



CITIES OF YOUTH:
CITIES OF PROSPERITY



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Students in a technical education program supported by the World Bank in Antioquia, Colombia.

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INTRODUCTION

Cities of Youth: Cities of Prosperity is a background report for the upcoming *State of the Urban Youth Report (SUYP) 2011/2012—Prosperous Cities*. Youth are key to the prosperity of cities in the developing world, yet many barriers—most notably under and unemployment and a lack of access to basic services such as healthcare and education—prevent them from fulfilling this role. Youth from 15–24 are societies’ most essential and dynamic resource; if supported to create secure livelihoods, they, their families, and their communities will prosper. It is the responsibility of governments and institutions to assist youth in overcoming the barriers to their success, for example through the facilitation of equitable access to education and employment. This report focuses on the nexus between employment,

cities, and youth: areas that drive economic prosperity in the developing world. The report analyzes those factors that increase the ability of youth to secure employment. Mobile communication technologies appear to emerge as supporting asset development among young people and equalizing wealth disparities. The conclusion considers policy and program implications.

Chapter 1 will analyze pertinent research on youth and employment. It will situate youth employment globally, identify its current state, and review the barriers that youth face. Chapter 2 will analyze the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) of six geographically diverse urban areas. The analysis will focus on human capital (skills), income composition,

employment, sector structure, and policies. These issues will be viewed in relation to the demographic youth bulge in the developing world. The data will be reviewed with a focus on the importance on youth's access to basic

infrastructure such as water and sanitation, their access to educational institutions, and their access to telecommunications and digital technology. Chapter 3 will summarize the findings of this report.



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Municipal workers lay asphalt in the Atanasio Tzul avenue, zone 12, Guatemala city, Guatemala.

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CHAPTER 1: YOUTH AND THE URBAN ADVANTAGE

Urbanization is the engine that propels the world towards prosperity in the 21st century and youth are the engineers. Youth are society's most essential and dynamic human resource. There are more people under the age of 25 today than ever, totalling nearly three billion or

Historically, youth have not been seen as a demographic important enough to engage with—this is even true for the world's most youthful regions such as Africa—and they are not a focus for governments or funding agencies (Bennell, 2000; Mulenga, 2000). Yet there

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