

INVESTING IN YOUNG PEOPLE

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Inside

A new kind of politics is developing among youth, based on loose networks and high levels of communication. **Richard Lapper** reports
Page 4



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Future hinges on keeping doors open

Fulfilling the potential of the world's youth is an even tougher challenge in an economic crisis, writes **Sarah Murray**

Enterprise can provide a long-term route out of poverty for many unemployed young people. This is the conclusion of Youth Business International, a UK-based non-profit organisation that champions youth enterprise.

In the first of a series of reports on entrepreneurship, YBI sets out steps that governments, businesses and civil society groups can take to foster entrepreneurship among young people. The advice comes at a critical time, as the economic crisis has badly damaged employment prospects for the world's youth.

Young people are almost three times as likely to be unemployed than an adult – and about half the world's population is under the age of 25. For these young people to reach their full potential, at least 400m jobs need to be created, according to the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

However, the global downturn is making this target look even further off than it did a couple of years ago. "The world has recently lost a couple of hundred million jobs, so we're going in the wrong direction," says William Reese, president and chief executive of the International Youth Foundation (IYF), a Baltimore-based organisation that works to enhance the potential of young people.

"What does that do for someone at the bottom of the pyramid who is trying to earn his or her future when the economies are stagnant at best?" he asks. "For poor people, that just shuts more doors."

Opening those doors is not just important for young people. Halving youth unemployment could, according to some estimates, add up to \$3,500bn to the world economy. The gains of such a reduction in youth unemployment could be substantial, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, where the ILO estimates it would generate a rise of 12 to 19 per cent in gross domestic product.

Taking on this challenge, however, is not simply the role of the corporate sector. While businesses create jobs, fostering the skills and employability of young people requires the attention of a range of actors, from families to governments and civil society groups.

And although not everyone is equipped or motivated to become an entrepreneur, many young people can create jobs that generate employment. In the US, says YBI, micro-enterprises create jobs at an average annual rate of 900,000 a year.

"We should continue to think about young people as potential innovators," says Bruce McNamer, chief executive and president of Technoserve, a US-based non-profit that provides business advice and access to markets and capital to entrepreneurs in developing countries. "And there's a movement around that which has been building for some time."

But whether they are seeking employment or starting their own businesses, young people also need access to education and healthcare.

They are particularly vulnerable when it comes to sexually transmitted diseases, accounting for more than half of new HIV/AIDS infections. And women under the age of 15 are at five times higher risk of dying from pregnancy and childbirth-related complications than those in their mid-20s.

Moreover, the impact that "hidden hunger" has on young people is often forgotten. Lack of access to sufficient levels of vitamins and minerals – thought to affect about a third of the world's population – can cause birth defects, loss of IQ, stunted growth and greater risk from infectious diseases and chronic illnesses.

While improving the health of the world's young people is often seen as the responsibility of governments or institutions such as the World Health Organisation, business also has a role.

This is partly through workforce health programmes. However, many companies are going further, establishing community programmes and



Inside this issue

Technology The power of mobile phones, computers and the internet to create new opportunities cannot be overestimated, writes **George Cole Page 2**

Employment Companies in the developing world are being guided by enlightened self-interest, writes **Rowenna Davis Page 3**

Education Sarah Murray finds out why Patrick Awuah, founder and president of Ghana's Ashesi University, demands high standards **Page 3**

Social entrepreneurs Across the world, young innovators are putting the public good ahead of profits, writes **Rowenna Davis Page 4**



Healthy outlook: participants in the Empowering Africa's Young People Initiative at Bagamoyo District, Tanzania

Bea Spadacini

health information initiatives in the regions where they have operations.

More public-private partnerships are emerging in this field, too. In Africa, for example, the IYF has partnered with the [US] President's Emergency Plan for Aids Relief (Pepfar) and Johnson & Johnson, the US healthcare products and services company, to promote HIV prevention education, to strengthen the role of parents and to reduce incidents of sexual coercion and exploitation.

So far, IYF's Empowering Africa's Young People Initiative has trained more than 31,000 young people and parents in how to reduce transmission of the disease.

As well as health information, young people also need education and development programmes that will prepare them for success in adulthood. These should start early, says Wendy Cunningham, co-ordinator of the Children and Youth programme at the World Bank, which has been evaluating the impact of different investments in young people.

The World Bank had known for some time about the long-term benefits that came from programmes for pre-school children addressing issues such as nutrition, health and social behaviour – whether those were delivered through day-care centres, community-based or parenting initiatives. "Early child development programmes have been found to affect youth behaviour," says Ms Cunningham. "They seem to reduce the incidence of youth violence and the incidence of youth unemployment, and they increase the earnings of young people – so there's a whole range of outcomes that seem to be linked to investing in years zero through five."

One US study the Bank reviewed followed the development of a group of children enrolled in an early childhood programme versus a control group from the same community that did not participate in the scheme.

Among the results of the study was a difference in the proportion of children who finished high school, with 71 per cent of those in the programme graduating compared with only 55 per cent of those not in the programme. "This is evidence we find very compelling," says Ms Cunningham.

Also compelling is the ability of

technology to bring better education to more of the world's young people. In countries such as Tanzania and the Philippines, for example, a multi-sector partnership called *Bridget* that includes the IYF and Nokia, the mobile phone company, is using mobile technology and video to improve teaching and enrich the classroom experience.

Technology is also a powerful tool in helping young people become innovators and advocates. Moreover, technologies facilitating mass collaboration through the open source movement, crowd sourcing and social media are particularly suited to young people.

"Ideas are refined by a network, and that's an interesting new development for innovation," says Mr McNamer. "And it's primarily youth who inter-

act in that environment. They are the biggest users of these technologies and cultures."

Empowered by education and technology, young people have the potential to become employers, educators, advocates and "changemakers" – a term coined by Ashoka, the social entrepreneurship organisation.

Online forums such as Brainstorming, a website founded by Talia Delgado, a Spanish journalist based in Romania, can bring together young activists, advocates and philanthropists from across the world.

Meanwhile, in Ghana, Bright Simons, a young innovator, has used mobile technology to develop a service called mPedigree through which people can text packaging codes to determine the authenticity of their medications, helping fight the prob-

lem of the counterfeit drugs that, in the developing world in particular, are responsible for a growing number of deaths.

Such initiatives show how young people can help solve global problems by finding novel ways to address issues such as poverty and lack of access to healthcare and education.

"You don't become the founder of a social movement without certain charisma and a vision," says Mr Reese at the IYF.

"But armed with the communications skills and tools that a handheld device can give you, we're seeing extraordinary things being done by young people."

* Youth entrepreneurship: recommendations for action, *Youth Business International*, November 2009

Seizing opportunity now will make the world fairer and safer

Opinion
JUSTIN YIFU LIN and
WENDY CUNNINGHAM

The first weeks of the new year must be frustrating for governments, which started 2010 hoping and praying for signs of a more vigorous recovery from the crisis.

Even in those countries fortunate enough to have reported successive quarters of economic growth, the rebound looks decidedly fragile.

Those less fortunate continue to grapple with high unemployment, excessively tight credit, and steeper cuts in public spending.

While all countries are grappling with uncertain economic prospects, in developing countries generational concerns present another challenge.

This is because young people in the developing world are coming of age in

greater numbers than ever before. A recent World Development Report that focused on youth strongly suggested that countries need to seize this window of opportunity to invest.

Yet for many young people, the financial crisis has meant even fewer life options and falling spirits. Many are struggling to finish school or find jobs in pursuit of a more promising life.

In the best of times, young people are three times more likely to be unemployed than adults. Even before the financial crisis struck, developing countries needed to create 1bn jobs over the next decade just to keep up with a new wave of first-time job seekers.

Because of the crisis, job creation is an even more challenging task.

As a world community we simply cannot afford to abandon these young people to the ups and downs of the global

economy. By nature, they yearn to realise their full potential, earn a living wage, save for marriage, a home, and above all, take their rightful place in society.

Too often we regard our young men and women as the workers, entrepreneurs, parents, citizens and leaders of tomorrow. In

For many young people, the financial crisis has meant even fewer life options

fact, they are today's citizens and we must recognise their potential to make extraordinary changes to the world around us.

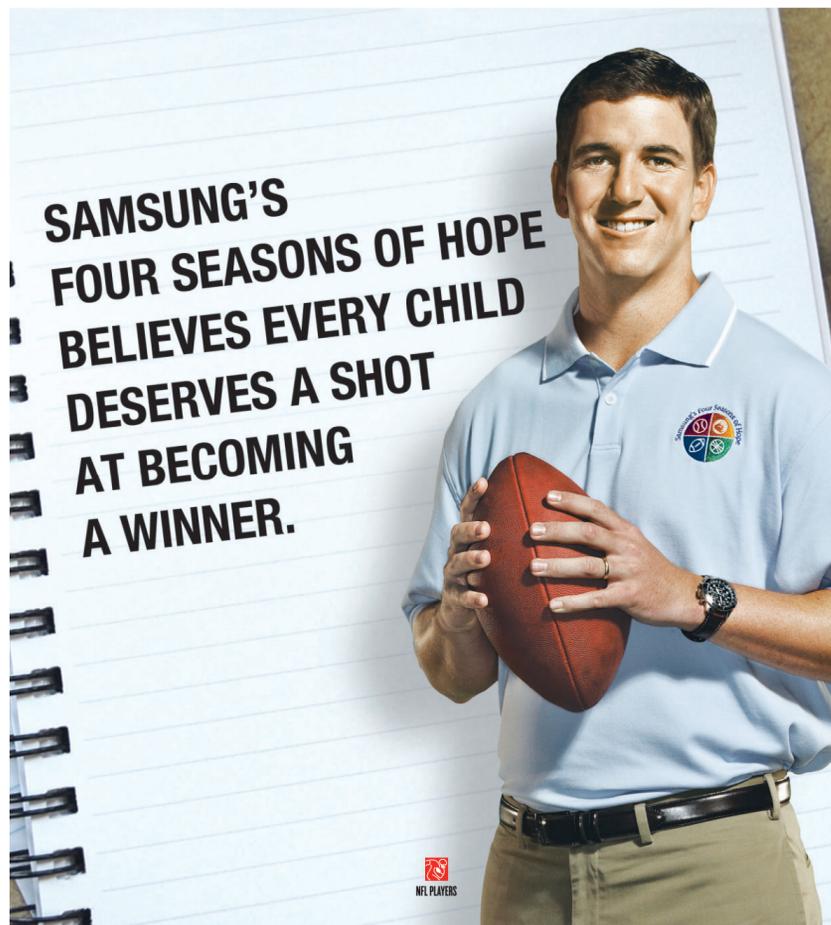
Addressing young people's needs and aspirations is vital for both social and economic progress. Either we do

nothing – and risk alienating them from the mainstream and instilling in them a legacy of distrust and hopelessness – or we invest in the biggest source of human potential that the world has ever had, and reap the benefits of that investment through greater growth and social well-being for generations to come.

The current crisis poses risks for our collective future. A recent British Council report on the young people of Pakistan predicts a "demographic disaster" if that country does not address the needs of its young generation. More than 70 per cent of Pakistani youth reported being worse off financially than a year earlier.

Pakistan is not alone. World Bank analysis shows that child and youth poverty in some eastern European countries has increased by 5 per cent to

Continued on Page 2



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Investing in Young People

Better access can level the playing field

Technology

George Cole examines programmes that help bridge the digital divide

In many developed countries, technologies such as mobile phones, computers and the internet are routinely used by young people in education and employment. Most young people are enthusiastic about technology and the benefits it can bring.

"Young people have a natural ability to use technology, regardless of their qualifications, knowledge, education or location. It doesn't matter if a child is in California or the slums of Nairobi," says Akhtar Badshah, senior director of community affairs at Microsoft.

The power of technology to create opportunities and unleash potential cannot be overestimated, so a number of corporate-supported programmes and initiatives have been established to give young people in developing countries greater access to technologies such as video and IT.

"We can use technology to help level the playing field and give them a leg-up. By providing the younger generation with training and technology, they can acquire skills and apply them, for example, by starting a business," says Mr Badshah.

Microsoft and the International Youth Foundation (IYF) have formed a two-year partnership called the Youth Empowerment Program (YEP). This aims to improve the employability of disadvantaged people aged 16 to 35 in sub-Saharan Africa, where youth unemployment stands at 21 per cent – the second highest rate in the world. Microsoft has provided a \$1m grant and IYF works with local partner organisations in Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal and Tanzania.

YEP aims to reach 40,000 individuals, with 10,000 young people directly benefiting from technology and train-

ing. In Kenya, for example, IYF and three NGO partners are providing ICT, life skills, entrepreneurship training and other support to 2,600 young people based in settlements around Nairobi.

"This isn't about getting people into computers. It's about giving people the space to unleash their creativity and to start small local enterprises in their community," says Mr Badshah.

Dell YouthConnect is a global programme that aims to support education and digital inclusion for underserved youth. The programme has provided more than \$8m and has been launched in eight countries including Brazil, China, India, Morocco and France.

The latest Dell YouthConnect programme was in collaboration with Unicef and supports the Children's Forum for Climate Change. Dell YouthConnect has provided 160 laptops to enable young people to participate in the debate on climate change.

RM, the UK-based education technology company, sponsors two government schools in Kerala, southern India. It has not rushed to provide the schools with IT, although its long-term strategy is to do this.

"The children at the government schools have more basic needs than technology," says Chris Clements, director of information systems and managing director of RM's Indian operation. "The first thing we gave all the students was a school uniform and we are now providing them with shoes. There is no point in having a great IT suite if you have no shoes to walk to school in."

RM has taken students into its local office to show them how IT is used in the real world, and to explain how a good education can improve their quality of life. "IT will come to the school eventually, but as Bill Clinton said, we want to 'give a hand up, not a hand out,'" adds Mr Clements.

In September 2007, IYF and the Tanzania Ministry of Education and Vocational Training launched Bridgeit (known locally as Elimu kwa Teknolojia or Education through Technology).



Class act: teacher Anna Mtui using the Bridgeit system at Mgulani Primary School in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Kate Place

Other project partners are Nokia, Nokia Siemens Networks, Instituto Nolia de Tecnologia (INdT) and the Pearson and Vodacom foundations.

The aim of Bridgeit is to provide schools with videos that can support science, maths and life skills teaching, and to improve the quality of interaction between teacher and student. Bridgeit has received almost \$3m funding from the US Agency for International Development (USAID).

Some 150 public (state) schools are involved in Bridgeit, representing more than 40,000 students with an average age of 13. The schools are in 17 districts across the country. Every school involved in Bridgeit was given a package comprising a Nokia N95 mobile phone, 29in flat screen television, secure storage facilities and free mobile network bandwidth.

The videos – topics include human biology, geometry and HIV/Aids – are written by teachers, produced by a local video production company and hosted on Vodacom's server. There are 146 video clips, which teachers can select and download to the Nokia N95 handset. The handset is con-

nected to a television and the videos played back.

"The videos support the teachers; they don't replace them. They have encouraged students to ask questions and generated more group work. It's a more learner-centred process," says Felix Mbogella, chief country adviser for Bridgeit IYF Tanzania.

Michael Maige, an education official from the Bagamoyo district, says: "The teachers have benefited by having extra teaching material and the students benefit by seeing a real picture of what the teacher is talking about. In the past, the teacher may only have had one book to teach geometry to the whole class, but with video, everyone can see the diagrams, and this helps their understanding."

A project evaluation has revealed heartening results. "The reaction of teachers and students has been very positive," says Mr Mbogella. "We have conducted research involving schools with and without the video content, and the results are amazing. Students who watched the videos showed greater motivation and achieved better test results."

Case study Young Africa Live

Since December, Young Africa Live, an entertainment-led mobile portal, has been deluged with responses from subscribers eager to read everything from the dating tips of a blogger called the "Love Princess" to stories about the infidelities of US golfer Tiger Woods.

But the mobile phone service is delivering more than gossip – the blogs are hooks bringing young South Africans into contact with a powerful source of information on sexual health.

When it comes to HIV/Aids, young people are particularly vulnerable, accounting for more than half of new infections. With this in mind, Young Africa Live was launched on last year's World Aids Day as a way to educate young people, not by feeding them with information but by stimulating discussion.

The idea is to encourage young people to share their experiences and opinions, while also providing them with health facts and advice on things such as how to get access to anti-retroviral drugs or to how to deal with the stigma associated with being HIV-positive.

The service is the brainchild of the Praekelt Foundation, a technology incubator that focuses on improving the health and well-being of people living in poverty. The site is hosted by Vodafone Live, the digital portal of the mobile phone operator.

Meanwhile, the Vodacom Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Vodacom, South Africa's largest mobile phone operator, has made it possible for users to visit the Young Africa Live site free, with no download or bandwidth charges.

While for now Young Africa Live is available only in South Africa, the foundation has plans to roll it out in Nigeria and Kenya, and eventually in other parts of Africa.

"The main aim is to get an active audience that's engaging around these topics and also getting real

information," says Gustav Praekelt, founder of the Praekelt Foundation.

Stories are kept short – to about 200 words. "On a mobile device people don't consume large chunks of text," explains Mr Praekelt. "And that means the comments are right beneath the story, so people can see them immediately."

The celebrity stories often prompt users to become involved in more general discussions about topics such as polygamy, infidelity and the role of marriage. "That's really relevant, because many people think that if you're in a relationship, you don't have to use condoms," says Mr Praekelt. "We also allow people to comment anonymously and that makes it easier."

Moreover, because much of the information on the site is coming from peers, the discussions are unusually frank and open on subjects that in other forums might be considered taboo.

Sometimes, the conversations turn serious. As a result, the team has come up with software that searches for certain words, such as "suicide" or "rape". For this reason, the foundation has close partnerships with organisations such as the National Aids Helpline.

"We're technologists and interactive people not clinical specialists, so we definitely hand that over," explains Mr Praekelt.

Mr Praekelt and his colleagues certainly hoped the platform would be appealing to young users. However, the team has been overwhelmed by the response so far, with the stories on Tiger Woods attracting more than 2,300 responses and the Love Princess's dating tips attracting more than 2,500.

"It's taken us by surprise how much pent-up demand there was for this," says Mr Praekelt.

Sarah Murray

MORE ON THE WEB

Today's young people are keen to get involved in helping to solve the world's problems. Fortunately, there is growing evidence that development organisations are listening to them and taking note both of the roles they can play and the freshness of their perspectives.

In an extra online-only article, **Andrew Baxter** examines youth-oriented initiatives at organisations including the World Bank, the Global Humanitarian Forum and the British Council.

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Making the world fairer and safer

Continued from Page 1

10 per cent over the past year.

Across the world, young people's hopelessness in the face of the crisis is reflected by dropping out of the labour force altogether at three times the rates of adults. Even more troubling is the growing level of despair among youth that reflects disillusionment not only with their governments but with democracy itself.

Things do not have to be this way. We have seen time and again how countries that invest in their young men and women end up with more economic growth and social cohesion.

Governments that encourage their students to stay in school see significant national returns on each additional year of schooling. This is especially true when countries invest in educating their adolescent girls to secondary school level and beyond.

Governments and private companies can also finance and expand effective job-training programs which can groom young people for the demands of a global economy that requires more and more highly skilled workers.

For example, in the Dominican Republic's Juventud y Empleo project, comprehensive job-training has bumped up young people's salaries by as much as 10 per cent.

The returns on the investment in the young beneficiaries are expected to exceed the programme costs within two years of their graduation. Such returns are observed across Latin America.

The current crisis has spurred governments to work more intensively with the international donor community, NGOs and corporate sponsors to champion new models of youth employment programmes that focus on a more comprehensive market-driven approach – with relevant job and life skills training, internships, and job placement opportunities.

The World Bank is mobilising around this issue as well – having joined forces with the Nike Foundation to set up an Adolescent Girls Initiative to pioneer employment projects for girls in Liberia, Rwanda, South Sudan, Afghanistan, and Nepal.

The Bank is also preparing three youth development programmes in Kenya, El Salvador, and Papua New Guinea, in addition to others in the Dominican Republic and Honduras, reflecting a sense of urgency and recognition that young people can play a significant role in reducing poverty and spurring economic growth.

And the Bank is working in partnership with the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Youth Employment Network, with

leading NGOs, including the International Youth Foundation and with the overall donor community to develop a body of knowledge on effective youth employment interventions that will succeed even after the crisis has subsided.

To be sure, it will take time for countries to get back into the global economy, to restore their confidence in trade and investment, in creating jobs, and other measures of economic vitality. But we cannot wait until the crisis

We need to empower young people to take charge of their own lives and discover their full potential

ends to pay serious attention to the plight of today's young people.

Consider that they now constitute the largest youth cohort in human history – more than 1bn people between the ages of 15 and 25 – with the vast majority of them growing up in developing countries. Sub-Saharan Africa, according to the US-based Population Reference Bureau, is home to the world's largest population of young people and is projected to stay this way for decades.

If we do nothing to address these issues, the

consequences will be severe. According to a recent World Bank study of Latin America and the Caribbean, underinvestment in youth costs countries as much as 2 per cent of their GDP every year, even at the best of times, and the situation is getting worse.

As a result, fewer young people will be able to contribute to the economic growth that will help fuel a more widespread, stable global recovery, and more will eventually lose hope in themselves and in a vision for a better world.

Now is the time for governments and donors to act. Given their sheer number in a world beset with poverty and its related tribulations, we need to empower young people to take charge of their own lives and discover their full potential.

Whether they succeed has everything to do with whether we succeed as a world, and as a society. But they cannot do so alone.

Justin Yifu Lin is chief economist and senior vice-president, development economics at the World Bank; Wendy Cunningham is co-ordinator of the World Bank's Children and Youth Programme.

To enter the World Bank's 2010 International Essay Competition on youth unemployment, go to www.essaycompetition.org

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Training helps develop key skills for work

Employment

Companies are being guided by enlightened self-interest, writes Rowenna Davis

Companies have two big incentives to tap into and invest in young labour supplies – the need to replenish their workforces, and the desire to further their reputations. In some of the poorest areas of the globe, this enlightened self-interest is guiding economic and social development for the next generation.

Take Samsung Electronics' work in Africa, for example. The South Korean company's Real Dreams programme has offered employability skills to more than 4,000 young people aged predominantly between 18 and 30 since it started in 2008, offering courses in South Africa, Kenya, Nigeria and Egypt.

Jung Wook Ko, marketing manager for the Middle East and Africa, says the programme has complemented the company's expansion on the continent.

"Our resources are not enough in Africa – we need more local people to help us," he says. "In developed countries we can easily find talented people, but in developing countries it's more difficult to find good candidates. If we can tell our retailers and distributors and technicians that they can hire more from our youth programme, it's a win-win situation."

The \$2m programme varies according to local capacities. The more advanced programmes in Nigeria and Egypt help qualified university students find a job after graduation by furthering their IT skills.

In Kenya, for example, Samsung is working with the digital design school NairoBits to offer unemployed youth advanced web design skills, enabling some to find jobs in the country's top design agencies and government departments. At the other end of the scale, young uneducated slum dwellers in South Africa are given basic maintenance and repair skills.



Jordan's Youth:Work programme will aim to reach more than 10,000 young people and help address unemployment

Jordan River Foundation

Samsung employs only a tiny percentage of the young people on its courses, but Mr Ko still says there is a business case for investing in them: "These programmes have the side-effect of familiarity with the brand."

Other companies are keen to participate. Mr Ko says that Samsung is in discussion with Microsoft about how they might support each other, with Samsung providing hard training facilities and Microsoft providing the software.

A huge number of other multinationals is offering similar opportunities for young people.

Wrigley's Youth Empowerment Success programme (Yes) has invested \$2.5m in a variety of business training schemes that have reached some 1,800 students across five target countries – India, the Philippines, Poland, Russia and Spain. This year it is expanding the programme with the aim of helping 15,000 young people across the globe.

"Wrigley is focused on sustainability, and a key component of that is contributing to the success of the communities where we do business," says Dushan Petrovich, company

president. "It also provides the opportunity for Wrigley's associates to get involved on a volunteer basis."

Although the challenges of youth unemployment vary massively across the globe, employers consistently say that young people – even those that receive higher education – lack important employability skills. That is why in the UK, Deloitte has invested £2.6m in its Employability Skills initiative, which is designed to enhance team working, communication and personal effectiveness. This year 4,000 young people enrolled for

training; by 2012, Deloitte plans to reach 40,000.

"Engaging in a collaborative approach makes sense for us, helping us build our connections with key stakeholders," says Ken Sargison, director for education and skills at Deloitte. "It also makes sense for employers, who are telling us that these young people are able to hit the ground running and make a real difference to their bottom line."

But if companies' investments in young people are going to pay off, the conditions have to be right. As Emmanuel Jimenez,

Case study Youth:Work scheme in Jordan

Queen Rania Al Abdullah of Jordan is set to launch a multi-million pound programme next month to help shift the nation's young people out of unemployment.

Working with the United States Agency for International Development (USAid) and the International Youth Foundation (IYF), the Youth:Work programme will reach more than 10,000 young people in some of the country's most deprived areas.

"Engagement" is the buzzword of this \$30m dollar project – particularly among employers. A cross-section of business representatives has been serving on the project's steering group to ensure that corporate interests are represented at every stage of the project.

A consultation of more than 30 employers in the targeted areas – which include East Amman, Al Russeifa and the Jordan Valley – asked local businesses what they needed from the investment.

"Business people around the country kept telling us two things," says Jay Knott, Jordan's mission director for USAid, which is funding the programme.

"First, that the leading universities are not producing people who are ready for the workforce. Many students have learnt the theories, but lack practical and applicable skills.

Second, they don't have a sense of what it's like to work in an organisation or work in

teams towards shared goals. We would like to see better matching."

USAid and IYF teams are discussing how employers can be involved throughout the five-year Youth:Work project.

They want to see employers offering young people work experience, traineeships and – the end goal – permanent positions on the pay roll.

Businesses will also be linking with the programme's network of 200 new youth trainers to advise what jobs are available, and what young people need to get them.

Awais Sufi, vice-president for employment at IYF, says that businesses have an economic interest in such involvement. "Businesses with a long-term view appreciate that vibrant, robust economies with qualified workers are an incredibly important foundation to business success, particularly in developing countries that may need a shot in the arm to move forward."

The Jordanian project is one of a number offered under the IYF's Youth:Work umbrella, which is also active in other Middle Eastern countries and across South America. So far, more than \$40m worth of investment has been made to get young people into work, with help from the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, Microsoft and Samsung.

Rowenna Davis

New college sets high standards to mould Africa's future leaders

Education

Sarah Murray talks to the founder of Ashesi University

Some say that the most powerful way to change the world is to educate its future leaders. This is certainly the view of Patrick Awuah, founder and president of Ghana's Ashesi University.

While working as a software engineer for Microsoft in Seattle, Mr Awuah had been looking for a way to contribute to nation-building efforts both in his home country, Ghana, and more broadly across Africa.

"Drilling down, I came to leadership," he says. "And if you look at who is at the African universities, those are the people who are going to be running this continent," says Mr Awuah, who was educated in the US at Swarthmore College.

Yet when he surveyed the higher education landscape across Africa, Mr Awuah was dismayed by what he saw. For a start, he says, only 5 per cent of school leavers were going on to college.

Because the number of young people embarking on higher education is so



Patrick Awuah (centre, in blue shirt) at the ground-breaking ceremony for a new campus

small, he says, these are by definition the future leaders – and not just politicians but also the lawyers, doctors, bankers, chief executives and teachers essential to shaping society and managing an economy.

Yet most young people, he says, are receiving their education from institutions where classes are overcrowded, where learning by rote is the main form of instruction and cheating is the norm.

To start to change this, Mr Awuah decided to create a liberal arts college that would educate students to be ethical and entrepreneurial leaders.

First, though, he decided to educate himself – with business and management skills. He embarked on a two-year MBA programme at the University of California's Haas School of Business, a course he says was probably "the single most important investment" he made in the Ashesi University project.

After a 1998 trip to Ghana with business school colleagues to conduct a feasibility study into the possibility of setting up a university in Accra, the capital, he returned to Seattle and set up a foundation, investing his own money as well as donations from colleagues and from Microsoft.

He decided against a for-profit model. "It soon became clear that if we

wanted to achieve a certain quality, we wouldn't have sufficient returns to attract investors and venture capitalists," he explains.

"And it wasn't clear what the exit scenarios were – you don't start a school and sell it to an investor or do an IPO. So for an adventure like this, the non-profit model seemed better."

But while half the students are on financial aid and fundraising remains essential for expansion, the

More than 95 per cent of graduates from the school have remained in Africa

school is financially self-sustaining, with tuition fees largely covering operating costs.

As well as pushing for high academic standards, fostering a culture of ethics is a central mission of the school. If caught cheating, students fail the course. Anyone found cheating a second time is expelled. "When we started, people said we were being unreasonable," says Mr Awuah. "But it's what schools in the west do, so why shouldn't we?"

Now, students sign up to an honour code – one voted into force by the students

themselves in 2008 – that requires them to report instances of academic misconduct. Moreover, all students embark on community service before they graduate.

With a liberal arts core and majors in business administration, computer science and management information systems, the emphasis is on teaching young people to think entrepreneurially and ethically, as well as on equipping them to analyse problems and come up with solutions.

"It's a very different learning environment," says Mr Awuah. "They do lots of writing, teamwork and talking, rather than just learning by rote and following teachers' notes."

After starting its first year with 30 students, Ashesi University's enrolment has now reached more than 400. With the help of a \$2.5m investment from the International Finance Corporation, the investment arm of the World Bank, a new campus will open next year, accommodating many more students.

Most importantly, perhaps, more than 95 per cent of graduates from the school have remained in Africa, generating a fresh supply of the young, entrepreneurial, ethical individuals that African political, social and business institutions so badly need.

Vangeline wants to help preserve Africa

Since 2008, the Pearson Foundation has been working with educators and community organizations across southern Africa – training teachers, supporting local schools, and helping young people share their own experiences and concerns with others around the world.

We're particularly proud to support Jane Goodall's Roots & Shoots program and to have helped young people across southern Africa to create digital films that share ways we all can work together to preserve nature and protect the environment.

In these intensive digital arts workshops, filmmakers like Vangeline share ideas, document

the consequences of deforestation on local wildlife, and produce personal films that challenge young people to make the world a better place.

Now Vangeline's voice – and the voices of young people from Africa and around the world – is a permanent part of the international Roots & Shoots story, a story that's also the center of the annual Earth Day Challenge we host for young people in local communities each year.

Find out more about how the Pearson Foundation helps people around the world to live and learn. Visit www.pearsonfoundation.org.



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Investing in Young People

Putting the public good ahead of profits

Social entrepreneurs

Rowenna Davis on the impact of pioneers with creative solutions

Fredrick Ouko Alucheli is disabled. He uses two elbow crutches to support his weight and a caliper for walking. He grew up in West Kenya and both his parents are peasants. But the defining feature of Mr Alucheli is his job – the head of Action Network for the Disabled (Andy), the organisation he founded when he was 20.

"We wanted to stop the fact that persons with disabilities are banished to the periphery of society, confined in the dark alleys and only taken as objects of charity and perpetual beggars," he says. "The organisation exists to demonstrate that disability is not inability or the end of life for a person – there is a lot more that one can do given necessary support."

After his parents made sacrifices to give Mr Alucheli an education, he was able to apply for the grants he needed to start Andy (formerly known as Kenya Disabled Action Network), which now offers a range of programmes for disabled young people including training, work placements, sporting opportunities and human rights education. In the seven years since its foundation, Andy has helped more than 1,000 young people.

Mr Alucheli is not alone. He is one of thousands of young "social entrepreneurs" – innovative pioneers who find creative solutions to social problems. They only differ from regular entrepreneurs in that the public good rather than profit drives their activities. These imaginative pioneers are pushing the boundaries of development in nations across the globe.

In the UK, four Cambridge PhD students have founded JustMilk, an organisation that is developing a device that would filter the HIV virus out of breast milk. In the Philippines, a group of young people has founded Rags2Riches, an enterprise that empowers women liv-



Nothing wasted: workers at Evamaria, a youth-led social enterprise programme in Brazil

EvaMaria

ing on a sprawling dumpsite to make high quality handbags out of recycled cloth. In the US, graduates have started Husk Power, which uses discarded rice husks to deliver power to off-grid villages in rural India. In Brazil, low-income women are transforming discarded commercial waste into furniture and works of art for sale, as part of

Evamaria, a youth-led social enterprise programme.

According to Paul Hudnut, an instructor in social entrepreneurship at Colorado State University College of Business, such initiatives are set to solve some of the world's main development challenges.

"Society now has a number of big institutions and businesses

that aren't functioning well," he says. "They have their roots in petroleum, and times are changing. India and China are rising. The demand for development is growing. The Fortune 1,000 companies aren't going to change these things. I have more faith in young people to come up with ground-breaking solutions."

Profile George Onyango of Sidarec

George Onyango was born in the Pumwani slums of Nairobi, Kenya. At the age of 20, he and his friends set up the Slums Information Development and Resource Centre (Sidarec) in a mud hut in the city.

Thirteen years on, the organisation has three centres functioning across the country and has trained more than 5,000 young slum dwellers in the art of entrepreneurship.

"Young people can be very entrepreneurial, and a bad economy doesn't mean their ideas are going to fail," says Mr Onyango.

"Some of the most successful institutions in our country are run by young people. If they are given the support to realise their dreams and aspirations, they can perform wonders."

One of the first groups Sidarec helped was a notorious gang of teenage slum dwellers. They walked into Mr Onyango's office and announced that they were sick of crime, but needed some funds to start an alternative way of living. Mr Onyango offered them business training and made them come up with a proposal. Eventually, he granted them a small sum of money to fix and regenerate one of the slum's few formal toilets.

"Before we gave them a grant, the gang used to make their money from mugging people. Now staffing and cleaning that toilet supports 14 young people, and they're very proud of their business," says Mr Onyango.

Slums breed entrepreneurs. The conditions are ripe; there is a desperate need for basic goods and services, and few formal employment opportunities that provide them. But a deficit of start-up capital and institutional order means that

the entrepreneurial activity that does occur in slums is often informal, small-scale and illegal. Moreover, economic activity is frequently dominated by the strongest members of the community, rather than those with the best ideas.

Mr Onyango's organisation aims to change all that. Sidarec offers Kenya's young people – 62 per cent of whom are out of work – training in business and management skills, as well as advice on how to make business plans and apply for funding. When the resources are available, it may fund new or existing enterprises.

The story of how Sidarec came into being is remarkable. "When we started we hardly had any resources – most of us were just getting a few shillings acting on the streets," says Mr Onyango. "We used to contribute a tiny amount to the centre every time we met."

The local administration donated a piece of land for the centre, and eventually further funding was provided by the Ford Foundation – which also paid for Mr Onyango to take a course in non-profit business management in the US.

More recently, Starbucks and the International Youth Foundation (IYF) have granted Sidarec \$10,000 funding for a further 850 training placements.

A true entrepreneur, Mr Onyango does not want to stop there. He has managed to raise funds for a 40-acre site on the outskirts of Nairobi to build an advanced youth training centre. However, he needs another \$20,000 to get it open – and conditions for fund-raising are tight in the financial crisis.

Rowenna Davis

Most experts in the field agree that young people often make the best social entrepreneurs. They are willing to fail, more prepared to travel and less likely to be tied to a family. But most importantly, they think outside the box.

As Harry Dellane, director of talent at the Acumen Fund, a non-profit organisation that

supports entrepreneurial approaches to solving global poverty, explains: "The rules of how to play the game aren't burned into their brains yet. It's easier for them to see new possibilities. They're more filled with hope than the realism that might inhibit creativity."

Sam Tombs is a young social entrepreneur who demonstrates

that energy. At the age of 22, he founded Tomorrow's Economists, which places top economics graduates in under-resourced state schools in London to support economics teaching.

With no training or funding, Mr Tombs worked with his friends to get the project off the ground while holding down a full time job.

"Luckily, my work let me have some time off to go into schools," he says. "You have to throw yourself in at the deep end and then get feedback. At first, we didn't know what level to pitch the ideas at – you just have to try a few ideas and see what happens. Turns out the students were more interested than we thought."

While some ventures take very few resources to get off the ground – Mr Tombs says all he really needed was a few hours from volunteers and £30 for a website – most social entrepreneurs find funding a serious obstacle.

This is one of the vital areas in which the Acumen Fund can provide support. Relying almost entirely on voluntary donations, Acumen uses a range of debt and equity measures to help the most promising fledgling projects get going.

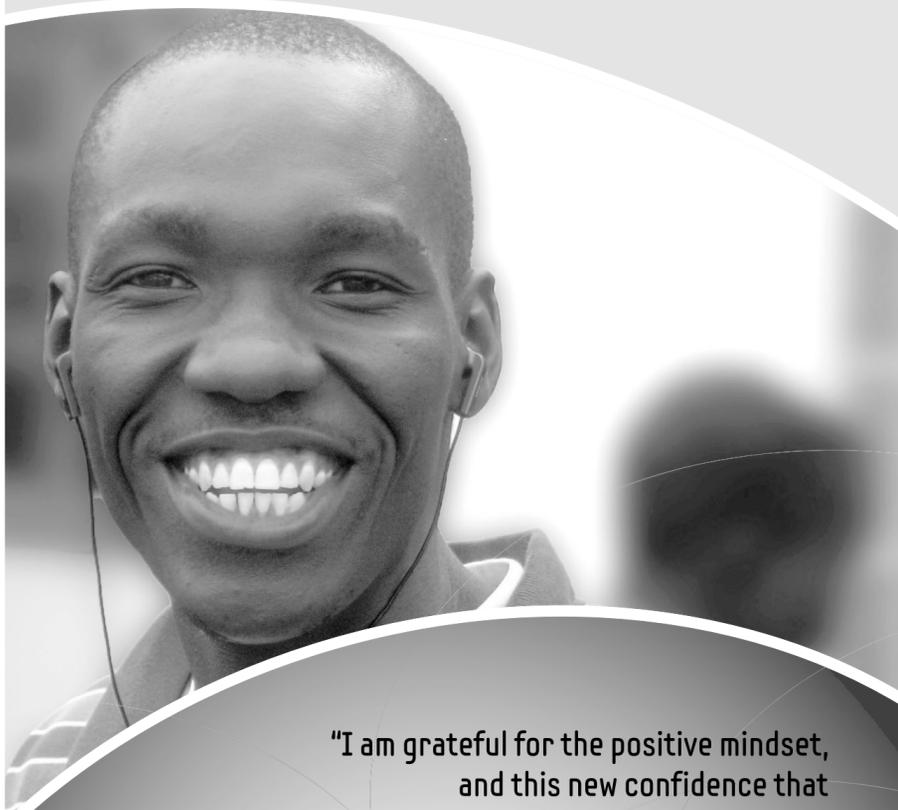
"Social entrepreneurs are unconventional, so typical lenders won't offer them loans," says Mr Dellane. "But we don't expect to make two times our investment in three years. We expect to make our money back, or lose a bit in the name of social change."

Acumen is currently funding 26 projects in Africa, India and Pakistan that reach more than 26m people. Its network of experienced social entrepreneurs means that young pioneers can seek advice before things go wrong. Mr Dellane says project defaults are rare.

But youth entrepreneurs also need an amenable economic context if they are to thrive. Bureaucracy, complicated funding applications and red tape are more likely to put young people off than other groups, and the adults that hold the keys are often sceptical of their initiatives, when support is what young social entrepreneurs need.

Samsung REAL DREAMS

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"I am grateful for the positive mindset, and this new confidence that allows me to shape my own future."

– Tobias Ouma, 23

international youth foundation



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Youthful protesters help shape new kind of politics

Activism

Richard Lapper on a generation with different priorities from their parents

The toppling of the mighty statue of Enver Hoxha, Albania's former communist leader, made a big impression on Erion Veliaj, who describes the day in 1991 as "the most exciting event of my boyhood".

Mr Veliaj, now 29 and a prominent political activist, still draws inspiration from a struggle that started when students at the Enver Hoxha university in Tirana campaigned to rename their institution.

But, he says, the political methods and organising tactics of the mass movement that overthrew Europe's harshest communist regime are not necessarily the same as those needed to fight widespread corruption and promote more accountable government in Albania's struggling democracy.

"People associate protests with violence," says Mr Veliaj, a founder of the Mjaft movement (*mjaft* means "enough" in Albanian) and the G99 political party. "They don't want to go, so we have to make politics fun and accessible."

As a result, rather than rely on traditional mobilisation techniques, such as leaflets, meetings and door-to-door campaigning, Mjaft – which began in 2003 – organised through text messaging. It staged street theatre as a form of protest designed to capture the imagination of the public.

Groups of activists – mobilised by text message – gather suddenly and without warning, bringing props, such as donkeys or fashion manikins – chosen to attract media attention. "We want to make it shameful for the government to act against these events," says Mr Veliaj.

This kind of approach – based on loose networks and high levels of communication between activists –

is typical of a new kind of politics that has been developing among youth. During the so-called Orange revolution in Ukraine and last year's election protests in Iran, activists used similar techniques.

"We worked with protesters who got involved in the Orange revolution," says Mr Veliaj. "It was amazing to see the guys we had gone to workshops with a few months before suddenly appear on television."

And the new style is also becoming visible too in richer countries, where – despite declining membership of political organisations and lower voter turnout – youth are not becoming quite so depoliticised as some surveys have indicated.

"Young people are redefining what politics is," says Ashok Regmi, a Nepalese activist who is now programme director at the International Youth Foundation in Baltimore.

Or as Rakesh Rajani, founder of Twaweza, a new Tanzania-based initiative promoting greater government accountability in East Africa, puts it: "Young people today are looking for more immediate ways of acting. They don't want to spend hours travelling just to demonstrate for half an hour."

Several factors underpin that redefinition. First, the sharp ideological division of the 1960s and 1970s – when capitalism and socialism offered contrasting visions of the world order – has given way to a more complex and fragmented political environment.

"When the fight was against systems, movements were more united and more visible," says Mr Regmi. "There was a single enemy. Now there are many more issues."

Societies – even relatively undemocratic ones such as China or Iran – have become more fluid and open.

The interest of big corporations in exploiting the commercial potential of low-income groups in emerging economies – what

business school theorists call the "bottom of the pyramid" – has also opened up new spaces for social and political activism.

Mr Regmi says the kind of distribution networks set up in poorer areas by mobile phone and consumer goods companies bring young people together, for example.

Second, over the past 15 years internet access and mobile phone technology have increased at a rapid pace, especially in Asia, Latin America, eastern Europe and Africa.

Young people have been particularly quick to catch on to mobile phones, text messaging and social net-



'In the past, it was numbers that gave legitimacy. Now, it is skills'

Ashok Regmi, Programme director, IYF

working sites such as Facebook and Twitter, and activists are deploying these new communications tools.

In 2008, a group of young Colombians angry at the brutality of the Farc leftwing guerrilla group began a popular campaign against them by organising on Facebook.

And by using simple digital cameras, mobile phone-based internet activist groups can collect data on the state of roads, water or health services, monitoring local government providers.

At the same time, the internet offers activists in relatively remote areas and in different parts of the world the opportunity to

connect with each other. "There are few boundaries between issues because of the wider availability of information. It is now possible for someone in Vietnam to connect up with someone in the eastern Congo," says Mr Regmi.

The IYF has developed links with many groups campaigning internationally on issues as diverse as climate change and educational achievement. More and more groups are acquiring and using skills that have been developed in a commercial context.

Focus groups – typically used in marketing and advertising campaigns – are one example. The African Youth Trust, a Nairobi-based non-governmental organisation, organised focus groups in all eight Kenyan provinces, as part of its effort to persuade the government to adopt policies to address youth unemployment and other concerns.

Mr Veliaj says the founders of his organisation were heavily influenced by Malcolm Gladwell, the American writer whose book *The Tipping Point* examines how social trends develop and often draws examples from the world of business.

This new focus means that youth activists have different priorities from their parents' generation.

Mr Regmi says he has found that groups are keen to acquire other marketing, fund-raising and communication skills. "In the past, it was numbers that gave legitimacy. Now it is skills," he says.

However, the big issue for today's politically conscious generation of young people, especially in richer countries, is how to achieve a broader relevance.

The danger is that issue-based focuses, combined with the exigencies of fund-raising, can domesticate – or as Mr Rajani puts it, "sterilise" – youth politics. "There is a real need to scale up these initiatives," he says. "You need people typically want change now. They have to develop strategic thinking."