National and International Perspectives on Youth Policies and Programs
Professor Joan Dassin
Spring 2020 Module 2
Wednesdays 2:00-4:50PM
HS-312f, Room TBD

The Heller School for Social Policy and Management
Brandeis University
Sustainable International Development Graduate Program

Prof. Joan Dassin, Ph.D.
jdassin@brandeis.edu
Office Hours: By appointment

University Notices:

1. If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have an accommodation made for you in this class, please see me immediately.

2. You are expected to be honest in all of your academic work. The University policy on academic honesty is distributed annually as section 5 of the Rights and Responsibilities Handbook. Instances of alleged dishonesty are subject to possible judicial action. Potential sanctions include failure in the course and suspension from the University. If you have any questions about this policy, please ask.

Academic integrity is central to the mission of educational excellence at Brandeis University. Each student is expected to turn in work completed independently, except when assignments specifically authorize collaborative effort. It is not acceptable to use the words or ideas of another person without proper acknowledgement of that source. This means that you must use in-text citations and quotation marks to indicate the source of any phrases, sentences, paragraphs or ideas found in published volumes, on the internet, or created by another student. If you are in doubt about the instructions for any assignment in this course, ask for clarification.

Course Description
Youth, development and poverty are inextricably linked. An estimated 1.8 billion young people between the ages of 10-24 constitute the world’s largest youth population ever. 65% of India’s 1.25 billion people are 35 or under, and half are under 25. Developing countries are home to 89% of the world’s 10-24 year olds (Office of the Secretary General’s Envoy on Youth, 2017). The poorest, least developed countries typically have the largest proportion of young people in their populations; by 2050, 9 out 10 young people are expected to be living in developing countries (www.youthpolicy.org). Policies and programs that connect young people to employment, quality education and health services, help them to mitigate the risks of becoming involved in violence and civil
conflict, and promote youth civic engagement, leadership and national service are therefore critical for economic growth, as well as for building stable, productive societies over the long term.

It is these policies and programs that will be the principal focus of the course. Managers, planners, policy analysts and researchers alike need to know about effective youth programs and the public policies designed to bring them to scale. To situate specific policies in the youth sector as a whole, the first session of the course will review the demographic trends that have produced a ‘youth bulge’ in most developing countries. We will also assess various arguments about the centrality of effective policies for youth to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In the second session, we will examine the principal youth policies that currently exist at the global, national and regional levels, identifying underlying legislation, key institutional actors, and the most common types of youth-oriented projects funded by national governments and through international cooperation agencies and NGOs.

Sessions three through six will delve more deeply into research, policy and practice on a series of key topics that shape the youth sector. These include: (a) employment and entrepreneurship; (b) education and health services; (c) interventions for youth caught in situations of internal conflict and violence, and the risks of migration; and (d) efforts to build civic engagement, leadership and national service. In the course of these thematic sessions, we will pay special attention to the relationship between academic research, policy formation and program implementation and evaluation as it informs and leads to measurable social change. Intellectual and analytical frameworks such as concepts of youth vulnerabilities and positive youth development will also be introduced. In the seventh and final session, we will focus on the failings of the development sector in addressing youth issues, and introduce frameworks and assessment tools that can help to improve project outcomes in this critical sector.

Specific Goals
- Learn how youth issues are ‘framed’ in development work, and what that means for policies and projects at the global, national and local level
- Understand the demographics of developing countries and the core concept of the ‘demographic dividend’
- Familiarize students with research, policy and practice in key policy areas for youth advancement and well-being (e.g. education, employment, health, human rights, civic engagement)
- Identify the key agencies and organizations active in the youth sector, including funding sources
- Identify, analyze and evaluate programs and projects that effectively promote positive youth development
- Apply the lenses of gender, poverty and inequality to understand the constraints and opportunities in the youth sector
• Introduce students to some of the major intellectual and analytical frameworks in the youth sector, such as vulnerabilities and the positive youth development paradigm
• Identify “best practices” as well as the most common reasons for policy and program failure in youth programs
• Expose students to the analytic, strategic and assessment tools for understanding and evaluating youth policies and programs

Core Competency Statement
This course teaches concepts and skills that have been identified as core competencies for a degree in SID, although students in all degree programs may enroll in the course.

Youth development is central to social and economic development, linking the topic of this course to SID’s required literacy in the history, concepts, and goals of sustainable development, including theories of what development is, how it occurs, and how it affects economic, social and environmental sustainability (Competency 1). Similarly, most youth programs and policies are subject to the interaction of ecological, social, political and economic systems and to the relationship between market forces, governance institutions, social welfare strategies and environmental management approaches to desired development outcomes, requiring awareness and understanding of these interconnections (Competencies 2 and 3, respectively). The course also relies on contextual analysis to determine the appropriateness of specific youth policies and programs for certain countries and groups, especially marginalized youth in poor communities (Competency 4).

Competency 5 on problem solving methodologies is less connected to the course outline, although we do focus on using evidence and research to frame programs, policy and advocacy. Competency 6 on use of evidence is addressed directly in the course and opportunities will be created for students to undertake research and writing on topics related to youth development, such as the role of families, education and health services and national service programs. Competency 7 on scarcity and distribution is only indirectly connected to the course, although the focus on youth in poor communities raises questions about access to opportunities across various sectors. As in any policy area, youth policies and programs may be designed to address specific problems in an incremental or comprehensive manner, thus alerting students to the function of time in social change processes (Competency 8). Finally, the course will help students to understand management and leadership functions in organizations promoting youth development (Competency 9), and will also enable students to develop and practice their communication skills (Competency 10).

Sustainable Development Statement:
Issues of sustainability of policy and program impacts in the youth sector are closely connected to the content of this course. Starting with an analysis of the demographics of the youth sector in developing countries, the course examines the potential
contributions of youth to equitable growth and social development. Focusing on youth from poor or marginalized communities, the course examines how specific policies and programs in key areas for intervention not only address youth vulnerabilities but also harness the energy, idealism and commitment of youth for building more equitable, stable and peaceful societies. Youth are a key demographic group for both the present and future of development, especially in low and middle-income countries where they represent a significant portion of the population.

**Race and Ethnicity Statement:**
This course examines youth policies and programs from a comparative perspective, as seen by researchers, policy makers and young people themselves who come from different cultural traditions. It is based on understanding the social construction of race, ethnicity, social class and other markers of ‘difference’ in contemporary societies, and how such perceptions lead to bias, social exclusion and marginalization in specific policy areas.

**Gender Perspective Statement:**
By definition, the concerns of both women and men in development need to be considered both separately and together, recognizing that different societies employ diverse approaches to gender relations. Students will learn how to incorporate a gender lens into discussions of youth policies and programs. They will investigate whether specific policies lead to discriminatory practices that impede the full participation of, or condone stigmatization and violence against, individuals or groups with diverse sexual preferences and gender identities.

**Course Requirements**
1. Attendance at all sessions
2. Prompt arrival
3. Preparation of all readings
4. Participation in class discussions and small group work, and leading class discussions as requested
5. Timely submission/presentation of assignments
6. Class exercises and presentations
7. Helpfulness to other students.

Your **Grade** will be calculated as follows

1. Class attendance and participation (15%)
2. Reading responses (5 responses = 35%)
3. Final policy brief (50%)

**Class Schedule and Readings:**

**PART I – OVERVIEW OF YOUTH ISSUES AND YOUTH POLICIES**
Session 1: Demographic Trends, the Youth ‘Bulge’ and the Importance of Youth for Sustainable Development

The class will open with introductions by the participants who will explain why they are interested in youth policy and programs and what their experience has been in the youth sector. The professor will then review the syllabus, the class assignments and the grading system. She will explain the rationale, organization and scope of the course.

The substantive portion of the session will focus on demographic trends that are reshaping both the size of the youth population and the proportion of youth in the global population. Discussion will focus on the major challenges facing youth in developing countries. These include overcoming poverty, securing access to stable employment, quality education and health services, mitigating the impacts of exposure to conflict and violence, including the risks of migration, and creating opportunities for civic engagement and national service. We will examine arguments for investing in youth and placing youth at the center of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda.

Readings and Resources:
Read:
Executive Summary, pp. 1-3
Introduction, pp. 5-9
Chapter 1, Youth and the 2020 Agenda for Sustainable Development, pp. 11-20


Additional Resources:

New York: UNFPA. Read the following chapters:
   Chapter 7: The transformation of the future and the case for young people, pp. 91-102.


**Session 2: Youth Policies and Programs**
This session will continue our mapping of youth issues. First, we will examine United Nations Resolution 2250, passed in December 2015, the first ever Security Council resolution on young people. We will analyze the UN recommendations for action on youth, peace and security now recognized as the main planks in global youth policy. We will also work with resources and data on youth policies in various countries and regions.

**Required:**


Data and reports on www.youthpolicy.org

**PART II – MAJOR YOUTH POLICY AND PROGRAM AREAS**

**Session 3: Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship**
This session will introduce the major methodological challenges involved in analyzing youth employment, including defining types of employment inadequacy, especially in developing countries and among disadvantaged youth. It will examine the role of education and training in creating youth employment, and assess the effectiveness of different types of policies and programs designed to connect youth to labor markets. We will take a special look at entrepreneurship – often touted as the best solution to youth unemployment – and its emerging role in the developing world.

**Required:**
Read: Chapter III: Youth Employment, pp. 35-54.

Read: Chapter 1 - Introduction, pp. 1-8
Chapter 2 - Global and Regional Outlook for Youth Employment, pp. 9-23
Chapter 5 - Policies for Youth Employment, pp. 61-72

Read: Executive Summary, pp. 9-10
Assessment and Recommendations, pp.11-16
Chapter 1: pp. 17-24

Recommended:


Session 4: Youth, Education, Health and Development: The Unfinished Agenda
This session focuses on young people’s access to education and health services in the developing world. For education, what is the unfinished education agenda as represented in the SDGs? We will focus in particular on secondary and vocational
education, which have received new scrutiny because of their importance in harnessing the ‘youth dividend’ and bringing young people into the labor force. For health, what are the priorities for young people in the developing world, especially in the areas of sexual and reproductive health and HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment?

**Required:**

**Education:***


**Health:***

RUN Envoy on Youth. #YouthStats. *Health.* Available online: http://www.un.org/youthenvoy/health/


Read: Section 8: Policies to Support Adolescents’ Health


**Session 5: Youth, Violence and Political Conflict**

This session examines the causes and consequences of youth involvement in armed conflict and in post-war settings, particularly in Africa. What policy approaches and types of interventions are most effective in these situations? How central are they to youth development in general?

**Required:**

Read:
- Chapter 1, Demography and Alienation, pp. 1-26
- Chapter 3, Moving Forward, pp. 64-123.


**Additional Resource:**

**Session 6: Youth Civic Engagement, Leadership, and National Service**

This session examines the nature of youth civic engagement, leadership and national service programs and their impact on employability, upward mobility and community engagement, especially for poor and at risk youth. We will consider various types of youth participation programs to identify those elements, such as volunteerism and group membership, which produce the strongest positive outcomes. To what degree do these programs result in quality employment, boost civic participation, and enable youth to contribute substantively to peace and development? Are they equally applicable in different national and regional settings? What priority should be given to youth civic engagement, leadership and national service programs in youth development policy?

**Required:**

Read: A Review of Literature from Academia and Practice, pp. 2-19
Insights from Experts in the Field, pp. 19-36.


**PART III – ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION**

**Session 7: Assessment and Evaluation: Learning From Failures, Crafting New Frameworks**
This session will consider why youth policies in developing countries often fail, and what can be done to improve the outcomes of policies and programs in specific settings. Students will be introduced to a comprehensive tool for assessing youth wellbeing, first published in 2014 by the Center for International and Strategic Studies and the International Youth Foundation. We will conclude the course with a reflection on the characteristics and ‘transferability’ of successful youth policies and programs.

**Required:**

Read:
Chapter 4, The Development Response, pp. 124-175
Chapter 5, Warlords and Stovepipes, pp. 176-186
Chapter 6, Toward Youth Inclusion: A Framework for Change, pp. 187-200


**Final Policy Brief:** Due Friday, May 6, by 11:55pm.
2500 Words (Approximately 5 pages) Times New Roman Font #12, Single Spaced, 1” Margins.

1) Select a youth issue area in which you have a special interest (e.g. employment, education, health care, migration, national service). You may select a policy area we covered in the course or another area (e.g. climate action, criminal justice) that you find compelling.

2) Discuss the main facets of this problem and develop the case for why it is critical for youth development.

3) What policies and programs are in place to address this issue in a particular region, country or social group?

4) Are these policies and programs successful, and if so, why? Why not?

5) Based on the readings and your own further research, what elements should be in place to achieve positive outcomes for youth in this area?

Instructions
Refer to 'How to Write a Policy Brief' for the format. Your brief should include:

I - Executive Statement
II - Introduction
III - Key Messages
IV - Methodology (Optional)
V - Results and Conclusions (Findings)
VI - Recommendations or Implications
VII - References and Useful Links
VIII - Author (You!)

Review How to Produce a Policy Brief and the Policy Brief Toolkit for additional hints on how to produce your brief. (Note that the suggested format in the two sources differ slightly. Don't worry about that - use the format listed above.)

Additional questions to consider when writing your policy brief:

1) Identify your audience. Who or what (agency or organization) should actually implement the policies you are recommending?

2) How much are they likely to know about the topic already? This will determine how much detail you need to put into the brief.

3) What argument do you need to make to your audience to convince them that the problem you are describing requires urgent attention?
4) Do you want to inform your audience (informational brief) or get them to take action (advocacy brief)? A combination of both?

5) What is the best way to present your data? What kind of graphics (e.g. charts, tables, photographs, etc) would have the most impact on your audience?

6) What is the 'story' you are telling to your audience about the problem? What are the key messages you want them to remember after reading your brief?

7) What resources (e.g. citations, links) will help them to research the problem further?