



A Comparative Survey of

*DEMOCRACY, GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT*

Working Paper Series: No. 70

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The Landscape of Asia's Youth

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Democratic Governance  
UNDP  
Asia Pacific Regional Centre

## **Asian Barometer**

A Comparative Survey of Democracy, Governance and Development

# **Working Paper Series**

Jointly Published by

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# The Landscape of Asia's Youth

September 20, 2012

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# Outline of Presentation

- Global and Regional Context
- Country-Level Entry Points
- Review of Current UNDP and UN Activities
- Policy and Programme Implications

# Global Context

- Views of young people in development tend to be either positive or negative
- Address young people as a homogenous group
- Policy and programmes do not reflect young people's needs

# Examining Recent Events

- ‘Arab Spring’ - Excitement about role of young people in bringing about democratic changes
- ‘London Summer’ – Young people looting for quick material gain
- ‘Chilean Winter’ and other student protests

# What do they tell us?

- Youth and student protests are not a new phenomenon
- Surveys with young people reveal frustrations over social injustice and growing inequality
- Financial crisis and high unemployment intensified the frustrations

# Are young people prone to violence?

- Youth bulges and high unemployment considered risky factors
- Surveys of young people point to political exclusion and lack of participation channels
- Vast majority of young people do not engage in violence and can be a force for peace

# An Asian Spring?

- Governments in Asia Pacific took steps to stifle dissent following Arab Spring
- Low unemployment, not same frustration with government
- Important to explore how young people experience injustice and exclusion

# Entry Points

- **Citizenship education** – ensure that democratic norms and values are sufficiently integrated in formal and non-formal education activities.
- **Civic engagement** – provide a range of opportunities for young people to volunteer and be engaged in their communities.

# Entry Points

- **Youth leadership** – provide support to youth-led organizations and develop the capacity of young people to lead and manage organizations and projects.
- **Youth involvement in decision-making** – institutionalize channels for youth participation in national decision-making

# Entry Points

- **National youth policy** – anchor the rights of young people in national legislation and set out policies that address the specific needs of young people
- **Government capacity** – provide sufficient human and financial resources to government ministries responsible for youth.

# UNDP Activities

- Youth strategy and organizational focal point on youth
- Democratic Governance Thematic Trust Fund
- Country Office projects

# UN activities

- Special Advisor and Inter-Agency Network
- Regional - emphasis on activities that are short-term in nature, such as events, forums, competitions and awards
- Less focus on working with governments and regional institutions

# Policy Implications

- Youth as a key variable that is intertwined with other demographic characteristics
- Political exclusion among youth should be a key factor in the analysis
- Assess the political environment and the political will among key partner institutions

# Programmatic Implications

- Solid assessment of context
- Integrate youth components in existing programmes
- Special focus on young people in 20-24 age bracket, and on gender and marginalized groups

# Role of UNDP

- Utilize its convening power to improve the dialogue between governments and young people
- Identify key legislative, judicial, and political barriers to genuine and effective youth participation.