

YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE FUTURE OF EMERGING MARKETS

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



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INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes the findings and recommendations of a symposium on *Young People and the Future of Emerging Markets* at the University of Oxford on 7-10 January 2016. The symposium was the seventh in a series of symposia on human welfare in emerging markets organized by the Emerging Markets Symposium (EMS). The EMS was created in 2008 as an academic initiative of Green Templeton College (GTC), the newest college in the University of Oxford and one of its seven graduate colleges. The EMS is also an expression of GTC's commitment to promote understanding of the issues of managing human welfare in the modern world and the flow of ideas across traditional disciplinary and professional boundaries.

The creation of the EMS was anchored in the premises that: (1) Unresolved issues of human welfare are critical constraints to growth, cohesion and stability in emerging markets; (2) Existing international forums did not reflect the complexity and urgency of these issues and (3) The College had the capacity and ambition to address them, the convening power to bring together leading figures from the public, private and voluntary sectors to consider them and the means to promote changes in policies and practices in governments, multilateral institutions, national and international corporations and civil society.

For more information about the Emerging Markets Symposium see: ems.gtc.ox.ac.uk

For more information about Green Templeton College see: www.gtc.ox.ac.uk

The work of the EMS has been made possible by generous grants from the C&C Alpha Group, a London based venture capital company with strong commitments to human welfare in emerging markets and worldwide interests in healthcare, aviation, real estate, hospitality and utilities.

The first EMS symposium was on *Health and Healthcare in Emerging Markets* (2009). It was followed by symposia on: *Urbanization, Urban Health and Human Security in Emerging Markets* (2011); *Tertiary Education in Emerging Markets* (2012); *Gender Inequality in Emerging Markets* (2013); *Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition in Emerging Markets* (2014); and *Ageing in Emerging Markets* (2015). The 2017 symposium will be on *Health and the Environment in Emerging Markets*. Reports on each symposium are launched at events throughout the world and participants collaborate in disseminating recommendations online, in print and in broadcasts, lectures and speeches.

Over the last eight years, the EMS has been guided by the proposition that human welfare is a function of complex interactions between economic and social policies and decisions made by government, business, civil society and individuals throughout the human life course. The EMS has expressed its commitment to a multi-disciplinary and inter-sectoral approach to human welfare in several ways. First by choosing topics that demanded the insights of social scientists and hard scientists and blending their expertise with that of leading figures from government, civil society and academe. Second, by opting for a conversational format under the Chatham House Rule that gives a maximum of fifty participants ample time to speak their minds knowing they will not be quoted. Third, by designing agendas that examine causes and consequences, assess the costs and conditions of alternative solutions and conclude with grounded and actionable recommendations.

The purpose of the symposium on *Young People and the Future of Emerging Markets* was to identify potential solutions to an array of demographic, economic, social and political problems that affect more than a billion people aged between 10 and 24 in the increasingly urbanized emerging markets of Asia, Northern and Southern Africa, Eastern and Southern Europe and Latin America¹.

In line with past practice, the symposium brought together experts in many fields, including demography, economics, anthropology, sociology, politics, religion, epidemiology, psychiatry, public health, education and management combined with high level experience in national governments, multilateral institutions and/or the public, private and voluntary sectors.

Economic marginality, social tensions, generational divides, political alienation and pessimism are familiar to young people in Barcelona and Boston as well as Bangkok and Bogota. What separates emerging markets from richer countries is that these problems occur on a much larger scale and evolve at unprecedented speeds in relatively fragile financial, institutional, commercial and legal environments.

¹ The EMS focusses on 20 emerging markets: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Malaysia, Mexico, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Russian Federation, South Africa, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The symposium agreed on findings and recommendations that call for autonomous or collaborative actions by government, business, civil society organizations and individuals in emerging markets (and in some cases other countries). Although their complexion and relative priority varies as a function of economic, cultural and political circumstances, in lesser or greater degree, they apply to all emerging markets. A comprehensive report on the symposium is available online at ems.gtc.ox.ac.uk.

THE BIOLOGICAL TRANSITION

The symposium found that emerging market governments and societies (like many other governments and societies) have tended to overlook the results of recent research on the biological transition from childhood to adulthood that shows:

- The average human brain is not fully developed until the third decade of life.
- Adult capabilities are shaped by the interaction of adolescent brains and social environments.
- The physical, cognitive, emotional, social, and economic attributes of human beings are largely acquired during adolescence.

In light of these findings the symposium recommended that:

Allowing for the facts that some aspects of recent research remain controversial and that some questions remain unanswered, emerging market governments should consider the implications of evidence on the asynchronous maturation of the young brain when developing and managing health, education, economic, social, law enforcement and penal policies.

YOUNG HEALTH

The symposium found that the health of young people in most emerging markets is a neglected priority and that health and healthcare systems make few provisions for the peculiar vulnerabilities and morbidities of young people. Nor do they acknowledge that the health of young people is best managed if they are treated as a distinct biological cohort rather than as small adults.

In light of these findings the symposium recommended that:

- Young people should have access to specialized youth healthcare.
- Emerging market governments should enhance health security for young people by developing integrated (age and developmentally) specific systems for physical and mental healthcare that should:
 - Be conceived in the context of the human life-course.
 - Include specialized preventive and curative healthcare.
 - Be integrated with social care.
- Emerging market governments should promote research on culturally specific and diverse determinants of mental health.
- Emerging market governments, in conjunction with business and civil society should:
 - Address suicide risks among young people through public education and counselling services.
 - Address the facts (through intensive education in schools, public information campaigns, access to contraceptives and specialized advice and medical facilities) that:
 - Maternal death is the second leading cause of mortality for girls aged 15-19.
 - Girls aged 15-19 are twice as likely, and girls aged under 15 are five times more likely, to die of complications during pregnancy or childbirth than women aged 20 or older.
 - Mount aggressive campaigns to diminish obesity associated with soft drink consumption through school and public education, social policies and market regulation.
 - Address health risks associated with tobacco through punitive fiscal policies, aggressive school and public education, advertising controls and market regulation.
 - Address rising levels of HIV/AIDS through public and school education, and the creation or strengthening of specialized clinics and the provision of drugs.
- Emerging market governments should help young people understand and accept co-responsibility for preventive healthcare through education campaigns and public information.

EDUCATION

The symposium found that changes in access to and the quality of primary, secondary and tertiary education and the effective use of information and communications technologies are essential to improving the prospects of young people in emerging markets. Its specific findings and recommendations were:

PRIMARY EDUCATION

The symposium found that most emerging markets can claim near-universal primary school enrolment. But weaknesses in school leadership, curricula, technology, plant and teacher quality create large gaps between levels of enrolment and levels of attainment. Closing these gaps should be the highest goal of education policy in emerging markets. First, because primary education is a precursor to secondary and tertiary education. Second because basic literacy and numeracy are mandatory conditions of economic life and arbiters of social inclusion in complex societies.

In light of these findings the symposium recommended that:

Emerging market governments, in conjunction with business and civil society organizations, should:

- Prioritize primary enrolment.
- Address systemic weaknesses in primary school leadership, curricula, technology, plant and teacher quality by:
 - Using teacher quality as a performance criterion for school principals.
 - Improving leadership by enabling principals to observe best practices in other schools and school systems.
 - Considering the merits of competency-based education development and alternative curriculum and assessment methods.
 - Reforming accreditation processes.
 - Reconsidering the merits of the traditional school year to make more intensive use of facilities.
 - Challenging obsessions with measurement and testing (recognizing that some aspects of teaching cannot be measured).
 - Re-thinking teacher training (e.g. by using Avatars and virtual long-distance teaching) to build teacher confidence and competence.
 - Providing culturally appropriate food supplements to all primary school students (in light of conclusive evidence that nutritionally deprived children cannot learn efficiently).

SECONDARY EDUCATION

The symposium found there is a widespread need to strengthen secondary education by aligning secondary curricula with the changing demands of future employers. This challenge will grow as emerging market economies shift to increasingly complex service and industrial processes demanding ever-higher levels of educational attainment in increasingly competitive global markets. That does not mean abolishing traditional curricula, discarding established teaching methods or replacing old schools with new ones. It means making major efforts to make secondary schools relevant to labour markets, adaptable to change and able to learn from the experience of more developed economies that, at high economic and social costs, have neglected technical training and education and guild traditions.

In light of these findings the symposium recommended that:

Emerging market governments should:

- Use pilot projects and programmes to evaluate alternative approaches to improvements in secondary education.
- Assess experimental methods and consider alternative ways to reconcile strategic educational objectives with the future needs of their economies.
- Learn from countries where technical and vocational education is prized (e.g. Germany, Sweden, Japan, South Korea) to focus on the technical skills needed for industries, including industries that emerging markets have captured from rich countries.

TERTIARY EDUCATION

The symposium found there are generalized needs for: comprehensive strategies covering all forms of tertiary education in emerging markets; stronger links between tertiary and secondary education; and broad public and private sector participation in defining tertiary education priorities; establishing sustainable institutional missions; allocating resources (including research resources); strengthening regulatory bodies to develop and enforce national accreditation standards in public and private tertiary institutions including private for-profit and foreign based institutions.

In light of these findings the symposium recommended that:

- Emerging markets must recognize the critical role of tertiary education in developing the professional, technical, leadership and management skills they will need in the 21st century.
- Emerging market governments should work closely with business and civil society organizations to strengthen tertiary education by:
 - Aligning publicly funded research with national economic, social and cultural priorities and the expansion of national innovation capacity.
 - Building and retaining critical masses of research personnel.

- Encouraging researchers to leverage their careers and capacities by partnering with institutions and scholars in rich countries.
- Developing transparent cost-sharing arrangements for research funding with the private sector.
- Recognizing imperfections in the global market for tertiary education and promoting international action to improve its functionality.

TECHNOLOGY

The symposium found there is a need to harness the power of information and communications technologies to strengthen primary, secondary and tertiary education.

In light of this finding the symposium recommended that emerging market governments should:

- Emphasize the development of low-cost and comprehensive national high speed broadband networks to provide reliable internet access for all schools and colleges.
- Enable all primary and secondary students to acquire and use personal computers.
- Promote the development of internet based distance learning.
- Take full advantage of the growing availability of high quality electronic educational resources.
- Monitor and evaluate opportunities offered by cloud computing.

THE YOUNG ECONOMY

The symposium found that high levels of unemployment among highly skilled as well as unskilled young people and burgeoning unregulated and insecure informal economies in emerging markets reflected: widespread disjunctions between secondary and tertiary education systems and unpredictable employer demands for hard and soft skills; barriers and rigidities in labour markets; and constraints to young entrepreneurship.

In light of these findings the symposium recommended that:

Emerging market governments, in conjunction with business and civil society organizations, should attenuate the consequences of unemployment, under-employment and misemployment for young people by:

- Adopting policies to achieve and sustain rapid GDP growth to create jobs.
- Modify secondary and tertiary education systems including training for actually or potentially obsolete occupations with training in the adaptive learning skills that will be increasingly essential in the fast-changing economies and fluid labour markets of the 21st century.
- Removing labour market rigidities, barriers and constraints to facilitate access to employment for young people.
- Promoting young entrepreneurship and alleviating constraints to young entrepreneurs including measures to improve:
 - Vocational education.
 - Financial literacy.
 - Access to financial services and systems.
 - Legislative processes that affect young entrepreneurs.
 - Access to internships and job-training.
 - Bureaucratic transactions.

YOUNG PEOPLE IN SOCIETY

The symposium focused on three critical issues for young people in emerging market societies. These issues were: gender; mentoring/parenting; and political participation.

GENDER

The symposium found that girls and young women in many emerging markets suffer the consequences of discriminatory attitudes and practices ranging from the extremes of neo-naticide, infanticide, gendercide and selective starvation, through abusive relationships (including premature motherhood, sex trafficking, forced labour, educational exclusion) to day-to-day denials of equal rights, unequal treatment and inequality before the law.

In light of these findings the symposium recommended that:

- Without discounting or diminishing the needs and rights of older females, emerging markets should prioritize those of girls and young women because they will shape their demographic, economic and social futures.
- Emerging market governments, in conjunction with business and civil society, should make gender equality a national priority, giving due consideration to the examples of countries that have established ministries to manage and monitor progress towards gender equality, and compliance with pertinent international, multilateral and regional agreements.
- Emerging market governments should improve life chances for young women by:
 - Promoting young female entrepreneurship through training and gender-specific micro-credit initiatives and employment.
 - Encouraging private enterprises, particularly multinational corporations, to provide jobs, internships and mentoring for girls who finish secondary school.
- Emerging market governments should promote sexual sovereignty for girls by:
 - Providing universal unfettered access to reproductive and other healthcare services.
 - Criminalizing neo-naticide, infanticide and the disposal of female children (particularly as revealed by dramatically imbalanced gender ratios in some emerging markets).
 - Enforcing laws prohibiting the sexual and labour exploitation of girls through domestic and international trafficking and slavery.
 - Developing education programmes for children and adults in collaboration with religious and other organizations to build understanding of gender equality and promote attitudinal and behavioural changes.
 - Collaborating with countries that are sources of demand for trafficking, sexual and labour exploitation and slavery to strengthen controls and increase convictions against traffickers.

MENTORING

The symposium found that:

- Adolescents and young adults need to know what makes them tick; why their impulses, desires and questions are 'normal'; how they can compensate for and explain differences between themselves and others to themselves and others; how they should think about personal and group identities; how they should resolve concerns about developmental processes ranging from physical manifestations of *menarche* and *spermarche* to volatile feelings and emotions.
- Whereas, in an ideal world, no child would make the journey to adulthood without knowledgeable guides, most young people in most emerging markets fend for themselves because:
 - School curricula generally place little or no emphasis on enabling young people to understand and interpret the current phase of their lives.
 - Most education and health professionals are poorly equipped to help them.
 - Parents who navigated teenage shoals without help, lack expository skills, do not have a sound grasp of the world in which their children live and/or lack comparable technological skills or have different preferences may find it hard to communicate with their children while also contending with the competing demands of jobs, homes and families.
- Emerging market governments, businesses and civil society organizations have many opportunities to support family life and enhance parental mentoring of young people.
 - Businesses that have sought to ease work-life conflicts have been rewarded with enhanced employee loyalty, retention and corporate reputation.
 - Other businesses have enhanced productivity by understanding and responding to issues that affect the personal lives of employees including pressures of maternity, child rearing and elder care.
 - Some schools have helped young people help themselves through curricular innovations and teacher training. These changes are laudable but there is need for more.

In light of these findings the symposium recommended that:

Emerging market governments should help parents improve work-life balance, enhance the quality of family life and increase the time parents can devote to children by:

- Encouraging all employers (public, private and civil society organizations) to create solutions to the childcare, elder care and work-life challenges of working parents of both sexes.
- Encouraging small and medium enterprises that are too small to provide childcare and other facilities to develop collaborative arrangements with other enterprises.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

The symposium found that:

- Most governments, businesses and civil society organizations in emerging markets are led and managed by adults over 30, who may be handicapped by generational insensitivity, uncertain how to engage with young people with different values and priorities and/or unwilling to trust immature judgment.
- Recent history suggests that, given the chance, young people often perform above expectations, are wise beyond their years and reveal themselves as constructive thinkers and responsible leaders who build competencies through active engagement with the structures and processes around them.
- In some emerging markets 16 year-olds can leave home, leave school, enter full-time work or training, join the military, pay income tax and national insurance, obtain tax credits and welfare benefits, consent to medical treatment, engage in sexual relationships, get married or join civil partnerships, raise children and (in some cases) drink alcohol, and drive motor vehicles.
- Most emerging markets have been unable or unwilling to reconcile the rights, roles and responsibilities of young people with their ages although two – Brazil and Indonesia – have set the age of enfranchisement at 16.

In light of these findings the symposium recommended that:

Emerging market governments, in conjunction with business and civil society should empower adolescents and young people, enable them to contribute to society and realize their personal potentials by:

- Enhancing youth participation in policy making and other decisions by allowing them to play consultative, advisory or executive roles compatible with national cultures.
- Enabling young people to play larger roles in society by recognizing that chronological age is an imperfect and misleading guide to their capacity to contribute to civil and political decisions.
- Considering whether if the age of 16 is appropriate for other roles and responsibilities it may also be a good age to vote.
- Encouraging the UN Envoy for Youth to collect and disseminate knowledge about successful and less successful initiatives that emphasize the value of enabling young people to join in adult-led processes and create processes of their own.

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THE EMERGING MARKETS SYMPOSIUM

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