

## **Book reviews**

*Sex and America's Teenagers*, by the Alan Guttmacher Institute. New York and Washington: The Alan Guttmacher Institute, 1994, 88 pages. Pb US\$ 30.00

This book is the best available reference on current facts and historical trends relating to teenage sexual behavior, contraceptive and prophylactic use, sexually transmitted disease (STD), pregnancy, and parenthood. Well written, well organized, and comprehensive, the book covers the major contextual, transition, and intervention points in the adolescent sexual and reproductive development process. Chapter titles convey the scope of the book: Rites of passage, The context of adolescents' lives, Sex among teenagers, Risks and prevention of unintended pregnancy and STDs, Incidence and consequences of STDs, Adolescent pregnancy, Outcomes of adolescent pregnancies, Adolescent mothers and their children, Organized responses to adolescent sexual and reproductive behavior, and Where do we go from here?

Facts and trends – along with concomitant implications for program, policy, and education – are presented clearly and in straightforward fashion, with citations for supporting studies provided. The most important of the facts and trends are further elucidated by easy to read charts and graphs.

Policymakers, researchers, educators, service providers, parents – anyone wanting a quick overview of the field – should find this book a handy reference. The book would also make useful supplemental reading for high school sex education or living skills courses.

Beyond its utility as a reference, the book will, it is hoped, stimulate thinking about a range of important issues and challenges confronting the field and the country. Do we send our children overly complex, perhaps even contradictory, messages about the proper role of sex in their and our lives? Why is the American media loathe to portray and model 'safe sex' behavior on television? What exactly comprises 'responsible sexual behavior'? Do some of our laws and policies encourage irresponsible behavior? Why is it so difficult to conduct a scientific evaluation of the effectiveness of a teen pregnancy prevention program?

The book has two helpful appendix sections: Notes to text and References. Its utility as a reference document would have been improved by the inclusion of a more comprehensive Table of contents (with chapter headings and subheadings) as well as the addition of a keyword index to aid the reader in finding pertinent facts. Given the reference nature of the book, most readers will not sit down and read this book from cover to cover. Rather the book

is likely to be perused quickly up front, with only a few sections of special interest read carefully. The book is then likely to be consulted repeatedly as background facts and trends are needed, e.g., when writing proposals or papers, working on class assignments, planning service delivery programs or their evaluations, drafting pertinent legislation, or facing a specific problem at home. For all these latter uses, a comprehensive table of contents and a keyword index would help a great deal.

Josefina J. Card  
Sociometrics Corporation  
Los Altos, California

*Still an Open Door? US Immigration Policy and the American Economy*, by Vernon M. Briggs, Jr. and Stephen Moore. Washington, DC: The American University Press, 1994, 167 pages. Hb US\$49.50; Pb US\$16.95

*Still an Open Door?* consists of separate but related essays by two economists. The first by Vernon Briggs is titled 'The imperative of immigration reform: The case for an employment-based immigration policy' and summarizes themes first introduced in *Workforce 2000* by Johnston & Packer (1987) and developed in more detail by Briggs (1992). As Briggs sees the problem, US immigration has risen to historic levels while the amount of human capital embodied by the typical new migrant has been falling. This is happening at the same time that the emerging service-oriented US labor market calls for workers with more skill and more education. The underlying problem is traceable to a US immigration policy that is driven by special interest groups for whom political objectives are more important than economic ones. The outcome is that 'precisely when the nation needs a more highly skilled and better educated labor force, US immigration policy is supplying large numbers of unskilled, poorly educated workers who have a limited ability to speak English to the central cities of many major urban labor markets, where they compete with the sizable pool of low-skilled citizen workers for a declining number of jobs in low-skill sectors of the labor market' (p. 45). Briggs is especially concerned about the adverse labor market consequences for African Americans.

Some of these problems were addressed by the 1990 Immigration Act which increased the annual number of skill-based visas from 54,000 to 140,000. But Briggs argues that the number of other non-employment-based visas increased as well so that the overall proportions remained about the same (p. 27). Briggs' long-term solution to the mounting labor market skills mismatch is not a more generous immigration strategy but rather 'an expanded national human-resource-development policy for citizen workers' (p. 48). His specific policy recommendations include: (1) using highly-qualified immigrant workers only on a limited and short-term basis to fill identifiable job shortages while minimizing the entry of those unqualified to remedy such