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Introduction

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CODESRIA held a month-long institute on 'Negotiating Children's and Youth Livelihoods in Africa's Urban Spaces' (Dakar, Senegal, in September 2009). The twenty participants were senior and junior academic researchers, both Francophone and Anglophone, from universities and related institutions throughout the continent. This book brings together much of the research and ideas that were presented at the institute or resulted from it.[1]

Problems facing children and youth in African cities have been widely documented and have received much recent attention. African populations have high growth rates and, consequently, relatively high proportions of young people. Population growth in rural areas has stretched resources leading to urban migration and a rapid growth of cities. Economies have not grown apace with the population; and in some countries economies have even shrunk. The result is a severe lack of resources in cities to meet the needs of the growing populations, shown in high unemployment, inadequate housing, poor services, and often extreme poverty. All the essays in this book draw attention to such urban environments, in which children and youth have to live and survive. We have specific detail on the problems in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. Ali Sangare's research on unemployment (chapter 2) shows the problems typically faced by youth in many African cities, and how they develop means to deal with city life. In particular, degrees and diplomas are no longer guarantees of future employment. Marie-Thérèse Arcens Somé (chapter 3) shows the lack of resources and services faced by families and their younger children in poor areas, and various initiatives taken by families to overcome the resulting problems. While not all those living in urban areas face the same problems, and not all cities are the same, these two studies illustrate the plight of many children and youth among Africa's urban poor.

Who are children and who are youth? International documents like the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) define children as those under the age of eighteen or the legal age of majority. The broader term 'youth'

refers to those who are somewhere between childhood and full adulthood, covering an age range from mid-adolescence (around 15) to various upper limits of between 25 and 35. The African Union Charter (1999) defines youth as those aged from 15 to 35. For several legal purposes, such as the age to drive a car, or get married, or obtain employment, or vote for government, the end of childhood and the achievement of responsibility is defined according to particular ages.

While such definitions may be necessary for legal convenience or customary classification, they do not correspond exactly to the growth of competence and responsibility of particular children. In many African societies, a key transition from childhood to adulthood is symbolized by initiation rites rather than a specific age, but classification according to such rites does not always reflect the behaviour and responsibilities of particular children. Moreover, the determination of when childhood ends is invariably made by adults, with little consideration for the opinions and competencies of particular children. In some situations, the definition of childhood appears precisely to assert the control of children by adults. For example, many adults consider it right for children to work in their homes for no pay, but not to work for money (which would give them a degree of independence). Such rules reflect the dominance and control of adults rather than the competencies of children (Levison 2000). Even traditional initiation rites, by which young people are supposed to become adults, can sometimes be understood as a mechanism for patriarchal control (la Fontaine 1977).

In practice, children live in the same world as adults, and learn gradually how to participate in this world through observation and practice. Forces of poverty and exploitation affect adults and children alike, as do the effects of societal economic growth and development. Clearly defined lines of transition must always be in some sense artificial. Children's behaviour and competencies depend on personal characteristics, on the circumstances of their upbringing, on particular experiences, and on gradual learning processes. Particularly significant in developing competencies are cultural practices and expectations (Rogoff 2003:1-24): in Europe and North America, children are protected from danger by being kept away from it, whereas in other cultures they are exposed to risky situations and taught to deal with them; again in Europe and North America, children are kept free of responsibility, whereas in many other cultures children learn to be responsible for young siblings and for family wealth (particularly when herding domestic animals). While in England it would be illegal to leave children under the sole charge of someone under the age of 16, in many African societies children of ten are expected to care for young siblings while their parents work. Responsible behaviour develops more quickly when it is taught and expected. So in this book, we do not specify rigid definitions of 'childhood' and 'youth' as if these can be separated from the world of adults. Nor do we adopt a particular normative ideal for 'childhood'. Various authors use the terms appropriately for

their different studies, which are more concerned with patterns of behaviour and status in society than with age-based definitions.

Young people are numerically dominant in Africa, and the future depends on their ability to sustain themselves and the societies in which they live. Yet they have few resources, material or social, with which to meet the threats of poverty in African cities. Material resources are largely in the control of adults; social networks of youth rarely include those in positions of power; and young people's experience of dealing with livelihood issues is limited by their age. Children and youth are therefore particularly likely to suffer from crises arising in cities, and often struggle to maintain even a constrained and deprived livelihood. Some young people migrate to cities in search of better lives, and find themselves so constrained by poverty that when their illusions about city life are shattered, they have no means of returning home.

Cities, however, also provide opportunities. Children and young people generally are shaped by the world they live in, but also to some extent shape this world to suit their interests and needs (Honwana and De Boeck 2005:ix). They use the cities to engage with the wider world (Simone 2005:1). So, in spite of constraints imposed on them by poverty, many young people find livelihoods in cities which they prefer to what is available in rural areas. Rather than submitting passively to poverty, they frequently become a major resource in dealing with urban problems and developing the cities (illustrated in several essays in Tienda and Wilson 2002). Outside Africa, recent studies have pointed to the ways in which young people can improve their lives even through work on city streets (e.g., Burr 2006; Offit 2008). This book looks at poor to middle-class communities in African cities, and illustrates how young people find ways not only of surviving, but also of enjoying themselves. In the face of cramped and uncomfortable homes, and in the absence of public resources for leisure, young people use the streets and find other urban spaces where they can enjoy themselves. It focuses on how young people adapt to the constraints they face, make use of opportunities that cities offer, and find ways of improving their lives.

We see the creative ways that young people find to improve their economic status in a variety of urban spaces in Cameroon (Lebongo, chapter 4). Impoverished child migrants from Zimbabwe show determination in improving their lives by working for income in the South African border town of Musina (Mahati, chapter 5). Children from very poor homesteads earn a living by recycling materials from a municipal rubbish dump in Eldoret, Kenya (Atieno, chapter 6). Handicapped youths have taken advantage of a government concession to create a trading niche for themselves between Brazzaville and Kinshasa in the two Congos (Yekoka, chapter 7). Youths in Onitsha, Nigeria, take on a variety of forms of self-employment (Ezeah, chapter 8). When homes are cramped and uncomfortable, and cities do not provide adequate recreational facilities, young people find ways

of creating leisure and entertainment on the streets and other urban spaces. Children combine productive work with fun in night foraging in Owerri, Nigeria (Azuwike, chapter 9). Youths enjoy themselves, earn a living, and open up possibilities for careers in entertainment by forming 'karaoke' groups in Kampala, Uganda (Wasswa-Matovu, chapter 10). Apart from the material side, young people find spaces for socializing and enjoying themselves in informal TV and video lounges in Ado Ekiti, Nigeria (Omotosho, chapter 11); older youths meet in informal tea clubs in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso (Hein, chapter 12); and young people meet with peers in a youth group in Bugembe, Uganda, for social purposes and to learn skills (Naisiko, chapter 13). The networks created in these social activities can provide livelihood support, in the forms of useful information, influential contacts, and sometimes material support: the youth group in Bugembe also offers opportunities to learn livelihood skills. Some young people use their sexuality for livelihood purposes, whether for immediate financial returns or for longer-term supportive relationships (Yonta, chapter 14). In all these activities, young people develop and utilize social support from peers, kin (sometimes including those in rural areas), and others in the cities, often creating new networks to replace older family networks that are no longer accessible in cities. Far from accepting the passive role of victims, young people use their initiative to take advantage of opportunities offered to them in the midst of city life. They show themselves to be active agents, attempting with some success to take control of aspects of their lives.

Negotiating Livelihoods

Educationalists have long realized that children do not normally learn by passively receiving information and instructions passed on to them by teachers and other adults. They learn reading, writing, and numeracy by practice. They learn social skills by taking part in social activities. They learn sports by playing them. They observe what others do and imitate what works: learning is a kind of apprenticeship in life (see Rogoff 1990). Children experiment to see the effect of different responses to the situation they are in. They are constantly producing their own responses to the environment they face, and normally they learn to take control of their lives through successful responses.

When we find children and youth in stressful situations, in the cities as elsewhere, it is a mistake to assume that they are passive victims to be rescued: rather they comprise a major resource to be encouraged and utilized. Research on street children in the 1970s and 80s showed them finding ways, often innovative and creative, to deal with the oppressive environment in which they lived. The reality of many children choosing to live on the streets challenged common assumptions that all children live under the protection and control of adults (Hart 1997:14-15). These street children have been badly failed by the adult world, but (with few exceptions) are not simply passive victims: rather they have taken their lives into their own hands.

We could think of a continuum between two extremes. At one extreme, some children have virtually no agency or control over their own lives and have little power to negotiate: children in extreme poverty, or working and living in extreme hardship under dominating adults may be in such a position. Indeed, some street children are unable to cope with street life and are destroyed psychologically and physically (e.g., Gigengack 2006:200-213). At the other extreme, the young people take control and are not interested in negotiating, as we see in Susan Kilonzo's account of Mungiki in Kenya (chapter 15, see also Jensen 2008). The majority of children and youth in African cities lie between these extremes. In spite of the constraints that urban poverty imposes, most find some way of coping and even improving their lives. The degree to which they successfully take control of their lives, and in this sense exercise agency, varies. Sometimes young people contest with adults for use of space and time, and do not always conform to adult regulation (illustrated in chapter 9). There is also variation in the degree to which their solutions are socially constructive, or threaten the norms and fabric of society. Often there is tension between the norms and values adopted by young people, and the norms of the dominant adult society (illustrated in chapters 10, 13, 14, and 15). Negotiation usually leads to patterns of behaviour that are tolerated, if not welcomed, by most people.

The title of this book, and the institute on which it was based, speak of negotiating livelihoods. The English concept of 'livelihood' is difficult to translate into French. In development studies in the English language, the concept of 'livelihood' has been adopted to incorporate the social and physical environment together with people's responses to it (see, for example, Bourdillon and Hebinck 2002). It considers not only material but also human and social resources, including local knowledge and understanding. It thus considers the material means for living in a broader context of social and cultural interpretation. These connotations are not readily conveyed in the French translation, 'des moyens d'existence'. Consequently, we found at the beginning of the Institute a difference in emphasis between some Francophone scholars, who initially focused on earning a living, and Anglophone scholars, who spread their interests more broadly to include values and lifestyles. The advantage of a bilingual institute is that such technical terms have to be carefully examined and explained, and agreement was reached in discussion. This book contains chapters that deal not only with material and economic existence, but also with leisure activities and entertainment, and with forms of social life developed in response to the urban environment.

When we speak of negotiation, we are acknowledging the agency of young people in taking control of their lives within the constraints imposed on them. Agency operates not only in practical decisions, but also in developing knowledge and perspectives on the situations they face.

Perspectives and Knowledge of Young People

In the past, society was largely studied from a male point of view. Many assumed that men were in charge of households, and that men could speak for women. If the feminist movement has not yet succeeded in completely abolishing such a male perspective, it has seriously challenged male points of view. Women comprise half the world's population and in practice are not always subordinate to men. In urban Africa, there are numerous households headed by women. Even when women live with men in patriarchal societies, they are usually able to control many areas in their lives. Women have been seen to be important economically: even unpaid work in the home can have significant economic consequences for the family and society. Moreover, women often have different perspectives on life and culture from those of men. Women demand the right to speak for themselves and to have their perspectives taken seriously. It is now generally agreed that any research on women's issues must take into account what women say about them.

It is not yet so widespread that research on young people's issues must take account of what young people say. Children and youth comprise well over half of Africa's population. They are not always under the control of adults. Their activities, especially those that involve peer co-operation, are often outside adult domains. Indeed, many children and more youths have become socially and economically independent of adults, often living on their own, but increasingly also as heads of households in the absence of adults – in which case young people are usually responsible for even younger children.

The future of African cities depends on this large youthful population. They will ultimately determine what the cities will become. It is extremely unlikely that they will simply reproduce the cities of the past. In this volume, we see young people responding in different ways to changing technologies, changing economic structures, and changing social fabrics. They will produce new forms and styles of urban life and the sociology of cities cannot afford to neglect their inputs.

On the material side, young people are economically important. It has been pointed out that, even in the developed world, children's roles as consumers and producers are often understated or even ignored (Zelizer 2002). In traditional rural African societies, children are expected to contribute to families' means of sustenance in a variety of ways, from looking after the home and young children to contributing their labour in agriculture and animal husbandry. The economic importance of children continues in many urban families, where children still contribute to family livelihood in a variety of ways: indeed, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child points to the duty of children 'to work for the cohesion of the family, to respect his parents and elders at all times and to assist them in case of need' (article 31a).

On the cultural side, children and youth have their own perspectives on their lives and on their societies, which affect their behaviour and interaction with others. Their new forms of behaviour and interaction will inform the future cultural life of cities, and so cannot be ignored by social researchers.

Their behavioural responses derive from their views of the world around them, which in turn are affected by their particular experiences. This was illustrated at the institute in an address by Moussow Sow, director of Avenir de l'Enfant – an organization dedicated to protecting children from various kinds of abuse. He spoke about the world of children on the streets, and pointed out how, with their very different experiences of life, they often see things differently from the way adults perceive the same material things. He exemplified this with perspectives on graveyards at night. To most people cemeteries are places of fear to be avoided, especially at night; and precisely because of this, street children see them as places where they can sleep, relatively safe from being molested. Another example was pick-pocketing, a crime and nuisance to much of the world, but a highly skilled and rewarding form of co-operative work to the children. We cannot understand their behaviour without first understanding how they perceive their environment, which requires hearing from them.

Also at the institute, Dr Elsbeth Robson reported on a research project on problems of transport that face children in three African countries. This research was planned so that children themselves would have an opportunity to collect information from their peers and report on the problems that faced them: the findings would thus reflect not only the observations of adults, but also the perspectives of children. The children produced some ideas and perspectives that were missed by adults. One noticeable point was that while walking to and from school and in the vicinity of their homes children felt many fears of dangers (real or imagined), such as dangers from snakes, dogs, or malicious people. Another point made strongly by children, and which was largely unnoticed by adult researchers and informants, related to the unpleasantness and harassment children often experienced while moving around in their communities (Robson et al. 2009:475-476). This example illustrates why good research must incorporate the perspectives of the people being researched, however young they may be.

Sometimes, children's perspectives provide a more fundamental challenge to the very way we think. At an international conference on 'Urban Childhood' held in Trondheim in 1997, representatives of working children were invited to speak at the session on 'child labour', alongside academics and representatives of national and international organizations. A thirteen-year-old girl from Senegal, in a short speech which reduced the hall to an awkward silence, had this to say:

> Do you understand how you insult me, when you talk of 'combatting' and 'abolishing' the work that I do? I have worked as a domestic servant since I was

eight. Because of doing this work, I have been able to go to school (which my
parents in the village could not afford); I help my parents with the money I earn. I
am very proud of the work I do! (Bourdillon et al. 2010:9)

This young school-going worker from Senegal challenged adults in a fundamental
way, to re-consider how they thought and spoke about her work and about her.
She challenged the concepts of an ideal childhood that many adults took for
granted.

These examples illustrate the fundamental point that, on many things, children
have their own perspectives deriving from their specific experiences. If we want
to understand the lives of children (and therefore the future of cities), we have to
include their perspectives. For this, they must have adequate opportunity to express
themselves and we must listen to what they say. While their perspectives, like
anyone else's, are limited by what they have learned and experienced, they
nevertheless form an important part of the whole picture of what is real, and
particularly of how and why they respond to the world in the ways they do.

When we pay attention to the perspectives of young people, certain widely
held notions have to be modified. Many studies, for example, point to the exclusion
and marginalization of youth. While young people may indeed be marginalized
in terms of political and economic power, they form half or more of urban
populations, making the term 'marginal' seem incongruous: in some circumstances
they adopt life styles and culture that deliberately exclude adult control, thus
marginalizing adults. Young people are often central to certain aspects of urban
life, and particularly to social change in cities. Perceptions that young people fail to
integrate into urban life sometimes reflect narrow adult perspectives and ignore
the ways in which the young successfully integrate into an urban life that is different
from lives of adults. One of the issues raised in discussion at the institute (and in
chapters 3 and 13) is that traditional forms of socialization do not work in the
cities, and that parents who are relatively new to cities do not know how best to
raise their children for urban life. Children are then left to find their own ways of
adaptation, which often create tension with the values of older members of society.

Apart from the importance of children's views in our comprehension of
urban life, careful attention to the perspectives of children and youths highlights
the limited alternatives realistically available to them when they make their choices,
and reveals the variety in the lives and responses of young people. Constraints at
home, or the poor quality of available schooling, can lead to the choice of alternative
activities outside the home – especially in the streets, which do not always meet
the approval of adults. Reasons behind young people's choices frequently reveal
rational choice and often contest negative stereotypes that adults may form of
'irresponsible' youth. If youth are indeed irresponsible, policy and intervention is
likely to focus on control, which reflects interests of adults. Careful attention to

the perspectives of young people produces a better understanding of their plight and ensures that policy and intervention attend to their interests.

This is well illustrated by activities that go against life styles and values accepted broadly by adult society. Early in the institute, consideration was given to children's work, which can be exploitative and abusive (as it is often depicted in high-income societies and communities), but which can also positively contribute materially to the livelihood of children and their families, and in various ways to children's development (see Bourdillon 2009). Children working on the streets have been shown to work for economic reasons, but also to get out of their homes for entertainment and experience (Oloko 1989; 1993). In spite of the poverty and insecurity of many people in African cities, young people sometimes improve their lives by leaving impoverished rural homes to work in cities, even when they have to live and work on the streets (see Mahati, chapter 5). Josephine Atieno (chapter 6) describes young people scavenging from municipal rubbish: while adults were fearful of and for the youngsters involved, these were creative in recycling usable materials for sale, co-operating and socializing with peers, and contributing to stretched household budgets in marginalized communities. Another activity that contests stereotypes is prostitution (see Yonta, chapter 14). At first, some members of the institute could see nothing positive in such activity, but attention to the perspectives of those involved showed a variety of situations ranging from desperate measures against poverty with little chance to exercise agency in the control of one's life on the one hand, to the deliberate choice of an enjoyable life style in the company of powerful persons on the other – with many gradations between. This is neither to approve nor condemn prostitution: it is to point out that a nuanced approach is necessary to understand why different people do what they do.

Human and Child Rights

I have pointed out that it makes sound research sense to let young people speak for themselves and to listen to them. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child also points to children's rights to be allowed to seek information, to express themselves, and to be heard in decisions that affect them (articles 12, 13: see also the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, articles 4, 7). If research hopes to influence policy and intervention that will affect the lives of young people, researchers clearly have an obligation to listen to what the young people say, however young they may be. Apart from being necessary for sound research, this is also a matter of the rights of the people concerned.

What are rights? Historical abuses of people, sometimes approved and encouraged by sovereign states, such as in the institution of slavery and the Nazi treatment of Jews, have resulted in widespread agreement that all humans have

certain fundamental rights that are not subject to community customs or decisions by individual sovereign states. The culmination of these discussions was the Universal Convention on Human Rights, passed by the General Assembly of the United Nations in Paris in 1948. Rights specific to children came strongly into international discussion in the 1980s, which resulted in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989, and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child agreed by the Organisation of African Unity in 1990.

In chapter 5 of this book, Stanford Mahati suggests that staff of NGOs trying to help migrant children were committed to international conventions on child rights, but that this commitment led to inconsistencies in their support of the children and did not always work in the best interests of children. Elsewhere in Africa it has been noticed that commitment by organizations to a particular interpretation of child rights can work against children most in need of support (Jacquemin 2006). In both cases, the contentious issue was children's work, but this points to a more general problem: international conventions are agreed by governments, and do not always reflect the thinking and values of particular communities or of the children they are intended to protect.

A perception sometimes emerges in Asia and Africa (see, for example, Burr 2006:16-19) that human rights, and child rights in particular, are a Western concept based on individualism and negating more communitarian principles according to which the interests of individuals are subordinate to those of the community. Rights do not have to be interpreted in this way: in particular, the African Charter links children's rights to their responsibilities towards their families, their communities, and their societies (article 32).[2] The preamble to the Convention on the Rights of the Child speaks of 'taking due account of the importance of the traditions and cultural values of each people for the protection and harmonious development of the child'. The rights of individuals, therefore, do not negate the rights of others in the community, nor do they normally negate values of the community.

Moreover, international conventions and supporting government legislation express only those rights that are widely agreed. In practice, the rights of children and young people to protection and harmonious development are largely contained in cultural values and practices. These apply to what they can expect materially and socially from their families as they grow and the support and inheritance they can expect in the future. Such expectations are often referred to as 'moral rights', which are not legally binding but are supported by communities and their cultures.

With respect to children's rights, some people argue that since children are dependent on adults, and since they are in the process of becoming citizens of the future under the guidance of adults, there are problems in talking about children's rights, and that it is more useful to speak of obligations towards children,

and of the care and protection that is due to them.[3] Such arguments assume an absolute division between childhood and adulthood. If, on the other hand, we see children as already participating in their families and communities, with responsibilities and duties while they learn, it is appropriate also to consider their rights as they continuously and actively develop their lives.

Rights refer to the fact that all humans have a status and dignity, which cannot simply be subordinated to the economic or political expediency of others. While few of the chapters in this book explicitly engage the language of rights, all accept the premise that children and youth have a fundamental right to basic resources for livelihood, and to be treated with respect as human beings. One fundamental right, related to respect, is to have a say and be heard on matters that affect one's life. While this right is widely acknowledged for adults, it is often overlooked for children when adults (often wrongly) think that they know best what is good for children under their charge (Twum-Danso 2003). All the chapters in this book include information on perspectives of the young people they describe.

We look at young citizens, therefore, as people determined to make something of their lives, and who work to make space available for their activities. The future of our cities depends on them.

Outline of this Collection

After this introduction, Dr Ali Sangare draws from research into unemployment in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. He points to the growing number of youths in the city who cannot count on degrees or diplomas to find employment. Instead, they have to rely on a variety of self-employment strategies.

In chapter 3, Marie-Thérèse Arcens Somé considers the livelihoods of families in a poor community in the same city, and the poverty of resources available to them. Without professional qualifications, families have to take on work that may endanger their health and children have to contribute to the fight for livelihood.

Besides seeing African cities as places where young people are excluded and marginalized, Jean Marcellin Manga Lebongo, in chapter 4, considers cities of Cameroon as settings that create advantageous opportunities. He considers economic, agro-pastoral, and cultural activities of young people in which they express their creativity.

The South African border town of Musina is host to a large number of young migrants trying to escape extreme poverty in Zimbabwe. In chapter 5, Stanford Mahati examines how the efforts of children to make a living are sometimes in conflict with norms of organizations that have been established to give them care and shelter. Care workers are inconsistent, in some situations showing appreciation for the efforts of children and in others being very critical of them.

Chapter 6 moves to Eldoret in Kenya. Josephine Atieno describes how children earn a living and establish friendships by recycling garbage at a municipal dump. Here the perceptions of the children of themselves and their work differ from the more negative and fearful perceptions of adults living in the nearby communities.

The governments of the Democratic Republic of Congo and of Congo-Brazzaville agreed to allow disabled persons to trade freely across the river between Brazaville and Kinshasa. Jean Félix Yekoka describes in chapter 7 how physically disabled youths occupied this niche to overcome the cultural and material disadvantages arising from their disability.

Dr Peter Ezeah conducted a survey of youths in a township of Onitsha, south-eastern Nigeria, to examine how they cope with urban life under constraints of poverty. In the absence of opportunities for formal employment or access to social support, youths adopt various forms of economic activity in the informal sector. The majority perceive their livelihood strategies positively despite the constraints they face in negotiating livelihoods in the city.

Okechi Dominic Azuwike describes in chapter 9 the night-time hunting of termites and snails on the streets of Owerri, Nigeria. These activities are undertaken largely for fun, but have an important productive element, both to improve household diet and for income. Although children's hunting is largely outside adult control, produce is usually controlled by parents or guardians. The activity sometimes involves contestation over public space, and can cause tensions with parents or guardians as well as a variety of hazards.

In chapter 10, Dr Joseph Wasswa-Matovu describes how some young people in Kampala, Uganda, join 'karaoke' entertainment groups to earn a part-time living, and sometimes to establish a career in entertainment. The groups, using high-sound technology, establish a space for themselves beside the more formally established entertainment centres that serve the elite. Their work involves a variety of hazards as well as offering opportunities to young people.

Chapter 11 looks at another kind of semi-formal entertainment, this time focussing on the the clients who spend to enjoy it. Dr Babatunde Joshua Omotosho studied informal video and television parlours in Ado Ekiti, south-western Nigeria. These attracted a largely young population, over half of whom were studying in a number of surrounding tertiary institutions. The main motive for visiting the parlours was to watch football matches around the world on large television screens, but the venues also served a variety of social functions.

Returning to Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, Ollo Pépin Hien in chapter 12 describes tea clubs. Since older, kin-based networks are not easily accessible, young people create new social groups. The chapter describes how groups of young people meet regularly to drink tea together, an activity which provides a focus to

discuss and to share information and ideas on issues ranging from entertainment to politics. The clubs also provide a social network for material and social support.

In chapter 13, Tabitha Naisiko uses Bugembe Youth Group in a peri-urban setting in Uganda, to consider the role of socialization in negotiating livelihoods. In the absence of traditional forms of socialization adapted to the urban environment, a parish Youth Centre provides leisure and social activities, as well as training in skills that will be useful economically to the youths. According to the concerns of the both the youth and adults involved in the study, this kind of socialization is considered important to the youth. There are, however, sometimes tensions with adults in the community, and such groups need to be strengthened by combining public and private resources.

The last two chapters deal with activities of the young that are in conflict with dominant values and sometimes with the interests of wider society. In chapter 14, Achille Pinghane Yonta discusses prostitution among young girls in Yaoundé, Cameroon. Apart from the standard sex for pay, he discusses 'semi-prostitution' in which girls use sex to establish longer-term relationships that provide livelihood. He looks at factors that favour this kind of activity, including various categories of clients that utilize it.

Dr Susan M. Kilonzo considers a different kind of youth activity in chapter 15. She describes the organization of Mungiki in Kenya, which started as a youth movement for social justice, but through various transformations and with some political support, became a sponsor of violence and extortion. Although it claims to support traditional cultural values, many of its activities are clearly criminal in nature.

Ways Forward

The essays in this volume illustrate a wide diversity of urban situations and an equal diversity in responses by young people to these situations. There is no single strategy that will improve livelihoods of all. Nevertheless, taken together, the essays suggest certain principles for research if this is effectively to feed into interventions to improve livelihoods.

The first is that the people we are trying to help comprise a major resource. They are already finding ways to help themselves. There are two reasons why sustainable development should build on these initiatives. First, initiatives that are owned and desired by the persons concerned have a better chance of success than those imposed from outside. Second, in the personal development of young people, self-esteem and decision-making ability arise from perceived successful practice; it therefore helps to emphasise and build on their own successes.

Academics can contribute to this approach by more and thorough, respectful research on the numerous ways in which young people perceive and respond to the environments they face in growing African cities. The essays in this volume provide suggestions for a vast field that needs to be explored.

Notes

1. Unfortunately, not all presentations became available in the time scheduled for the production of this book.
2. The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, approved by the Organisation of African Unity (which later became the African Union) in 1981, also refers to the duties of individuals to their communities, to ensure that rights of individuals do not supersede or negate the rights of others. See articles 29 and 27(2).
3. For fuller discussion and critique of these points of view, see Freeman 1997; Archard 2004.

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