



# Improving Children's Lives through Research

**Children, Youth and Women  
Research and Practice Forum**

**Ministry of Women and Social Affairs**

Summaries from presentations of the Monthly Seminar Series of the  
Children, Youth and Women - Research and Practice Forum 2023

# **Improving the Lives of Children, Youth and Women through Research and Dialogue**

## ***Children, Youth and Women Research and Practice Forum***

### **Ministry of Women and Social Affairs**

**Summaries from Presentations at the Monthly Seminar Series of the  
*Children, Youth and Women Research and Practice Forum* in 2023.**

**Foreword by H.E. Dr Ergogie Tesfaye,  
Minister, Ministry of Women and Social Affairs**

**Edited by Alula Pankhurst**

**Addis Ababa**

**December 2024**

***Improving the lives of Children, Youth and Women through Research and Dialogue***

Summaries from Presentations at the Monthly Seminar Series of the *Children, Youth and Women Research and Practice Forum* in 2023.

Edited by: Alula Pankhurst, Young Lives Ethiopia Country Director.

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## Acknowledgements

The Child Research and Practice Forum (CRPF) has been hosted by the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth since 2010 and continues to be hosted by the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs.

In 2023 various stakeholders suggested that the mandate and scope of the Forum should be expanded to include youth and women rather than only children. After several meetings, it was decided to hold a survey poll of members which was carried out in July. The Survey endorsed this view so the name of the Forum was changed in August 2023 to Children Youth and Women – Research and Practice Forum (CYW-RPF).

*The Children, Youth and Women Research and Practice Forum* would like to extend its gratitude to the Federal Ministry of Women and Social Affairs for hosting the seminar following on from a decade of activities under the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth. In particular, special thanks are due to Her Excellency Dr Ergogie Tesfaye who authored the forward to this book and Dr Tifsehit Solomon, Chief Executive for Policy and Strategy Research, for her important and useful improvements and for working with the editor to complete the publication.

The CYW-RPF wishes to thank all partners, organizations and individuals who have shown their support to the Forum through participation in the monthly seminars both as presenters and as participants. The CYW-RPF is also indebted to all the steering committee members for their commitment towards ensuring the success of the Forum's activities. We wish to thank Dr Aboubacar Kampo, the UNICEF Representative in Ethiopia, for authoring the Preface, Mr Daniel Kumitz, the Chief of the Policy Section in UNICEF for reviewing the manuscript, and Martha Kibur, UNICEF Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist, for support in organizing the meetings.

The CYW-RPF is most grateful for the support of UNICEF and The UK's Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO) who have covered the coordination costs for this year's activities. Finally, CYW-RPF extends its appreciation to Young Lives who enabled the production of the summaries of presentations included in this book.

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Addis Ababa University	Population Council
African Child Policy Forum	UN Women
Freedom Fund	UNICEF Ethiopia
GAGE	World Bank Group
Pathfinder International	World Health Organization
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## **Foreword**

**H.E. Dr Ergogie Tesfaye, Minister,**

**Ministry of Women and Social Affairs**

The Children, Youth, and Women Research and Practice Forum (CYW-RPF), established in 2010, has been a key initiative of the former Ministry of Women, Children, and Youth and continues under the stewardship of the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs in collaboration with Young Lives and UNICEF. Over the years, the Forum has provided a robust platform for knowledge sharing and dialogue on issues affecting children, youth, and women in Ethiopia, with the goal of driving meaningful improvements in policy and practice.

In 2023, stakeholders proposed expanding the Forum's mandate to include a stronger focus on youth and women. Following a survey conducted among the Forum's mailing list members in July, this proposal received widespread endorsement. Consequently, in August 2023, the Forum was renamed the Children, Youth, and Women – Research and Practice Forum (CYW-RPF) to better align with its broadened scope.

For over 14 years, the CYW-RPF has organized monthly seminars, fostering a vibrant network of experts, practitioners, and stakeholders, including representatives from government ministries, development partners, non-governmental organizations, and research institutions. These seminars offer a unique opportunity to present and discuss research findings on critical issues, shaping policies, strategies, and programs that improve the lives of women, children, and youth across Ethiopia.

The Forum's mailing list has grown to around 1,500 subscribers, a testament to its relevance and impact. Through its quarterly newsletters and annual summaries, the CYW-RPF disseminates key insights and research findings to a wide audience. This 2023 collection marks the thirteenth annual summary produced by Young Lives. The earlier summaries (2011 to 2022) are available on the Young Lives Ethiopia website ([www.younglives-ethiopia.org/child-research-and-practice-forum](http://www.younglives-ethiopia.org/child-research-and-practice-forum)).

This edition comprises 12 presentations addressing diverse topics such as child wellbeing by Dr Assefa Bequele, founder and distinguished fellow of the African Child Policy Forum (ACFP), early education, education during conflict, child protection, children's domestic work, the effects of parental death on orphans, sexual and reproductive health, adolescent well-being, women's caregiving roles.

Many of the presentations address critical policy issues including the fiscal space for children in Ethiopia and child sensitivity of social policies, and policy and practice regarding women's employment, domestic workers, refugees, and adolescents' sexual and reproductive rights.

Gender issues remain a cross-cutting theme in the Forum's work, with particular attention to adolescent sexual and reproductive health, rural-to-urban migration among girls, risk for female domestic workers, and support networks for women. The thematic areas explored in this edition, ranging from migration and mental health to education and social protection, highlight the Forum's critical role in addressing these challenges.

The Ministry of Women and Social Affairs extends its sincere gratitude to the United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) for funding the CYW-RPF and supporting the production of this collection. We also acknowledge the invaluable contributions of Young Lives, which has meticulously curated this and previous summaries, and UNICEF for its sponsorship of the Forum's monthly events.

As we move forward, we look to sustain and strengthen the CYW-RPF's efforts through continued collaboration with partners such as UNICEF, Young Lives, and other stakeholders. Together, we remain committed to fostering dialogue, promoting evidence-based decision-making, and advancing the well-being of children, youth, and women. As the Forum will be celebrating its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary in January 2025, we wish to commend the organisers for their contributions to sustaining the Forum to date.



# Preface

## UNICEF Representative in Ethiopia

**Aboubacar Kampo**

The Children, Youth, and Women Research and Practice Forum (CYW-RPF) has established itself as a vital platform for fostering dialogue and knowledge exchange on issues affecting children, youth, and women in Ethiopia. By providing a regular venue for presenting and discussing research findings, the Forum plays a crucial role in shaping policies and practices that promote well-being and social development.

Since its inception 14 years ago, UNICEF has been a proud supporter of the CYW- RPF, working in collaboration with the Ministry of Women, Children, and Youth (MoWCY), and now with its successor, the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs (MoWSA). Together with Young Lives, we have supported the organization, management, and continued success of this Forum.

The CYW-RPF reaches a network of around 1,500 individuals and organizations by sharing research findings through its presentations, quarterly newsletters, and annual summaries. These publications are not only distributed through its network but are also made available on the Young Lives Ethiopia website ([www.younglives- ethiopia.org](http://www.younglives-ethiopia.org)), ensuring broader accessibility.

This 2023 annual summary compiles 12 presentations addressing a diverse range of pressing issues. These include contributions from leading research organizations such as African Child Policy Forum, Young Lives, Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE), and the Population Council, as well as international organisations including UNICEF, the World Health Organization (WHO) and World Bank. international NGOs such as Pathfinder International and Freedom Fund and researchers from Ethiopian universities, notably Addis Ababa and Haramaya Universities and the Policy Studies Institute have also enriched the Forum's discussions.

Key themes explored in the presentations include child wellbeing by Dr Assefa Bequele, founder and distinguished fellow of the African Child Policy Forum (ACFP), early

childhood education among refugees, child protection in relation to child labour and domestic work, rural-to-urban migration among girls, sexual and reproductive health of adolescents, and women's caregiving roles. Additionally, the Forum has provided a platform to examine the impacts of recent crises in Ethiopia, including conflicts and their effects on adolescents' education and mental health.

These summaries condense key policy recommendations of important issues including the fiscal space for children in Ethiopia and ways to increase the child sensitivity of social policies, ways of combatting child labour and addressing the issue of girl domestic workers, adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights, and women's unrecognized roles in the care economy.

UNICEF has consistently supported the production of these annual summaries and continues to facilitate the Forum's regular meetings. We are pleased to present this latest collection of findings, which offer valuable insights for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers working to address Ethiopia's pressing challenges.

We look forward to continuing our collaboration with MoWSA and Young Lives in hosting future CYW-RPF meetings, producing publications, and disseminating critical research findings. We look forward to celebrating the 15h anniversary of the Forum with an annual workshop in January 2025.

Aboubacar Kampo  
UNICEF Country Representative



# **A Review of Child Sensitivity in Social Policies in Ethiopia**

**Jemal Mohammed Adem and Kaleab K. Haile**

**UNICEF<sup>1</sup>**

## **Introduction**

Social policies address how nations respond to global, national and regional challenges associated with social, demographic and economic change. These policies are designed to meet the human needs for security, education, work, health and well-being and overcome the challenges caused by structural inequities – social, economic and gender-based.

Ethiopia has seen significant progress across development indicators at a much more accelerated rate than other countries in the region. The government is committed to increasing the country's recent economic growth trajectory. Simultaneously, the government has embarked on a range of socio-economic development programmes to achieve low-middle-income country status by 2025. Social protection has been at the centre of Ethiopia's development policy and has been instrumental in reducing poverty and increasing the resilience of the population.

However, despite the progress, the rate of economic growth has slowed slightly in recent years. The slow growth and the lack of public finance for children also affect the achievement of child-sensitive Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which has implications for approximately 50 percent of the population – 47.8 million youth – who are under the age of 19.

The study provides a background of risk and vulnerabilities affecting children, adolescents and women in Ethiopia, and identifies the needs and gaps of social policies regarding child sensitivity.

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<sup>1</sup> Presented by Jemal Mohammed Adem (Researcher and coordinator of the Gender and Child development center at the Policy Studies Institute (PSI)) and Kaleab K. Haile (Senior Researcher at Policy Studies Institute (PSI)) on May 25, 2023. It was published on December 2021. <https://bit.ly/4buzMhm>.

## Methodology

The study adopted an exploratory and primarily qualitative design to analyse the child sensitivity to social sector policies.

## Key Findings

- **The education sector's** policies and strategies recognize children as rightsholders and account for their needs and perspectives more comprehensively. In terms of children's involvement in the policy process, the policies in the education sector are developed through a consultative process and address the needs of children. However, this does not translate well into programme and district implementation. While emphasis is placed on prioritizing equitable access to education, these priorities are not adequately reflected in the policies, as they do not clearly define the category, 'vulnerable groups of children', including children with disabilities, orphaned children and migrant children.
- **The health and nutrition sector's** policy development process is collaborative and incorporates the perspectives of children and caregivers. In terms of institutional arrangements, on paper, coordination mechanisms are mapped out. However, the policies are not entirely inclusive and do not adequately address the needs of disabled children, both in policy development and implementation. Further, the policies and strategies do not adequately respond to children's evolving risks and vulnerabilities and to the need for adaptation of support in the event of shocks.
- **The social protection sector's** programmes such as the flagship Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) have gradually improved in child sensitivity over recent years. However, in terms of policy development within the social protection sector, policies are relatively silent on the perspectives of children and adolescents and account for their voices indirectly (through evaluations and assessments). The social protection policy framework recognizes the high child and youth dependency ratios but places a disproportionately low emphasis on child poverty, multidimensional deprivations among children or the impact of household food and income insecurity on child-sensitive development indicators such as education.

- **The child protection sector** addresses the overall needs of children but does not adequately prioritize the various kinds of vulnerabilities and risks faced by migrant children, children with disabilities and those vulnerable to disaster risks. Further, there is a gap in addressing the gendered aspects of these risks. In terms of policy development, opportunities to engage community members, specifically rightsholders, are limited, mainly due to budgetary constraints. The National Child Policy (NCP) is the key policy for the coordination of children's rights, for which the former Ministry of Women, Children and Youth (MoWCY) is responsible. However, MoWCY lacked adequate power, capacity or resources to ensure the integration of child protection in other sectors.
- **The Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) sector** strategies are among the most child-sensitive. The strategies in the sector recognize the urgency in protecting children's rights, while also recognizing how gender impacts outcomes. In terms of the multisectoral approach, the strategy recognizes the multisectoral benefits of sanitation and also acknowledges that intersectoral collaboration with health, water, education and rural development sectors is required to achieve sanitation outcomes, and the strategy outlines mechanisms to achieve this. The sector maintains child-sensitive monitoring as a critical priority. However, consultations indicate that one of the critical issues regarding WASH is that there is no national database for WASH services. Consultations indicate that UNICEF is currently working on child-sensitive budgeting within the WASH sector.
- **The Disaster Risk Management (DRM) sector** strategies highlight the challenges faced by vulnerable groups, including children, recognizing that since these groups are the most vulnerable to the impact of hazards and related disasters, DRM activities need to consider their needs during implementation. In the policy development process, the extent of the inclusion of children's voices in policy programming is unclear. The policy mentions that DRM will be mainstreamed into every sectoral development plan and outlines the lead institutions and their roles. However, in implementation, emergency preparedness falls under the mandate of the national disaster and risk management committee and is not embedded across sectors.

- **In the culture and tourism sector** within the National Culture Policy, the involvement of key stakeholders, including children, in the development of the policy, is unclear. However, in terms of implementation, the roles are outlined. In terms of articulation, the policy mentions international and national standards for cultural services, as well as cultural cooperation to strengthen international and national partnerships. However, children are only referenced twice in the entire policy.

## **Key Recommendations**

### ***Education Sector***

- In Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) policy - Recommend increased integration of WASH and child protection with mechanisms to ensure joint monitoring.
- National/subnational implementation strategies should explicitly engage with vulnerable groups, and funding be explicitly allocated.
- Complement strategies with a costed sector plan that outlines identifiable child-specific programmes, key activities, and costs associated source of financing.
- Consider leveraging integrated Management Information System (MIS) at the community level, building the trinity of Education, Health and Child Protection with robust monitoring of at-risk children.

### ***Health & Nutrition Sector***

- Strengthen the link between child protection - (MoWSA) and health (Ministry of Health) to ameliorate the risk of leaving vulnerable children behind.
- Improve accountability by coordination through a superstructure, i.e., a structure supervised by a higher authority with executive power.
- Policies must respond to the changing risks of children in bad circumstances (victims of conflict, and disasters). Localised implementation plans/strategies are needed to address these risks.
- Consider strengthening health-based interventions (adequate human resource capacity for Health Extension Workers (HEWs), to improve the handling of referred

cases, and increase access to essential services for persons with disabilities and persons with special needs).

### ***Social Protection Sector***

- Expedite the recognition of MoWSA as the policy lead and coordinating agency for social protection; Capacitate MoWSA financially, with human and administrative resources.
- Capacity building for social protection must take place at all levels of governance.
- Develop a comprehensive, robust and child-sensitive social protection monitoring framework; Allocate financial, technological and human resources.
- Gradually scale interventions for PSNP once existing programmes achieve minimum required coverage and performance:
  - ✓ Prioritise implementation of the interventions for pregnant women and children aged 0-2 years, before expanding coverage to children aged 0-5 years.
  - ✓ Cost the programme options and develop a government-led financing plan with necessary financial allocations to support the expansions.

### ***Child Protection Sector***

- Strengthen the National Children's Policy as the foundation of the Child protection policy framework. As MoWSA begins to assume the role of the lead agency for securing children's rights, a comprehensive child policy will be instrumental.
- The policy must be complemented with a strong institutional and monitoring framework to ensure its implementation.
- Advocate, build awareness and strengthen capacity for integrating child protection, education and health to strengthen child protection at district levels.
- Reprioritise of the formalisation of the National Case Management System Framework for Child Protection - by building a network of social and case workers.

### ***WASH Sector***

- Mother and Baby WASH guideline implementation identifies newborn corners in healthcare centres as a site to deliver WASH messaging. This initiative should be mainstreamed into the next Newborn Health Strategy.
- Increased coherence between education sector policies and WASH sector, to enable WASH sector to work with education to ensure access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene (products and services) at schools. WASH sector needs to raise awareness and promote behaviour change for the use of WASH services.

### ***Disaster Risk Management Sector***

- Consider institutionalising rapid monitoring, evaluation, and response system for DRM. Develop an accountability framework with clear targets for monitoring the provision of emergency support, its timeliness, its adequacy, and drawing lessons through solid feedback loops.
- Ensure that DRM planning and programming, especially at the district level, include a multisectoral response (including health, education, WASH, and child protection).
- Explicitly highlight the role of social protection in the DRM and Response Framework as the primary instrument for disaster risk management.

### ***Culture & Tourism Sector***

- The culture policy must be adapted to respond to the goals outlined in the NCP:
  - ✓ Constructing training centres where children can develop their talents and learn new skills in the fields of art, sport, science and technology;
  - ✓ Establishing child-friendly theatres, cinemas, libraries and cultural centres and strengthening existing ones;
  - ✓ Facilitating conditions for children to participate and exchange experiences on art at national and international forums.
- The education and culture policies must be aligned.



# **Roots and Wings: Envisioning a Strategy for Ethiopia's Children**

**Assefa Bequele**

## **African Child Policy Forum<sup>2</sup>**

This wide-ranging presentation, part of work in progress, uses comparative national, continental and international data as well as policy experiences in Asia and Latin America to understand the Ethiopian conundrum and to articulate the possible strategic and policy responses needed to bring about transformative change in the human development landscape in Ethiopia.

Ethiopia's demographics present reason for considerable optimism on the one hand and an even greater reason for concern on the other. On the positive side, there is its relatively huge child population currently estimated to be over 56 million, constituting a little over 46 percent of its 126 million population. Such a demographic profile offers a time-bound opportunity to secure a demographic dividend of a dynamic economy of growth, prosperity and improved wellbeing. But this dividend can only be realised in the presence of a well-nourished, healthy, educated and skilled work force. This, unfortunately, is far from the case now and far from certain in the foreseeable future.

Like the proverbial glass that is half full or half empty, Ethiopia's trajectory and standing in child wellbeing can be characterised as either impressive or appalling. Ethiopia has made good progress in cutting child and infant mortality, in expanding health services, and in raising school enrolments over the last several years. Yet, for all the progress it has made, as UNDP reports have shown time and again and as a simple stroll around urban and rural Ethiopia can testify, Ethiopia remains a low-human-development country of exceptionally deprived boys and girls and poor people. Ethiopia today is about the worst place in the world to be a child. This deplorable state of Ethiopia's children and youth is not just a moral issue but also a matter of existential significance for the nation

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<sup>2</sup> Presented by Assefa Bequele PhD, Founder and Distinguished Fellow, African Child Policy Forum (ACPF) on November 30, 2023.

at large. Change is a must and long overdue. It calls for transformative strategy and action on the part of government.

Such a strategy should go beyond the conventional mantra embedded in child rights instruments. Almost all governments and child rights organisations around the world rely on a standard policy framework inspired by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and, in the African case, also by the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC). But such an approach is not without its limitations. The Ethiopian and indeed African social, economic and political context calls for a framework that takes into account our specific background, our values and expectations, and our special, albeit disadvantaged position in global affairs. We need to adopt a wider perspective in several directions.

First, we should view children not just as atomised individuals with rights but also as members of a society that expects them to assume civic and intergenerational responsibilities.

Second, given the turbulent situation we are in and the important role of youth in our politics, we need to prepare them to contribute to building and enhancing a culture of peace and human rights in Ethiopia.

Three, we need to prepare our children and youth to participate successfully in the rapidly changing world of science and technology. We also need to provide them with the capability to compete and work anywhere in the world.

This last point suggests the special place of *Talent*. Talent, and its nurturing, is pivotal for a modern society and economy. Therefore, growing the physical and intellectual wellbeing of our children and nurturing their talent should underpin the design of public policy here in Ethiopia and in Africa at large.

These considerations suggest that our approach to enhancing the rights, wellbeing and capability of our children and youth should go beyond the standardised policy framework and include the following specific goals: first, the full physical and mental development of our children as prescribed in the UNCRC and ACRWC; second, a strong commitment to the full development of their talent to enable them to participate effectively and compete

successfully in the world of science and technology; and, three, preparing them to assume their societal responsibilities as eventual carers and citizens. So borrowing from the 18<sup>th</sup> century German writer and philosopher Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, we should provide our children with roots to grow and wings to fly.

This calls for a commitment to fast-track and accelerate the urgent, radical and sustained development of the capability, knowledge, skills and talent of our children and young people. This presentation provides specific goals and strategies to make this happen. Above all, it underlines the imperative for a fundamental transformation in our mind-set, our consciousness of the world around us, and a commitment to break out of the historical and political shell suffocating us. Why are we at the margins of world development and world affairs? Why is it that our country is not a good place to be a child? What can we do about it? We need a national conversation to interrogate ourselves and initiate a transformation of the mind, of our politics and of our economics. Only that way can we hope to create the Ethiopia that is fit for children and young people.

The presentation sets out aspirational goals and strategies and policies for an Ethiopia that nurtures and supports the full physical and intellectual development of children and young people, that prepares them for good citizenship and adult responsibility, and one that provides them with the wherewithal for the flourishing of their talent. It is fairly easy, the presentation concludes, to be cynical and dismissive of the ambitious goals and the effort required given the current situation and the rather ominous future unfolding before our eyes. We are ostensibly at an inflection point in our history - in the shadow of what Arthur Koestler in a different context called **Darkness at Noon**. But even the darkest of nights can end if we have the will to claim our future. And that begins with putting our children and young people at the heart of our development concerns and by providing them the solid roots they can stand on and the wings they need to fly.

# Children and the Fiscal Space in Ethiopia

Alemayehu A. Ambel, Getachew Yirga Belete, Oliver Fiala

The World Bank Group<sup>3</sup>

## Introduction

This study investigates the effects of public transfers and taxes on the well-being of children in Ethiopia. Taxes, government spending, and public transfers are crucial in advancing child rights and welfare and reducing poverty and inequality. While there is increasing empirical evidence of the distributional effects of public finance in low- and middle-income countries, data and insights on the impacts on children are very limited.

In 2016, approximately 88% or 36.2 million children in Ethiopia were multi-dimensionally poor, meaning they were deprived of the fulfilment of multiple rights or needs for basic food or services.

Child-focused distributional analyses of fiscal systems are needed because children have different needs and consumption patterns, and household-level analyses ignore intra-household distribution showing that poor individuals do not necessarily live in poor households.

## Methodology

### *Measuring fiscal incidence*

- ✓ The study applies the Commitment to Equity for Children (CEQ4C) methodology, which is an extension of the Commitment to Equity (CEQ) approach.
- ✓ The method compares income before and after fiscal policy and evaluates its distributional effects on welfare

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<sup>3</sup> Presented by Alemayehu A. Ambel (Senior Economist for the Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS), the World Bank's flagship household survey program housed at the Development Data Group) on September 27, 2023. It was published on June 28, 2023. <https://bit.ly/4docKKG>.

### ***Measuring poverty***

- ✓ Child multidimensional poverty (MDP) based on relevant indicators available in the survey - Indicators across all dimensions equally weighted
- ✓ Child monetary poverty using the national poverty line

### ***Measuring inequality***

For gauging inequality, the study uses the Theil index which is a family of the generalized entropy inequality measures.

### **Data**

#### ***Survey data***

The survey data are from the 2018/19 Ethiopia Socioeconomic Survey (ESS). ESS is a nationally representative survey implemented by the Central Statistics Agency in collaboration with the World Bank under the Living Standards Measurement Study - Integrated Surveys on Agriculture (LSMS-ISA) project. The survey interviewed 6,700 households out of which 4,992 households had at least one household member between 0-17 years old at the time of the interview. A total of 13,820 members in this age group are included in the analyses.

#### ***Administrative data***

Administrative data used in this study include the following:

- ✓ Budget - public revenue and expenditure data for the 2018/19 fiscal year and regional education and health spending from the Ministry of Finance,
- ✓ School enrollment information from the Ministry of Education,
- ✓ Kerosene subsidy from the Ethiopian Petroleum Supply, and
- ✓ Wheat subsidy from the Ethiopian Trading Businesses Corporation.

### **Results**

#### ***Distribution of Taxes and Transfers***

- **Taxes:** direct taxes are progressive, i.e., their value relative to market income decreases with the average number of child deprivations. For example, direct

taxes constitute 6% of market income among households of non-deprived children, while this is only 1% when a child experiences five or more deprivations. Indirect taxes, comprising of VAT and excise taxes, are regressive. There are also differences by gender. The share of both direct and indirect taxes relative to market income is slightly higher for girls (with one or two deprivations) than for boys in the same situation. However, the reverse is the case for children with four or five deprivations. Rural-urban differences also exist. In rural areas, the study finds that both direct and indirect taxes are low across multiple child deprivations, i.e., they are neither progressive nor regressive. For urban children, excise taxes are regressive.

- **Transfers:** are almost completely in the form of indirect in-kind transfers, with direct transfers accounting for only 0.3% (in the case of no deprivations) to 1.9% (in the case of five or more deprivations) of market income. Direct transfers are relatively equal across the various disaggregation groups, although they are slightly higher for urban children with four or more deprivations than similarly deprived children in rural areas. Primary education is the largest in-kind transfer and is progressive overall, constituting about 3.9% of market income of non-deprived children and rising to 13.2% for those with four deprivations. Though no differences exist between boys and girls, public spending on primary education is progressive in urban areas while neutral in rural areas. On the other hand, secondary education is regressive overall and in all disaggregation groups.

### ***Impacts on Poverty and Inequality***

- The net effect of fiscal policy (taxes and direct transfers) increases child poverty when comparing market and consumable income
- However, if we monetize in-kind services, poverty headcount declines to 26%
- Effects are stronger for girls and children in rural areas, therefore reducing group-based inequalities in monetary poverty

In summary, the analysis suggests that the overall fiscal system is not well calibrated to reduce monetary poverty, with poverty rates increasing for all groups between market income and consumable income. Only the significant in-kind transfers for education and

health result in a decrease in the poverty headcount at final income. This highlights not only the essential role of those public services to deliver on fundamental child rights but also the importance of investments in education and health in reducing poverty.

### **Policy simulations**

Two assumptions are made a priori about the simulations. First, the extra transfers can induce a reduction in the labor supply by beneficiaries. Such changes in behavior are ruled out by our simulations. Second, the simulations do not take into account the additional administrative costs related to enrolling currently unenrolled students and increasing the amount and redistribution of PSNP transfers. However, these limitations are unlikely to change the main takeaways from the simulation exercises.

### **Conclusion**

The incidence analyses show that the fiscal system on average is progressive and mainly driven by direct taxes and indirect in-kind transfers. However, important differences in the distribution of some of the elements of taxes and transfers exist. For example, indirect taxes are regressive while public spending on primary education is by far the largest in-kind transfer and is generally progressive across levels of child deprivation. Secondary education spending is regressive, while public spending on health care is progressive across all children. However, in rural areas spending on primary education and health is neutral, in sharp contrast to strong progressivity in urban areas. Regarding impacts on poverty and inequality, the fiscal system reduces poverty by 21% from market income to final income, and the poverty gap by 33%. The effects are stronger for girls and children in rural areas than for boys and those living in urban areas. However, this is only the case once the significant in-kind transfers for education and health are considered. Poverty rates increase between market income and consumable income, which implies that the overall fiscal system up to this point has impoverished both boys and girls. The findings in this study highlight the fact that public services are not only essential in delivering fundamental child rights, but also in reducing poverty among children.

Child-focused fiscal incidence analyses provide essential insights into the distribution of taxes, direct transfers and public spending, and allow for a better understanding of the

impact of fiscal policies on poverty and inequality among children. These insights are relevant for a wide range of decision makers, including policy makers in local and national governments, international financing facilities and other multilateral organizations, as well as civil society organizations. Furthermore, indicators on both pro-poor public spending on social services as well as the distributive impacts of fiscal policies are now part of the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals.

Finally, while this study offers an analysis of fiscal incidence in 2018/19, CEQ4C assessments can be used to simulate the effects of potential policy interventions and offer an important toolkit to assess the effects on poverty and inequality of new policy proposals. Our four fiscal policy simulations that focus on universal education and the productive safety net program (PSNP) improve child welfare. Closing the education gap in Ethiopia in particular is associated with modest reductions in monetary inequality as well as multidimensional and monetary poverty, with varying gender and location effects. PSNP transfers, if doubled, would have a modest reduction effect on monetary poverty and inequality. PSNP transfers, if redistributed from non-poor to poor children, would have larger poverty and inequality effects. Doubling and redistribution jointly result in the largest welfare improvements for all groups of children.



# **Space for 'Learning through Play' in Ethiopian Primary Schools. A Look into the Situation of Selected Refugee and Host Community Schools**

**Abraha Asfaw and Ambissa Kenea**

## **Play Matters<sup>4</sup>**

### **Introduction**

The study draws from PlayMatters Project formative study finding that adopted a positive deviance theoretical framework and a qualitative ethnographic design across four pre-primary and primary case study schools in Somali (in refugee camps and host communities) and Sidama (host communities) Regions. Given the positive deviance theory adopted to guide the study, criteria were developed to identify schools that have already integrated play-based approaches. Accordingly, an initial selection of case schools was made using a snowball sampling technique. Then, the selected schools were visited to finalize the site selection. Data were collected from 19 educators (14 females, 5 males), 61 school learners (29 girls, 32 boys), and 62 parents (38 females, 24 males) through video/photo-stimulated key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs), as well as using classroom and free play/ recess observations. With a focus on a whole school approach the study covered guided-play activities, free play and recess both within and outside of classrooms. The research findings have helped identify meanings, practices, opportunities, and barriers of Learning through Play (LtP) for PlayMatters grounded in the realities of refugee and host communities' contexts.

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<sup>4</sup> Presented by Abraha Asfaw (Addis Ababa University) and Ambissa Kenea (Associate Professor of Curriculum Studies and Multicultural Education at the College of Education, Addis Ababa University) on April 25, 2023. It was published in May 2023. <https://bit.ly/3WAcJ0e>

## Key Findings of Formative Research

### Meaning of LtP

- Play was defined by the study participants in different ways. Many of them considered the meaning of play as happiness, joy, and amusement for learners.
- When asked about the significance of LtP for learners, educators had different views such as, “Play supports intellectual development; enriches thinking; makes learners happy; promotes physical development; enhances creativity; helps learners identify their own talents, strengths, and shortfalls; and promotes social and identity development.” In addition, a primary teacher in Sidama stated, “LtP encourages integrity and intimacy. Learners’ movement in LtP is essential for mental and physical well-being. It builds their body and makes them happy. Through play learners become creative.”
- In general, the research identified that “Play is not an end by itself nor is the content of plays related to the actual classroom lesson in primary schools.” This shows that the educators understood the importance of LtP for learners.
- ***Parents and guardians did not encourage learners to play in schools, rather to focus on their curriculum, which will help them to the transition of adulthood stages.*** This is because parents and guardians perceived play-based learning as more fit for preschool learners than primary learners. This shows a lack of awareness among the parents about the importance of play and LtP integration in the primary school curriculum.

### Practices and examples of LtP

- ***As observed during the research, play-based learning was more commonly practiced by the educators in preschools than primary school.*** Educators showed significant efforts to make instructional and playful activities inclusive, though only in guided activities. Preschool educators have the capacity to engage learners in playful and joyful learning sessions: building blocks and use of flash cards. At free play in the preschools, different play activities were observed including sliding and spinning. In primary school free play examples included running and football for boys, and rope skipping and cultural dance for girls though

with limited resources. The primary educators prioritized content-focused teaching practices and not preparation of play-based teaching methods due to capacity limitations and misperceptions of LtP. However, as observed in the classrooms, primary educators used storytelling, singing and physical exercise-centred activities which were not related to the content of the lessons they provided in the classrooms.

- ***The school policies supported the practice of LtP; however, the educators indicated that preschools are more likely to integrate LtP in the lessons than primary schools as the focus of primary school is on the lesson content and use the time for full coverage of the daily lesson plans.*** The preschool curriculum and lesson plan integrate LtP as an integral element of learning. The school leadership at primary schools are inclined towards monitoring strictly from a supervisory standpoint instead of tailoring their support to align with LtP similar to the school leadership at preschools. Playful activities are determined by gender and age categories at school or community which is bounded by the process of socio-culturally constructed gendered play. In Somali region, where gender-based learning and play become visible and gender norms are highly enforced, boys and girls play separately in different games and have a separate seating arrangement in the classroom, even if they want to play or the teachers want to arrange a cross-gender play. The educators and parents determine when and for how long the girls to play in the primary schools and communities.

### **Opportunities and Barriers**

- ***The findings show that the national education policy is supportive of LtP interventions in preschools and lower primary schools.*** In addition, existing cultural playful practices are a remarkable opportunity for educators to adapt them to the LtP intervention in the classroom and during free play at preschools and primary levels.
- The study indicated various barriers that can affect the effectiveness of LtP implementation. At the primary level, these include a lack of educators' capacity in playful activities and limited space available for LtP, weak leadership support for

LtP, large class sizes, negative parents' attitudes towards play-based learning, unsuitable infrastructure in the schools, hindering pedagogical belief and competence of teachers. Both preschool and primary levels highlighted limited budget and resources to implement LtP.

### **Policy and Programming Implications**

The findings reveal the context and challenges as learning to deepen effective implementation of LtP. Though the theoretical ground (policy provisions and willingness of educators) is encouraging, the findings highlight a lack of practical strides in implementing quality LtP at primary schools. Here are some policy implications that emerge from the findings of the study:

#### **Clearly Define LtP as a Method for Active Learning**

- ***Awareness creation and community mobilization are critical*** - Work towards shifting the existing LtP perceptions through awareness-raising campaigns, information dissemination, and workshops on the importance of play for educators, learners, and Parents and Teacher Association (PTA), especially at the primary level. Community involvement in the planning and implementation of LtP is vital to get the acceptance of the intervention among parents and guardians when they understand the importance of LtP for children's holistic development and well-being.
- ***Align LtP with the existing strategies***: Link the LtP strategies with the existing 'Active Learning Pedagogy' policy and strategies to be integrated and implemented by teachers in the lesson plans.

#### **Strengthen Education Stakeholders' Capacity for LtP**

- ***Adapt cultural playful activities***: Provide capacity-building trainings for educators and stakeholders on LtP conceptualization, implementation, and adaption, including integrating different cultural playful activities and school context pedagogical options playing activities to enhance learners' participation in indigenous ways of learning acquisition.

- **Teachers Professional Development (TPD) training:** Provide continuous Teachers Professional Development (TPD) training on LtP with routine monitoring and support for educators. For the sake of ensuring sustainability, LtP should be integrated into the teacher education curriculum in colleges of teacher education for preschools and lower grades (Grades 1-4).
- **Create capacity to use locally available resources:** Encourage the educators' capacity to use locally available playgrounds and materials in the place where there are resource constraints to implement LTP at preschools and primary levels. This includes using free play as a beneficial learning experience for learners through an available natural environment. If budgeted, play materials should be purchased, stored properly, and used appropriately to fill the gaps of resource limitations.

#### **Allocate Time and Resources for an Enabling and Equitable Environment**

- **Create conducive learning spaces:** Ensure accountability and strong coordination of educators in the arrangement of a conducive classroom setting to implement LtP strategies and to manage the large class size.
- **Work on gender equality:** Involve girls as boys in various playful activities by minimizing the gender norms and barriers, creating a safe and inclusive classroom, and ensuring all girls can access the playful activities and support as boys in learning opportunities and environments regardless of their age and abilities.

#### **Strengthen the National Evidence Base**

- **Further Research and implementation are needed:** There is lack of literature on LtP in general and its implementation in particular in Ethiopia. Hence, donors, practitioners, and academics should conduct further studies to have a better understanding of LtP conceptions and practices in different contexts of Ethiopia and to get the attention of stakeholders to inform education/pedagogical policy, programmes, and practices.

# **The Dynamic Impact of Parental Death on Child Labour: Panel Data Evidence from Ethiopia**

**Gidisa Lachisa Tato**

**Addis Ababa University<sup>5</sup>**

## **Introduction**

Ethiopia provides an important setting to study the causes of child labour because of its high prevalence and slow improvement over time. According to two consecutive Ethiopian child labour surveys conducted in 2001 and 2015, 52.1% and 51% of children aged 5 to 17 years were engaged in economic activities, respectively. However, the proportion of children engaged in household chores exceeds 70%. According to the ILO definition, 42.7% of children in the country are engaged in child labour (CSA, 2001; 2015).

This paper examines the dynamic impact of parental death on child labour using five waves of the detailed panel data from Ethiopia - the Ethiopian Young Lives longitudinal data publicly archived by the UK Data Service.

Given the significant influence that parents have on their children's time allocation, it is worthwhile to investigate the impact of their absence. The study also adds to the body of knowledge by investigating the short-term and long-term dynamic impact of parental death on child labour. In addition, age- and time-specific effects are assessed. That is, variations in the impact are examined based on the age at which children experience such shocks, as well as the impact at different ages of the children. In addition, the impact of the length of exposure to the shock is investigated.

## **Data**

The study makes use of five waves (2002-2016) of data from the Young Lives Survey. During the first survey round in 2002, 2,000 one-year-old children (the younger cohort) and 1,000 eight-year-old children (the older cohort) were surveyed. The same children were tracked and surveyed in the subsequent survey rounds (round 2 in 2006, round 3 in

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<sup>5</sup> Presented by Gidisa Lachisa Tato, PhD student in Economics at Addis Ababa University in a joint programme with the University of Gothenburg, Sweden on July 27, 2023. The PhD dissertation is not yet published.

2009, round 4 in 2013, and round 5 in 2016). The sample was drawn from children living in 20 sentinel sites spread across the country's four major regional states, including Amhara, Oromia, the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples (SNNP), Tigray, and the Addis Ababa city administration. Because these regions account for 96% of the national population, the sample gives a good indication of conditions throughout most of the country, even though the sentinel sites were chosen purposively. From round 1 to round 5, the aggregate attrition rate, including dropouts due to death, is limited to 9.6% (4.3% due to death) for the younger cohort and 18.8% (1.1% due to death) for the older cohort (Lives, 2017).

## **Findings**

The key regression results suggest that parental death has a statistically significant impact on child labour. As a result, those who have lost either of their biological parents have a 2.3% higher daily child labour time share than their counterparts. This accounts for approximately 13% of a child's daily time spent on unpaid and/or paid activities at home or outside of the home. Alternative estimations also indicate the following results: First, the cumulative effect of parental death is greater than the immediate effect, with those who lost their parents early in life (at the ages of 8 and 12) being more affected. Second, the impact of parental death is greater at around 12 years old than at earlier or later ages. Third, parental death forces children to perform unpaid household services (care and domestic work) rather than engage in economic activities (farm activities, family businesses, and paid work). Finally, the death of a mother has a greater impact on child labour in Ethiopia than the death of a father.

The results are consistent when a child labour dummy, built on UNICEF's standard indicator, is used as an outcome variable. In this case, children who have lost either of their biological parents are 11% more likely to engage in child labour. When the crowding-out effect of child labour on child education is examined, it was discovered that parental death has a statistically significant and negative effect on child school enrolment and study hours but has no effect on number of hours spent in school. As a result of the heterogeneous results, context-specific policy interventions and support programmes are required.

# **Trends, Demands, and challenges of protecting Domestic workers: lesson from selected places of Ethiopia**

**By Trist Sahledengle**

**Addis Ababa University<sup>6</sup>**

## **Introduction**

Acute poverty, socio-cultural norms, and peer pressure are significant factors driving girls and young women to migrate to urban centers in search of domestic labor. While both boys and girls engage in domestic work, the number of girls far exceeds that of boys, largely due to entrenched socio-cultural reasons. Traditional gender stereotypes heavily influence the gendered dynamics of domestic labor, positioning girls as primary candidates for these roles.

Conducted for the Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA) in 2021, this research aims to understand the trends, demands, and challenges faced by domestic workers, with a particular focus on underage girls entering the workforce. The study specifically targets young girls migrating from the southern regions of the country, notably the Hadiya and Wolaita zones, where socio-economic pressures are particularly acute.

The research encompasses a diverse range of participants, including domestic workers, brokers, employers, and legal bodies, to provide a comprehensive view of the domestic labor landscape. By exploring the experiences and challenges of these young workers, the study seeks to shed light on the systemic issues that perpetuate their vulnerability. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for developing effective interventions and policies aimed at improving the conditions of domestic workers, especially young girls, and addressing the socio-cultural barriers that contribute to their marginalization.

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<sup>6</sup> Presented by Tirsit Sahledengil, PhD lecturer and a researcher at the Social Anthropology Department and Institute of Ethiopian Studies, on June 29, 2023.



## **General Objective**

The general aim of the research was to investigate the factors contributing to the demand for child domestic labor and to identify opportunities for intervention to protect the rights of domestic workers.

## **Specific Objectives**

- To investigate factors that contribute to the demand for child domestic labor: This objective focuses on understanding the socio-economic and cultural dynamics that drive the recruitment of child domestic workers.
- To examine the challenges of interaction between employers and domestic workers. This objective aims to identify and analyze the barriers and difficulties faced by domestic workers in their relationships with employers, including issues of exploitation and communication.
- To identify opportunities for intervention in protecting the rights of domestic labor: This objective seeks to explore potential strategies and initiatives that can be implemented to enhance the legal and social protections for domestic workers, particularly vulnerable children.

## **Methodology**

### **Method of Data Collection**

Fieldwork for this study was conducted in three locations: Addis Ababa, Hosana, and Wolaita Sodo. The research employed a mixed-methods approach, utilizing informal conversations, observations, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions to gather comprehensive data on the dynamics of child domestic labor.

### **In-Depth Interviews**

A total of 45 in-depth interviews were conducted with various participants, including domestic workers, employers, and brokers. The distribution of interviews was as follows:

- Addis Ababa: 15 in-depth interviews
- Hosana: 15 in-depth interviews

- Wolaita Sodo:15 in-depth interviews

These interviews aimed to explore the experiences and challenges faced by domestic workers, as well as the perspectives of employers and brokers involved in domestic labor.

### **Key Informant Interviews**

In addition to the in-depth interviews, key informant interviews were conducted to gain insights from individuals with specialized knowledge of the domestic labor sector. These key informants included representatives from legal bodies, social organizations, and community leaders, which helped to contextualize the findings and identify broader trends and challenges within the domestic labor market.

### **Focus Group Discussions**

Three focus group discussions were held to facilitate dialogue among participants and gather collective insights on the socio-cultural dynamics influencing domestic labor. These discussions provided valuable qualitative data and helped to enrich the understanding of the issues at hand.

The combination of these methods allowed for a comprehensive exploration of the factors contributing to child domestic labor and the challenges faced by those involved in this sector.

### **Key findings**

#### **Recruitment and Trafficking**

##### **Key Findings**

The recruitment and trafficking of young domestic workers predominantly involve young girls from rural villages or small towns, particularly from the Oromia, Amhara, and Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (SNNPR). Employers often access these workers through established networks or brokers who facilitate the hiring process. In Addis Ababa, young girls seeking employment are required to present an ID card proving they are at least 18 years old; however, this regulation is not effectively enforced. In contrast, in Hosana and Wolaita Sodo, the majority of young girls working as domestic

laborers are between the ages of 11 and 16. Cultural practices, such as the Hadiya and Wolaita New Year celebrations (Yahode and Gifata), also drive many children to leave their villages, as they follow friends who have previously migrated to urban areas for work. Additionally, it is common for groups of young boys and girls to make secret arrangements to travel together to towns, often evading the scrutiny of their families. This pattern highlights the complex interplay of socio-cultural factors and economic pressures that contribute to the ongoing recruitment and trafficking of young domestic workers.

### **The role of Brokers**

The landscape of domestic worker recruitment in Ethiopia reveals a stark contrast between legal and illegal brokers. In cities like Sodo and Hosana, illegal brokers, often referred to as “Amchi” or “chilfit,” actively recruit workers from bus stations, operating without official offices. In contrast, Addis Ababa hosts around 200 registered brokers who operate across various sub-cities, all of whom possess licenses and adhere to legal requirements, including tax payments and worker identification. However, there are significant concerns regarding the age of the workers, many of whom may be under 18, despite holding ID cards. While these licensed brokers connect workers with employment opportunities, they remain aware of the illegality surrounding child trafficking and labor. Notably, there is a troubling knowledge gap among brokers regarding the rights of domestic workers, which may contribute to the persistence of informal practices. Even registered agencies sometimes blend formal and informal mechanisms in their operations, highlighting a complex dynamic within the workforce. Despite agreement with labor offices, the informal nature of many brokers' work continues to pose challenges to the effective regulation of this sector, particularly concerning the exploitation of vulnerable children in the recruitment process.

### **The Victims Voice**

In Addis Ababa, many victims of domestic work report adverse living conditions and a lack of basic rights. Some individuals have left their relatives' homes upon realizing their right to education and freedom of movement, signaling a critical awareness of their entitlements. However, the challenges they face in domestic employment are significant. Employers often deny their maids access to food, and there are no established time limits

on their working hours, leading to an overwhelming burden of labor. Furthermore, access to education is severely restricted for these workers, perpetuating cycles of poverty and dependency. Gender-based violence is prevalent, manifesting in various forms such as verbal and psychological abuse, as well as sexual harassment. This environment underscores the urgent need for better protections and support for domestic workers, particularly in addressing the systemic issues that contribute to their exploitation.

### **The employers**

The traditional perception of domestic workers in Ethiopia is often rooted in societal norms that undervalue their rights and contributions. Many view domestic work as a low-status job, which leads to a significant knowledge gap regarding the legal rights and protections afforded to these workers. This lack of awareness not only affects the workers themselves but also influences employers' attitudes toward their responsibilities. For instance, many employers hold misconceptions about the importance of education for domestic workers, often viewing schooling as a luxury rather than a right. This perspective can result in the denial of opportunities for personal and professional development, reinforcing cycles of poverty and limiting the potential for social mobility among these workers. Addressing these perceptions is crucial for fostering a more equitable environment where domestic workers can access their rights, pursue education, and be recognized for their valuable roles in households and society at large. Promoting awareness and challenging traditional views are essential steps in transforming the treatment and status of domestic workers in Ethiopia.

### **Opportunities for Intervention**

#### **Legislative Mechanisms**

Implementing robust legislative mechanisms is essential for protecting the rights of domestic workers, especially children. Policies that promote schooling opportunities for domestic workers can help ensure that children are not forced into labor at the expense of their education. Effective labor inspection systems must be established to monitor working conditions and enforce regulations, ensuring compliance with laws that protect young workers. Additionally, access to justice for victims of exploitation is critical; legal

frameworks should be in place to support children and their families in seeking redress. Limiting working hours for domestic employees can also help prevent the overwork and abuse that many young workers face, promoting a healthier balance between work and personal development.

### **Awareness Creation**

Raising awareness among various stakeholders is crucial for combating child labor in domestic settings. Many employers lack understanding of the consequences of hiring young female workers, often viewing it as a viable economic solution without considering the associated harms. Educational campaigns targeting employers can highlight the importance of protecting children's rights and the long-term benefits of investing in their education. Similarly, brokers play a significant role in this issue; many exhibit a lack of knowledge about the rights of children and the ethical implications of their work. Interventions aimed at educating brokers, particularly those who may have higher educational backgrounds, can foster behavioral changes that align with protecting vulnerable children.

### **Targeting Victims and Their Communities**

Significant numbers of children leave their homes, often influenced by peers who have migrated to urban areas for better opportunities. Community-based interventions should focus on educating families and children about the risks associated with leaving home and the realities of domestic work. Providing support systems, including mentorship and resources for at-risk youth, can help them make informed decisions. Engaging transport service providers in these efforts is also vital, as they often facilitate the movement of children into exploitative situations. By creating a network of support within communities, we can reduce the incidence of children being drawn into domestic labor.

### **Collaboration with Law Enforcement and Parents**

Collaboration with law enforcement agencies is essential for enforcing laws against child labor and ensuring that victims receive the protection they need. Training law enforcement personnel to recognize and respond effectively to cases of child exploitation can enhance their ability to protect vulnerable children. Additionally, parents must be

educated about the potential dangers of sending their children into domestic work and the importance of education. Empowering parents with knowledge and resources can help them make better choices for their children's futures, ultimately contributing to the reduction of child labor in domestic settings. Together, these interventions can create a comprehensive approach to protecting children and promoting their rights.

## **Conclusion**

Domestic labor remains a critical area where children, particularly girls, are inadequately protected from exploitation and abuse. The lack of effective interventions and awareness among employers, brokers, and the victims themselves poses significant challenges in addressing this issue. Without a concerted effort to educate all stakeholders about the rights of child workers and the importance of safeguarding their well-being, the cycle of exploitation will continue. It is imperative to implement comprehensive strategies that promote awareness, enforce legal protections, and foster a culture of respect for children's rights, ensuring that domestic labor does not come at the cost of their education and safety.

# **The Prevalence of Domestic Servitude among Child Domestic Workers in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

**Annabel Erulkar, Eyasu Hailu, Yetimgeta Shiferaw and Mahlet Mekbib  
Freedom Fund and Population Council<sup>7</sup>**

## **Introduction**

It is estimated that there are 17.2 million child domestic workers globally, most of whom are girls. Despite their large numbers, research related to this marginalised group is extremely limited, with most of the existing research remaining at a small scale or subsumed in other topics, such as domestic workers generally. The dearth of evidence related to child domestic work arguably limits awareness about girls in such circumstances and inhibits the design and implementation of context-appropriate policy and program responses. This study represents one of the few large-scale studies to examine the phenomenon of child domestic work, including its prevalence, the entry and experience of girls in this work, and levels of human trafficking, hazardous work and illegal child labour.

Under the Labour Proclamation (No. 1156/2019) in Ethiopia, children under the age of 15 are prohibited from working and those aged 15 to 17 are considered ‘young workers.’ ‘Young workers’ may work a maximum of seven hours per day and are prohibited from working before 6:00 AM or after 10:00 PM. They should have at least one rest day per week, not work on public holidays and are prohibited from specified dangerous forms of work such as in mines and quarries, electric power plants, or sewers and tunnels. Domestic work, however, is not governed by the Labour Law but by the 1960 Ethiopia Civil Code. The Civil Code gives domestic workers relatively few protections and allows the work conditions to be regulated ‘by the conscience of the employers’. In addition, Ethiopia has not ratified ILO 2011 Domestic Workers Convention No. 189, which includes minimum labour standards for domestic workers despite having ratified other key ILO

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<sup>7</sup> Presented by Annabel Erulkar (Country Director of Population Council), Eyasu Hailu (Research Officer at the Population Council), Yetimgeta Shiferaw (Project Coordinator) and Mahlet Mekbib (program officer at the Freedom Fund Ethiopia office) on October 26, 2023. It was published on November 18, 2022. <https://bit.ly/3wqlrDE>.

labour standards including the Minimum Age Convention (No. 138), Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (No. 182) and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

### **Methodology**

This research was a mixed-method study that included a large-sample, population-based study of girl child domestic workers as well as qualitative, in-depth interviews with a smaller group of girls. The study took place in low-income areas of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, specifically, areas that were identified by child domestic work experts and stakeholders as locations where large numbers of child domestic workers are found.

### **Findings**

Based on household data from the study areas, the prevalence of child domestic work among all girls aged 12 to 17 is 37 percent. Whether one identifies as a domestic worker, or one is deemed as such by virtue of their daily work burdens, these two categories of domestic workers have differing profiles and experiences. Girls who do not identify as domestic workers and who typically live with distant relatives often enter into these arrangements at younger ages and are more likely to be orphans. They also have some advantages over self-identified domestic workers, such as greater access to education and fewer hours devoted to domestic work, though both groups report long hours in domestic service. At the same time, girls who do not consider themselves domestic workers are significantly less likely to receive cash payment for their labour. Those who self-identify as domestic workers report longer hours of work and higher levels of exploitation and abuse, including trafficking and hazardous work.

The study found that the majority of girls in child domestic work are migrants to the area and come from extremely poor backgrounds. They often have few years of education; on average they possess only five years of schooling and only 62 percent can read. What is remarkable about child domestic workers in this study is the excessive hours devoted to work. On average, girls reported 55 hours of work per week (61 hours among self-identified domestic workers and 49 hours among those not identifying as domestic workers). Large percentages of girls do not have a rest day (40 percent), were not given time off on public holidays (27 percent) and many worked during early morning (29



percent) and late evening hours (9 percent) which is in contravention to the Ethiopian labour law. The pay that girls receive is usually very minimal, if anything at all. Fifty-two percent of respondents are not paid, which is primarily girls who are in extended family arrangements and do not consider themselves as domestic workers. Among those who are paid, they received the equivalent of US \$24 per month on average. Younger girls aged 12 to 14 were paid considerably less, an average of US \$17.50 per month. Twenty-seven percent of girls who were paid for their work reported that their salaries were 'kept' for them by employers and some girls who participated in the in-depth interviews said that the money 'kept' for them was never paid. Five percent of girls who were paid reported their salaries are given to their families residing elsewhere, which is more common among younger girls; among girls aged 12 to 14, 14 percent have salaries paid to their families.

While few girls receive financial support from their natal families, a considerable proportion send support to their families, usually in rural areas. Among self-identified domestic workers, 67 percent have savings put aside and 51 percent send money home to their families.

There were indications that many girls underreported negative circumstances in their lives such as physical and sexual violence, which is consistent with previous studies of domestic work in Ethiopia. This may be because employers frequently provide housing, food, and many times, hold their salary. As a result, girls are extremely reliant on their employers and probably unlikely to say anything that could be perceived as negative. Indications of underreporting of negative experiences were manifested in discrepancies between the reporting of violence by former employers compared to current employers, as well as a greater level of reporting of violence, withholding pay and pay deductions in the context of in-depth interviews as compared to responses on survey questions. In addition, when validating study results, former domestic workers emphasised the likelihood of respondents not disclosing negative experiences because of fear of retaliation or loss of one's job or income.

## **Recommendations**

The study findings provide support for the following recommendations related to prevention, protection and prosecution:

### ***Prevention***

- Recognise domestic work under official labour laws, as well as through the ratification and incorporation of ILO Resolution Convention 189.
- Ensure adequate consultation, representation and voice for child domestic workers in future policy and legislative decisions.
- Utilise existing local leaders and community structures, such as Idirs, faith leaders and kebele and woreda-level structures, to instigate change in harmful norms towards child domestic workers, through strategies such as Codes of Conduct for employers and model contracts.

### ***Protection***

- Provide adequate and reliable information in source communities for girls and families contemplating migration and entry into domestic work.
- Support collaboration between government bodies, non-governmental organisations, and community structures to ensure seamless and efficient identification, referral, shelter and aftercare services for child domestic workers.
- Break the isolation of child domestic workers with safe spaces aimed at: building their confidence, skills and social capital; raising awareness of current laws and policies; and connecting them with support services and entitlements.
- Provide opportunities for alternative basic education (ABE), life skills and financial literacy training in a flexible format adapted to the needs of domestic workers.

### ***Prosecution***

- Ensure all law enforcement bodies (police, prosecutors, judges) have the capacity and resources to enforce Ethiopia's Labour Law, Constitution and Anti-trafficking legislation.
- Implement special provisions for child-friendly reporting, investigation and tribunal procedures in suspected cases of abuse, exploitation and trafficking.

# **Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (ASRHR) in Ethiopia: Reviewing Progress over the last 20 years and Looking Ahead to the Next 10 Years**

**Elsie Akwara, Kereta Worknesh, Lemessa Oljira, Lulit Mengesha, Mengistu  
Asnake, Emiamrew Sisay, Dagem Demerew, Marina Plesons, Wegen Shirka,  
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**World Health Organization<sup>8</sup>**

## **Introduction**

This study takes stock of the progress made in adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights (ASRHR) in Ethiopia in the last two decades. Firstly, it discusses the political, economic, and social context and the policies and programmes, highlighting the enablers and barriers in addressing ASRHR. Secondly, it highlights levels and trends in key ASRHR indicators, paying attention to differing levels and trends among different groups of adolescents. Building on this it sets out an agenda for action.

The profile and distribution of adolescents have changed significantly over this period in Ethiopia with the estimated population of adolescents increasing from 15.6 million in 2000 to 26.8 million in 2020. Population growth means that declining rates of child marriage for example co-exist with higher absolute numbers of girls affected. This necessitates a holistic multisectoral approach to address their overall well-being as they transition into adulthood, leaving no one behind. Given that there are 10 years to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) target date, there is a pressing need to build on the lessons learnt in the 15 years of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) era and the first 5 years of the SDGs era.

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<sup>8</sup> Presented by Lemessa Oljira (School of Public Health, College of Health, College of Health and Medical Sciences, Haramaya University), Elsie Akwara (Department of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Research/Human Reproduction Programme, World Health Organization, Geneva, Switzerland), Worknesh Kereta (Adolescent and Youth Health and Development Programme, Pathfinder International, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia) and Lulit Yonas (Youth Council, Talent Youth Association, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia) on January 26, 2023. The document was published in Reproductive Health Journal in June 2022. <https://bit.ly/3y3E9KU>

## **Aim of the Study**

The aim of the study is therefore to review progress over the last two decades in selected ASRHR indicators, by addressing the following question.

- How have the national political, social and economic context as well as policies and programmes evolved concerning ASRHR in the last two decades?
- In which health outcomes, harmful practices, health behaviours, health services use, and social determinants were there progress, and was the progress equitable and steady?
- What are the opportunities and challenges in moving ahead, and what key actions are needed to accelerate progress in the next 10 years?

## **Findings**

**Over the last two decades, political, economic and social developments, and national health and development policies and programmes have contributed to the changes in ASRHR**

### ***Improvements in the economic and social context***

- The country's average annual gross domestic product (GDP) has grown and levels of poverty have declined.
- There has been impressive progress in primary school enrollment but less progress in primary school completion and secondary attendance and completion.
- While this progress is uneven, Ethiopian children and adolescents as a whole are likely to be growing up in a context of declining poverty.
- New means of communication, including the use of social media, are transforming the lives of Ethiopian adolescents, while there are also disparities in access and use.

### ***Contribution of national health and development policies and strategies***

- ASRHR has been mainstreamed into the national agenda through policies and strategies directly addressing unintended pregnancy and childbearing, maternal mortality, HIV/AIDS, child marriage, female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), and violence against women and girls.

- This contributed to progress in a number of ASRHR outcomes.

**Substantive changes have occurred in a number of health outcomes, harmful practices, health behaviours, health service use, and social determinants in the first two decades of the twenty-first century**

***Child marriage, childbearing & modern contraceptive use among adolescent girls aged 15-19 years in Ethiopia, 2000-2019***

- There has been a substantial, although uneven decline in the levels of child marriage among young women aged 20-24 years.
  - ✓ 8.8 percentage point decrease in child marriage between 2000 and 2016.
- There has been an increase in modern contraceptive use among adolescent girls aged 15-19 years.
  - ✓ 33.5 percentage point increase in modern contraceptive use between 2000 and 2019.
  - ✓ 37.8 percentage point increase in post-partum family planning between 2000 and 2016.
- There has been a slight reduction in childbearing among adolescent girls aged 15-19 years.
  - ✓ 2.9 percentage point decrease in childbearing between 2000 and 2019.

***Health service uptake among adolescent girls aged 15- 19 years in Ethiopia, 2000-2016***

- There has been an increase in ANC visits of four or more (ANC4+) and the use of skilled birth attendance (SBA) among adolescents aged 15-19 years over time, yet the levels of use are still low.
  - ✓ 20.9 percentage increase in ANC4+ between 2000 and 2016.
  - ✓ 26.8 percentage point increase in SBA between 2000 and 2016.
- There has been an increase in adolescents seeking abortion services in health facilities. Although abortion is legal under specific circumstances, notably underage and mentally ill women, an estimated one-third of adolescent abortions are clandestine and potentially unsafe.

### ***HIV and condom use among adolescents aged 10-19 years in Ethiopia, 2000–2016***

- There is some indication that the HIV infection rate in adolescents is declining. However, the numbers of adolescents using condoms and seeking HIV testing show a mixed picture.
  - ✓ The estimated number of new annual HIV infections among adolescents aged 10–19 decreased between 2000 and 2018, from 6,000 to 3,000 cases among both boys and girls.
  - ✓ The use of condoms among adolescents during premarital sex shows a mixed picture, with a steady increase between 2000 and 2011, but a sharp decline in 2016.

### ***Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) rates have shown a promising decline with uneven levels***

- There has been a sharp decrease in the proportion of adolescent girls aged 15-19 years that have undergone FGM/C by 24 percentage points (from 71% to 47%) between 2000 and 2016.
- At least 28% of adolescent girls aged 10-14 years had experienced FGM/C in 2016, with Afar having the highest rate at 86% and Tigray the lowest rate at 14%.

### ***Levels of reported gender-based violence against girls and women remain high, but attitudes towards wife beating have changed***

- At least 33% of ever-married adolescent girls aged 15-19 years have experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence committed by their husband or partner.
- There has been a decrease of 22 and 49 percentage points among adolescent girls and boys aged 15-19 years, respectively in attitudes towards wife beating, between 2000 and 2016.

**As we look to the next 10 years, Ethiopia must build on the progress made, and move ahead understanding and overcoming challenges and making full use of opportunities**

### ***Opportunities for moving ahead***

- Ethiopia has an enabling legal and policy environment and sound health and gender strategies. These strategies have been well resourced, managed, and implemented. Different government sectors have been involved in this work.
- The Ministry of Health has built partnerships at national and sub-national levels with academic institutions, NGOs, and professional associations of public health professionals and clinicians.
- At the local level, the Ministry engaged extension workers from the communities they would serve. These workers were aware of the prevailing context and were trained and supported to engage in dialogue to challenge norms.

### ***Challenges for moving ahead***

- There is limited and uneven awareness of the enabling laws, policies, strategies, and plans among both the frontline workers who are mandated to carry them out and among the communities they are meant to benefit.
- The implementation of these laws, policies, strategies, and plans has been hampered by lack of both human and system capacity.
- There is limited health system readiness to adequately respond to the needs and preferences of adolescents. Following from this, the progress that has been made in some aspects of ASRHR has been uneven across the country, with evident equity gaps.
- Restrictive social norms are coupled with resistance in some quarters to certain aspects of ASRHR, such as comprehensive sexuality education.

### ***Key actions which must be taken to accelerate progress on ASRHR***

- Ethiopia must make full use of the existing political support for ASRHR policies and programs and sustain this support in the next stage of strategy development while working to increase social support.
- Efforts to challenge and change social norms affecting ASRHR must intensify by engaging religious and community leaders, parents and families, and adolescents themselves more actively, including through community dialogue on traditional values that negatively affect the health of adolescents, particularly girls.

- Ethiopia must strengthen investments in and financing of interventions to meet the SRH needs of adolescents (external and domestic funding).



# **Ethiopian Adolescents' Sexual and Reproductive Health: Findings from GAGE's Mixed Methods Research**

**Elizabeth Presler-Marshall, Nicola Jones, Rebecca Dutton, Sarah Baird, Workneh  
Yadete, Tassew Woldehanna, Fitsum Workneh and Abreham Iyasu**

**Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE)<sup>9</sup>**

## **Introduction**

The report synthesises findings from the Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE) programme's 2019/2020 midline data collection to explore changes in Ethiopian adolescents' sexual and reproductive health, in the two years since the baseline. It pays particular attention to gender and urban-rural and regional differences in how young people aged 12–19 can access the information and services they need. It then discusses key actions needed to accelerate progress and ensure that all adolescents have good access to sexual and reproductive health.

## **Methods**

- Mixed-methods research was undertaken in late 2019/early 2020 in three regions of Ethiopia: Afar, Amhara and Oromia. Rural communities (kebeles) – of which two were in pastoralist Zone 5 (Afar), five were in South Gondar (Amhara), and five were in East Hararghe (Oromia).
- The sample for the report includes 7,526 successfully surveyed adolescents (out of a possible 8,555) as well as their caregivers.
- The sample was divided into two cohorts: younger adolescents (majority aged 12–14 at midline) and older adolescents (majority aged 15–19 at midline).
- The qualitative sample – of 278 core adolescents – was selected from the larger quantitative sample.

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<sup>9</sup> Presented by Workneh Yadeta (Research uptake and Impact Coordinator, and Qualitative Research Lead of GAGE Ethiopia) on February 23, 2023. It was published in November 2020. <https://bit.ly/3wCOBKg>

## **Policy and programming implications**

- Use school and community-based classes to provide in- and out-of-school adolescents with accurate and timely information about their maturing bodies.
- For school-based education, twin content on human biology in science classes with life skills education in Gender Clubs where discussions on issues related to consent, negotiating safe sex and marrying as an adult can all be addressed with a supportive adult mentor. Ensure that such content starts no later than 10 years.
- For out-of-school based education, work with youth centres and specialist NGOs (e.g. working with young people with disabilities, with street-connected youth, with young people involved in the sex industry) to provide SRH life skills classes, drawing on WHO-approved curricula that have been adapted and piloted in the Ethiopian context.
- Ensure that girls are offered practical advice about how to manage menstruation, including how to make reusable sanitary supplies, and ensure that this is a focus of Gender Clubs in schools.
- Work with boys and parents to reduce menstruation-related stigma to support girls' attendance during their monthly menstrual cycle.
- Work with girls, boys and parents to raise awareness about the health and wellbeing risks of FGM/C and child marriage, including risks of divorce due to age and sexual incompatibility.
- Use school and community-based classes (provided by HEWs, gender club teachers and school counsellors) to provide adolescents with accurate, age-tailored and timely information about reproductive biology, contraception, disease prevention, as well as the life-course and inter-generational health and wellbeing risks of FGM/C and child marriage.
- Ensure that HEWs offer a full array of youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services – including contraception (and condoms), HIV testing and abortion referrals as needed – at health clinics, and through school and youth centre outreach visits.
- Use marriage as a point of intervention work with couples to ensure that partners are aware of sexual and reproductive health and family planning options.
- Encourage health workers to disseminate information about contraception for married and unmarried adolescents even in areas where it is not yet welcome, taking care to

address possible risks of backlash and proactively target men, boys and religious leaders.

- Strengthen investments across sectors (health, justice, women and social affairs, education) in efforts to change gender norms around FGM/C, child marriage, adolescent child-bearing and safe sex, including identifying and supporting community influencers and role models.

# Gender-Transformative, Gender Synchronized, Multi-Sectoral, Age-Segmented Programming for Adolescents in Ethiopia: Key Insights and Learning from Five Years of the ‘Act With Her’ Journey

Abiy Hiruy and Masresha Soressa

Pathfinder International<sup>10</sup>

## Introduction

The Act With Her (AWH) program is a transformative initiative aimed at empowering Ethiopian adolescents, particularly girls, to thrive across health, education, economic, and social domains. Conducted from 2017 to 2023 by Pathfinder in collaboration with the Government of Ethiopia, CARE International, and funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, AWH adopted a gender-synchronized, multi-sectoral, and age-segmented approach. Reaching over 50,000 adolescents, the program sought to shift entrenched gender norms, prevent early disruptions such as forced marriages, and improve local systems to support adolescent development.

## Key Achievements

- **Gender Norm Transformation:** The program catalyzed meaningful shifts in gender norms through community-driven strategies. For instance, in the Amhara region, coordinated efforts combining legal enforcement, community mobilization, and temporary shelters led to the cancellation of 632 early marriages out of 878 identified cases between October 2020 and February 2021. These successes highlight the program’s ability to influence local perceptions and practices regarding girls’ education and early marriage.
- **Menstrual Health and Broader Health Discussions:** AWH utilized menstrual health management (MHM) as an entry point to address broader adolescent health

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<sup>10</sup> Presented by Masresha Soressa (Project Advisor for Act With Her Project at Pathfinder International) on March 30, 2023.

and well-being. More than 177 schools established MHM rooms, reducing stigma and absenteeism among girls. The program's fact-based discussions reshaped misconceptions, particularly that menstruation marks readiness for marriage, fostering a healthier narrative around adolescent girls.

- ***Life-Cycle and Multi-Generational Impact:*** AWH adopted a 'triple-win' approach, benefiting younger and older adolescents, mentors, and adult allies. For very young adolescents (ages 10–14), the program intervened at a critical phase to address gender norms before they solidified. Mentors aged 18–25 not only served as role models but also gained knowledge, confidence, and skills that advanced their education and career opportunities. Parents and community leaders became proactive changemakers, spreading program principles within their communities.
- ***Government Engagement and Institutionalization:*** AWH's early and sustained collaboration with public sector stakeholders enabled the gradual handover of program implementation. By late 2022, officials in three regions began piloting government-led AWH activities, supported by translated materials in five local languages and expanded training of trainers. These efforts laid the groundwork for future scaling and sustainability.

## **Challenges**

- ***Engaging Very Young Adolescents (VYAs):*** While VYAs showed enthusiasm for learning, their engagement required age-appropriate, playful approaches. Programs had to carefully balance the inclusion of boys without detracting from the focus on girls.
- ***Mentor Retention and Supervision:*** Although mentors were essential, high levels of effort, competing opportunities, and insufficient incentives led to attrition. Supervisors also needed support to objectively track mentor performance.
- ***Mobilizing Adult Allies:*** The program faced challenges in sustaining adult engagement due to competing priorities. Creative solutions, such as integrating social activities like coffee ceremonies, proved effective but required adaptation.

- **System Responsiveness:** Local systems often lacked the tailored resources and flexibility required to address the unique needs of adolescents. Strengthening these systems required significant effort and customization.

## Recommendations

- **Strengthen Mentor Support:** Provide structured incentives, professional development opportunities, and enhanced supervisory frameworks to retain and motivate mentors.
- **Deepen Adult Engagement:** Adopt culturally relevant methods, such as community gatherings, to sustain adult participation. Encourage broader involvement of men and boys as proactive agents of change.
- **Expand Cross-Sector Collaboration:** Ensure integration of adolescent-focused initiatives into existing health, education, and social services, emphasizing the inclusion of very young adolescents.
- **Institutionalize Early Gains:** Leverage the momentum from government-led pilots to institutionalize the AWH model. Scale efforts across additional regions by embedding program components into national policies and budgets.
- **Enhance Monitoring and Evaluation:** Involve adolescents in program evaluation to ensure insights reflect their lived experiences. Develop metrics that capture nuanced shifts in social norms and individual empowerment.

## Conclusion

The Act With Her program demonstrated the power of a holistic, gender-synchronized approach in transforming adolescent lives and community dynamics. By addressing systemic barriers, equipping local stakeholders, and centering adolescent voices, AWH created a sustainable model for empowerment. Continued investment in such programs, coupled with adaptive strategies to overcome challenges, can ensure long-term benefits for future generations.

# **The relationship of conflict with education and employment of youth in Ethiopia: Evidence from Young Lives Pre-pilot Survey**

**Tassew Woldehanna, Kefyalew Endale, Chanie Ejigu, Marta Favara, and Sophie von Rusdorf**

**Young Lives Ethiopia<sup>11</sup>**

## **Introduction**

Armed conflict has a devastating impact on development (Fukuda-Parr et al., 2008; Gates et al., 2012) and continues to pose a serious threat to many regions of the world (Buvinic et al., 2013; Gleditsch et al., 2002; Lopez and Wodon, 2005). Besides causing deaths and injuries on the frontlines, armed conflict destroys various forms of capital (human, physical, and social), as well as educational, health, and economic facilities and infrastructures. It also leads to displacement, family breakdown, increased vulnerability, and physical and psychological trauma (Gates et al., 2012; Kadir et al., 2018).

The effects of political violence and armed conflict on youth are significant and long-lasting, yet they have been largely overlooked in academic literature (Betancourt et al., 2013; Cummings et al., 2017). This study aims to explore how the recent and still ongoing war in Northern Ethiopia, that has started in November 2020 and involved the federal and Tigray forces, affected the education and work opportunities of young people living in that part of the country. This paper aims to enrich the existing literature by providing timely evidence on: (1) how the conflict affects the educational enrollment of youth, and (2) how the conflict influences the work status of youth.

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<sup>11</sup> Presented by Kefyalew Endale (an associate researcher with Young Lives Ethiopia) on August 31, 2023.

## **Data**

For this study we use data collected in May 2023 as part of a pilot study for the seventh round of the Young Lives study in Ethiopia (Boyden et al., 2018). 140 young participants (aged 21-23 and 27-29) were recruited by the Young Lives Ethiopia team across ten sites in the Tigray, Amhara, Oromia, and Addis Ababa City Administration. More specifically, the respondents were selected from zones that experienced direct impacts of the two-year armed conflict, such as South Eastern zone of Tigray, North Wollo zone in the Amhara region, from zones close to the war zone, such as the South Gondar zones of Amhara, and from zones that were not directly affected by the conflict, such as North & East Shewa zones of Oromia, and Kolfe Keranio sub-city of Addis Ababa.

Sites and respondents were selected based on their similarity to the Young Lives sample in terms of socio-economic and demographic characteristics. The survey covers various topics such as demographics, shocks (including those related to conflict), assets, food insecurity, education during the pandemic and conflict, employment activity, conflict experience, and mental health among others. We used an Audio-Computer Assisted Self-Interview (ACASI) method to minimize the underreporting of sensitive information regarding conflict experiences such as sexual violence, in addition to the face-to-face interview (von Russdorf et al., 2024).

## **Method**

For our empirical strategy, we take advantage of the geographical distribution of our sample spread across battlefield and non-battlefield sites and exploit the occurrence of armed conflict and the number of conflict related shocks. More specifically, we measure the exposure to conflict in two ways. The first measure involves the use of battlefield and non-battlefield zones. The second conflict measure is the number of conflict-related items that the household and young respondents exposed. This measure takes the variation in the intensity of conflict exposure in the battlefield zones. The main outcome variables include conflict related interruption of school and employment.



## **Key findings**

- Larger incidences of conflict related shocks are reported in the conflict areas. Out of the total 17 conflict related shocks, each household in Tigray and North Wollo sites respectively experienced 7.5 and 10.6 shock counts sites, but in the remaining sites, the average count was about 1.
- Young people who lived in areas affected by conflict had more difficulties in accessing education for themselves or their children even after the war was over. For instance, enrollment in education was the lowest in the sites affected by armed conflict with only 25% and 35% enrollees in Tigray and North Wollo sites whereas in the other sites over 50% have enrolled after March 2020.
- The study also found that households in conflict zones experienced more income/job losses than those in non-battlefield areas suggesting a slow recovery from the war impact.

## **Policy implications**

The study proposed some policy recommendations to accelerate the revival of households to enhance their livelihood and education.

Post-conflict education is crucial for the young generation, but it faces many challenges. To ensure its continuity and quality, funding and community involvement are needed to restore the schools' infrastructure. Some actions to achieve this are:

- Finding diverse financial support from international, local, NGO, and private sources to allocate enough resources for rebuilding and running schools in war affected areas, including training teachers and providing learning materials;
- Inviting community participation from parents, teachers, students, and local leaders to contribute their labor and materials for the school reconstruction, as well as to give feedback and suggestions for the educational system improvement;

- Giving incentives and recognition to the community members who participate in the school reconstruction efforts, such as certificates, awards, or public acknowledgment, to foster a sense of ownership and responsibility for the schools.

Some possible measures to address the negative consequences of conflict on youth employment are:

- Training, mentoring, and incentives for young people who want to work in the formal sector or start or grow their own businesses, provided by the government and the private sector;
- Reconstruction and restoration of essential services, such as health, education, water, and electricity, supported by the international community and local stakeholders, to foster the rehabilitation of damaged infrastructures and institutions;
- The provision of credit access and input support for young entrepreneurs who face challenges in accessing capital, markets, and technology due to the conflict, facilitated by the financial sector and the civil society; and
- Promote community-based initiatives, such as cash-for-work, public works, and social protection that can generate income and assets for the youth and their families, designed and implemented by the government and the development partners.

# **Women and the Care Economy in Ethiopia: Challenges, opportunities, lessons, and policy implications**

**Ziade Hailu**

**UN Women<sup>12</sup>**

## **Introduction**

Across the world, care work is overwhelmingly the preserve of women, and this unequal responsibility often restricts women's time and opportunities for education, employment, politics and leisure.

Ethiopia is no exception, with unpaid care and domestic work (UCDW) mostly performed by women and girls, which affects their participation in education, in decent paid work, health, and agriculture productivity. Also, as a result of their unequal responsibility for unpaid care work, women are more likely to work in the informal sector, which can grant a degree of flexibility in balancing paid and unpaid responsibilities, but is often characterized by low pay, poor working conditions and insecurity.

Research shows the gendered differences in unpaid care work. For instance, the Ethiopia Time Use Survey (TUS) (2013) reveals that an overwhelming majority (93 per cent) of women compared to a little of half of the men (56 per cent) were engaged in unpaid domestic work during 2013 and that women spend nearly twice as much time (49 per cent) as men (25 per cent) collecting fuel wood. On average, women spend 6.45 hours each day on care as a primary activity, compared to 0.29 hours for men. Women also spend more time than men on care as a secondary activity (undertaken alongside another activity). The total number of hours that women spend on care as a primary or secondary activity is significantly higher than for men (9.03 hours vs 0.72 hours).

However, women are not restricted to unpaid care work alone. They are also employed in paid care work in care and non-care sectors. The undervalued and gendered nature of

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<sup>12</sup> Presented by Ziade Hailu (Director of Econ M. Consultants) on December 28, 2023. It was published in December, 2023. <https://bit.ly/4bsdFbo>.

the care chain extends to paid care work, where the majority of the work is provided by women around the world, who encounter workplace gender-specific barriers that reduce their earnings and well-being. Among the paid care sectors, education and health care are prominent. The education sector (e.g. Early Child Care and Education (ECCE) programme) in Ethiopia already employs many women in paid care work. Also, women comprise most of the health workforce. These sectors have great potential for female employment, and investment in paid care work makes good business sense. Globally, women constitute around 70 per cent of the health and social care workforce and earn 24 per cent less than men.

While initiatives to promote care work and increase investments in the care economy have expanded in Ethiopia, there remains a lack of understanding of the full spectrum of issues about paid and unpaid care work. This study aims to address this lack of understanding and contributes to the documentation of good practices, opportunities, challenges and lessons learned from initiatives that provide care services in Ethiopia's formal and informal sectors. It offers policy-makers and development practitioners knowledge and evidence that could be replicated and scaled up elsewhere. Insights may also serve as policy options for dialogue on the care economy.

## **Methodology**

The present document is informed by a synthesis of an extensive literature review, interviews, case studies and observation. In-depth interviews were conducted with representatives from institutional daycare centres, community-run Early Child Development (ECD) centres, school feeding programme centres, organizations that run male engagement programmes, trade unions and so on.

## **Constraints and challenges to transforming the care economy**

The constraints and challenges the care economy faces to transform.

1. **Recognize:** Unpaid care work is a substantial contributor to the economy and growth, but it is rarely acknowledged as such. There is limited interest and awareness about considering the contribution of UCDW to the macro economy by policy-makers.

2. **Reduce:** The sheer volume and intensity of care work can be overwhelming, leading to physical and mental exhaustion for caregivers.
3. **Redistribute:** The unequal distribution of care responsibilities poses a significant constraint. Due to deep-rooted gender norms and societal expectations, women are disproportionately burdened with unpaid care work, limiting their opportunities for education, employment and economic empowerment.
4. **Reward:** The lack of financial compensation or social recognition for unpaid care work further perpetuates its devaluation.
5. **Representation of care workers:** While there is promising advocacy work by the Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions (CETU), Ethiopian Teachers Association (ETA) and other civil society organizations, the voices and perspectives of caregivers, especially women, are often excluded from decision-making processes in the country.

### **Lessons learned**

Lessons emerged from the consultation with policy-makers and caregivers

- Generating evidence is the first step to value care work.
- Investment in time- and labour-saving equipment and infrastructure reduces time spent on care work.
- Promoting social protection policies.
- Access to childcare services is linked with women's economic participation.
- Entrenched social norms and gender stereotypes can be reduced through continuous male engagement initiatives.
- Scaling up good practices and promoting the care economy requires collaboration and coordination between government, civil society organizations, communities and international partners.

### **Opportunities and the way forward**

Raising awareness and acknowledging the value of unpaid care work is crucial. The activities being conducted by several civil society organizations and trade unions have laid bases for future work. In addition, the government's statistical service has emphasized the need to collect more evidence on unpaid care work. A progressive policy

and legal environment that sets an enabling environment to push for promoting recognition of the care economy indicates commitment by the government to address the challenges of care work. Interventions by human rights organizations who demand budgets and favourable policies for care work are some of the opportunities for policy uptake. However, there is a need to push for more recognition of UCDW by generating reliable time use surveys and developing stand-alone household satellite accounts.

In addition, there are several strategies that can be useful to decrease the amount of time and effort required for unpaid care work, which can provide opportunities for women to engage in other productive activities. Government entities such as the Ministry of Innovation and Technology and Ministry of Water and Energy are investing in infrastructure. More and more women are accessing electricity and time- and labour-saving technologies. Improved access to labour-saving devices and technologies can help automate or simplify care tasks, freeing up time for other activities. Improved access to water, sanitation and electricity can reduce the time spent on domestic chores, particularly for women and girls. But there is a need to create access to financial services for business entities that are attempting to bring their final product to the market and commercialize technologies at scale.

Similarly, social protection measures that support women and men with substantial UCDW responsibilities are in place in some cities. For example, the school feeding programme in the capital city is believed to have contributed to freeing time for many women to engage in productive work. In addition, access to community-run day care centres and institutional daycare are revolutionizing the prospects for working women. However, in the case of institutional child care at government offices, there is a need for vertical integration, as public transport services are not responsive to mothers with children. Also, coverage needs to be expanded and sustainability sources identified.

Furthermore, policy and programmatic initiatives are in place to share the responsibility of unpaid care work more equitably. This includes the civil service and employee leave policies that support paid family leave, and affordable child care facilities that can help redistribute care responsibilities between family members. However, there is significant concern over policies that promote extremely long maternity leave for women and very

short paternity leave for men. In general, these policies can be considered “care responsive”, as they support children’s rights to receive good-quality care and for a person to provide that care, but they are not “gender responsive” in that they reinforce gendered norms about the responsibility for care. There is a need to advocate for policies that are both care responsive and gender responsive. Also, there is a need for campaigns that promote the value of spending time with young children and that support male managers to be role models in taking parental leave provisions.

## About the Children, Youth and Women Research and Practice Forum (CYW-RPF)

The need for a link between research, policy and practice on issues of children, youth and women in Ethiopia resulted in the establishment of a Forum through which practitioners, policy makers and researchers discuss research findings.

The idea was proposed during a workshop in December 2010 for a study on orphans and vulnerable children undertaken by Young Lives. Participants felt that research on children's lives was not made publicly available. The idea was developed through consultations with Young Lives' partners, leading to the establishment of the Forum.

The overall goal of the Children, Youth and Women Research and Practice Forum is to create a stronger connection between research, policy and programmes related to children, youth and women in Ethiopia by presenting and discussing evidence based research.

The CYW-RPF seminars have taken place over the past twelve years at the Ministry of Women Children and Youth and since 2022 at the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs. The monthly seminar is open to policy makers, researchers, NGOs and interested individuals both as presenters and as participants. The Forum has a mailing list of over 1000 individuals and institutions and produces newsletters and annual presentation summaries.

