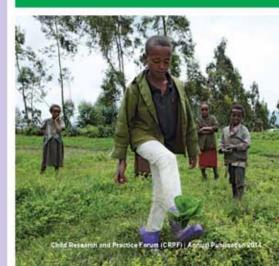# Improving Children's Lives through Research

Summaries from Presentations at the Monthly Seminar Series of the Child Research and Practice Forum in 2014

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Summaries by: Clare Gorman

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Foreword

The Child Research and Practice Forum (CRPF), since its inception in September 2010, has organized a series of monthly child research seminars held at the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs. The audiences include policy makers, practitioners, researchers, other interested individuals and institutions and the Forum seek to improve the uptake of research findings by stakeholders. As it is well known, CRPF generally strives to create, strengthen and sustain linkages between research, policy and practice with the overall aim of improving the lives of children in Ethiopia.

The year 2014 was a very successful one in this regard as it witnessed the presentation of a good deal of research papers on a number of pressing topics on children lives – urban relocation, girls' migration and development, child care services, household wealth and child wellbeing, early quality learning, essential newborn and skin-to-skin care, worst forms of child labor, child protection, and girls' education. The papers originated from various individuals and organizations and attracted many interested audiences.

The Forum brought together participants from government and non-government organizations, donors, bilateral and multilateral organizations, the media, research institutions and interested individuals. It also facilitated constructive discussions and debates on children, and promoted learning among a wide range of interested stakeholders. In addition, the Forum has produced eight newsletters with summaries from the monthly paper presentations. It has also organized annual workshops, leading to publications.

This annual booklet comprises summaries of nine monthly presentations from the Forum. These are meant to promote further interest on child poverty research, provide condensed research findings to stakeholders, stimulate discussion and instill the collaboration of researchers, policy makers and practitioners for the betterment of children's lives in the country.

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Beyond Urban Relocation? Expectations and Concerns of Children and Care Givers in Addis Ababa and Hawassa

Alula Pankhurst and Agazi Tiumelissan, Young Lives

Introduction

The urban landscape in Ethiopia is currently undergoing a fundamental transformation, with whole residential areas in the centre of major cities being cleared and their inhabitants relocated elsewhere. This report documents the views of children and their caregivers about impending relocations as a consequence of plans to develop central areas of Addis Ababa and Hawassa. It is one of a set of three reports resulting from a study of the impacts of urban relocation on children and their families and the long-term consequences of displacement to neighbourhoods and community networks.

The report reviews the attitudes of children and their families towards their planned relocation, and their expectations, hopes and concerns about the move. It also records their perceptions of the potential positive and negative consequences of relocation in terms of the living environment, housing and sanitation, access to services, notably water, health and education, opportunities for employment and impacts on social relations. In doing so, it captures:

- The extent to which children and adults are aware of the plans for relocation, from whom they have heard about it, when they expect the move to take place and the rationale for the relocation.
- What children and adults knew of other people who have already been relocated, and how they fared.
- The expectations of children and caregivers about the problems posed by the process of moving, and expected problems and opportunities in the new setting.
- The overall expectations of children and caregivers about their life after relocation.

Methodology

The report was written using data from a cross-sectional sub-study on relocation conducted in four Young Lives sites: three in Addis Ababa and the fourth in the city of Hawassa, the capital city of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR). The relocation sub-study, conducted in January 2012, comprised both qualitative and quantitative methods including:

- A full sample quantitative survey of Young Lives households and older and younger cohort children.
- Qualitative sub-sample protocols with care givers and children.
- Interviews and discussions with officials, community leaders, caregivers and children

The quantitative survey comprised a total of 466 caregivers and 451 children.

- This represents 15.8 per cent of the Young Lives children and 40 per cent of those living in urban areas.
- Of the children, 64 per cent were aged between 11 and 12 years old and 36 per cent aged between 17 and 18.
- Of the total, 51.4 per cent were girls and 48.6 per cent were boys.

In the qualitative survey, interviews were conducted with 79 children and their caregivers, ten boys and ten girls in each of the four sites. The selection criteria included:

- The wealth quintile of household
- House ownership
- Other social characteristics such as religion and ethnicity

Key-informant interviews were also conducted with respondents from formal and customary institutions in each community. Focus-group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with children, taking into account their age and gender cohorts, with separate FGDs for boys and girls for each cohort, as well as with their caregivers. FGDs were also held with influential community members.

Findings

Knowledge about relocation plans

The findings suggest that most of the children and their caregivers had heard about the planned relocation from various sources. A significant proportion of caregivers mentioned promises made to them, mainly regarding improvements in housing and services, notably water and electricity. However, they did not have any clear idea about the likely timing of the move, indicating that the people most directly concerned had not been sufficiently involved and consulted in the planning process.

- Some heard the news from *kebele* officials and others from different sources (parents, friends, at school)
- Those living in rented housing or who are *debal* were afraid of the prospect of relocation
- Less than a fifth of caregivers knew when the relocation would happen

Knowledge about other relocated people and changes in their lives

Almost half the caregivers overall knew other people who had been relocated – one indication that both cities are undergoing rapid changes. Most of the caregivers and the children believed that the changes experienced by the relocated residents were, on the whole, positive.

- More than 50 per cent of children and about 44 per cent of caregivers said the change had been positive.
- Other children and caregivers mentioned that people liked the improvement in housing and some of the services, but were unhappy over the loss or breakup of social ties and lack of work opportunities in areas in outskirts of city.

Expectation of changes after relocation

Although a quarter of children and a fifth of caregivers said they did not know how their lives would change as a result of relocation, most of the respondents felt that the change would be generally positive. Fewer than one in five respondents thought that the change would be for entirely for the worse, and under ten per cent thought that the consequences would be mainly negative.

Anticipated problems of relocation included:

- Finding a place to live (cited by more than half caregivers and children).
- Adapting to the new area, finding friends and helpers, establishing relations with neighbours and finding work in new area.
- Places to play.

Opportunities in the new areas included:

- Improved sanitation (three-fourth of children and two-third of caregivers)
- Improved housing (three-fourth of children and a little less than two-third of caregivers)
- Better health facilities, education and environment

Overall expectations about the changes

Children and caregivers were generally positive about the prospects resulting from resettlement, although some foresaw serious challenges, notably in relation to finding housing and work, and rebuilding social relations and institutions. Few felt that they had no choice but to go along with the changes, which they perceived to be inevitable.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The findings of the study suggest that both children and caregivers living in the inner-city areas are aware that urban redevelopment is likely to lead eventually to their relocation and resettlement, and that this is most likely to mean removal to the city outskirts. The results also suggest that there is a lack of clarity and transparency about the timing and the process of urban redevelopment and potential relocation of residents living in the areas due for redevelopment.

On the whole, children and caregivers were optimistic about the potential opportunities that relocation could provide, and they had heard of improvements in the lives of people who had already been relocated. However, children and caregivers expressed a number of concerns about resettlement and the problems of adapting to a new environment.

The issue of urban development and the resulting relocation has important policy implications. Poor people living in inner city areas would prefer to remain in the same area where their livelihoods are based after the area is redeveloped; reserving part of these areas for housing for the urban poor would therefore be an equitable pro-poor
policy. The report recommends:

- Given their poverty, replacement housing in condominiums or other affordable housing schemes deserve priority since they are unable to build housing on their own.
- Greater participatory planning, involving not simply transparent, timely advance information and adequate compensation and/or replacement housing, but involvement of communities in the planning and execution of the relocation would be an improvement on the current process.
- Redevelopment and relocation in stages could also prevent unnecessary excessive disruptions.
- In the new relocation areas, the development of adequate infrastructure and services, as well as the linkages between housing, livelihood opportunities and recreational facilities, especially for children, deserve greater consideration.

For more details see the brief by Alula Pankhurst and Agazi Tiumelissan (2014) Beyond Relocation: Expectations and Concerns of Children and their Caregivers, Ethiopia Urban resettlement brief 3, Oxford: Young Lives available on the Young Lives website: http://www.younglives-ethiopia.org/files/ policy-papers/new-policy-paper-urban-resettlement-alula-and-agazi

Time to Look at Girls: Adolescent Girls' Migration and Development

Marina de Regt, VU University Amsterdam

Introduction

Although the migration of girls from rural to urban areas in Ethiopia has been widespread for decades, a rise in the number of adolescent girls migrating abroad is contributing to a new phenomenon. Despite a temporary government ban on migration between Ethiopia and the Arabian peninsular and the subsequent large-scale return of Ethiopian migrants from Saudi Arabia and Yemen, recent research points to an increase of illegal cross-border migration, including that of adolescent girls.

This summary is based on the presentation given to the Child Research and Practice Forum (CRPF) by researchers[1] involved in a research proposal to capture the accounts of adolescent girl migrants with the intention of soliciting feedback. The proposal was in response to 'Agency in Action: Adolescent Girls Migration' – a workshop held at the University of Sussex, UK in September 2012 which called for a worldwide exploration into the increasing rates of migration by adolescent girls.

Rationale

The movement of children under the age of 18 is often described very negatively. Up until now, international advocacy around the issue has tended to focus mainly on exploited and abused child migrants. As a consequence:

- It is hard to acknowledge early migration as children's own decision and their reasons for migrating.
- It is difficult to recognise and address the needs of migrating children.

This project intends to fill the gaps by studying adolescent girls and trying to understand their agency in migratory trajectories and the wider impact of their migration. A focus on Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Sudan stems from:

- Limited existing literature on adolescent girls' migration.
- Previous research experience of the researchers in the proposed countries.
- Diverse typology of migration in the different sites.

The project will look at three case studies – one in each country. In Ethiopia, fieldwork will take place in Addis Ababa, two places of origin and Khartoum. The focus of will be on labour migration of adolescent girls and will explore the link between migration from rural to urban areas and cross-border migration (Middle East and Sudan).

Research Questions

The study will investigate four areas:

Migration choices and trajectories

- What are the reasons for the first migration and for the subsequent choices?
- What were the circumstances under which the decision to migrate took place?

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1 The academic partners are: The Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID), Geneva, Switzerland, VU University Amsterdam, The Netherlands, Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU), University of Dhaka, Bangladesh and AHFAD University, Khartoum, Sudan

- What were the roles of different events and networks in facilitating the process?
- Are there other migrants in the sending households and what are their destinations?

Girls' life course transition/s

- How does migration as a spatial shift intersect with other transitions?
- In which ways does it affect life trajectories in terms of education, marriage and work?
- What are girls' aspirations for their future? To what extent will migration fulfill them?

Migration of adolescent girls and young women and social development

- To what extent has migration contributed to girls' empowerment?
- What has been the impact of migration on the wellbeing of the sending household?
- How is the contribution of the migrant perceived and valued?
- What is the impact of migration on health and education at the household level?

Legal and policy frameworks

- How do national and regional policies and projects interact with the priorities and everyday lives of migrants?
- How do policies and projects affect young migrants and how do young migrants perceive them?

Methodology

The study proposes to take a mixed method and multi-sited research approach and will include:

- Interviewing migrant girls, family members, peers and key actors in organisations.
- Comparison between recent migrants and women who migrated as adolescent girls.
- Participatory action research with migrant girls (involving them as interviewers).
- Focus group discussions (with migrant girls, household members, peers, representatives of organisations).
- A survey of migrant girls and of household members.
- Life histories of migrant girls and returned migrants.
- In-depth interviews with household members, peers and return migrants.
- Expert interviews with policy makers and other decision-makers.
- Collection of statistical data (if available).

Feedback and Discussion

After the presentation, the researchers solicited feedback from CPRF members on the relevance of the research questions, design feasibility, methodology and the best selection sample. To aide the discussion, the researchers asked:

- What are the main causes of migration of adolescent girls in and out of Ethiopia?
- Where do the migrant girls mainly come from? Where do they go to?
- What are the main challenges they face?
- In what way is migration of adolescent girls different from that of other migrants?
- How does their migration intersect with other decisions in their life, such as education and marriage?

The discussion at the CRPF will enable the research to improve the research design and questions prior to commencing the study.

Assessment of Community- and Family-based Alternative Child-care Services in Ethiopia

Getnet Tadele, Desta Ayode and Woldekidan Kifle
Family Health International (FHI)

Introduction

Ethiopia's already massive number of orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) is increasing, while the capacity of the extended family is declining. Studies show that children without parental care are at a higher risk of discrimination, abuse and a host of unmet development needs. This problem is exacerbated by a lack of information about the coverage, quality and impact of the various care options available, including formal community- and family-based alternative child-protection services.

This assessment was commissioned by Family Health International's 360 programme to generate evidence about the formal agencies providing these services in Ethiopia, with a particular focus on quality and quality-assurance mechanisms in place. It aimed to address four specific objectives:

- To identify, list and quantify all formal forms of community and family-based alternative child-care services offered in the five studied regions in Ethiopia at the time of study implementation, by type.
- To describe the extent and quality of alternative child-care services (including the extent to which they function within the continuum of alternative child care, qualifications of staff and service-delivery standards used) and gaps to be addressed.
- To investigate existing quality-assurance mechanisms and tools, and their use in monitoring family-based alternative child-care services.
- To inform the development of practical recommendations to address the identified gaps.

Methodology

The assessment was conducted within five regions in the country: Addis Ababa, Afar, Amhara, Oromia and Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR). A mixed methods approach was applied with the objective to generate:

- Quantitative data about the quality of community- and family-based alternative child-care services or the scale and distribution of agencies providing these services.
- Qualitative data to provide an in-depth understanding of the perception and experiences of various actors including community members, former beneficiaries and stakeholders towards community- and family-based alternative child-care services.

A multi-stage random sampling method was used to draw a sample of 184 agencies from a total of 354 institutions identified in the five geographic locations. Purposive sampling was used to select 324 participants from the same locations for the qualitative assessment.

The populations for the quantitative assessment were child-care agencies providing different types of formal community- and family-based alternative child-care services, including foster care, adoption, kinship care, reunification and family-preservation services (FPS). The populations for the qualitative study included former beneficiaries, guardians, caregivers or parents, community representatives, heads of child-focussed organisations and key informants from government and non-government institutions.

A structured questionnaire, semi-structured interviews and discussion guides were designed to generate information dealing with experiences and perception of participants about agencies and the quality of services they provide.

Findings

Profile of agencies

- 90 per cent of agencies provided family-preservation services that were meant to support families and prevent the unnecessary separation of children mainly due to poverty.
- Close to half (45 per cent) of the agencies provided reunification services, and 39 per cent provided adoption-placement services (almost all inter-country adoption).
- Only 28 per cent of the 39 per cent provided domestic adoption-placement services. Few agencies (11 per cent) provided foster care.
- A higher proportion of faith-based institutions were based outside Addis Ababa, compared to the other regions.
- Almost all agencies across the five regions (95 per cent) relied on funding from external donors. Only five per cent of the agencies in the five regions relied primarily on domestic sources.

Quality assessment of services

- *Capacity:* There was a significant shortfall in the availability of staff with specialised qualifications. For example, only 30 per cent of agencies reported having one or more psychologists, only 51 per cent reported having at least one social worker, and only 48 per cent have at least one health worker.
- *Continuity of care for OVC:* The number of agencies providing child-care services in the five regions (384) was found to be small compared to the huge demand. Few of these agencies provided integrated services or were able to refer children that their services did not meet.
- *Safety of children:* Emergency placement was provided by only a little over half of the agencies that provide foster care. 52 per cent among adoption-service providers, and 28 percent foster care-service providers indicated they had no child-protection policy to guide the conduct of their staff and provision of services. 18 per cent among community-based services and 46 per cent in reunification services had no criteria to inform the screening of children for service eligibility.
- *Participation:* Only 6.6 per cent of agencies providing community-based child-care services consulted children in decision-making while 75 per cent involved the community in the form of committees of volunteers. Only about half (54.3 percent) of the agencies provided services to children with special needs.
- *Mechanisms for Service Quality Assessment:* Almost all agencies undertook regular monitoring (follow-up) to track the progress and outcomes of the services they provide. Three in every four agencies undertook regular, joint monitoring practices with relevant government authorities.

Good practice

Organisations reported on the major changes brought about through implementation of their respective family-based child-care services. For example:

- 96.2 per cent claimed that the services improved the lives of target OVC.
- 79.1 per cent reported increased capacity of the family in providing care to the children.

Most respondents asserted services improved the children's life chances and opportunities for normal childhood. Reported benefits included a decline in the number of children receiving institutional care and a reduction in the number of children living on the streets.

Community Based Organisations and their leaders were made aware of the need to support OVC and how to mobilise the community. Religious institutions were involved in sensitising the community about domestic adoption and kinship care. Community committees collaborated with schools to identify needy children, and ensure they received quality care. Some agencies (private schools and religious institutions) actively sought to raise funds locally.

Major challenges

Challenges facing agencies included:

- Shoddy practices by some agencies including nepotism and lack of transparency.
- Problems of sustainability attributed to (among other things) too much reliance on external funding
- A mismatch between demand for services and what is available
- Lack of capacity of government agencies to enforce compliance

Conclusion and Recommendations

Existing agencies providing formal community- and family- based alternative child-care services can only scratch the surface of how to respond to the increasing numbers of OVC and a host of unmet basic and developmental needs. Efforts are needed to expand the access of OVC to alternative care options to guarantee their wellbeing and development. Agencies should:

- Apply the principle of continuum of care and prevent the unnecessary separation of children from poverty stricken or conflict-prone families by expanding the availability of community-based prevention services.
- Improve the capacity of the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs (MOWCYA) and its sub-structures to provide adequate support and supervision of agencies that provide formal alternative childcare services.
- Strengthen MOWCYA's information management system and its sub-structures and that of agencies providing community- and family-based alternative care services in order to provide the platform for evidence-informed planning and programme implementation.
- Improve compliance to quality-standard guidelines by making them widely accessible in the respective official language of the region, improving awareness and understanding through training and regular supervision and support of the service-providing agencies.
- Improve collaboration, referral systems and linkages among agencies and other relevant institutions to provide a continuum of care and emergency placement for children at risk and ensure access to services for OVC with special needs or disabilities.
- Promote uptake and support for foster care and local adoption by addressing barriers such as stigma, lack of awareness about local adoption procedures, reluctance to face the legal process, fear related to inheritance of property, and limited economic capacity of households to care for additional children.
- Better sensitise communities regarding domestic adoption, foster care and fund raising.

Household Wealth and Child Wellbeing in Tigray: One and the Same?

Keetie Roelen, Institute of Development Studies

Background

Interventions that improve the lives of children can play a vital role in breaking the cycle of inter-generational poverty. But guidance on investments in these is weak, and often based on partial views informed by single, rather than multi-dimensional, measurements of child poverty.

This summary outlines preliminary research findings into the dynamics of child poverty in Tigray, Ethiopia. By investigating differences between household wealth (as measured using indicators of household consumption and assets) and child wellbeing outcomes (as measured using indicators of food intake, education and time use), the research seeks to understand:

- The extent to which different poverty measures identify different groups of children as being poor.
- The reasons for different groups of children being identified as being poor when using different measures.

Methodology

The research uses a mixed methods approach and combines analysis of secondary quantitative data and primary qualitative data for investigating the link between household wealth and child wellbeing outcomes and assessing potential reasons for mismatch between such outcomes.

Data from the Ethiopia Rural Household Survey (ERHS) was used for informing the sampling strategy and fieldwork instruments prior to qualitative data collection, and for analysis of poverty outcomes following insights from qualitative data analysis. Qualitative data was gathered from children and adults through focus group discussions, in-depth interviews and individual and group-based participatory discussions in two *woredas* in Tigray that were also included in the ERHS.

Findings

In line with existing evidence, preliminary findings suggest that household wealth and child wellbeing are strongly related but not necessarily the same. The quantitative analysis points towards positive correlation between household consumption and school attendance and number of meals consumed, but also indicates that not all children living in consumption poverty are deprived in terms of education or nutrition and vice versa. The correlation between increased household wealth and child wellbeing appears strongest for the poorest children but then drops for children living in wealthier households. When using time use as an indicator of child wellbeing, the relationship reverses and higher household wealth is associated with lower child wellbeing.

These findings are corroborated by analysis of the qualitative data: both adults and children point out that although household wealth is an important condition for ensuring child wellbeing, it is neither a necessary or sufficient condition. 'Positive' mismatch – children being well off despite living in poor households, appears more prevalent than 'negative' mismatch – children having low wellbeing despite living in relatively wealthy households.

Various issues could explain the mismatch of poverty outcomes, including measurement error, lagged improvements in child wellbeing following improvements in household wealth, availability of infrastructure and public services, opportunity costs and awareness and aspirations.
Early findings suggest that:

- The use of household consumption as an indicator for household wealth may contribute to differential findings regarding household wealth and child wellbeing. Analysis of survey data indicates that consumption is correlated with but is not a perfect proxy for indicators of household wealth as identified by adult and children.
- It takes time for child wellbeing to catch up with improvements in household wealth. Life histories elicited from qualitative case studies illustrate that improvements in child wellbeing lag behind those in household wealth.
- Lack of infrastructure and services – particularly schools and clean water, limits the extent to which greater household wealth can be translated into improved child wellbeing.
- Opportunity costs lead to a trade-off between household wealth and child wellbeing, particularly in terms of the balance between school, work and leisure. Greater household wealth may be achieved by involving children in productive or household work, compromising child wellbeing with respect to time use.
- Parental awareness of and attitudes towards raising and educating children plays an important role in translating high or low levels of household wealth in improved child wellbeing. Qualitative findings point towards a gender dimension with 'positive' mismatch occurring more frequently in female-headed households and 'negative' mismatch being more prevalent among male-headed households.
- Children's aspirations are important in their own considerations of what constitutes child wellbeing and how to achieve it. Qualitative findings indicate that the lack of local economic opportunities in combination with many examples of community members having gone to Saudi Arabia for work compromised children's perceptions of the value of education and the extent to which this would bring them wellbeing at present and wealth in the future.

Conclusion

Getting poverty measurement right is imperative for gaining insight into the magnitude of child poverty, its manifestations and underlying causes. It lays the foundation for framing policy efforts toward the reduction of child poverty, tracking progress of such efforts and consequently feeding information back into decision-making.

Preliminary findings of this research in Tigray confirm that a combination of measures is required to identify different groups of children living in poverty and deprivation. Findings about the drivers underlying differential poverty findings also suggest that policies should consider both household-level and structural factors in their bid to reduce child poverty and deprivation. Finally, the tension between improvements in household wealth and child wellbeing, particularly for relatively better off households, indicates that policy makers should be wary of the assumption that higher household wealth will always translate into greater child wellbeing.

Delivering early learning quality learning in low-resource settings: progress and challenges in Ethiopia

Kate Orkin, Workneh Abebe Yadete and Martin Woodhead
Young Lives

Introduction

Ethiopia is a success story for Education For All (EFA), a global movement to provide high quality, basic education for all children, youths and adults. Studies show that in 1992, after the end of the civil war, nearly four in five children were out of school – by 2009, this number had been reduced to one in five.

Given the major reforms taking place to achieve EFA and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for universal primary education, the Ethiopian Government has, until recently, paid much less attention to early childhood care and education (ECCE). This paper reports on the experiences of children and their families during early childhood and the initial grades of primary school in order to:

- Understand the level of children's access to ECCE and primary education in rural and urban areas.
- Document the major challenges of achieving quality ECCE and early primary education.
- Draw some concluding remarks on how to improve access and quality of ECCE and early primary education.

As well as presenting an analysis of the different trajectories of urban and rural children through ECCE and the early years of primary school, this paper provides a set of insights on the challenges of delivering ECCE in contexts where resources are scarce, where government engagement is limited and where there is heavy reliance on the private sector.

Methodology

The paper is built on on-going research into the potential benefits of ECCE conducted in Ethiopia by Young Lives, an innovative, longitudinal study investigating the changing nature of childhood poverty. It draws on three rounds of quantitative data in 20 sites across five regions and qualitative data gathered in one rural site in Oromia and one urban site in Hawassa covering 60 children (divided equally between younger and older cohorts). Qualitative methods of capture include: focus group discussions with caregivers of both cohorts and community leaders, in-depth interviews with children, caregivers and teachers, group activities with the older cohort and school and classroom observation.

Findings

Opportunities and challenges in the ECCE sector in Ethiopia

- Strategic and operational plans for ECCE must be realistic in terms of how rapidly they seek to expand access to ECCE.
- There is an urgent need to introduce more developmentally appropriate child-centred curricula, supported by adequate training and supervision.
- Shortages of skilled ECCE professionals can be a major barrier, especially where training courses are insufficient to meet demand.

- If teachers are volunteers or are poorly paid, there will tend to be high turnover, leading to the loss of investment in training.
- Plans to locate a year of pre-school in primary schools should take account of available management capacities and the number of available teachers.
- Adding new pressures on primary schools should not undermine their existing activities.
- Greater attention should be devoted to developing and scaling up low-cost but high quality alternatives to formal pre-schools.

Early childhood and primary education in Ethiopia

- Until recently, the government has left the provision of ECCE programmes up to NGOs, the private sector and communities.
- Recently there has been rapid growth in enrolment in urban centres, especially in fee-paying private pre-schools.
- Low investment in ECCE needs to be understood in the context of the remarkable expansion in primary enrolment in Ethiopia.
- In 2010, the government distributed a national ECCE Policy Framework but with very little funding to support it.
- The ECCE Framework will be able to build on a number of strengths in the primary system. Greater accessibility and quality of ECCE also has the potential to support learning achievement when children reach primary school.

Studying early childhood transitions in Ethiopia

- The proportion of children using government or community pre-schools barely changed between 1999 and 2006, indicating that, for poorer families, there are few alternatives to fee-charging private or public schools.
- Increases in pre-school enrolment have largely occurred in urban areas. Rates of enrolment in pre-school in rural areas have stayed close to zero.
- Pre-schools are largely provided by the private sector or by NGOs, and provide very little access to pre-school for the poorest children.
- The type of pre-school that children attend is heavily influenced by the socio-economic status of their households.
- The percentage of children aged eight who have not enrolled at all or who have enrolled late is much higher among the poorest families.
- Longitudinal data shows that children who enrol when they are over the age of ten or below the age of seven are more likely to drop out.
- The availability of pre-school means that children are more likely to enrol in primary school at the correct age. Access to pre-school may ensure that children are more school-ready and thus reduce the rates of dropout.

Unequal pathways into education: Case studies from an urban community

- Case studies illustrate three different pathways through early childhood education. *Hagos's* family was able to pay fees in order to give him the best educational start, although attending the private pre-school involved quite a long journey. *Kelile's* family couldn't afford the fees for private school, but he was able to attend a small priest school and then transfer to a primary school run by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, which partially subsidises the fees charged by the school. *Aamina* had no access to pre-school and had to wait until she was 9 years old before a place in school became available.
- Interviews with teachers reinforced the evidence of disadvantage for poor urban children with little or no ECCE experience, who very often are also over-age once they begin school and who progress slowly through the grades. Even so, they have better opportunities than rural children.

- From these case studies, three specific issues were identified, relating to the very variable costs and quality of early education: the need for quality assurance across all providers; and the continuing challenges for children once they begin primary school.

Accessing Education for All: Multiple Challenges for a rural community

- No ECCE was available in the site of Leki, although, for a short time, there was a summer programme to help prepare children for school.
- Only one primary school is available to the children of Leki and, in the absence of universal birth registration, it isn't always easy for parents to assure their child a place.
- While government schooling is free, there are hidden costs that put additional pressures on very poor families.
- Local realities need to be the starting point for implementing the national EECE policy, recognising that: (i) children currently start school with very little preparation; (ii) innovative finance and programmes are needed in order to make learning opportunities more widely available; (iii) even when children do begin school they face multiple challenges in making progress; and (iv) it may not be straightforward to add quality pre-school classes to existing schools.

Conclusions and recommendations

The government can retrain existing teachers to provide ECCE, but this is unlikely to provide enough teachers without creating a shortage in the primary school sector.

The idea of recruiting older children as Child-to-Child facilitators needs to recognise that older children may require a small stipend to help reduce the burden of paid or unpaid work they would otherwise be expected to do.

There is a risk that ECCE will become overly formalised if pre-school classes are attached to primary schools. In rural areas, it would be useful to explore other low-cost methods of ECCE that place less of a burden on primary schools, such as Rapid School Readiness Programmes or community-based centres.

In urban areas, if the government continues to rely largely on non-governmental providers, there will be a need for stronger governance, regulation and quality assurance of these providers as well as some form of subsidy arrangements or vouchers to ensure that the poorest children can access ECCE. The Ethiopian Government's 2010 ECCE Framework is an important advance in policy development for the youngest children. To make progress in its implementation, donors and the government urgently need to source the additional resources required. Further development of the framework will require:

- A more detailed strategy for training and adequate funding for ECCE staff.
- A national curriculum, with technical support and structures to ensure compliance.
- In rural areas, alternative structures for ECCE that rely less on primary schools.
- In urban areas, if the government continues to rely on non-government providers to provide ECCE, some mechanisms to ensure that poor children can access these schools.

The detailed report has been published in the Bernard Van Leer Working Papers in Early Childhood Development series as Working Paper no 59 and is available on the Young Lives website: www.younglives.org.uk/publications/WP/delivering-quality-learning-low-resource-settings-Ethiopia

Community-based Promotion of Essential Newborn Care and Skin-to-skin Care by Health Extension Workers: Results from the Evaluation of a Pilot Programme in Four Regions of Ethiopia

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Background

Since 1990, Ethiopia has experienced a significant reduction in its neonatal mortality rate, partly due to interventions such as Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC) – a technique composed of skin-to-skin contact (SSC) between a mother and her baby, and frequent and exclusive breastfeeding.

Despite having a KMC policy for several years, KMC services are not widely available across all Ethiopian health facilities. This report provides the results from the evaluation of a feasibility study to promote KMC at the community level through Health Extension Workers (HEWs). The specific objectives of this evaluation were to assess:

- The coverage of community-based KMC (CKMC) interventions and other neonatal health interventions related to MCHIP programming in Ethiopia.
- The knowledge and acceptability of CKMC among postpartum mothers in the pilot area.
- Compliance with KMC among mothers of low-birth weight (LBW) newborns.
- The effects of HEWs' promotion of CKMC and other newborn care interventions on utilisation of facility-based delivery and newborn services.
- HEWs skills and knowledge for promoting KMC in the community.

Methodology

The evaluation focused on the implementation of CKMC by Health Extension Workers (HEWs) in ten *woredas* within four regions of Ethiopia – Amhara, Oromia, Tigray and Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR). A baseline household survey was conducted to establish pre-intervention measures of coverage, including: i) antenatal care and counselling from HEWs; ii) exposure to counselling on newborn care and KMC; and iii) targeted newborn care practices including SSC, KMC, and other thermal care and breastfeeding behaviours. Following 18 months of implementation, an endline household survey was conducted in the same facility catchment areas as the baseline to assess the changes in the coverage indicators.

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to collect data:

- *Household survey methods:* to assess measures of specific care received from HEWs and other health workers/sources.
- *Qualitative Study:* to assess the barriers and facilitating factors for CKMC implementation.
- *HEWs' Skills Assessment:* to assess HEWs' skills of counselling and coaching mothers on KMC.
- *Routine Data Collection:* to monitor programme outputs and performance.

Selected Findings

Changes in coverage of KMC counselling and practice

- The CKMC intervention resulted in increased practice of elements of KMC for all newborns. However the coverage achieved for both home and facility births was lower than expected.
- Practice of elements of KMC for all births, including any skin-to-skin care, immediate breastfeeding, and feeding of colostrum, increased significantly in the intervention area, although the extent to which these increases could be attributed to community-based promotion by HEWs is unknown.
- Facility-based providers also received training to promote skin-to-skin care and other essential newborn care at the same time. Increases in the practice of SSC were higher for newborns delivered at a health facility than those delivered at home.

Programme intensity and support

- Skin-to-skin care and exclusive breastfeeding could be expected for home and facility births in areas implementing a community-based KMC approach.
- Low levels of contact by HEWs with pregnant and postpartum women, especially within the first week after birth were due to several factors including:
  - HEWs had multiple responsibilities and were expected to split their time between service delivery at the health post and working in the community.
  - HEWs did not have any means of transport available to carry out their community activities, which may have constrained their ability to reach more remote rural areas.
- Other health worker training and service quality improvement efforts also took place in the health facilities before and during the study implementation period. These had an effect on provision of SSC and helped to increase antenatal clinic attendance and skilled birth attendance.

HEW counselling skills

- HEWS ability to reach women with KMC counseling messages during the antenatal and postpartum periods, especially the first week after birth, was low due to the low levels of contact they had with women during these periods.
- Health Development Army volunteers also rarely visited women within the first week after birth, and therefore did not make any notable contribution to promoting the intervention.

Recommendations

This study was primarily intended to inform programmatic decision-making by the Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH) regarding whether and how to expand the community-based KMC intervention to other parts of the country. It recommends that the FMOH and implementing partners:

- Develop strategies for increasing coverage of home visits by HEWs during antenatal and postnatal periods. This is to ensure that pregnant and new mothers get the counselling and support they need to practice SSC.
- Strengthen the capacity of the Health Development Army to counsel and encourage pregnant women and new mothers to practice key essential newborn care behaviours including SSC.
- Integrate KMC promotion and support to pregnant women and new mothers and assess various mechanisms for increasing home visits during antenatal and postnatal period by HEWs and members of HDA.
- Commission a further study to follow up the outcomes of babies who received community-based KMC as compared with babies who were cared for in a facility to investigate any adverse effects with this approach.

Situation Analysis on the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Amhara and SNNPR Regional States of Ethiopia

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Introduction

In spite of commitments made by the government to eradicate it, child labour including its worst forms, continues to be a major problem for Ethiopia. While child trafficking for domestic services is highly common, studies suggest that children are also trafficked from rural to urban areas to perform a variety of jobs including street vending, manual labour and commercial sex.

Although assessments have been carried out to gauge the situation in the past, little is still known about the broad underlying economic, social and cultural conditions that lead to exploitative labour. The main purpose of this situation analysis was to generate evidence of the worst forms of child labour (WFCL) in Amhara and Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Regional (SNNPR) States with the aim of establishing a systematic and comprehensive information-base to inform both policy and practice by Save the Children and its partners. The objectives of the situation analysis were to:

- Describe the current magnitude, prevalence, forms (types) and driving factors of WFCL and the trafficking of children for labour.
- Describe community knowledge and attitudes towards child labour.
- Identify the influence of informal social support for children in harmful working conditions, especially in time of distress.
- Identify existing formal and informal social support services and their availability and accessibility.
- Identify current intervention policy/legislation and programming gaps/challenges in addressing WFCL.
- Create a profile of the children involved in harmful work activities.
- Provide recommendations for interventions to respond to the problems of WFCL and help protect children from child trafficking.

Methodology

The study used a mixed methods approach to collecting data, combining the use of quantitative tools such as document reviews and household surveys with qualitative methods such as life history interviews and focus group discussions.

This analysis was conducted in 1792 households (896 per region) in ten towns and *woredas (six rural and four urban)* in Amhara and SNNPR. The research participants included children exposed to WFCL, their parents/guardians, public sector employees and community members.

Selected Findings

The findings of the analysis were presented under nine broad headings:

Magnitude of child work and WFCL

- 75.5 per cent of the children interviewed were engaged in some kind of work such as housekeeping. 53.6 per cent of these have experienced WFCL as they have been working for more than the appropriate working hours specified for their respective ages by international standards.

Types of WFCL

The most common types of worst forms of child labour were found to be similar across both regions.

- *In Amhara:* Renting children for child caring, weeding, cattle keeping, petty trade and street vending at night, engaging children in commercial sex and allowing children to beg.
- *In SNNPR:* cutting false banana or 'kocho', carrying cereals for milling, cleaning out cattle houses or 'azaba', trafficking.

Driving factors for WFCL

- Household labour demand (30 per cent),
- Household financial problems relating to poverty (15.2 per cent)
- Household demand for additional income (12.9 per cent).
- Wanting to learn new skill, new jobs, and socialisation (17 per cent)

Three variables were found to be determinants of WFCL: i) the residence of the parents/guardians, ii) the age of the children, and iii) the parents'/guardians' awareness about child labour.

Profiles of children engaged in WFCL

- Children living in rural areas, girls and children between 12-14 years old experienced the worst forms of child labour compared to other groups.
- Boys were trafficked more than girls.

Knowledge of child labour

- 56.9 per cent of parents/guardians across both regions were aware of the minimum age for employment in Ethiopia. A total of 82.9 per cent were aware of compulsory primary education.
- 65.7 per cent of parents/guardians across both regions were aware of the rules regarding the employment of children under 14 years old. 57 per cent were aware of the rules concerning the engagement of children between the ages of 15-18 in hazardous labour.
- 51.7 per cent of parents/guardians knew how to seek guidance on matters concerning child labour.

Attitudes towards child labour

- 78.2 per cent of parents/guardians understood that engaging young children in labour could be risky/hazardous.
- 63.8 per cent of interviewees reacted against the suggestion that child labour should be legalised.
- 19.2 per cent of interviewees said that boys and girls should not complete their education equally.
- 36.2 per cent of interviewees were not ready to react against child labour.

Magnitude and availability of social support services for children in harmful working conditions

- The participants of the study in both regions unanimously confirmed that both formal and informal social support system were almost non-existent in their community.
- The support available was found to be inconsistent, fragmented, non- coordinated and inaccessible.
- Informal social support systems were relatively better in assisting children exposed to labour exploitation than formal social support systems.

Gaps in existing programmes

Key programme gaps were found to include:

- The absence of awareness creation and attitude change structures/systems related to worst forms of child labor that work.
- Insufficient programme intervention that addresses WFCL.
- Low operational capacity of key stakeholders at the grassroots.
- Weak networking and collaboration among key stakeholders.

Policy/legislative gaps

- Knowledge on how to reduce WFCL among legislatives bodies is weak.
- There is a lack of ratified key international instruments and proclamations regarding the minimum age of employment in Ethiopia. Housekeeping domestic activities are not covered in current proclamations as dangerous/risky.

Recommendations

The situation analysis concludes with the following recommendations:

- *Improve livelihood status of households:* The situation analysis found that the main driving factors for child labour are poverty and household demand for additional income. Improving household livelihoods can reduces children engagement in WFCL.
- *Focus on vulnerable children:* Protection and integration activities of the public sector need to give emphasis to vulnerable children such as girls and children between 12-14 years of age.
- *Sensitise public opinion and mobilise public support:* The fight against WFCL needs to happen at levels.
- *Create awareness intervention at the community level:* Knowledge and attitudes of the community can be changed through continuous, targeted, and tailored activities at the grassroots level.
- *Improve schooling system:* Schools need to emphasise the importance of education for children at risk from WFCL. Subsidising the costs of school uniforms and learning materials could also help to encourage attendance.
- *Create awareness and advocacy on policies/legislation:* to enable decision-makers to effectively implement existing policy frameworks and to formulate new policies.
- *Build capacity for key stakeholders with a duty of care:* that focuses on both technical and financial support to children and families at risk.

Good Practices and Lessons Learnt on the Multi-sectorial and Multi-stakeholders Approaches in Child Protection at Adama Town of Oromia Region, Hawassa Town of SNNPR, and Addis Ababa

Belay Hagos and Tirussew Teferra
Save the Children

Background

Violence against children, child abuse, neglect, and exploitation are all problems that require systemic and coordinated efforts to proactively address them. The purpose of this study was to document how community based multi-sector and multi-stakeholder approaches contribute to child protection and to identify lessons and best practice to inform replication. The objectives of the study were to:

- Document the impact or changes that the project has brought in ensuring the access to child friendly protection services for children and care providers.
- Capture the contributions of the coordinated efforts of different government and non-government sectors, partners, and other stakeholders in achievement of results through the project.
- Identify lessons and gaps of the project implementation and suggest practical recommendations on ways forward.

Methodology

The study assessed child protection approaches implemented by Save the Children and the Forum on Sustainable Child Empowerment (FSCE) in Addis Ababa and Adama and by the Mary Joy Development Association (MJDA) in Hawassa.

Qualitative data was generated from interviews, focus group discussions, observations, and document reviews. Methods of data analysis included transcription of primary data and translation into English, quantitative analysis of the secondary data, thematic essence extraction and photo voice – a group analysis method combining photography with grassroots social action.

In Addis Ababa data sources included members of:

- The Women and Children's Office, community police, children's parliament, girls' clubs, Addis Ketema School teachers, the public mobilisation office;
- *Iddir* (funeral association) leaders, community project committee members, community conversation facilitators, FSCE programme officers, FSCE safe home, families, teenagers, and school club members.

In Hawassa:

- The Mehal Ketema sub-city police, Women and Children's Office, Child Friendly Court, Hawassa Referral Hospital, Schools teachers;
- Community conversation facilitators, peer mothers' group, *chimesa* (elderly people) *Iddir*, the Association for National Planned Programs for Vulnerable Children, social workers, toll-

free police hotline service operators, MJDA programme officers, families, and teenagers and school club leaders.

In Adama:

- The Women and Children's Office, community police, children's parliament, girls' clubs, Addis Ketema School teachers, Communications Office and Public Mobilisation Office;
- *Iddir* leaders, community project committee members, community conversation facilitators, FSCE program officers, FSCE safe home, families, teenagers, and school club members.

Findings

Community Based Multi-Stakeholders Approach in Child Protection

At structural level:

- Proactive measures focussed on prevention of children from various forms of violence, exploitation and neglect.
- Formal and non-formal structures worked together and with the community with the mutual goal of child protection.
- Structural leadership was committed and proactive.
- The informal structure of *Iddir* helped to make use of local wisdom – *Mekari Shimagile* (elders giving advice)– to resolve conflicts.

At community level:

- Community conversation played a pivotal role in changing the community.
- Community sense of ownership and commitment increased.
- Relevant stakeholders were brought together for the same goal of child protection.
- The community influenced and convinced brokers and child traffickers to stop.

At family and children level:

- Families became economically empowered and their businesses improved. Children have been saved from various forms of labour exploitations and sexual abuse.
- Some vulnerable teenagers were supported with skills training and counselling. As a result, they have been protected from labour exploitation, sexual abuse and exploitation.
- Many out of school children including working children accessed non-formal and formal school enrolment.
- Children's participation in schools and in their communities increased; schoolgirls' clubs proactively engaged to support peers.

Integrated Approach against Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation

At structural level:

- Networking and coordination among child-focused organisations and sector offices in Hawassa City resulted in the smooth flow of information and a fast response to the needs of abused and exploited children.
- Organisations have worked together to develop a service directory indicating what type of services they provide.

At community level:

- MDJA ran community conversations that inspired community volunteers to become responsible for protecting children in their community.

- Members of the Coffee Ceremony were instrumental in changing the awareness of the community about child protection.
- The *Hawassa Iddir* coalition, consisting of 128 member *Iddir* Associations upgraded their bylaws to include a statement on child protection.

At family and children level:
- Fathers and elderly men were convinced by the community facilitators to collaborate towards protecting children in their communities.
- Some mothers adopted children in especially difficult circumstances and raised them together with their own biological children.
- Some teenagers received skills training and become empowered – some even support other orphan children.

Conclusion

As a result of the approaches implemented, the awareness, participation and commitment of the community members towards child protection increased and the lives of target children and their families improved.

The study identified five examples of best practice that could be replicated by other programmes aimed at scaling up these approaches in different settings.

1) Networking among stakeholders

The coordination between target children and families and duty bearers of sector offices was found to be good in all three sites. This coordination has resulted in better responses to the needs and rights of the target children as well as direct positive impacts to the lives of children themselves.

2) Community sense of ownership of the problems and solutions

The study found that both FSCE and MJDA were good at facilitating and motivating members of the community, including children, to realise existing problems at the community level and to take initiatives to address them themselves.

3) Contextually relevant approaches implemented within the same city

For instance in Adama city, community members in Kebele 01 identified the lack of access to education as an priority issue, while the other community members in Kebele 06 raised child sexual abuse as an matter requiring urgent attention. Child sexual abuse and abduction was highlighted a major issue in Hawassa city.

4) Using existing local human and material resources

All three approaches capitalised on the existing structures such as *Iddir* associations, peer mothers group, and sector offices to work towards protecting children's well being and development.

5) Using community volunteers to facilitate child protection issues

As a result of using community conversation tools, members of the community have begun to take ownership of child protection issues. Committed volunteers have begun to take over the mission of protecting children.

Using SenseMaker™ Story Collection to Understand Girls' Education in Afar

Rita Ferrio on behalf of GirlHub, Ethiopia

Introduction

Ethiopian society has been changing rapidly during the past ten years: child mortality has fallen, access to healthcare has improved and advances have been made in primary education. Yet challenges for the country's children, especially girls, remain.

Since 2011, Girl Hub has been seeking to improve the lives of adolescent girls in Ethiopia. The programme is a part of Girl Effect, the overarching global movement that prioritises investing in adolescent girls so that they may achieve their full potential. It is also one of six partners in the Pastoralist Girls' Education Support (PAGES) consortium working in Afar to ensure that girls living there achieve their right to education.

As part of the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework of PAGES, Girl Hub applied SenseMaker, an innovative narrative-based research methodology that uses storytelling to identify quantifiable patterns from qualitative data. By collecting girls' stories through SenseMaker, the programme aimed to:

- Understand the value, purpose, perceptions and relevance of education in the region.
- Provide PAGES with information that can be used to adapt education materials.
- Help PAGES listen to what is relevant to people in Afar in terms of education.
- Give PAGES the space to test assumptions about education content.
- Assess the feasibility of using SenseMaker in the future as an M&E tool for the PAGES project.

Methodology

Four data collection methods were used in this study: SenseMaker storytelling, interviews with girls, notes from debriefing sessions with data collectors and data collector observations and reflections.

One hundred households were selected from the implementation *woredas* of Mille, Chifra, Semurobi, and Hadilella, half of which were selected from the highlands and half from the lowlands of Afar. The team also conducted a final round of pre-testing of the data collection instrument in Gewane *woreda*. Educational learning outcomes for a hundred girls, while not described in this report, were tracked for comparison.

Eight data collectors conducted the study over the course of 12 days of data collection. After each day of data collection, the senior researcher led a debriefing session with interviewers for 60-90 minutes regarding their experiences of that day.

Findings

While some findings overlapped with the baseline data collection, the SenseMaker study unveiled some of the complexity that underlies the gap between positive attitudes towards education and contracting behaviour towards education.

Feelings about girls' education
- Girls reported more feelings of withdrawal and resentment in telling their stories about a girl's experience with education, while caregivers tended to be more optimistic.

Perceptions about education
- Helping a girl help herself, her family and her community to overcome poverty was understood to be the main purpose of education.
- Many believed education empowered girls at the expense of their family and community.
- Girls perceived that a girl's education helped her community significantly more than adults did.
- In Hadilella, there were some unique cultural patterns. Girls thought family beliefs about education played a more dominant role in a girl's attending school. Caregivers thought women in the family contributed most to the decision of sending a girl to school, while girls thought men in the family were the dominant decision-makers in this respect.

Decision making about girls' education
- While a father may chose when to enroll a girl in school, the day-to-day choice of attending school was up to the mother.
- Religious and clan leaders appeared to have an extremely limited influence on whether a girl went to school or not.
- When a quality school is available nearby, even dropout students may choose to return to school.

Overcoming barriers to girls' education
- Older brothers played a key role in supporting girls' education in their families.
- Stories were told that illustrated how families shared household chores to support girls' school attendance. For example, fathers herding goats and mothers fetching water.
- Many told stories of girls who got married and continued their education.

Relevance of education to the Afar
- The introduction of additional subjects such as the Afar language, health, hygiene and veterinary studies would make education more relevant to Afar communities.

Lessons about the SenseMaker process
Some of the lessons learned that could help guide future implementation include:
- Do not have respondents wait in a common space to be interviewed.
- Ask supervisors and enumerators to ensure confidentiality.
- Use women as data collectors but use local men as logistic supervisors and enumerators.
- Interview parents after girls.
- Clarify expectations about incentives.
- Involve local government in the dissemination of results.

Recommendations

- Discuss study findings with key project management staff to identify the implications for project implementation.
- Do not prioritise supply-side barriers at the expense of demand-side barriers, but allocate resources to each over time.
- Lay out specific, distinct recruitment and retention strategies by increasing the number of topics taught in school that are relevant to Afar communities.

- Consider communications that emphasise success stories of educated girls supporting themselves, their families, and their communities in order to overcome the belief that when education helps the girl it harms the family.
- Educate the community on the importance of continuity in education for girls.
- Continue the SenseMaker study a year after the project's implementation.
- During the second round of the SenseMaker study, use very small teams (two to four collectors as most) to collect data from the homes of respondents.
- Revise all evaluation data collection tools to specify the distinction between school enrollment and school attendance.

Note

Note

About the
Child Research and Practice Forum (CRPF)

The need for a link between research, policy and practice on the issues of children in Ethiopia resulted in the establishment of a Forum through which practitioners, policy makers and researchers come together to discuss research findings to improve practices and provide inputs for policy design and implementation.

The idea was proposed during a consultative workshop, organized by Young Lives, for preparing a study on orphans and vulnerable children (OVC). Workshop participants raised the concern that research on all aspects of children's lives was often not shared and made easily available so that it can be useful for practitioners and policy makers. The idea was further developed through a series of discussions and consultations with Young Lives' partners, leading to the establishment of the CRPF.

It now has a coordinator hosted by Young Lives and an 13 member Steering Committee composed of representatives from the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs (MoWCA), the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the African Child Policy Forum (ACPF), CHAD-ET, Concern World Wide, Consortium of Christian Development Associations (CCRDA), Forum on Sustainable Child Empowerment (FSCE), Norwegian Church Aid, Oak Foundation, Plan Ethiopia, Save the Children UK,

UNICEF, and Young Lives. It also holds constrictive dialogues with the Ministries of Education, Health, Justice, and Culture and Tourism, and representatives from these Ministries have been attending the Forum and contributing greatly.

The overall goal of CRPF is to create a stronger connection among research, policy and programmes related to children in Ethiopia. It has also the following specific objectives:

1) Communicate new research from Ethiopia, the region and globally and other new documents related to children to a wide audience;
2) Promote the usage of existing (online and physical) resource centers;
3) Facilitate dialogue and consultation among researchers, policy makers and practitioners working on children's issues; and
4) Provide practitioners with the skills to use research to strengthen their programmes for children.

To this end, it has launched a monthly seminar series, which is conducted every last Thursday of a month at MoWCA. The monthly seminars are always open to policy makers, researchers, practitioners and any other interested individuals to participate both as presenters and participants. *Anyone interested is most welcome!*