According to the *World Report on Violence and the Health* prepared by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2002, Latin America is the most violent region in the world. The average homicide rate among young people between the ages of 15 and 29 is 101.7 per 100,000 men, and 11.5 per 100,000 women. Homicide, however, is the most extreme manifestation of violence. It is estimated that for each homicide there are 20 to 40 victims - adults and youth - that suffer injury requiring hospital care as a result of violence. Adolescents and young adults are disproportionately affected by all forms of violence, and whether their participation is as witnesses, victims, or perpetrators; their potential for healthy development is becoming increasingly limited.

Most countries in Latin America recognize that the violence that affects young people is a political and public health problem. Its prevalence not only impacts youth development, but also undermines the democratic foundation of society and is responsible for enormous losses in human, economic, and social capital in the Region.

Governments devote significant resources to the struggle against youth violence; however, many initiatives fail because little has been invested in evaluating the impact of the projects and in promoting youth participation in the process.

The primary objective of the “Promoting Youth Development and Violence Prevention” project, financed by the German government and implemented by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), is to improve the participation of the young people in the management of the youth development and violence prevention programs in selected countries —Argentina, Colombia, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Peru.

One of the main components of the project, knowledge management, aims to generate evidence of successful experiences and policies in preventing the violence affecting young people in Latin America. These evidences are drawn from the public health perspective and incorporate gender, development, and participation.

This publication, *Policies for the reduction of violence related to alcohol use among young people: An environmental approach*, is part of a series of such evidence documents. We hope that it helps to strengthen the capacity of professionals working in youth development and violence prevention in the different countries.