Web.pdf, accessed 14th February 2022

[34] African Union (2006) African Youth Charter, available online at https://au.int/sites/default/files/treaties/7789-treaty-0033_-_african_youth_charter_e.pdf, accessed 14th February 2022

[35] European Commission (2011) Commission Staff Working Document On EU indicators in the field of youth

[36] See Eurostat EU Dashboard

[37] inistry of Youth and Sports Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (2017) National Youth Policy 2017

[38] The Republic of Uganda Ministry Of Gender, Labour and Social Development (2001) The National Youth Policy

[39] Tier I means: 'indicator is conceptually clear, has an internationally established methodology and standards are available, and data are regularly produced by countries for at least 50 per cent of countries and of the population in every region where the indicator is relevant'. See alsohttps://unstats.un.org/sdgs/iaeg-sdgs/tier-classification, accessed 14th February 2022

[40] Tier II means: 'indicator is conceptually clear, has an internationally established methodology and standards are available, but data are not regularly produced by countries'. See also https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/iaeg-sdgs/tier-classification/, accessed 14th February 2022

[41] Hagerty, Talia (2017) Data for Youth, Peace and Security: A summary of research findings from the Institute for Economics & Peace (Institute for Economics & Peace, available online at https://www.youth4peace.info/system/files/2018-04/16.%20TP_Youth%20affected%20by%20violent%20conflict_IEP.pdf, accessed 14th February 2022

[42] Belmonte, M; Conte, Alessandra; Ghio, Daniela; Kalantaryan, Sona; McMahon, Simon (2020) Youth and Migration an overview (Luxembourg: European Commission)

[43] DAI (2020) Analysis of youth-related policies and actions and future recommendations (Brussels: DAI Brussels) p. 44

3 Searching for data

In this report, we generally define youth as a life-stage between childhood and adulthood. It is characterised as: (a) a *transition* in which people move out of childhood, usually involving the end of compulsory education, entry into the labour market and increasing personal and financial independence from the family; (b) a *formative process* which shapes people's future opportunities and identities which will impact on their adult lives; and (c) by being *varied,* taking place and lasting in different ways for particular social groups and in different places.[44] But this definition does not allow us to select a definitive age range to define a 'young person'. As a result, in this report we adopt a flexible approach to defining youth as an age group. Ideally, we consider datasets to contain a 'youth cohort' if they can be disaggregated to observations of people between 15 and 29 years of age. However, we also report other forms of disaggregation where necessary. While not perfect, this approach is inclusive of definitions of youth in policies and statistics from varied data providers, such as Eurostat (15 to 29 years), the UN (15 to 24 years) and the African Union (15 to 35 years).

In order to organise the available data, we built a novel dataset recording information on relevant indicators which have a global or regional coverage. These were gathered from an extensive review of official and non-official data sources in international and regional databases, dashboards and studies. However, we are aware that, while extensive in coverage, our study is not exhaustive. There may be data which are not included. In particular, we have focused on the publicly available data from each source, which can be downloaded and accessed by data users without limitations. In many cases, the underlying data which has been gathered by the provider may be significantly more detailed than that which is publicly available. Generally speaking, if the detail is not included in the open source, publicly-available dataset then we do not include it here either.

Through the dataset, we organise the different indicators according to their thematic area, source and data type, the international and temporal coverage of the data and the availability to users. The thematic areas have been selected based on a review of relevant EU policy documents and frameworks from other organisations (as mentioned above). The selection has also been revised in consultation with European Commission stakeholders and in light of the forthcoming Youth Action Plan in the EU's external action. 14 thematic areas are classified in six general groups (see Figure 4). Reviewing youth data across such a broad range of areas reflects its interconnected and cross-sectoral character as a policy sector. Young people's needs and lives are shaped and supported by multiple policies and processes which touch on all aspects of the transition to adulthood. As a result, youth cannot be viewed in isolation from other themes.

The dataset also describes a range of ways in which data sources on youth are disaggregated. Disaggregated data enables analysts to observe specific groups within broader populations according to a determined characteristic, and to compare and make connections across different groups. For example, age-disaggregated data allows users to define and examine a youth cohort between given upper and lower age boundaries. Data which is also disaggregated by gender, migration status, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability or urban-rural residence is particularly relevant for youth because age interacts with other individual characteristics and traits to shape people's lives and development. Intersectional approaches to policymaking and programming which recognise these interactions require data which enables them to make connections across a range of population characteristics.

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[44] Belmonte, M; Conte, Alessandra; Ghio, Daniela; Kalantaryan, Sona; McMahon, Simon (2020) Youth and Migration an overview (Luxembourg: European Commission) p.6

Figure 4. Dataset structure
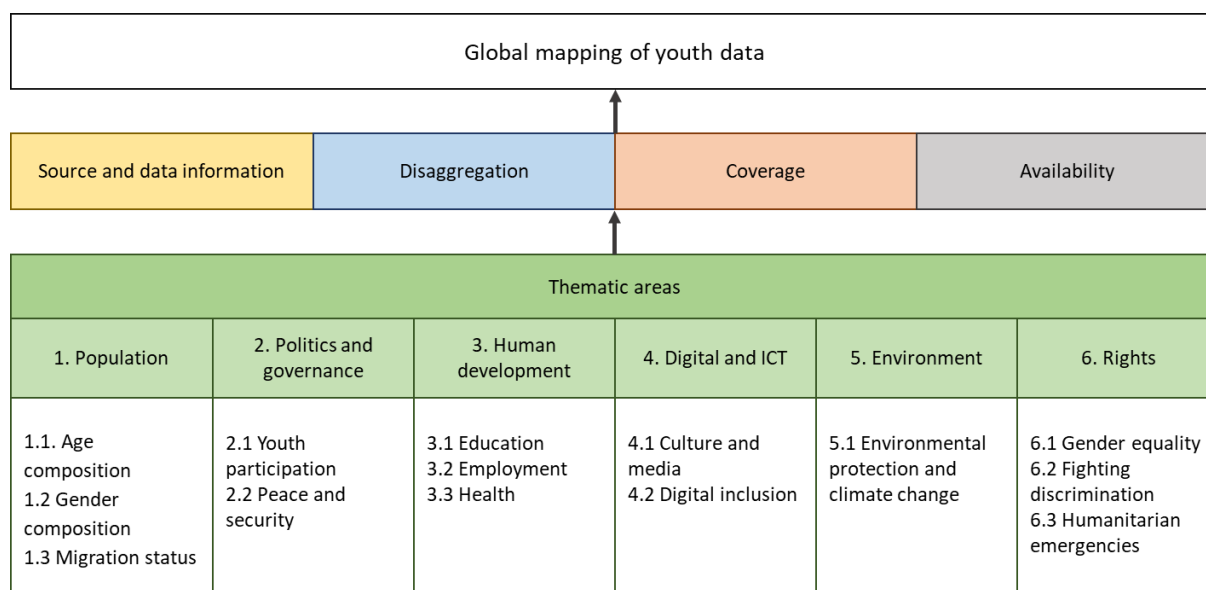
Source: JRC

The study prioritises official statistics with an international coverage. Official statistics are defined as 'indicators produced and validated by bodies/organisations with a recognised mandate'. These include statistics which are provided by national statistical offices and international organisations, with no limitation to their methodology. Official indicators can be built on varied types of data, such as administrative data from national governments, censuses, nationally-representative surveys such as Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS),[45] or systematic evidence reviews. Data associated with SDG targets and indicators is also recorded as 'official'. However, to address gaps in the availability of official statistics, we also include turn to non-official sources where relevant. Non-official sources include private organisations, research centres, universities and data that have not yet been post-processed or validated by a national or international organisation. Most of the non-official sources included in our study produce data from public opinion surveys (see Box 1 for more information).

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[45] For more information on DHS surveys, see online at https://dhsprogram.com/Methodology/Survey-Types/DHS.cfm, accessed 14th February 2022

Box 1. Surveys

Surveys can be defined as a form of data collection based on questioning populations. Ideally, survey data can be made available as an open-access, anonymised, microdata file for research, monitoring and evaluation purposes. Microdata, understood as information referring to individual people, can often be disaggregated into precise groups (e.g. an individual's precise year of age, rather than a broad category) and across a range of dimensions (such as ethnicity, rural or urban residence). This gives more detail than statistics which are already processed and aggregated into specific tables. The geographic coverage of the surveys included in this study is shown in Figure 5.

Public opinion surveys such as the World Values Survey or the different regional 'barometer' surveys, can offer particular insights into people's perceptions and aspirations. The microdata are publicly available and could be used to develop bespoke indicators.

However, there are also limitations to using public opinion surveys. They are usually restricted to covering a select group of countries or a particular region (as with the barometer surveys). Survey datasets from different organisations cannot always be easily merged or compared with another due to differences in questions and sampling approaches. And processing microdata to analyse information from surveys and make available to a broader audience also requires technical knowledge of statistical software.

Figure 5. Geographic coverage of public opinion surveys

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Regional Survey
- Afrobarometer
- Arab Barometer
- Asian Barometer
- Caucasus Barometer
- Central Asia Barometer
- Eurobarometer
- Latinobarometro
- Other (WVS only)

World Value Survey
- Yes
- No
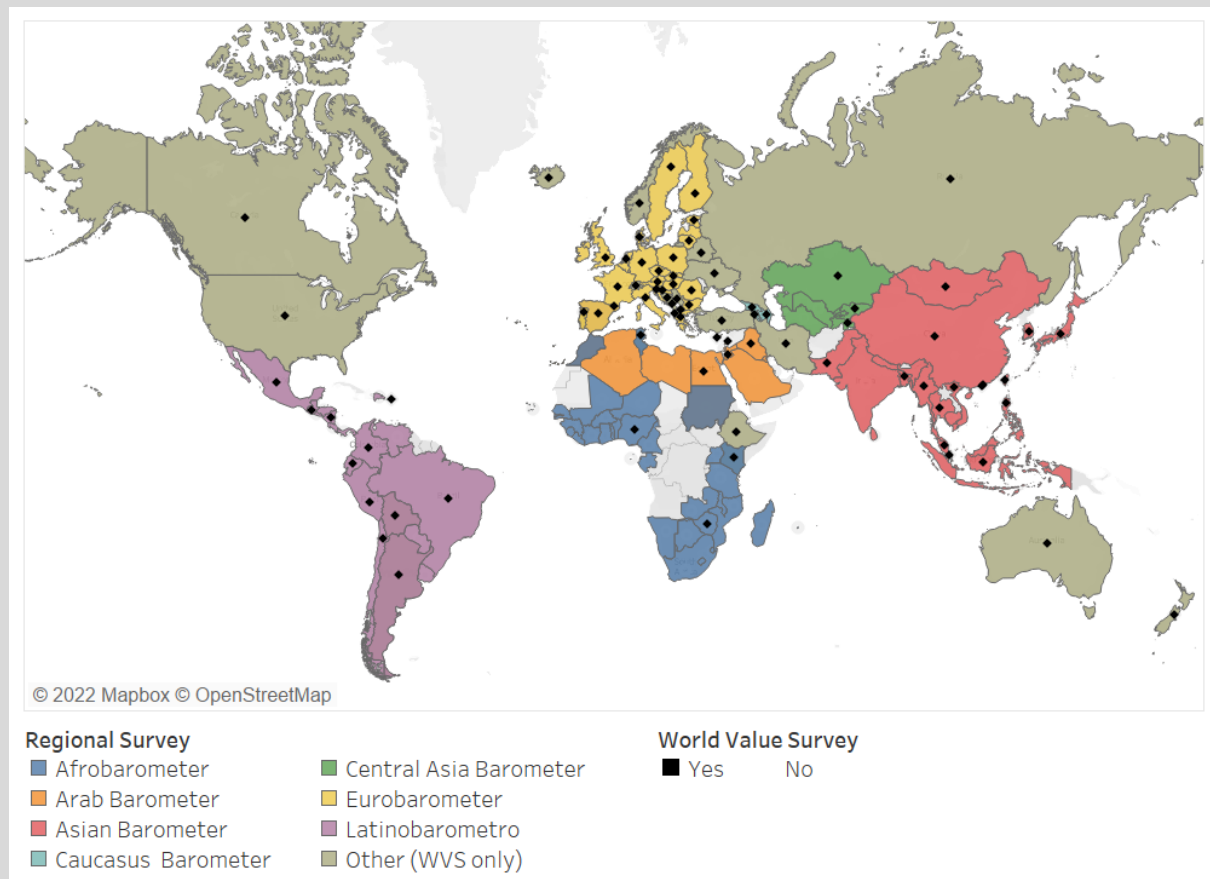
Source: JRC.
Note: The shading denotes coverage of regional surveys. The coloured dots on countries reflect coverage of the World Values Survey. Tunisia, Morocco and Sudan are covered both by Afrobarometer and Arab Barometer surveys.

4 The youth data landscape

This chapter describes the international data landscape on youth, drawing on the dataset described in the previous chapter. It begins with a general overview, before examining each of the thematic areas of this study individually.

4.1 Overview

Overall, we find that there is an extensive body of international data on youth. We identify a total of 258 international indicators, 157 of which are provided by official sources. The remaining 101 indicators included in our dataset are provided by unofficial sources, included to address gaps in the availability of official sources and to give more detailed insight into particular populations and places. It should be noted that whilst this list gives a general overview of the international data landscape, it is not exhaustive of all possible data in every context. Indeed, as noted above, governments, policy evaluators and researchers in individual countries may have access to their own data which we do not include here.

However, we also find that the international data on youth is lacking in several ways. In particular, its thematic coverage is uneven. Whilst there is a range of official international data on education (we identify 62 indicators from official sources) and employment (67 indicators from official sources), there are none on young people affected by environment and climate change, and very few on youth and humanitarian action or discrimination (one indicator for each). Particularly concerning is the limited information on youth participation, despite this being a key focal point of all international policy frameworks on youth. Nevertheless, as can be seen in Figure 6, non-official sources can fill the evidence gaps on some of the thematic areas which are not covered by official statistics.

Figure 6. Thematic coverage of youth data
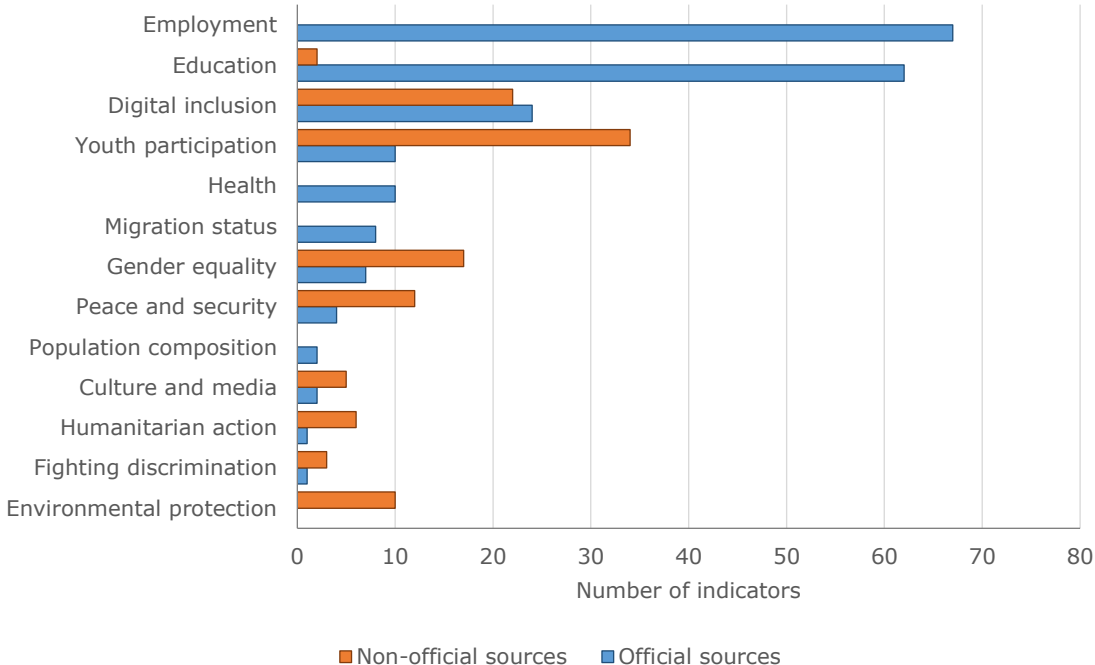
Source: JRC. **Note**: Some indicators are relevant for more than one thematic area

Figure 7. Geographic coverage of youth data
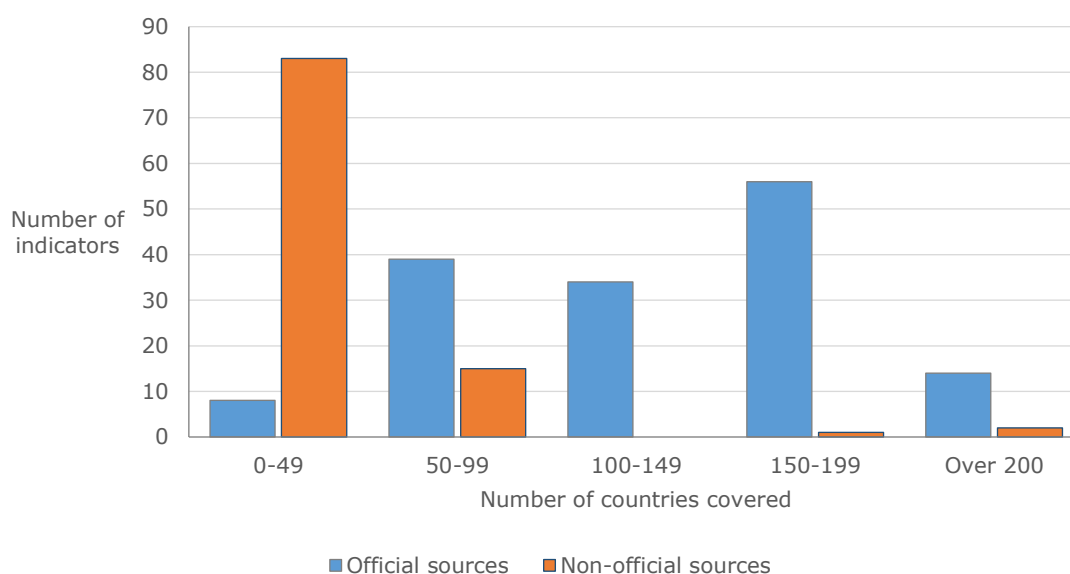
Source: JRC

The available international data is also limited in terms of its geographic coverage. Of the official indicators that we have identified, only half (47 per cent) claim to have a global, or nearly-global coverage (i.e. they cover more than 150 countries). As can be seen in Figure 7, the non-official data sources that we have identified tend to have a much smaller geographic coverage than official statistics, with most of them including information on less than 50 countries. This is due to them being predominantly public opinion surveys which are focused on specific regions. Furthermore, it should also be noted that there are often variations in the geographic coverage of a particular indicator over time, so the number of countries for which data is updated can vary from year to year (see Box 2).

Overall, the available evidence and data on youth and sustainable development is dispersed and varied across multiple sources and providers. In Europe, Eurostat has also produced a dedicated section on youth statistics and a dashboard of EU youth indicators,[46] and in Africa the African Union has produced its own Youth Development Dashboard.[47] The UN has created a series of reports and online platforms to share up-to-date statistics on the SDGs, including those on youth.[48] But there are other age-disaggregated statistics which are not included on the SDG platform, such as those available through the data repositories of the World Health Organisation,[49] the World Bank[50] and other international organisations. This means that analysts seeking to gain an overview of the situation of youth on a global or regional scale may need to access, process and harmonise data from a range of different providers. The same is true for public opinion survey data, as mentioned in the previous chapter.

The detail and geographic coverage of the data can also vary according to the year or the organisation which has curated it. For example, there can be multiple types of data provided by the UN for a single indicator, due to the country-led character of the 2030

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[46] See Eurostat EU Dashboard
[47] For more information see online at https://1millionby2021.au.int/soayr, accessed 14th February 2022
[48] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, SDG Global Database, available online at https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/unsdg, accessed 14th February 2022
[49] World Health Organisation Global Health Observatory, available online at https://www.who.int/data/gho, accessed 14th February 2022
[50] World Bank DataBank World Development indicators, available online at https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators, accessed 14th February 2022

Agenda SDG framework which means that some data points may be based on different data collection or processing approaches to others. The UN entity responsible for an indicator might also produce further estimates from a statistical model to fill gaps where data are missing and to increase comparability across countries. These model-based estimates are not always published through the official SDG platform but are available directly from the responsible UN entity. While possibly providing better data and coverage for international comparison, the knowledge and use of these additional figures are to the most part limited to the relevant expert communities.

In the remaining sections of this chapter, we briefly summarise the main contents of each thematic section addressed by our review.

Box 2. Geographic coverage over time

The listed indicators, even those provided by the same international organisation, vary significantly in their coverage both across countries and over time. We take annual data on 'Youth labour force by sex, age and rural / urban areas' (EAP_3EAP_SEX_AGE_GEO_NB_A) to illustrate the gaps in coverage.

According to information provided by ILO Department of Statistics metadata, the indicator covers 136 countries and is available from 1990 to 2020. However, the number of countries for which data is actually available per year varies from two in 1990 to 87 in 2014. Over the last decade, the average number of countries has been 75.

Figure 8. Number of countries for the indicator over time
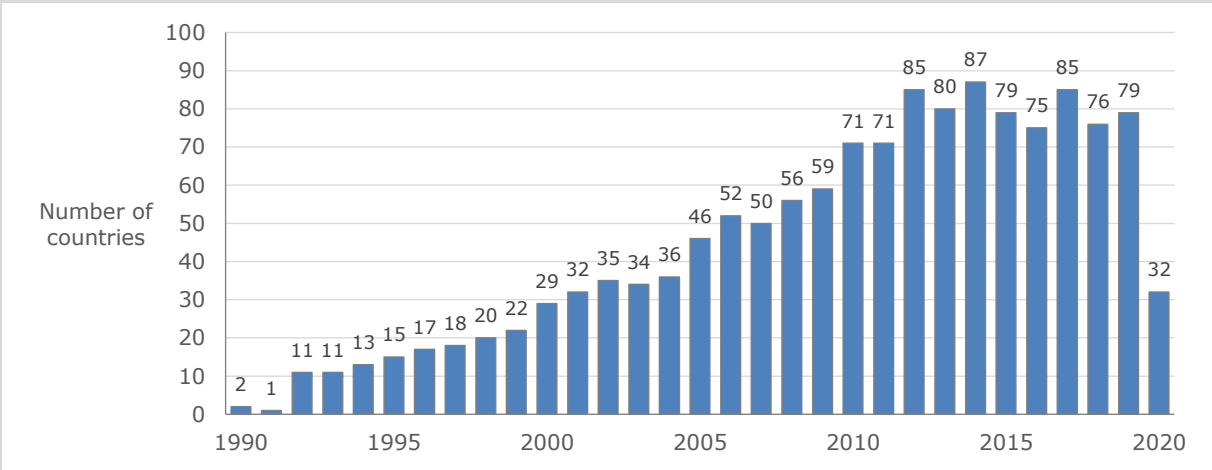
The coverage gaps are not even either across regions and income groups. In 2019 – the year with the most extensive coverage from the last three years – the global coverage was only 36 per cent. The best coverage is observed in Europe and Central Asia (35 countries or 60 per cent) followed by Latin America (16 countries or 38 per cent). The coverage is low in South Asia (1 country or 13 per cent) and Middle East and North Africa (4 countries or 19 per cent). High income and Upper-middle income countries have 40 and 42 per cent coverage respectively. The coverage is the lowest for Low income countries at only 11 per cent.

4.2 Population

4.2.1 Population Composition

There are two main indicators describing the composition of youth populations on a global scale. They are:

- Total population by broad age group, region, subregion and country, 1950-2100 (UNDESA)
- Total population by five-year age group, region, subregion and country (UNDESA)

Both of these indicators are provided and validated by UNDESA. They are composed of estimates, based on 'all available sources of data on population size and levels of fertility, mortality and international migration'. Both can be disaggregated by age, although in distinct ways. The first organises data into a pre-defined youth cohort between the ages of 15 and 24 years. The second disaggregates data by 5-year groups.[51] This means that a youth cohort can be defined by a user. Both can also be disaggregated by sex. There are no forms of disaggregation beyond age and sex. The coverage is global, with 235 distinct countries or territories included. The data also shows changes and trends over time, with estimates from 1950 to 2020 and projections to the year 2100.

The data is prepared and released every two years (although there are also smaller annual revisions). Neither of these sources show information on migration status, ethnicity, sexual orientation or disability.

4.2.2 Migration

There are few international data sources which can shine light on youth migration, as has been described in more detail elsewhere (Belmonte and McMahon 2019; Belmonte at al. 2020). We include nine possible indicators in this study, drawn from official providers (OECD, UNDESA, UNHCR and UNESCO). They are:

- Demographic and labour market characteristics of migrants (OECD DIOC-e)

- Characteristics of the foreign-born in OECD countries (OECD DIOC)

- International migrant stock at mid-year by age and sex and by region, country or area of destination, 1990-2020 (UNDESA)

- International migrant stock as percentage of the total population by age and sex and by region, country or area of destination, 1990-2020 (UNDESA)

- Percentage distribution of the international migrant stock by age and sex and by region, country or area of destination, 1990-2020 (UNDESA)

- Forcibly displaced population (UNHCR)

- Outbound mobility ratio by host region (UNESCO)

- Total outbound internationally mobile tertiary students, studying abroad, all countries, both sexes (number) (UNESCO)

- Outbound internationally mobile tertiary students per region of destination (UNESCO)

All of these are estimates which are calculated by examining primarily (but not only) official statistics, administrative data, census data and surveys. Nearly all can be disaggregated by age and sex (except Outbound mobility ratio by host region), allowing users to examine the composition of the youth migrant population in different countries. Moreover, they cannot be further disaggregated to ethnic groups, sexual orientation, disability or residence in urban or rural contexts.

UNDESA provides statistics with the largest geographic coverage, showing the migrant population (or 'stock') residing in 232 countries of destination over time. Data can be disaggregated into user-defined age cohorts but when it is disaggregated it does not provide information on migrants' countries of origin. UNDESA releases data updates annually. OECD Databases on Immigrants in OECD and non-OECD Countries (DIOC and DIOC-e) include data on both the countries of origin and destination of migrants. But their geographic coverage is limited. The DIOC database only includes information on migrant populations in 35 destination countries, whilst the DIOC-e database includes 100 countries of destination. Age disaggregated data is not available for all countries of origin however.

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[51] One-year age groups are foreseen in future World Population Prospects Revisions, forthcoming, June 2022

Updates have also been inconsistent, with data only referring to the period up to 2011 (in the case of the DIOC database) and 2016 (the DIOC-e database). UNESCO provides data on student mobility for different countries of origin and regions of destination (see Education below).

However, the statistics mentioned here only refer to migrant populations. As a result, they show who moves, where and when but do not have information about their rights or living conditions. There are international indexes on policies relating to migration[52] and migrant integration[53] and databases on citizenship and naturalisation,[54] but these do not have information on young migrants as a specific group.

4.3 Politics and governance

4.3.1 Youth participation

Youth participation (as well as terms such as *engagement* or *empowerment*) is a core aspect of all of the main international youth policy frameworks and strategies. It is sometimes an over-arching principle which states that all of an organisation's actions should include and be shaped by input from young people. In an evidence-based approach, this form of participation would be measured primarily through output indicators related to individual programme activities.

At other times, participation is also a goal or objective to be achieved by policy frameworks and strategies. In this case, it can be summarised generally as the extent to which young people can 'participate in and influence decisions and engaging in actions and activities so as to contribute to building a better society'.[55] In this sense, youth participation can have both a political dimension (such as protesting or standing and voting in elections) and a social or civic one (such as engaging with community and neighbourhood groups). This section examines data which refers to both dimensions of this second definition of youth participation.

Despite the extensive attention paid to youth participation, there is a lack of available international statistics which measure it. We have included ten official sources of international data on participation, which all come from the UN. They are:

- Number of speakers in parliament, by age and sex, Upper Chamber

- Number of youth in parliament (age 45 or below), Lower Chamber or Unicameral (Number)

- Number of youth in parliament (age 45 or below), Upper Chamber (Number)

- Proportion of youth in parliament (age 45 or below), Lower Chamber or Unicameral (%)

- Proportion of youth in parliament (age 45 or below), Upper Chamber (%)

- Number of chairs of permanent committees, by age sex and focus of the committee, Lower Chamber or Unicameral

- Number of chairs of permanent committees, by age sex and focus of the committee, Upper Chamber

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[52] See for example the DEMIG policy database, available online at https://www.migrationinstitute.org/data/demig-data/demig-policy-1, accessed 18th March 2022

[53] See for example MIPEX Migrant Integration Policy Index, available online at https://www.mipex.eu/, accessed 18th March 2022

[54] See for example the GLOBALCIT Citizenship law dataset, available online at https://globalcit.eu/databases/globalcit-citizenship-law-dataset/, accessed 18th March 2022

[55] Council of Europe (2003) European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life, (Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe)

- Number of speakers in parliament, by age and sex , Lower Chamber or Unicameral

- Ratio of young members in parliament (Ratio of the proportion of young members in parliament (age 45 or below) in the proportion of the national population (age 45 or below) with the age of eligibility as a lower bound boundary)

- Ratio of young members in parliament (Ratio of the proportion of young members in parliament (age 45 or below) in the proportion of the national population (age 45 or below) with the age of eligibility as a lower bound boundary), Upper Chamber

These indicators refer to SDG target 16.7, which seeks to 'ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels'. But they measure only participation in formal political institutions (such as committees and upper or lower chambers). They also disaggregate data into a very broad 'youth' age group between 15 and 45 years of age. Data is also not disaggregated by other characteristics such as gender or disability.

Survey data can help to fill the gap in evidence of youth participation. We have included 31 indicators of youth participation from public opinion surveys. Specifically, these include 17 indicators on youth participation from the Afrobarometer survey, seven from the Latinobarómetro survey, seven from the World Values Survey, two from the Arab Barometer survey and one from the PEW Global Attitudes Survey. In general, the surveys address three main topics; (1) people's interest in politics and likelihood of discussing their views with others; (2) participation in political activities such as voting at elections, joining political parties or attending demonstrations and protests; and (3) civic participation such as attending community meetings, or donating to a particular cause. The microdata from the surveys can be disaggregated by age and a range of other characteristics to give detailed insights, although their geographic coverage is limited.

4.3.2 Peace and security

The inter-relationships between youth, peace and security have been widely noted in international law and development cooperation. Research has also suggested a correlation between large youth populations and political unrest and violence, alongside the presence of other variables such as a lack of education and employment opportunities and a pervasive sense of political and social injustice.[56] However, there is a lack of international data on youth, peace and security.

In general, the inter-relationships between youth, peace and security can be summarised as relating to three main dimensions: (1) Young people as victims of violence and conflict;[57] (2) Young people as perpetrators of violence and conflict; and (3) Young people as active participants in peacebuilding and conflict resolution.[58] The official data that we have managed to identify refers only to the first of these three points.

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[56] United Nations and Folke Bernadotte Academy (2021) Youth, Peace and Security: A Programming Handbook (New York: United Nations) available online at
https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/yps_programming_handbook.pdf, accessed 14th February 2022
US Agency for International Development, Youth and Conflict (Washington DC: USAID) available online at
https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Pnadb336.pdf, accessed 14th February 2022
[57] For example the majority of casualties of lethal armed violence are young men between 15 and 29 years of age. For more information see Krug, Etienne G; Dahlberg, Linda L; Mercy, James A; Zwi, Anthony B; Lozano, Rafael (2002) World report on violence and health (Geneva: World Health Organisation)
[58] UN Resolution 2250 recognised the 'important and positive contribution of youth in efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security' and affirmed 'the important role youth can play in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and as a key aspect of the sustainability, inclusiveness and success of peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts'. Text available online at
https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2250(2015)&referer=/english/&Lang=E, accessed 14th February 2022.
See also:

The indicators that we have identified are:

- Number of conflict-related deaths (civilians), by sex, age and cause of death (Number)

- Conflict-related death rate (civilians), by sex, age and cause of death (%)

- Detected victims of human trafficking, by age and sex (number)

- Proportion of population aged 18-29 years who experienced sexual violence by age 18, by sex (% of population aged 18-29)

These are related to SDG targets 16.1 (Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere) and 16.2 (End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children). However, only one of these is disaggregated to a specific youth population (Proportion of population aged 18-29 years who experienced sexual violence by age 18) and even then it refers to experiences of violence which took place before they were 18 years of age. The other three all refer to people under 18 years of age rather than 'youth' specifically. The global coverage of the available data is also inconsistent, ranging from 148 countries in the case of trafficking victims data to only one over-arching entry for the World in the case of conflict-related deaths. Finally, the data is not disaggregated beyond age and sex.

Non-official sources of data can also shine light on the extent to which young people are victims of violence. Data from the IDMC does record the number of people who are internally displaced due to conflict, but it is not disaggregated by age and does not refer specifically to young people. The Afrobarometer survey contains eight indicators regarding young peoples' sense of safety and experience of violence. This data is disaggregated by age, sex, ethnicity and rural or urban contexts, but limited in its geographic coverage. The World Values Survey also contains three questions on feelings of insecurity, being a victim of violence and willingness to go to war. A research project at PRIO has also analysed data on conflict events and population distribution to assess the potential exposure of young people to violence and conflict, but this is presented through reports rather than a readily downloaded dataset.

The data landscape regarding young people as perpetrators of violence and conflict and young people as active participants in peacebuilding and conflict resolution is even sparser. We have found no international, comparable and harmonised official statistics for either. Indeed, existing proposals for data to support monitoring and evaluation of frameworks on youth, peace and security tend to describe new data that could be produced, rather than drawing on available sources.[59]

4.4 Human development

4.4.1 Education

Education is a core aspect of the transition to adulthood when young people tend to leave full time education and enter into the labour market. As a result, it is a key dimension in all international youth policy frameworks and strategies. Although there are variations in the structure of education systems worldwide, education levels are grouped by international organisations according to the International Standard Classification of

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Ozerdem, Alpaslan (2016) The Role of Youth in Peacebuilding: Challenges and Opportunities (UNICEF Global Development Commons) available online at https://gdc.unicef.org/resource/role-youth-peacebuilding-challenges-and-opportunities, accessed 14th February 2022

[59] See, for example: International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (2013) Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Indicators – Progress, Interim List and next steps, available online at https://www.pbsbdialogue.org/media/filer_public/a1/52/a152494f-0bb0-4ff3-8908-14bb007abd25/psg_indicators_en.pdf, accessed 14th February 2022

Education (ISCED).[60] This is a broad definition including different forms of schooling and training. Although not a precise equivalent, data on education levels can be interpreted as a general proxy for 'youth'. Specifically, between the ages of 15 and 29, people in full-time education tend to be at the level of upper secondary education, post-secondary non-tertiary education, short-cycle tertiary education, Bachelors, Masters or Doctoral or equivalent.

A broad range of international statistics refer to young people in education. We have listed 62 indicators from official sources, specifically the UN, UNESCO, International Labour Organisation (ILO) and OECD. 23 indicators refer specifically to participation and/or attainment in education. They are:

- Entry rates

- Graduation rates

- Official entrance age to post-secondary non-tertiary education (years)

- Proportion of children and young people: (a) in grades 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex.

- Completion rate (primary education, lower secondary education, upper secondary education)

- Gross attendance ratio for tertiary education, both sexes, female, male, urban, rural (%)

- Gross enrolment ratio for tertiary education, both sexes, male, female (%)

- Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, both sexes, male, female (%)

- Out-of-school rate for youth of upper secondary school age, both sexes, male, female, urban, rural (household survey data) (%)

- Out-of-school rate for adolescents and youth of lower and upper secondary school age, both sexes, male, female (%)

- Out-of-school rate for youth of upper secondary school age, both sexes, male, female (%)

- Share of youth not in employment, education or training (NEET) by sex -- ILO modelled estimates (%) -- Annual

- Share of youth not in employment, education or training (NEET) by sex and age (%)

- Youth not in employment, education or training (NEET) by sex (000)

- Proportion of youth not in education, employment or training, by sex and age (%)

- Proportion of 15- to 24-year-olds enrolled in vocational education, both sexes, male, female (%)

- Proportion of population achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional skills, by sex, age and type of skill (%)

- Youth illiterate population, 15-24 years, both sexes, male, female, rural, urban (number)

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[60] UNESCO (2011) International Standard Classification of Education, available online at http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/international-standard-classification-of-education-isced-2011-en.pdf, accessed 14th February 2022

- Youth literacy rate, population 15-24 years, both sexes, male, female, rural, urban (%)

- Youth literacy rate, 15-24, both sexes (%)

- Official entrance age to post-secondary non-tertiary education (years)

- Completion rate, upper secondary education, both sexes, male, female, rural, urban (%)

- Percentage of youth/adults who have achieved at least a minimum level of proficiency in digital literacy skills, male, female (%)

All of them can be disaggregated by sex and all except two have an extensive geographic coverage (over 160 countries).

18 indicators provided by ILO show the relationship between education level and participation in the labour force. They can be grouped as follows:

- Youth labour force (by sex, age, education, school attendance status)

- Youth labour force participation rate (by sex, age, education, school attendance status)

- Youth outside the labour force (by sex, age, education, school attendance status)

- Youth inactivity rate (by sex, age, education, school attendance status)

- Youth employment-to-population ratio by sex, age and school attendance status: Annual

- Youth working-age population (by sex, age, education, school attendance status)

- Youth unemployment rate (by sex, age, education, school attendance status)

- Youth unemployment-to-population ratio (by sex, age, school attendance status)

- Youth working-age population distribution (by sex, education, stages of transition)

- Youth working-age population (sex, education, forms and stages of transition)

All of these are disaggregated into 5-year cohorts which enable data users to examine a specific youth age group. They are also disaggregated by sex, but not by other characteristics. The data is annually updated, which allows for analysis of trends over between two to five decades. The geographic coverage is extensive, including over 150 countries (except for two indicators which cover 90).

Three indicators refer to student mobility, and so also overlap with the migration thematic area. These are not disaggregated in any way but 'tertiary students' can be interpreted as a general proxy for youth:

- Outbound mobility ratio by host region (All regions, North America and Western Europe, Central Asia, East Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Arab States, Central and Eastern Europe, South and West Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa) both sexes (%)

- Total outbound internationally mobile tertiary students studying abroad, all countries, both sexes (number)

- Outbound internationally mobile tertiary students studying in (North America and Western Europe, Central Asia, East Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Arab States, Central and Eastern Europe, South and West Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa) (number)

Eight indicators do not refer to young people themselves, but rather to government spending in education. They do not contain disaggregated population data, but do describe the education context in different places:

- Volume of official development assistance flows for scholarships by sector and type of study
- Volume of official development assistance flows for scholarships by sector and type of study, constant US$
- Initial government funding per upper secondary student as a percentage of GDP per capita
- Initial government funding per upper secondary student, constant PPP$
- Initial government funding per tertiary student as a percentage of GDP per capita
- Initial household funding per tertiary student as a percentage of GDP per capita
- Initial government funding per tertiary student, constant PPP$
- Initial household funding per tertiary student, constant PPP$

12 indicators also refer to education of digital skills, and so also overlap with the digital and information and communications technology thematic area (see 4.5.2 below). They are:

- Proportion of youth and adults who have connected and installed new devices, male, female (%)
- Proportion of youth and adults who have copied or moved a file or folder, male, female (%)
- Proportion of youth and adults who have created electronic presentations with presentation software male, female(%)
- Proportion of youth and adults who have used copy and paste tools to duplicate or move information within a document, both sexes, male, female (%)
- Proportion of youth and adults who have used basic arithmetic formulae in a spreadsheet, both sexes, male, female (%)
- Proportion of youth and adults who have written a computer program using a specialised programming language, both sexes, male, female (%)
- Proportion of youth and adults who have found, downloaded, installed and configured software, both sexes, male, female (%)
- Proportion of youth and adults who have transferred files between a computer and other devices, both sexes, male, female (%)
- Percentage of youth/adults who have achieved at least a minimum level of proficiency in digital literacy skills, male, female (%)
- Proportion of upper secondary schools with access to computers for pedagogical purposes (%)
- Proportion of upper secondary schools with access to Internet for pedagogical purposes (%)
- Percentage of youth/adults who have achieved at least a minimum level of proficiency in digital literacy skills, younger adults (%)

The European Training Foundation (the EU agency supporting countries surrounding the EU to reform their education, training and labour market systems) has also been collecting a set of Key Indicators on Education, Skills and Employment (KIESE), mainly through exchanges with statistical offices from EU Partner Countries. While access to the statistical database is granted only after an application, some of the indicators are published through a dedicated report series. These reports aim at providing an overview of trends and

developments in ETF partner countries, and to raise awareness on the use of indicators to drive the policy cycle.[61]

4.4.2 Employment

The employment/labour market is the thematic area with the largest set indicators readily available and provided by intentional organisations with the corresponding mandate. We have identified 67 international indicators from official sources.are related to either SDG targets (SDG 1 and SDG 8) or are provided by the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

ILO defines persons in employment as 'all those of working age who, during a short reference period, were engaged in any activity to produce goods or provide services for pay or profit. They comprise employed persons "at work", i.e. who worked in a job for at least one hour; and employed persons "not at work" due to temporary absence from a job, or to working-time arrangements (such as shift work, flexitime and compensatory leave for overtime)'[62]. However, being employed does not necessarily imply having decent work which is central to sustainable poverty reduction and is a means for achieving equitable, inclusive and sustainable development (ILO 2013).[63] ILO provides a set of ten employment related indicators on decent work which include two youth-specific indicators included our dataset (Youth not in employment, education or training (NEET) and Youth unemployment rate (YUR)).

The first set of indicators are SDG indicators. They are:

- Employed population below the international poverty line, by sex and age (%)

- Unemployment rate, by sex and age (%)

- Proportion of youth not in education, employment or training, by sex and age (%)

- Proportion of children engaged in economic activity and household chores, by sex and age (%)

- Proportion of children engaged in economic activity, by sex and age (%)

All of the indicators are disaggregated by age groups as well as by sex, and hence are available for youth.

The second set of indicators come from ILO. In addition to having age disaggregation for a significant number of indicators, it also has a special module on Youth labour market indicators – YouthSTATS. The set of 53 indicators available through YouthSTATS can be grouped as following:

- Youth working-age population by age, sex and place of residence (as well as education, school attendance status, forms and stages of transition, labour market status)

- Youth labour force by age, sex and place of residence (as well as education, school attendance status)

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[61] ETF (2020), KIESE - Key indicators on education, skills and employment 2020, Available at https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/key-indicators-education-skills-and-employment-2020
ETF (2019), KIESE - Key indicators on education, skills and employment 2019, Available at www.etf.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/key-indicators-education-skills-and-employment-2019
[62] ILO Glossary of Statistical Terms. Available at https://www.ilo.org/ilostat-files/Documents/Statistical%20Glossary.pdf
[63] ILO (2013) Decent work indicators. Guidelines for producers and users of statistical and legal framework indicators, ILO manual, Second version. Available at https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---integration/documents/publication/wcms_229374.pdf

- Youth employment by age, sex and place of residence (as well as school attendance status, status in employment, weekly hours worked, working time arrangements)

- Youth employment-to-population ratio by age, sex and place of residence (as well as education, school attendance status)

- Youth time-related underemployment by age, sex and place of residence

- Youth unemployment by age, sex, age and place of residence (as well ad categories of unemployed persons, duration, education, place of residence, school attendance status)

- Youth discouraged job-seekers by age, sex and place of residence

- Youth inactivity rate by age, sex and place of residence (as well as education, school attendance status)

- Youth outside the labour force by age, sex and place of residence (as well as education, school attendance status)

- Youth transited by sex (as well as economic activity, occupation, status in employment)

The data is mostly annual. The main sources are surveys, households and labour force surveys, in some cases census data, but also some are modelled estimated. The latter guarantees large coverage both geographically and over time.

The indicators not belonging to the YouthSTATS family include employment (thousands and rate), informal employment, labour force participation, share of youth not in employment, education or training (NEET), time-related underemployment, unemployment). These indicators are available for various age groups including youth (15-19, 20-24, 25-34) which allows both monitoring the labour market outcome of youth and comparing it to one of the other age groups.

Also for labour marker/employment thematic area, surveys can help in understanding the situation of youth. In particular, the public opinion surveys usually include a question on the most important issue (e.g. 'What is the most important problem facing our country today?') and in the set of possible answers included options such as 'unemployment' or 'low wages'. Developing indicator(s) based on such questions (e.g. share of young individuals considering 'unemployment' or 'low wages' the main important problem the country is facing) could complement the picture provided by the official statistics by adding in information on concerns expressed by young individuals.[64]

4.4.3 Health

There is a wealth of international indicators on health, but relatively few which refer specifically to youth. These touch primarily on physical conditions and reproductive health. There is little on mental health (we only include suicide rates), despite this being a prominent concern of young people and a significant challenge during the COVID-19 pandemic. We identified only ten indicators provided as official statistics that are relevant to youth. They are:

- Adolescent birth rate (aged 15–19 years) per 1,000 women in that age group

- Proportion of young women and men aged 18-29 who experienced sexual violence by age 18

- Proportion of women of reproductive age (aged 15–49 years) who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods

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[64] Kalantaryan, S. and McMahon, S. (2020) *Youth Perspectives in Africa: what are the most important issues for 18 to 35 year olds* (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union)

- Crude suicide rates (per 100 000 population)

- Prevalence of current drinking among 15-19 year old adolescents

- Alcohol, heavy episodic drinking (youth) past 30 days

- Population aged 15-24 years with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS (%)

- Prevalence of condom use by adults during higher-risk sex (15-49) (%)

- Number of new HIV infections per 1,000 uninfected population, by sex and age (per 1,000 uninfected population)

- Proportion of women aged 15-49 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care

Although they are all provided by UN organisations, the disaggregation availability, coverage across countries and time and the frequency of updates varies. The indicator on suicide is part of the indicator framework of the SDGs, specifically mortality attributable to suicide (SDG 3.4.2.). It has an almost complete country coverage, are available for recent years, is updated regularly, and can be disaggregated by age and sex. There are also indicators related to unsafe water, unsafe sanitation or lack of hygiene (SDG 3.9.1) and the joint effects of household and ambient air pollution (SDG 3.9.2) but this data cannot be disaggregated to a youth-specific age. WHO also provides data on other causes of death, but these are in many cases not collected for youth age groups, such as deaths from cardiovascular disease.

Five indicators relate to sexual and reproductive health with two coming from the SDG indicator framework. SDG 3.7.1 measures the demand for family planning satisfied with modern methods of contraception of contraception and SDG 3.7.2 the adolescent fertility rate. They are based on administrative and survey data and compiled by UNDESA. They cover most countries, are regularly updated, and span back multiple decades. Disaggregation by age is possible where the indicator is not already age-specific (such as the adolescent fertility rate). These indicators are also specific to females. Disaggregation by ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, migration status or place of residence is not yet possible. That is also the case for the two indicators provided by WHO that measure knowledge about HIV/AIDS and the use of condoms during higher-risk sex. Both are only available by age and sex and the country coverage is less than 50.

The dataset further includes indicators on health behaviour. These relate to the consumption of alcohol, and the experience of sexual violence. They are collected through household surveys. These data can also be sourced from WHO and have coverage of over 150 countries with the exception of data on the experience of sexual violence which are only available for 56 countries. Disaggregation by age and sex is possible for all of these indicators. The only other option for disaggregation is by place of residence but this is only the case for the indicator on the experience of sexual violence. There are indicators for other behaviours, such as the use of tobacco, but this cannot be disaggregated to refer specifically to young people.

The presented indicators on health in our dataset are only a sample of some of the most used indicators on health among young people. There are many more indicators on health available from WHO and other UN organisation and, of course also from other sources. The range of indicators can be expanded if the focus is on particular sub-topics. For example, to examine further the mortality of young people a myriad of indicators with global estimates and longer time series is provided by the Global Burden of Disease

Program.[65]Detailed statistics on progress among young person's reproductive health are provided by the Family Planning 2030 Program.[66] Furthermore, public-use microdata are available for international survey series on health such as the Demographic and Health Surveys or the Multiple Indicator Cluster surveys and allow for detailed user-defined analysis across a large range of health topics. Hence, including all indicators related to the health of youth is beyond the scope of this dataset.

4.5 Digital and information and communications technology (ICT)

4.5.1 Culture and media

Culture has been described as providing 'boundless resources in responding and adapting to development challenges'. It is specifically mentioned in SDGs 4.7, 8.9, 11.4 and 12.b. These define culture as either a good to be protected and promoted (as in 'cultural heritage'), or as a series of actions and a way of living which interact with other development processes (such as a 'culture of peace').

The data associated with culture and youth is limited. The relevant SDG targets and indicators tend to measure policies and frameworks rather than individual outcomes for different population groups. Only two indicators from official sources with a global coverage refer to young people specifically:

- Number of persons employed in cultural occupations
- Number of persons employed in non-cultural occupations

These indicators are disaggregated to a youth cohort of 15 to 24 years, and by sex as well. But they are not disaggregated in other ways, only cover 78 countries and the open access data referring to them was last updated in 2016.

There are also indicators available from non-official surveys, with a regional coverage. For example, the Latinobarómetro contains data on the use of social networking services, and Asian Barometer and Afrobarometer contain data on the use of the internet and on access to the different forms of online and offline media, which can be relevant for both cultural activities and digital inclusion (see below).

Regarding young people specifically, there is a clear gap regarding available data on their relationship with cultural goods and their cultural activities.

4.5.2 Digital inclusion

The digital transformation is revolutionising economies and societies. International organisations have reported on the importance of digital access and the limiting impact the currently observed digital divide has for low and middle-income countries in gaining a foothold in the global digital economy in the face of limited digital capacity, skills, and fragmented global and regional rules.[67] In 2016 the UN General Assembly passed a non-binding Resolution that "declared internet access a human right."[68] The COVID-19 pandemic and it's related also lockdowns importance of digital access (teleworking, access

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[65] GBD 2019 Adolescent Mortality Collaborators. (2021). Global, regional, and national mortality among young people aged 10–24 years, 1950–2019: a systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2019. Lancet (London, England), 398(10311), 1593

[66] FP2030 (2021) Family Planning 2030 – Measurement Report 2021. Family Planning 2030 Initiative, available online at http://www.track20.org/download/pdf/FP2030_DataReport_v5.pdf, accessed 14th February 2022

[67] OECD (2021) Development Co-operation Report 2021: Shaping a Just Digital Transformation (Paris: OECD Publishing)

[68] Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states 'Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers'. Available online at https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/udhr.pdf, accessed 14th February 2022

to online commercial platforms, remittance transfer, etc.). Even though the pandemic led to a boost in connectivity, an estimated 37 per cent of the world's population (or 2.9 billion people) is still offline with an estimated 96 per cent of them living in developing countries (ITU 2021).[69] For youth populations, which are generally more connected than the rest of the population, having access to the internet during the pandemic meant having an opportunity to continue education and upgrade their digital skills and/or stay employed if occupation permits.

The review of existing indicators on digital access suggests that the set of indicators identified in this dimension is relatively narrow but diverse in terms of sources. The main institutions publishing indicators with (close to) global coverage are the World Bank through its Global Findex database[70] and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).[71] The World Bank has been reporting the percentage of individuals using the Internet as one of its World Development Indicators starting since 1990.[72] The indicator is based on data provided by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

The Global Findex provides age disaggregated (15-24 age group) information for the following indicators covering digital access to financial tools:

- Made or received digital payments in the past year, young adults (%)

- Made digital payments in the past year, young adults (%)

- Received digital payments in the past year, young adults (%)

- Mobile money account, young adults (%)

While the geographic coverage of Global Findex indicators is good (over 140 countries) the data is available only for three points in time (2011, 2014, and 2017).

Two indicators are produced by the ITU and published by the World Bank are the following:

- Individuals using the Internet (% of population)

- Mobile cellular subscriptions (per 100 people)

Both indicators have wide geographic coverage (over 200 countries) and are available from the 1990s to 2019 and 2020 for the first and second indicators respectively. The indicators are published annually. Unfortunately, the indicators are not age disaggregated. However, the ITU provides a publication (database and report) proving a set of indicators disaggregated by age, though of more limited geographic coverage (33 to 83 countries depending on indicator). The dataset and the report are available to buy[73]. The set of provided age disaggregated indicators is the following:

- Individuals using a computer (from any location), and gender (%)

- Individuals using the Internet (from any location), by age and gender (%)

- Individuals using the internet by location of use (%) (at home; at work; at place of education; at another person's home; at facility open to the public; at community

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[69] ITU (2021) Measuring digital development Facts and figures 2021 (International Telecommunication Union) available online at https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Documents/facts/FactsFigures2021.pdf, accessed 14th February 2022

[70] According to the information provide on the website the Global Findex database is the world's most comprehensive data set on how adults save, borrow, make payments, and manage risk. Launched with funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the database has been published every three years since 2011. Available online at https://globalfindex.worldbank.org/, accessed 14th February 2022

[71] International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is the United Nation's specialized agency for information and communication technologies. https://www.itu.int/en/Pages/default.aspx, accessed 14th February 2022

[72] The indicator is provided by International Telecommunication Union (ITU) World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Database. https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/publications/wtid.aspx, accessed 14th February 2022

[73] More info on how to obtain the data is available at https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/stat/default.aspx, accessed 14th February 2022

Internet access facility; at any place via a mobile cellular telephone; while commuting, in transport or walking

- Individuals using a mobile cellular telephone by age and gender

- Individuals owning a mobile cellular telephone by age and gender

- Individuals with ICT skills by type of skills by gender ((a) using copy and paste tools to duplicate or move data, information and content in digital environments (e.g. within a document, between devices, on the cloud); (b) Sending messages (e.g. e-mail, messaging service, SMS) with attached files (e.g. document, picture, video); (c) Using basic arithmetic formula in a spreadsheet;(d) Connecting and installing new devices (e.g. a modem, camera, printer) through wired or wireless technologies; (e) Finding, downloading, installing and configuring software and apps; (f) Creating electronic presentations with presentation software; (g) Transferring files or applications between devices (including via cloud-storage); (h) Programming or coding in digital environments (e.g. computer software, app development); (i) Setting up effective security measures to protect devices and online accounts; (j) Changing privacy settings on your device, account or app to limit the sharing of personal data and information; (k) Verifying the reliability of information found online.

UNESCO Institute of Statistics among its education related indicators contains two indicators on digital access and one on digital literacy:

- Proportion of upper secondary schools with access to computers for pedagogical purposes (%)

- Proportion of upper secondary schools with access to Internet for pedagogical purposes (%)

- Percentage of youth/adults who have achieved at least a minimum level of proficiency in digital literacy skills, younger adults (%)

Public opinion surveys also contain questions related to digital access. The set of questions and hence the potential indicators can be classified into three groups:

- Questions /indicators on access and access mode (e.g. yes/no, computer/mobile);

- Questions /indicators on the frequency of use (e.g. daily, weekly, monthly, etc.);

- Questions /indicators on the purpose of use (e.g. searching/receiving information, expressing an opinion, education, social media, online purchases, etc.).

The Gallup World Poll is among surveys with the largest (global) coverage. It contains a set of questions allowing to capture access to the Internet. The microdata is however not publically available. It is provided upon request (with a research proposal) and is quite costly. Other surveys have regional coverage. For instance, Afrobarometer (34 African countries) and Central Asia (5 Central Asian countries) surveys contain a set of questions on ownership and frequency of use of mobile phones and internet access. Arab Barometer (from 7 to 12 Arab states depending on the wave) and Asian Barometer (13 Asian countries), Latinobarómetro (18 Latin American countries) contains a wider set of questions which varies across surveys and waves but overall cover access to the Internet, the access mode, frequency and purpose of its use. Latinobarómetro contains a question that is especially relevant for young individuals in times of pandemic related closure of educational institutions. The respondents were asked whether he/she or a student in the household was learning remotely via the internet during the pandemics.

None of the regional surveys provides enough information on migration status, sexual orientation for analysis. However, Afrobarometer contains a question on disability and ethnicity, hence making it is possible to develop the indicators on digital access for young people with disabilities or for various ethnic groups if the sample size permits.

4.6 Environment

4.6.1 Environmental protection and climate change

Despite the unprecedented effort made by young people to voice their concerns on climate change, the existing set of indicators on youth exposure to climate change or action to fight it is very limited. Only in half of 100 countries included in the recent UNESCO survey the national education curricula make any reference to climate change and when the subject is mentioned, it is almost always given very low priority.[74]

In our study, we found no international indicators on the impact of climate change on young people specifically. Although there is data available on populations that are internally displaced due to natural disasters, this cannot be disaggregated by age.

Climate change and environmental degradation have gained the attention of the population which is reflected in regional public opinion surveys that include related questions. For instance, the Afrobarometer survey included a set of questions on climate change covering the awareness of it, its meaning (positive or negative changes in weather conditions), perception (positive or negative) and perceived impact (for the country and agriculture production) and the role ordinary people can play in combating it.

The Arab Barometer contains a question on the perception of climate change (seriousness of the problem). Central Asia Barometer survey asks the respondents about the overall ecological state in the country, the causes of climate change, and its perception. Latinobarómetro survey captures (measures on a scale from 1 to 10) how willing the respondents would be to demonstrate and protest for climate change.

Here too, none of the regional surveys provides information on migration status, sexual orientation. However, Afrobarometer contains a question on disability and ethnicity, hence making it is possible to develop the indicators on the perception of climate change for young people with disabilities or various ethnic groups if the sample size permits.

The review of available information/indicators pointed to the absence of indicators on youth exposure to climate change. It would be important to develop indicators such as the number or percentage of young individuals currently as well as in the future residing in areas most affected by climate change (e.g. extreme climatic events such as droughts and subsequent decline in agricultural production). These indicators could help policymakers to design policies to attenuate the consequence of climate change on young individuals in advance.

4.7 Rights

4.7.1 Gender equality

Gender equality cuts across development indicators and several indicators that can be disaggregated by sex were included under other specific themes such as education and employment as well. 80 per cent of the official statistics included in this study have a potential gender dimension, due to being disaggregated by sex. This offers a rich body of data for examining different aspects of gender inequality across the different thematic areas.

There are also several international data sources measuring gender equality across a variety of dimensions such as health and well-being, social norms, attitudes and perceptions, economic disparities or experiences of domestic violence. We have identified seven indicators coming from official statistics, which specifically refer to gender equality:

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[74] UNESCO (2021) Getting every school climate-ready: how countries are integrating climate change issues in education. (Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization)

- Proportion of time spent on domestic and care work, by sex, age and location

- Proportion of women aged 15-49 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care

- Proportion of women aged 20-24 who were married or in a union before age 15 (or before age 18)

- Proportion of males/females 15-49 yrs who consider a husband to be justified in hitting or beating his wife

- Proportion of young women and men aged 18-29 who experienced sexual violence by age 18

- Proportion of women of reproductive age (aged 15–49 years) who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods

- Adolescent birth rate (aged 15–19 years) per 1,000 women in that age group

This data is provided by the UN and WHO. They offer good coverage across countries and over time and are publicly available. Five of the indicators on gender equality are taken from the SDG framework, which has a specific goal for gender. The coverage ranges from 64 to 161 countries and the data are frequently updated and released. Indicators from WHO also look at attitudes towards domestic violence but are only available for around 50 countries. The data are sourced from international demographic and health surveys carried out by UNICEF and USAID.

All indicators can be disaggregated by sex or are sex-specific, such as the measure of the proportion of young women who were married as children. The breakdown by age is available for most indicators; however, for some indicators the data by age are limited to pre-defined youth cohorts that do not correspond to targeted range of 15-29 years of age for youth. Moreover, most of the indicators allow differentiating by rural or urban place of residence while data by disability or ethnicity is only available for about a third of the indicators. A breakdown by migration status or sexual orientation is not possible.

Non-official statistics sourced from the barometer surveys show attitudes towards gender equality in private and public life such as opinions about a range of principles that should determine the behaviour and situation of women in society, and perceptions of the status of gender equality in the country such as equal access to education or the labour market.

4.7.2 Fighting discrimination

There are few international data sources related to the theme of fighting discrimination. We included five indicators with one coming from official statistics that are part of the SDGs and four from non-official statistics produced by PEW Research Centre, the Afrobarometer program and the Latinobarómetro program. All five indicators measure discrimination based on self-reported survey responses and can be categorised as either personal experiences of discrimination, personal engagement against discrimination and personal opinions on discrimination as a problem in the country.

The official indicator of the UN SDGs measures the overall prevalence of discrimination and harassment a country. It is defined as the proportion of the population reporting having personally felt discriminated against in the previous year based on grounds prohibited by international human rights law. The data are collected from household surveys, victimisation surveys and other social surveys and reported by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The data are released annually starting in 2014 and but the geographical coverage stretches to only 44 countries. The indicator aims to differentiate between the total prevalence of discrimination and discrimination by age, disability, ethnicity, colour, religion, sex, or migration status. There is no specific youth cohort, but the capacity to do so depends on the sample gathered from each individual country. Currently, disaggregation by age is available but disaggregation by other categories except for sex is not (it is planned for the future as part of the SDG indicator framework directive on data disaggregation).

The non-official indicators are based on individual surveys. The PEW Research centre provides indicators on discrimination from a global survey on attitudes. This includes an indicator on the willingness to take up personal action against discrimination and an indicator on the perception of discrimination based on race or ethnicity as a serious problem in the country. Data coverage is limited (less than 20 countries) and only for selected years since 2014. Disaggregation is possible by age and sex. The barometer surveys in Africa and Latin America include indicators on the personal experience of discrimination. The Afrobarometer collects data on the personally being affected by discrimination based on gender, religion, ethnicity or disability and covers 34 countries in Africa while the Latinobarómetro asks about being part of a discriminated group. The survey data are publicly available and allow disaggregation by age, sex, and rural-urban place of residence and the user-definition of different age ranges of a youth cohort.

The indicators are limited to the general perception and personal experiences of discrimination in the population. More detailed data would be needed to understand issues such as patterns of discrimination or policy shortcomings.

4.7.3 Humanitarian action

There is a general lack of international data sources providing data on youth affected by humanitarian emergencies or involved in humanitarian action. This is in part due to difficulties of data collection in emergency situations. Recent efforts, such as statistical guidelines developed by an international expert group on refugee and internally displaced persons statisticshave sought to address this.[75] Furthermore, new international initiatives such as the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action have made better data on young people affected by disaster, conflict, forced displacement and other emergencies one of their key priorities.[76]

We identified only five indicators related to youth and humanitarian emergencies, with only one which comes from official statistics. This is UNHCR data on displacement, specifically on the forcibly displaced population (including refugees and people of concern). This can be disaggregated by age but only between 12 and 17 or 18 and 59 years of age. These data are available since 1951, cover a large number of countries and are annually updated. Further disaggregation other than by sex is not possible.

Four non-official indicators cover the topics of internal displacement and conflict. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre provides two indicators on displaced persons. Data on conflict-induced displacement are available from 2003 and for 194 countries. Data on disaster-induced displacement start in 2008 and cover 200 countries. Both indicators are released annually but disaggregation by age or any other category are not available (although there are special reports that include youth data for a limited number of select countries).

Two further indicators on conflict are produced by the Peace Research Institute Oslo on the number of children affected by armed conflict and at risk of being recruited for armed conflict. The data do not include a bespoke category for youth, and only include persons up to the age of 18. No other disaggregation is available. The data are based on analysis of conflict event data and demographic data to determine potentially exposure of youth populations to different types of conflict. Global estimates covering conflicts in all countries and are provided for the years 1990 to 2020. They are no regular updates.

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[75] European Union and United Nations (2018) Expert Group on Refugee and Internally Displaced Persons Statistics. International Recommendations on Refugee Statistics (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union)
[76] The Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action (2020) Data Collection and Age Disaggregation for Young People in Humanitarian Action. Action 5 – Data, available online at https://www.youthcompact.org/action-5-data, accessed 14th February 2022

5 Findings and Recommendations

This report has presented an extensive review of international indicators and data sources across six main thematic areas of relevance to EU and international policymaking. The data included in the report and the associated dataset is not an exhaustive overview of all evidence on youth, but it is sufficient to present an overview. In this concluding chapter, we describe the main findings and gaps in the evidence. The chapter ends with a discussion of the implications of this study for future evidence-based youth policymaking, and makes recommendations for the EU's external action in particular.

5.1 Findings

Over recent years, youth has become a policy priority for many governments and organisations. An expanding group of international, national and non-governmental organisations and networks have produced policy, programming and strategic frameworks to positively impact on young people's lives. This policy interest has fuelled an expansion of international data to potentially inform decisions and facilitate monitoring and evaluation activities over time.

This study highlights data for analysis and policymaking across a broad range of thematic areas formulated as priorities for the EU's External Action. Overall, we have identified 157 different indicators from official sources which are relevant to international youth policies and programmes. In particular, there is a rich body of international data on youth education and employment. This is important given the centrality of education and employment to young people's transition to adulthood.

However, the data landscape is highly varied across the different thematic areas. In contrast to education and employment, there are significant data gaps for other thematic areas. In particular, we identify no suitable indicators from official sources on environmental protection and climate change, and a very limited selection on peace and security, humanitarian action or fighting discrimination.

We find the limited availability of data on youth participation in its various forms to be particularly concerning. Participation (as well as inter-linked concepts of engagement and empowerment) is underlined as a key dimension to all international policy frameworks on youth. But the available official data that we have identified refers only to a narrow form of participation in formal political institutions, and includes a broad population of all people up to the age of 45 years, which stretches beyond the definition of 'youth' adopted in European and international organisations.

Furthermore, although there is momentum behind the development of harmonised, comparable and readily accessible international data there is still a way to go. The available data is provided by a range of different organisations and although a large proportion of it is disaggregated by age and sex, different providers define different boundaries to the 'youth' age group. Beyond age and sex, different forms of disaggregation such as migration status or disability are rare. This makes it difficult to gain detailed insights into the living conditions of particular social groups. The geographic coverage of different indicators is also highly varied. It is positive that half of the official statistics in our dataset have a global, or nearly-global, coverage (more than 150 countries and territories), but it should be noted that in some cases not all countries are included in every data release, leading to an even more varied picture (and in some cases the underlying data may include more details which are not in the openly published datasets).

However, our study also underlines the potential value of openly available survey data to fill in data gaps and gain a more detailed view of particular social groups in specific places. Indeed, we highlight 101 indicators from non-official sources, especially international public opinion surveys, which could contribute to better understanding and monitoring youth in different world regions (although potentially there are many more).

Finally, we should reiterate that this study shows only part of the information which should be brought into effective policymaking on youth. Programme managers are able to gather

context-specific insights from their activities' output data for example. Researchers have carried out case studies on many of the themes referred to in this study as well, but with a geographical and temporal focus which is too restricted for us to include here. And any policy framework seeking to empower young people should hear from those young people themselves.[77]

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the strengths and weakness of international data on youth noted above, here we present a series of recommendations that seek to build on the progress made so far. They fall into three main categories; (1) Managing the available data, (2) Building on the available data, and (3) Addressing thematic and geographic gaps. Each are described below in more detail:

5.2.1 Managing the available data

Data providers should be encouraged to disaggregate their data, where possible, into consistent age groups which enable data users to build a youth cohort around the boundaries that are most relevant to them. In the case of UN population data, this has been done by disaggregating data into five-year groups. In survey data, disaggregation is into single-year groups. Both give data users flexibility to re-aggregate data into an ad-hoc youth cohort. This would enable data users to analyse youth specifically, but not be tied to pre-defined age boundaries to do so.

Data coherence and accessibility could be improved through the development of an online international youth data repository, platform or dashboard. There are several examples of potential approaches to adopt. For example, data on the SDGs has been effectively collated and presented in an accessible and user-friendly online interface. The EU youth dashboard, hosted by Eurostat, provides a range of youth indicators in one location.[78] Interactive online tools such as the Atlas of Migration,[79] Atlas of Demography[80] and the Global Development Data Tool[81] also bring together data from diverse sources into single, accessible and interactive platforms. These examples show a range of models and platforms which could contain, or inform the production of a dedicated resource for, international youth data which would mean data users no longer have to search across multiple sources.

5.2.2 Building on the available data

We recommend a deeper examination of regional public opinion surveys which can work towards their harmonisation as a unified resource. Researchers and policymakers can address evidence gaps or gain more detailed insights than provided by official statistics when drawing on public opinion survey data.[82] When specific countries or regions are included within these surveys, the data produced can complement official statistics, provide further information or focus on particular groups and places. But these surveys are currently limited in terms of their geographic coverage and the differences in their sampling and questioning approaches. The opportunities, but also the associated challenges and resource needs, of incorporating survey data into the planning and monitoring of the EU's external action activities should be explored.

Further analysis can also inform the production of new indicators where there is currently a lack of international data. Bringing together data from multiple sources can facilitate the production of new indicators which are specific to the EU's external action. For example,

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[77] For an overview of lessons learned from youth programmes and what works at amplifying youth voices, see: https://evaluation.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl151/files/docs/resources/Youth_Metasynthesis_Brief_ENG.pdf
[78] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/youth/data/eu-dashboard
[79] For more information: https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/atlas-migration_en
[80] For more information: https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/atlas-demography_en
[81] For more information: https://webgate.ec.testa.eu/intpa/gddt/
[82] We have also published our own studies on the topic REFERENCE

cross-referencing population data with thematic indicators may give an indication of the extent to which young people are *exposed to* different social processes, such as climate change or conflict. Statistical techniques can also be used to build composite indicators which express the relationship between different variables. Further reflection is required on the thematic areas and available data sources which could successfully be used for doing so.

5.2.3 Addressing thematic and geographic gaps

To fill many of the gaps in the international data on youth mentioned throughout this report, individual approaches may be needed which look beyond what is available in pre-prepared, off-the-shelf international statistics. Ad hoc thematic studies or research programmes are advisable which can address the thematic and/or geographic gaps in the available data landscape.

In particular, there is a major need for research and data focused on youth participation. As already highlighted in this report, youth participation is a main priority of the EU and all other youth-focused external relations and development cooperation frameworks. But the available data is lacking. Ideally, future data would have a broader view of the ways that young people participate politically and show how different youth groups with their own priorities, interests and vulnerabilities participate and why.

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Boxes

Box 1. Surveys

Box 2. Geographic coverage over time

Figures

Annexes

Annex 1. International youth policy frameworks and strategies

Name	Who	Year	Description	Priority areas
EU Youth Strategy: Youth goals	EU	2019	The Youth Goals are the outcome of the Youth Dialogue process with over 50 000 young people. They represent views of young people from all over Europe and are part of the EU Youth Strategy.	1. Connecting EU with Youth 2. Equality of All Genders 3. Inclusive Societies 4. Information & Constructive Dialogue 5. Mental Health & Wellbeing 6. Moving Rural Youth Forward 7. Quality Employment for All 8. Quality Learning 9. Space and Participation for All 10. Sustainable Green Europe 11. Youth Organisations and European Programmes
Status of African Youth Report	African Union	2019	The Status of African Report (SoAYR) provides an understanding of the current landscape of youth issues and what policies and programmes exist to address these issues among African Union (AU) Member States.	1. Employment and entrepreneurship 2. Education and skills development 3. Health and well-being 4. Rights, governance and empowerment
One Million by 2021	African Union	2019	The "One Million by 2021 Initiative" was launched in April 2019 to catalyze action for youth development in Africa. The African Union Commission does this by facilitating connections between AU Member States, corporate sponsors and development partners to inspire investment in African youth	1. Employment 2. Engagement 3. Entrepreneurship 4. Education
Youth 2030: The UN Youth Strategy	United Nations	2018	An ambitious system-wide strategy to guide the United Nations and its partners to work meaningfully with and for young people around the world	1. Engagement, Participation and Advocacy 2. Informed and Healthy Foundations 3. Economic Empowerment through Decent Work 4. Youth and Human Rights 5. Peace and Resilience Building
Youth Development Index	The Common-wealth	2016	The Youth Development Index (YDI), developed by the Commonwealth Secretariat, measures the status of young people in 183 countries around the world. The index is a comprehensive measure across 5 domains that are critical to youth development	1. Education 2. Health 3. Employment 4. Civic participation 5. Political participation

UNDP Youth Strategy 2014-2017	UNDP	2014	UNDP's first Youth Strategy 2014-2017 engages young people as a positive force for transformational change. This is the first organization-wide strategy that explicitly states UNDP's commitment to youth.	1. Economic empowerment 2. Civic engagement and participation in decision-making 3. Resilience building
EU indicators in the field of youth	European Commission	2011	This document is based on the work of the above expert group on EU indicators on youth, led by the European Commission ... the dashboard identifies key indicators for the EU Youth Strategy that are central to achieving a thorough understanding of the general living and working situation of young people.	1. Education and training 2. Employment and entrepreneurship 3. Health and well-being 4. Social inclusion 5. Culture and creativity 6. Youth participation 7. Voluntary activities 8. Youth and the world
World Programme of Action for Youth	United Nations	1995	The WPAY, adopted by the General Assembly in 1995, provides a policy framework and practical guidelines for national action and international support to improve the situation of young people around the world. The WPAY covers fifteen youth priority areas and contains proposals for action in each of these areas	1. Education 2. Employment 3. Hunger and poverty 4. Health 5. Environment 6. Substance abuse 7. Juvenile justice 8. Leisure time activities 9. Girls and young women 10. Participation in decision making 11. Globalization 12. Information and communication technologies 13. HIV/AIDS 14. Armed conflict 15. Intergenerational issues
Youth at Heart	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of the Netherlands	2020	Working with other partners, the Netherlands wants to invest in prospects for youth. This will pay dividends for the rest of these young people's lives.	1. Education 2. Work 3. Young People's Voice
Youth in Development	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark	2019	These pages contain programme management tools and guidance notes for increased youth mainstreaming. The tools and guidance notes are developed by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) to be used as inspiration when designing, implementing and evaluating development engagements.	1. Growth and employment 2. Governance 3. Social sectors (sexual and reproductive health) 4. Peace and security
Agents of Change	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooper-ation and	2017	Young people and their prospects in life are crucial to sustainable development. This action plan is intended to frame a strategy for and expand our worldwide	1. Health 2. Education and vocational training 3. Poverty and nutrition 4. Fair working conditions 5. Protection against violence and discrimination

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	Develop-ment		activities to promote children and youth.	6. Registration 7. Peace, security and displacement 8. Participation 9. Governance 10. Employment promotion 11. Integration of children and youth rights 12. Partnerships 13. International partnerships
Youth in Development	USAID	2012	This Policy on Youth in Development is the first of its kind for USAID … The goal of the Youth in Development policy is to improve the capacities and enable the aspirations of young people so that they contribute to and benefit from more stable, democratic, and prosperous communities and nations	1. Support 2. Protect 3. Prepare 4. Engage
Youth Wellbeing Index	European Youth Forum	2018	The Youth Progress Index is the most comprehensive measure of the quality of life of young people in 150 countries around the world.	1. Nutrition and basic medical care 2. Water and sanitation 3. Shelter 4. Personal safety 5. Access to basic knowledge 6. Access to information and communications 7. Health and wellness 8. Environmental quality 9. Personal rights 10. Personal freedom and choice 11. Inclusiveness 12. Access to advanced education
Positive Youth Development Toolkit	Youth Power	2017	Positive youth development engages youth along with their families, communities, and/or governments so that youth are empowered to reach their full potential. PYD approaches build skills, assets, and competencies; foster healthy relationships; strengthen the environment; and transform systems.	1. Assets 2. Agency 3. Enabling environment 4. Contribution
Global Youth Wellbeing Index	International Youth Foundation	2017	The Global Youth Wellbeing Index intends to bring to light opportunities that are vital to young people, to enhance the understanding of young people's development status, and to create positive action in areas that need improvement right now.	1. Gender equality 2. Economic opportunity 3. Education 4. Health 5. Safety and Security 6. Citizen participation 7. ICT

Annex 2. Youth-specific Sustainable Development Goals

Target	Indicator	Tier
4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes	4.1.1 Proportion of children and young people (a) in grades 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex	Tier I
4.3 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university	4.3.1 Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex	Tier II
4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship	4.4.1 Proportion of youth and adults with information and communications technology (ICT) skills, by type of skill	Tier II
4.6 By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy	4.6.1 Proportion of population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional (a) literacy and (b) numeracy skills, by sex	Tier II
8.5 By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value	8.5.1 Average hourly earnings of employees, by sex, age, occupation and persons with disabilities	Tier II
8.6 By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training	8.6.1 Proportion of youth (aged 15–24 years) not in education, employment or training	Tier I
8.b By 2020, develop and operationalize a global strategy for youth employment and implement the Global Jobs Pact of the International Labour Organization	8.b.1 Existence of a developed and operationalized national strategy for youth employment, as a distinct strategy or as part of a national employment strategy	Tier II
13.b Promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in least developed countries and small island developing States, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities	13.b.1 Number of least developed countries and small island developing States with nationally determined contributions, long-term strategies, national adaptation plans and adaptation communications, as reported to the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change	Tier II
	16.2.3 Proportion of young women and men aged 18–29 years who experienced sexual violence by age 18	Tier II

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