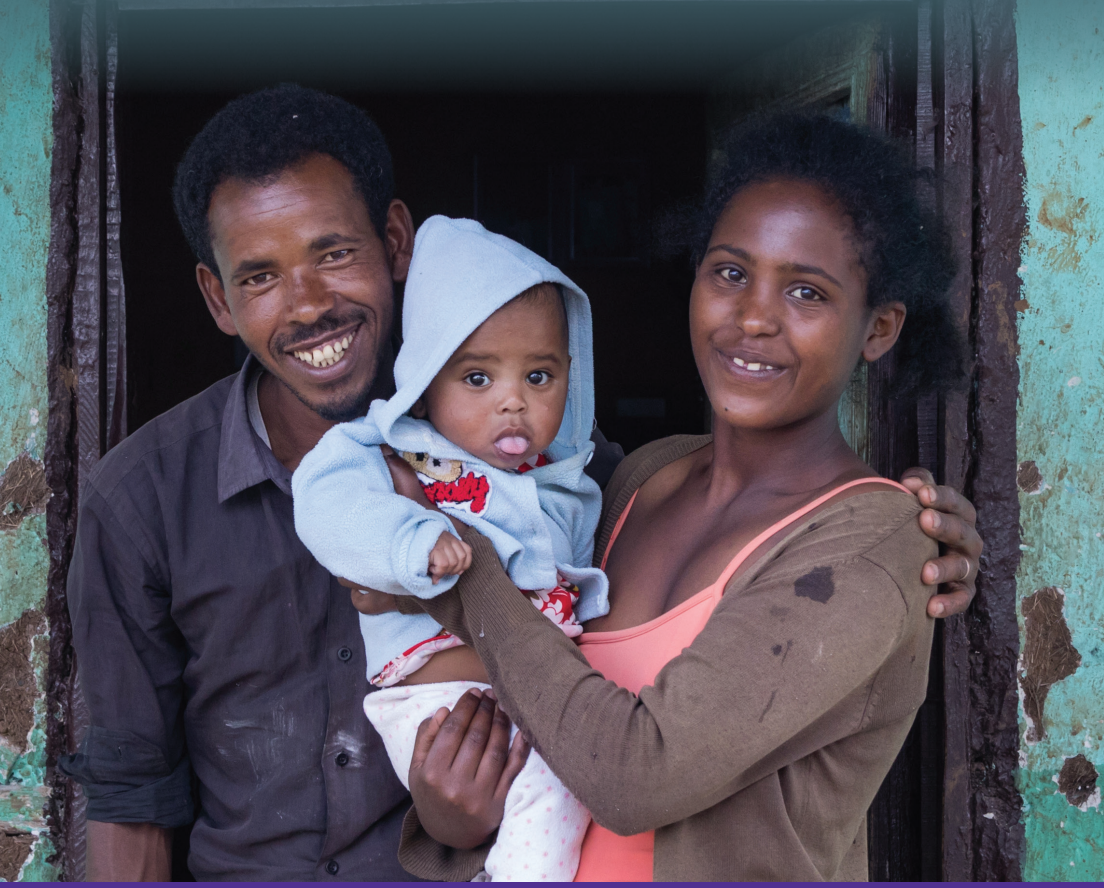
Improving Children's Lives through Research

Child Research and Practice Forum

Ministry of Women and Social Affairs



Summaries from Presentations at the Monthly Seminar Series of the *Child Research and Practice Forum* in 2020

Improving Children's Lives

through Research and Dialogue *Child Research and Practice Forum*

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Foreword by H.E. Dr Ergogie Tesfaye,

Minister, Ministry of Women and Social Affairs

Edited by Alula Pankhurst
Addis Ababa
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Improving Children's Lives through Research and Dialogue

Summaries from Presentations at the Monthly Seminar Series of the *Child Research and Practice Forum* in 2020

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The CRPF 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 CRPF is also indebted to all the steering committee members for their commitment towards ensuring the success of the Forum's activities. Special thanks go to Yibeyin Tesfaw from MoWCY for organising the monthly events, and to Kiros Berhanu, Agazi Tiumelissan and Biruh Aynekullu from Young Lives for their role in coordination work and preparing the quarterly newsletters. We wish to thank Martha Kibur from UNICEF for support in organizing the meetings.

The CRPF is most grateful for the support of UNICEF and FCDO Ethiopia that have covered the coordination costs for this year's activities. Finally, CRPF extends its appreciation to Young Lives that enabled the production of the summaries of presentations included in this book.

Dedication

This book is dedicated to the memory of Dr Gina Crivello

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Population Council

RISE research programme

Save the Children

UNICEF

Young Lives Ethiopia

Foreword

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

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 newly established merged Ministry of Women and Social Affairs. The CRPF has organised monthly seminars for twelve years and has provided a useful network for discussion and dialogue concerning children and youth in Ethiopia with a view to promoting improvements in policy and practice.

The CRPF provides an important regular opportunity for research findings on children's issues to be presented at our Ministry on a monthly basis to stimulate discussion between our experts, those of other ministries, development partner and non-government organisations about issues facing young people in our country. The discussions can contribute to designing better policies and programmes to improve the lives of women, children and youth.

The CRPF has a mailing list of over 900 subscribers and produces quarterly newsletters highlighting key findings from presentations at the monthly seminars. The Forum also prepares annual books with summaries of the research presented during each year.

This collection of summaries of presentations made at the Child Research and Practice Forum during 2020 is the tenth annual summary produced by Young Lives. The earlier summaries (2011 to 2019) are available on the Young Lives Ethiopia web-site (www.younglives-ethiopia.org/child-research-and-practice-forum).

This edition comprises 14 summaries of presentations covering a wide range of issues relevant to children and young people in Ethiopia, including overall policies and plans, including on the 10 year plan presented by the former Ministry of Women, Children and Youth, and research results with policy and programme implications on a variety of subjects.

The topics addressed include presentations on multidimensional and urban child poverty, early learning and education of children and the role of parenting, migration of

girls and young women and the role of brokers, shifting norms and practices in female genital mutilation/cutting, youth personality development centres, and the various challenges of adolescents' transitions to adulthood including from education to work, youth employment, fertility, marriage and divorce.

Our Ministry would like to thank the United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office that has covered the costs of running the CRPF and the production of this collection and Young Lives that has produced this and earlier edited collections, and UNICEF that has sponsored the monthly events.

We look forward to further regular presentations, newsletters and annual summaries from the CRFP and further collaboration with UNICEF, Young Lives and other partners in continuing the important work of the Forum.

Preface

Dr Gianfranco Rotigliano
UNICEF Representative in Ethiopia

The Child Research and Practice Forum provides a valuable network and a regular venue for research findings on women, children and youth to be discussed on a monthly basis and can contribute to improvements in policy and practice.

UNICEF has been supporting the CRPF since its inception 12 years ago and has collaborated with the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth (MoWCY) and from this year with its successor the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs (MoSA) in the organisation and management of the Forum together with Young Lives.

The CRPF sends the presentations made at the Forum to its members that number over 900 individuals and organizations. The CRPF has been publishing quarterly newsletters and annual summaries which are printed and distributed through the network and are also posted on the Young Lives website.

This annual book includes 14 summaries of presentations held in 2020 which include some important issues. Among these are the MoWCY ten-year plan and comments on the section on children, as well as summaries from several UNICEF-sponsored studies. These include presentations of findings on multidimensional poverty and children's views on urban poverty.

This book also includes five presentations based on the UNICEF-funded Young Lives fifth qualitative wave of research on transitions to adulthood carried out in 2019. These comprise summaries from working papers in which UNICEF staff were co-authors on a range of topics including transitions from education to work, employment and work experiences, fertility and childbearing, and separation and divorce.

Other important topics addressed in this book include an assessment of early literacy and numeracy, changes in norms and practices relating to female genital mutilation/cutting, the role of brokers in the migration of girls and young women, and an assessment of youth centres.

UNICEF has supported the production of earlier books of summaries and continues to support the regular meetings of the CRPF. We are pleased to see this book of summaries with findings that are relevant to current policy and practice published. We look forward to collaborating further with MoWSA and Young Lives in the production, discussion and dissemination of research results through the CRPF.

Women, Children and Youth Sector Ten Year Prospective Development Plan

Azeb Rezene,
Ministry of Women, Children and Youth[1]

Background

The Ministry of Women Children and Youth formulated a 10 Year Prospective Development Plan which extends from 2020 to 2030. The plan envisions Ethiopia becoming an African Beacon of Prosperity by 2030. The plan aims to ensure the economic, social and political participation and benefits of women, children and youth and to protect children's rights including through digital transformation.

The outline of the development plan includes the country vision and programmes, country policies, strategies and directives, roles and responsibilities allocated to the ministry by proclamation, SDGs and assessment studies, international and continental commitments and agreements, protocols and laws, and also the current context and economic, social and political needs and demands of women and youth, and the

[1]Presented on July 28 2020.AzebRezene is Capacity Building Officer at the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth.

implementation of the second GDP and existing pilots and experiences.

Women's sector

The major targets proposed were as follows:

- To increase the inclusion of women issues from 12.5% in 2020 in to 100% in 2030.
- To eliminate FGM in 2030 from 16% in 2020.
- To increase women's participation at federal level with the aim of reaching 50% participation women by 2030.
- To increase women's participation in middle level leadership to 50% by 2030 from 22% in 2020,
- To increase participation of women in executive bodies from 50% in 2020 in to 50% in 2030,
- To increase women's participation in legal formulation from 20.6% in 2020 in to 50% in 2030.
- To increase women's participation in decision making from 38.8% in to 50% in 2030.

Children's sector

- To increase the number of children benefiting from alternative care from 4,638,963 in 2020 to 15 million by 2030.
- To increase number of Children's Parliaments from 8,428 in 2020 in to 20,015 by 2030.
- To eliminate child marriage by 2030 from 40.3% 2020.

Youth sector

- To increase legal reforms on youth from 11.2 % in 2020 in to 36% in2030.
- To increase legal implementation from 12.2 % to 20% 2030.
- To increase Youth Centers from 2,854 in 2020 in to 10,000 by 2030.

Gaps and challenges

The main gaps identified included access gaps, policy gaps, insufficient studies and research, not having strong partnership and coordination, lack of strong monitoring and accountability mechanisms, limitations in access to services and the sector's structure.

Challenges indentified included biased views, gaps in legal implementation, lack of inclusiveness of women children and youth issues, insufficient representation of women and youth, incompatibility between implementation and duties, and HTPs and violence.

Strategic areas, aims, results and main activities

Resources, rights and representation were taken as strategic areas.

Rights

The plan aims to protect the safety of women, children and youth and ensure their rights are respected. The expected results are ensuring women, children and youth rights are respected and women, children and youth's safety being

protected. The main activities include establishing a national sex offenders' registrar, an anti-violence police task force and strengthening and increasing the numbers of rehabilitation centres. Activities under children section include establishing a children's social services agency and establishing and strengthening rehabilitation centres. The main activity under the youth section is establishing youth councils.

Representation

The aim of this strategic area is to ensure the participation and representation of women, children and youth. Results expected under this strategic area assuring women, children and youth participation. The main activities under the women's section is establishing an African Women's Leadership Centre, and reaching Gender participation parity of 50/50. The main activity under the children section is strengthening Children's Parliaments. The main activities under the youth section is ensuring youth participation and representation.

Resources

The aim of this strategic area is to ensure women, children and youth benefit from services and programmes. The

expected results are ensuring that women and youth's economic and social benefits are assured. The main activities under women's section are establishing a Women's Development Fund and Preparing a Women's Policy. The main activities under the children's section is assuring Universal Child Benefits, reviewing the Children's Policy and creating an enabling and healthy environment. The main activities under youth section are establishing a Youth Development Fund, revising the Youth Policy and promoting Internships and Apprenticeships.

Implementation means

Implementation means include the Children's Social Services Agency, Universal Child Benefits, Youth councils, African Women's Leadership Centre, Women and Youth Funds, Women's Market Centres and a communications strategy.

Children Social Services Agency

The proposed Children Social Services Agency will be a collaborative project with federal and regional bureaus of education and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The collaborative system will be linked by referral systems among the sector organizations.

Universal Child Benefits

Direct cash transfers will be provided for children aged 0-5 in areas where poverty, child marriage, trafficking, and HTPs are prevalent and support provided through mothers to ensure that children remain in school. Universal Child Benefits aims to improve child nutrition, quality education, foster citizens with a vision, improve health care and ensure healthy children's growth.

Youth Councils

Youth councils are an implementation means which will include personal advisors, volunteerism, vocational training, internship and apprenticeship.

African Women's Leadership Center

The centre will provide training, studies and experience sharing for African women. Prominent African women will share their experiences and selected policies for women will be designed and tested.

Women's Market Centres

The Women's Market Centres aim to ensure that women can benefit from economic development, to enable them to improve the economic status of their households, educate and feed their children and bring them up healthily. The centre will provide spaces where women can showcase and sell their products.

Women, Children and Youth Sector, 10 Year Prospective Development Plan: Comments on Children's issues

Dr Alula Pankhurst,
Young Lives Ethiopia[2]

Introduction

The Ministry of Women Children and Youth prepared a 10 Year Prospective Development Plan which extends from 2020-30. The Ministry identified and incorporated activities in the women, children and youth sectors taking into consideration the circumstances of the country and the sector. The following comments and reflections on the children's were presented to the Ministry of Planning along with the Ministry's presentation.

[2]Presented on July 30, 2020.Dr Alula Pankhurst is the Young Lives Ethiopia Country Director. He was selected to be the advisor for the Ministry of Women Children and Youth Affairs on the Ministry's Ten Year Plan preparation and presentation to the Planning and Development Commission.

General Comments

The plan addresses the objectives, gaps and challenges relating to children; however, some issues could be emphasized further in the plan. These include the following points:

- Poverty affects children to a greater extent than the rest of society
- Since children's issues are multi-dimensional this requires greater inter-ministerial coordination
- Children's needs differ by gender and age so that age and gender-specific approaches are required.
- Participation of children and mothers in addressing issues that concern them is vital to promote participatory child development.

The proposed Children's Social Services Agency

Benefits of the Agency

- Implementation of National Children's Policy
- Protecting children and their access to services
- Coordinating support for Orphans and Vulnerable Children

- Addressing major concerns that affect children's lives and proposing ways to address these through implementation programmes.
- Ensuring the participation of mothers and children by conducting research and piloting different approaches

The agency could carry out research and implement programmes for children in difficult circumstances identified in the 2017 National Children's Policy. These can include orphans, disabled children, street children, migrants and displaced children, refugees and returnees, children whose families faced shocks, domestic and sex workers, children involved in crime, children who are living in extreme poverty, and children from pastoralists and agro-pastoralists families whose access to education is constrained

Issues of concern for children

The agency could work on key issues including the following**:**

- *Harmful Traditional Practices* and *Violence Affecting Children**,*** notably girls' circumcision, child marriage, girls' abduction, sexual harassment and rape, and physical and psychological abuse.

- *Child Trafficking***,** including domestic and cross-border child trafficking
- *Child Labour:* Ensuring that children work is appropriate to their age and not harming their education and safeguarding them from a heavy and dangerous work as noted in the 2012 National Action Plan on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour.

Suggested Focus Areas

Early Childhood Care and Education: There is a need for further investment in ECCE given the evidence of high returns and long lasting benefits that have been documented internationally and in Ethiopian notably through the research of Young Lives. Since this work involves different sectors, including health, education and women and children's affairs this requires multisectoral coordination and further efforts to expand day care centres and improve the quality of O-class and kindergartens

Nutrition: Research evidence points to the importance of not just adequate early nutrition but also diet diversity in the early years. The Young Lives research has also demonstrated that

children who have been undernourished can recover, so that more emphasis should be given to day care and school feeding programmes.

Adolescence and growing gender differences and risk for girls: During adolescence, gender differences widen which increases the risks girls face, including child marriage, abduction and FGM/C.

Promoting appropriate healthy environments for children's upbringing: The Agency could play a big role in promoting the creation of suitable environments for children's wellbeing that are free from addictive surroundings and harmful influences.

Focus on creating playgrounds: Improving and developing further playgrounds for children should be considered a crucial approach in the 10-Year Plan.

Cooperation, Coordination and partnership modalities

Vertical coordination and horizontal partnerships from Federal level down to the Kebele, requires greater intersectoral collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Health, the Justice sector, including in the role of extension workers. This also requires promoting greater

collaboration with non-state actors including NGOs, private sector, community, religious, voluntary institutions, continental and international agencies.

Piloting and assessing different approaches and monitoring of implementation of programmes including through research is essential to ensure quality and effectiveness of interventions.

Prerequisites for establishing the Agency

- Deciding and approving the *vision, mandate, objectives* and *structure*
- Working out a *budget* and obtaining approval and support
- Recruiting appropriate *personnel,* especially with social studies backgrounds
- Establishing a *Child Fund* for projects with both government and donor funding

***Universal* Child Benefits (UCB)**

The evidence from empirical studies from countries that have implemented universal child benefits (UCB) or child grants with high coverage rates indicates they can be an effective tool to reduce child poverty and overall poverty. The main

advantages, are that the universal approach is easier to administer, can reach more poor children, avoiding problems with targeting, and labeling or stigmatizing the poor, promoting social cohesion, giving the responsibility to families creating trust and promoting birth registration.

Myths and Challenges of UBC

Misuse: The assumption that parents may misuse the money e.g. for drinking, contradict studies which found no such evidence. Evidence also shows that MFI loans to women in Ethiopia are often successful.

Creates dependency: The amount provided is usually too small to create dependency (e.g. 100 birr per child)

Promotes fertility: The study on the seven African countries shows no evidence that transfers promote fertility. However, the transfers could be reduced for those having more than one child. Beneficiaries could be provided monthly cash transfers until their child is two years old, which .could have a strong impact not only on poverty but on stunting rates, as noted in studies on other countries.

Starting with a Pilot and evaluating potential for replicating and upscaling: A pilot could be started within some Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) woredas to test the approach and build an evidence base through a rigorous impact evaluation. Based on this, a child grant system could be scaled-up accordingly to cover all pregnant and breastfeeding women in PSNP, and beyond PSNP depending on fiscal space.

Faces of Poverty - Studying the Overlap between Monetary and Multidimensional Child Poverty in Ethiopia

Martha Kibur,
UNICEF[3]

Introduction

This study details the UNICEF Ethiopia and Central Statistical Authority expanded study on children's wellbeing in Ethiopia. The research builds upon the findings of the January 2018 report to better understand disparities between monetary and multidimensional poverty among children, in order to guide policies and programmes targeting the fulfilment of children's rights and needs. This understanding will help to identify children who have better access to market and public services, and whether this access leads to improvements in their standards of living and quality of life.

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[3]Presented on May 28 2020. Martha Kibur is Monitoring and Evaluations Specialist, Social Policy UNICEF. The research was published in July 2020 by UNICEF Ethiopia. www.unicef.org/ethiopia/documents/faces-poverty-studying-overlap-between-monetary-and-multidimensional-child-poverty.

Understanding whether higher income levels are sufficient for improvements in non-income indicators for children's well-being is essential for designing effective and efficient policies for improvements in child well-being. Furthermore, using separate measures for monetary and multidimensional poverty for children will help to develop better and more comprehensive pro-poor programming strategies and policy instruments for Ethiopia's reforms and the next national development plan.

This study uses the 2016 Household Income, Consumption and Expenditure (HICE) survey and the 2016 Welfare Monitoring Survey (WMS) to estimate the extent to which monetary and multidimensional poverty overlap and identify the most vulnerable subgroups of children who are affected by both or either type of poverty.

While the EDHS data used in the 2018 study had many individual, child-level indicators, which were suitably applied to a study of children's multiple deprivations, the survey lacked information on household consumption and expenditure levels.

The HICE and WMS datasets benefit from having been collected from the same sample of households, resulting in a rich source of data which provides insight into both the individual and household indicators of these household surveys in addition to household consumption levels which allows for deeper analysis into the relationship between children's monetary and multidimensional poverty.

The objectives of this study are to:

- Understand the relationship between monetary and multidimensional child poverty.
- Investigate to what extent monetary and multidimensional child poverty overlap at the national and regional levels.
- Investigate factors associated with deprivations in some dimensions (such as health, education, nutrition, and protection) and across certain social groups, vulnerable sub-populations, and regions.
- Generate evidence on how children's deprivations are linked to service provision and household financial resources.

Data

The Welfare Monitoring Survey (WMS) and Household Income, Consumption and Expenditure (HICE) survey datasets were identified as suitable for the construction of multidimensional and monetary poverty measures. The HICE dataset will be used for measuring monetary poverty, while the WMS will be used for multidimensional poverty measurement. The surveys were administered to the same sample of households for the two years of interest; 2011 and 2016.

Conclusions

- Monetary and multidimensional child poverty are complementary rather than substitute measures and both should be used in informing policies and programmes aiming to enhance children's wellbeing.
- The scale, intensity and nature of poverty and deprivation across geographical areas suggest that there are wide disparities in fulfilment of children's rights. Interventions and financing should adapt to the social realities of these variations.

- Availability and accessibility of basic services, including public infrastructure connecting communities to services, markets and jobs are critically important.
- Cash transfer programmes should be designed in a way that they can easily be scaled up during emergencies and crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Cultural and societal norms should be analysed in more depth to develop interventions aiming to improve child protection.
- For long-term and sustainable improvements in wellbeing, programmes and interventions tackling child poverty should carefully consider age-specific deprivations and poverty incidence and intensity.
- Substantial investments in the sectors of education and healthcare are paramount for sustainable improvements and breaking the trend of intergenerational poverty.

Recommendations

- Identifying the individual and household characteristics of three groups of children: 1) Children experiencing monetary and multidimensional poverty, 2) Children poor only multidimensionality, and 3) Children poor only monetarily, to inform design of suitable interventions for different types of vulnerabilities. Especially for children who experience overlapping monetary and multidimensional poverty, the design of such interventions requires in-depth inquiry of sources of deprivation of basic goods and services, including lack of public and private supply and provision, quality of existing services, and culture and norms. Bottleneck analyses and mixed methods research approaches focusing on priority sectors in regions with the highest levels of overlap between monetary and multidimensional poverty would help identify and address the root causes of child poverty in these regions.
- Gaining insight into differences in the nature of urban monetary and multidimensional poverty, especially among specific groups: slum dwellers, street children,

children without parental care, and children in humanitarian situations.

- Gaining insight into bottlenecks with service availability, accessibility and affordability across different geographical areas and across different population groups (urban/rural areas, slum dwellers, street children, children on the move/refugees/asylum-seekers/ internally displaced people).
- Assessing the adequacy of the monetary poverty line with respect to coverage of basic needs (goods and services) across different localities: urban areas, peri-urban/slum areas, small towns, and rural areas.
- Costing necessary private (household) expenditures across key sectors to ensure that all children's basic needs and rights are fulfilled—excluding what is publicly provided for in terms of goods and services—and comparing this figure to the poverty line; and
- Determining the extent to which knowledge, attitudes, and socio-cultural norms affect certain outcomes like utilization of healthcare services (especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic) and school attendance, and issues like prevailing harmful practices such as violence against children.

Ethiopian Children's Voices and their Views on Urban Child Poverty

Dr Yisak Tafere,
Commissioned by UNICEF Ethiopia[4]

The Ethiopian Central Statistical Agency (CSA) cites several factors contributing to urban population growth: natural growth, internal rural-to-urban migration (due to limited basic services and economic opportunities in rural areas), and other factors relating to the emergence of new cities and the expansion of old ones. Challenges in identifying the role, significance and relevance of different drivers translate into difficulties in planning and managing urbanisation. Nonetheless, it is clear that rural-to-urban migration is one of the most important driving forces of urbanisation, spurred by the seemingly better social services and living conditions in cities.

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[4]Presented on CRPF August 27 2020. Dr Yisak Tafere is the Young Lives Lead Qualitative Research and a researcher at the Policy Studies Institute. This study commissioned by UNICEF Ethiopia under the Social Policy and Evidence for Social Inclusion (SPESI) section was published in July 2019.
www.unicef.org/ethiopia/media/2981/file/Report%20.pdf.

While one in every ten rural to-urban migrants move in search of economic opportunities in urban areas (CSA, UNICEF, and OPM, 2015), most migrants move due to push factors including environmental degradation, lower agricultural productivity, inadequate social services and land shortages in rural areas. Only 5 per cent of migrants move with their entire family (World Bank, 2015a), and many children are living without their mothers in urban centers (6 per cent in Addis Ababa alone). Recent findings from UNICEF's Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Analysis (MODA) applied to Ethiopian data suggest that 42 per cent of all urban children are deprived in three or more of six dimensions and, even though child poverty remains predominantly a rural phenomenon, inequality prevails in urban areas.

Owing to limitations in existing data, a thorough assessment of the impact of urbanisation on child poverty in Ethiopia is an arduous exercise. While available secondary quantitative data provide useful information to describe the extent and possible characteristics of urban child poverty, important gaps still remain in the understanding of urban children's complex experiences of poverty, the factors associated with this poverty, and its consequences.

Conventional multi-topic household surveys used to assess household poverty also fail, in most cases, to depict the full extent and nuances of the poverty facing children—including children qualified as the most vulnerable (migrant children, street children, orphans and children with disabilities). Qualitative research is particularly suited to help fill these gaps, as well as evidence gaps on stigma, discrimination, social exclusion, physical safety, violence (in the household and/or the community), and the psychological and emotional turmoil that often affect children. Such subtle information is necessary to complement quantitative assessments and to tailor policies to reduce urban child poverty more effectively.

New qualitative evidence on children's experiences of poverty in urban settings of Ethiopia is thus provided in this study that focused on two sites – Kombolcha city (Amhara region) and the KolfeKeraniyo sub-city of Addis Ababa. The study draws on information gathered from focus group discussions (FGDs) and in-depth interviews (IDIs) with children aged 10-14 and adolescents from 15-17. Child and adolescent views and voices are complemented by those from adults, including FGDs with parents/ guardians, teachers, community and religious leaders, and a series of key informant interviews (KIIs) with government officials and representatives from

NGOs at local, national, and regional levels. The study offers a comprehensive picture of child poverty in Ethiopia, also drawing from children's own perceptions of poverty, its causes and consequences, and the impact of urbanisation on their daily lives.

Qualitative findings are compared and contrasted with innovative analysis of the Welfare Monitoring Surveys that took place twice, once in 2011 and once 2016 (WMS, 2011, 2016). Only urban households with children aged 17 years or younger were included in this work. Furthermore, a principal component analysis guided the formulation of wealth quintiles (based on the distribution of urban assets across urban dwellers), and highlighted significant changes in living conditions for the poorest households that occurred between the years 2011 and 2016. The study concludes with a discussion of policy implications based on these research findings.

Urban poverty as viewed and voiced by poor children: key findings from the qualitative research

Our qualitative data collection and analysis shed light on children's understanding of poverty, its causes and

consequences, and the impact that rapid urbanization is having on the life of children growing up in poverty in Kombolcha and Kolfe Keraniyo (Addis Ababa).

Definitions and experiences of poverty

Children in urban areas commonly describe living in poverty as having unfulfilled basic needs for food, shelter and clothing. This definition is homogenous across sites and gender and age groups, and is most often referred to by out-of-school children. Poor urban children in our study identified the poorest children in the community as the most vulnerable children (including orphans, street children, migrant children and children with disabilities), which was not the case in a previous comparable qualitative exercise undertaken under the Young Lives Programme.

Children discussed education deprivation at length, and they associated ‘being poor’ with ‘being unable to attend school’ because of indirect costs of schooling, such as transportation and uniforms. Boys commented that they are likely to be beaten by teachers if they fail to bring school materials. Girls are bullied and teased by classmates if they wear worn-out school uniforms. Welfare Monitoring Survey (WMS) data

suggest that those urban children (aged 14 to 17 years) belonging to the poorest wealth quintile are most likely to have never been in school.

Causes and consequences of child poverty

Determinants and consequences of child poverty

Children in Kombolcha and Kolfe Keraniyo enumerated similar determinants for child poverty, independently of their age, gender and school attendance. Unemployment and lack of reliable household income were often mentioned, with available jobs (as daily labourers) paying income that was meagre and insufficient to meet the households' basic needs. Younger children further related 'lack of income' with 'uneducated parents'; and older children and adults discussed 'laziness' and 'over-reliance on expected financial assistance'.

Family breakdown was also thoroughly discussed during the qualitative exercise as another leading determinant of urban child poverty, often due to parental divorce or death, unemployment or lack of household income.

Among the consequences of child poverty, FGD and KII participants mentioned a lack of school attendance and/or poor school performance, poor health and sanitation (at the household and community level), inability to access medical treatment (because of unaffordable costs) and social exclusion. They also reiterated the effects that street life has on children, and exposure to child labour exploitation. Younger children and migrant children are more likely to be engaged in hazardous manual labour because they are unaware of their rights, and they lack connection to social networks.

On the impact of urbanisation on child poverty

When discussing the consequences of urbanisation on their lives, participants in our qualitative study focused on environmental degradation, unplanned population growth, increased child labour and the dismantling of social capital. Urbanisation – in this case the excessively fast growth of urban areas – deepens the negative impact of child poverty on children's lives. While participants briefly mentioned some 'positive' effects of urbanisation (namely, greater availability of goods and better markets for small private businesses), the

discussion mainly revolved around the perceived negative effect of urbanisation on children's lives.

Policy implications

This study sets out key policy implications based on the qualitative (and secondary quantitative) evidence gathered in the field that is situated within a broader assessment of existing policies and interventions to address child poverty in (urban) Ethiopia.

Reaching the most marginalized and most vulnerable urban children first

Within the context of the urbanisation of poverty, a key challenge for policy interventions is to reach the most marginalized children first. This includes out-of-school and/or working children, who are often street children, migrant children, trafficked children or child domestic workers, those affected by violence reinforced by social norms, orphans and children with disabilities. Numerous interviewees in our qualitative research identified the need to focus on such children, including orphans and children with disabilities because they are the poorest among poor children.

Various crucial dimensions of poverty (and child poverty) including social exclusion, domestic and school violence, juvenile justice and harmful child labour practices have all, so far, remained omitted from national poverty-reduction strategies. Policy initiatives tend to be one-size-fits-all, with few specific measures to ensure they are tailored to meet the differential needs of children, starting from different needs of urban (and rural) children. Moreover, children's views and experiences of poverty have largely been omitted in policy-making, implying that children are not considered competent in shaping their own interpretations of poverty.

Furthermore, the technical design and implementation of programmes is often a source of challenges. Again, this is because the specific needs and vulnerabilities of different groups of children are disregarded. This is evident in the consideration of children's needs and characteristics as a 'crosscutting' issue that leads them to be passed over and receive no specific attention in policy-making. Distinct and concerted efforts will be required, in the scope of policy interventions, to locate the most marginalised groups, acknowledge them as separate agents, and incorporate gender and age dimensions in programming.

Reducing barriers to access basic services for the urban poor, multisectoral programming and synergies between formal and informal community-based organisations

Increased public spending and redistributive public finance (including progressive taxation) can reduce barriers to access basic services for the urban poor, together with multi-sectoral programming based on a clear definition of roles and responsibilities for all parties engaged. Poor children experience multiple vulnerabilities and suffer from multiple deprivations that need addressing through multisectoral responses. The Ethiopian government, international development partners and (international and local) non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society organisations (CSOs) should then undertake a systems approach in programme planning and implementation. This approach would facilitate identification of poor urban children as beneficiaries, engage in effective targeting, and promote better service delivery bridging different sectors and areas of intervention.

Participants in qualitative fieldwork under this research further advocated for cooperation between the local government, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and community

care coalitions (CCCs). NGOs and CCCs can play a vital role in identifying the poorest children living in and outside household settings, and connecting them to existing government programmes that can provide support.

Addressing the negative impacts of urbanisation on child poverty, and expanding income-support programmes

Social protection programmes targeting urban poverty should also adjust and adapt to the needs of the urban poor, and of urban poor children, and they should be tailored around those needs and separately acknowledge and address children's needs. Their guidelines should incorporate review and revision mechanisms based on lessons learnt and experienced failures (from similar contexts in other countries). This should especially hold for the first generation of urban safety net programmes, which are currently being introduced in Ethiopia and several other countries.

Moreover, actions that complement cash transfer programmes (including nutritional supplements, behavioural change training, programmes that address mental health or partner's violence or that encourages aspirations through increased social interactions) can strengthen the intended

impact of social protection programmes. These actions can also address many emotional, relational and socio psychological dimensions of poverty that are especially important to poor children.

Focusing on information, education and communication

After identification of potential beneficiaries, extensive communication and outreach should be tailored to the needs of the urban poor, and the needs of poor urban children in particular. Accordingly, messages reaching the urban poor of all ages with appropriate and trusted multi-media and community-based channels should be considered.

Equally important for information, education and communication (IEC) efforts is to contribute to changing social beliefs on poverty, and to empower the urban poor and poor urban children to take positive actions.

Addressing evidence gaps

This study concludes with a call for action to fill evidence gaps and to gather new qualitative and quantitative data on urban child poverty. Improvements in available data would allow a more comprehensive assessment of the drivers of child

poverty in urban settings, and would inform ad hoc policy interventions accordingly. Current evidence gaps include city-level population projections, disaggregated by gender and age groups, and information on the different roles played by the drivers of urbanisation, as well as information on whether children migrate alone or are accompanied by one or more adults.

Evidence on the living conditions of the most vulnerable children (MVC) is scant and insufficient to inform sound policy recommendations. To address this specific gap, it may be necessary to rely on atypical survey methodologies, given that children living in poverty, especially MVC, are often left out of traditional data collection methods. Data can be improved with the use of satellite and mobile phone data. Sampling frames should also reflect the rapid changes that urban environments often experience. To this end, survey frequency matters.

Finally, existing datasets can also be further probed to ascertain whether social protection interventions have provided any sustainable escape from poverty traps, and whether they helped to break the vicious circle of chronic urban child poverty. If existing research highlighted any promising effect from certain interventions, a follow-up study

may reveal whether those effects were just short-lived and how they could otherwise be sustained.

Collaborative Parenting in Ethiopia

Azemeraw Belay,
Save the Children[5]

Introduction

Ethiopia is a country with diverse cultures. Each ethnic group or community has its own unique culture and way of living, views about children, and culture-specific child rearing practices. Parenting in Ethiopia is not solely the responsibility of biological parents, it is also the responsibility of relatives, older children, grandparents, neighbours, and community members - it is a social and collaborative exercise.

Collective parenting provides a number of supplementary and alternative provisions of care and support and services at times when biological parents are temporarily or permanently absent.

[5]Presented on 30 January 2020.Azemeraw Belay is Head of Child Rights Governance, Advocacy and Campaigns for Save the Children in Ethiopia..

Objectives of the Study

This research tries to describe the existing collaborative practices that exist in different ethnic groups of Ethiopia.

- Explore the existing good collaborative parenting practices that exist in different ethnic groups/cultures of Ethiopia.
- Describe the roles of elders, older children, extended family members, and the community in collaborative parenting practices in different ethnic groups/cultures of Ethiopia.
- Provide practical recommendations both at programming and policy levels to support the strengthening of families and communities to sustain the existing collaborative practices.

Methods

Research Design: A qualitative approach with a descriptive focus to identify and describe existing good parenting practices.

Study areas: Amhara (Goncha Sisso Enesse and Feresbet town), Oromia (Bishoftu, Ars iBekejo, Bule Hora, Woliso, and

Adama); SNNPR (Wolkite, Hammer/Tourmi, Bensa and Konso Special Wereda); Addis Ababa (Wereda 3 in Addis Ketema Sub-city, and Wereda 2 in Yeka Sub-city), Somali Region (Jigjiga); and Afar (Semera).

Respondents: Children/adolescents aged 12-18 years, parents (women and men) community leaders, religious and cultural leaders, and government officials. A total of 64 participants 42 males, and 22 females).

Major Observations

The following are the major observations of the study.

Community parenting: Parenting here is taken as a collective survival and interdependence mechanism, where kin and social network of supports between households and families are neither a unitary phenomenon nor closed social entities, but which are intricately intertwined with the wider social networks of support.

As mentioned by Poluha (2004) as ‘mahiberawinuro’, one must take part in order to be a meaningful member of the community. Iddir, Senbete, Equb, Mahiber, Debo and other community network systems are seen as providing care and support for the needy.

Cultural and religious influences: A child in Ethiopia cannot be seen as a lonesome individual, but as someone who is connected into the social and emotional ties and fulfils obligations and participates in communities, starting with the family, kin and peer groups. Across all the cultures in this study, there is a progression of child care from the mother, to others in the family, to extended family members and to the community at large. And religious institutions mobilise resources from members to help destitute children and youth.

The role of the elderly: The elderly in Ethiopia are not merely dependents on others. They are rather highly respected people, whose opinions are consulted in many ways. Elders are the custodians of cultural information, and they pass first-hand cultural knowledge and norms to the younger generations. The elderly teach children and young people on how to continue 'positive' traditions, and about socially acceptable and unacceptable behaviours. In Ethiopian parenting, more emphasis is given to equipping children with knowledge and skills to fulfil their responsibilities and less emphasis on their rights.

Extended family system: According to EDHS (2011), the majority (88%) of Ethiopian children live with their biological

parents, followed by those who live with extended family members. Of those living with neither parents, 88% were living with relatives, showing the important role of the extended family system. Extended family members fill the family's resource (financial and material) gaps, and provide support and guidance for children.

The role of older children: Older siblings help their parents in caring for their younger siblings when parents are not in the house. They also act as mentors, tutors and advisors for their younger siblings and teach them about good behaviours. There are also those older children who assume total responsibility for the care of their younger children in the absence of their parents. The majority of these child-headed households are cared for mostly by girls, between the ages of 14 -18.

Kinship care practices: According to a study about kinship care by Save the Children (2015), 95.5% of the children aged 11-17 lived with relatives, aunts taking the lead with 38.6%. Only 4.5% of the children were living with non-relatives. *Guddifacha* is a good example from Oromia, and *Adera* from Amhara is another example whereby children who lost their parents will get protection and shelter from a close kin or

somebody entrusted by their deceased parents (Mebratu 2010).

Alternative community based child care options: Here the resources and indigenous knowledge are mobilized from the community with the ultimate goal of addressing the needs and rights of vulnerable children. Children without parental care are provided with care in the child's own community and within a family like setting. According to MoLSA (2017), it is possible to fulfil the emotional, social and spiritual needs of orphan and vulnerable children thorough community based children care, and effectively protect them from abuse and exploitation.

This program proved to have positive impacts for improving the livelihoods and psychosocial wellbeing of targeted beneficiaries; and facilitate the building of social capital in the target communities.

Summary and Implications

- Culture and religion have strong influence on parenting. Religious institutions play significant role in parenting and this has been appreciated by government officials and community leaders.

- Elders assume increasingly important roles in parenting.
- Two important community or cultural practices widely practiced in Ethiopia can be mentioned as examples of best practices that could be scaled up: *Guddifacha* and A*dera*.
- There is a need to build capacity of child headed households and extended family members on positive parenting; mentoring/supportive supervision; and helping in their education.
- Design interventions to prevent unnecessary family separation and placement of children in kinship care; improve access to quality education, health care and livelihood opportunities.
- Strengthen family and community based protection systems to ensure the protection of children.
- Improve data collection and management on children living in the informal care arrangement including kinship care.

Relations between Executive Functions and Early Literacy and Numeracy of O-Class and Grade-1 Students

Dr Belay Hagos,
RISE research programme[6]

1. Introduction

Early childhood experiences are critical for rapid brain, cognitive and language development.

The human brain develops most markedly in the first five years of life as almost 85 percent of the "sculpting" of the human brain's neurological architecture takes place between birth and age 5 (Heckman, 2011 in Blondin, 2011). Early Learning Program (ELP) has been considered crucial as this is the right time for optimal investment for later individual and societal success.

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[6]Presented on February 27 2020. Dr Belay Hagos is Director of the Institute of Educational Research at Addis Ababa University, and a member of the Research on Improving Systems of Education (RISE) programme.

Investing in early years of human development was found to yield a huge social and economic return. For example studies show that there is roughly about 8.6$ gains for society for every 1$ invested in early childhood care and education (Heckman, et al., 2010). Investment in early childhood education and development not only improves quality of education but it has also a great potential in breaking the poverty cycle.

Early childhood education programs are set up with the purpose enhancing children's readiness for the formal school. Contents of school readiness programs usually focus on socio-emotional development, fine and gross motor skills, pre-literacy and numeracy skills. The pedagogical approach is play-based active learning methods where choice of the learner on what to play, do and tell and the facilitator's role is on creating more opportunities including more open-ended questions for children to reflect on their experiences.

2. **Executive Function**

What is an executive function? Executive functions are the cognitive abilities needed to control and regulate our thoughts, emotions and actions. Executive functions are skills

necessary for learning, solving problems, coping and adapting with emerging challenges. Executive function includes behavioral controls, cognitive controls and emotional controls.

Behavioral Control has two components: 1) Response Inhibition which could be stopping an impulsive act (e.g., delay of gratification) and being able to think about the consequences before acting. 2) Shifting thoughts and flexibility of coordinated activities which could be expressed as transitioning from one task to another, preferred to non-preferred activity, letting go of a specific interest, and behavioral and cognitive shifting.

Cognitive Control is expressed in five components: 1) Task Initiation where one begins tasks independently without reminders; 2) Working Memory, where one sustains attention to task showing persistence, thinking about one's own thinking (Meta-cognition) and following directions /instructions properly; 3) Planning or Prioritization which includes planning ahead, being goal-directed and developing cognitive strategies; 4) Organizing Materials, such as backpack, folders, and desk; 5) Monitoring: Paying attention to what you're doing including monitoring errors.

Emotional Control is expressed as regulation of emotions (or self-regulation) such as “reactivity” to stimulation (i.e., temperament), soothing oneself and stabilizing and adjusting one’s feelings in times of difficulty. Development of executive function leads to regulation of reactions.

Success is associated with well-developed executive functions which becomes an alert and active mindset. Flexibly inhibit, manage and control of their behavioral, cognitive and emotional skills. For example, delay of gratification at age 4 was associated with later academic success at age 18 as measured by SAT score. Executive function is critically important in predicting developmental outcomes such as academic achievement, health behaviors and social adjustments.

Executive function can be developed, through the support of parents and teachers, by allowing more opportunities for children to do a variety of age appropriate real life exercises and problem solving activities through play-based approaches. Scaffolding, supporting and modelling the efforts and engagements of children can enhance the skills development in executive functions. Early intervention on self-regulation: E.g., using enjoyable

activities, yoga, music, aerobics, dancing, meditation, storytelling, martial arts, etc, can improve core executive functions.

3. **Problem statement**

Early childhood education is provided in a two to three year kindergarten (KG) program and a one year O-Class program. Besides, CtC and ASR are provided in contexts where there are no other opportunities of access to KG or O-class. The purpose of the ECE programs is to prepare children with foundational skills that make them ready for formal education: **school readiness**. Executive function is a foundational skill that needs to develop during early childhood period, which is the critical period for later development. Optimizing the school readiness program is possible if we understand the contributions of executive functions. The purpose of this study is to explore the link between executive function and academic skills such as pre-literacy and pre-numeracy skills. In light of this, this paper attempts to answer the following research questions:

- Is there any gender difference between the performance of boys and girls enrolled in O-Class and

Grade-One on pre-literacy, pre-numeracy and executive function?

- Do children enrolled in O-Class perform differently from those enrolled in Grade One on pre-literacy, pre-numeracy and executive functions?

- Do skills on executive function, gender and grade level predict pre-literacy and pre-numeracy performance?

- What lessons can we learn from the contributions of executive function?

4. **Methods**

A cross sectional survey design method was employed to collect data from O-class and grade one children (N=1144) in six regions in Ethiopia: Amhara, Benshangul-Gumuz, Oromia, SNNPR, Somali, and Tigray. Child direct assessment tool called Measuring Early Learning Quality and Outcomes (MELQO) was used in six languages: Amharic, Berta, Afan Oromo, Sidamu Afoo, Af Somali, and Tigrigna.

The adapted Measure of Early Learning Quality and Outcome (MELQO) – Measure of Development and Early Learning (MODEL) – Child Direct Assessment, pre-literacy (α=.919),

pre-numeracy (α=.912 and executive functions (α=.920) were used. The Measure of Executive Function used in this study included the Head Toe Knee and Shoulder (HTKS) tasks. Reliability and validity was established with sound psychometric characteristics

5. **Results**

Executive function was positively related with pre-literacy (.391), pre-numeracy (.514), and fine motor skills (.373), forward digit span (.319), and backward digit span (.422),There was no statistically significant relationship between gender and performance on pre-literacy (r=-.039, p>.05), pre-numeracy (r=-.041, p>.05), and executive functions (r=-.022, p>.05).

Since gender was not significantly related to pre-literacy, pre-numeracy and executive function scores it was statistically dropped out in the regression. The predictor variables were grade (age), gender, Executive Function (fine motor, forward digit span, and backward digit span and Head-Toes-Knee-Should, HTKS). The predicted variables: Pre-numeracy and pre-literacy scores.

A multiple linear regression was run to predict pre-literacy performance of children based on grade level and scores on executive function. A significant regression equation was found ($F(2, 536)) = 198.99$, $p<.05$, with an adjusted R^2 of .424. Children's executive function and grade level (or age) significantly predicted performance on pre-literacy tests. About 37.1% of the variance in executive function is associated with performance on the pre-literacy test. About 5.5% of the variance in grade level is associated with performance on pre-literacy test.

Still another multiple linear regression was run to predict pre-numeracy performance of children based on grade level and scores on executive function. A significant regression equation was found ($F(2, 1021)) = 473.35$, $p<.05$, with an adjusted R^2 of .480. Children's executive function and grade level (or age) significantly predicted performance on pre-numeracy tests. About 44.4 % of the variance in executive function is associated with performance on the pre-numeracy test. About 3.7% of the variance in grade level (or age) is associated with performance on pre-numeracy test.

6. **Possible takeaways**

What lessons can we learn from the contributions of executive function? MELQO is a valid measure of school readiness in the Ethiopian context. Executive function predicts well performance of children on pre-literacy and pre-numeracy scores. Besides, executive function is worth considering in the curriculum of ECE. To develop the skills on executive function, active learning pedagogical approaches need to be considered by educators, teachers and even parents. Designing early intervention by integrating executive functions might yield better developmental, behavioral and social outcomes.

Exploring changes in female genital mutilation/cutting: Shifting norms and practices among communities in Fafan and West Arsi zones, Ethiopia

Dr Getaneh Mehari,
Population Council[7]

Background

Globally, more than 200 million women and girls have undergone FGM/C. More than 50% of the 200 million girls and women live in three high-prevalence countries: Indonesia, Egypt, and Ethiopia. Given the increase in population growth, recent estimates show that the number of girls and women

[7]Presented on June 25 2020. Dr Getaneh Mehari was chair of the Department of Social Anthropology at Addis Ababa University. This research by Population Council was published as a Working Paper authored by Getaneh Mehari, Asabneh Molla, Ayantu Mamo and Dennis Matanda. Published on 1 February 2020.

www.popcouncil.org/uploads/pdfs/2020RH_FGMC-ShiftingNormsEthiopia.pdf.

subject to FGM/C will continue to rise in the coming years unless sufficient efforts are undertaken to encourage abandonment of the practice. A descriptive analysis of changes in FGM/C prevalence over time in Ethiopia shows that the percentage of women aged 15-49 years who report undergoing FGM/C has been declining. Despite the decline, the FGM/C prevalence is still high at 65% with new incidences of girls being cut frequently reported. Various interventions have been implemented in Ethiopia for decades with varying success—the prevalence varies across regions and cultures in the country. Notwithstanding the importance of social norms in driving FGM/C, we are not aware of studies that have undertaken an in-depth analysis of shifts in social norms and practices associated with FGM/C in Ethiopia. This study, therefore, explored changes in social norms and practices associated with FGM/C in two “hot spot” regions: Somali—a region with the highest FGM/C prevalence; and Oromia—the largest region in the country with a history of practicing FGM/C.

Methods

This inquiry was a cross-sectional qualitative study conducted in two administrative zones of Ethiopia: West Arsi (Oromia

region) and Fafan (Somali region). In-depth interviews and focus group discussions were used to collect data.

Results

Government agencies and local NGOs are the major actors engaged in the implementation of FGM/C interventions. Programme implementers used various approaches to inform community members of the consequences of practicing FGM/C and encourage them to abandon the practice. The main intervention approaches were community conversations, legal interventions, religious and health-risks approaches. Programme implementers faced various challenges in their quest to end FGM/C in the two study settings. These included: resistance from community members, lack of sustainability of anti-FGM/C interventions, poor selection of change agents, reluctance of religious leaders to fully support abandonment efforts, exclusion of boys in the implementation of interventions, and legal restrictions. Interventions implemented in the two study sites have had varied levels of influence on community values and deliberations. Changes in norms and practices observed in the two study settings varied significantly.

West Arsi embraced an increasing awareness of and community participation in enacting bylaws and enforcing the anti-FGM/C law. Community values and norms related to marriageability, purity, respect, and other perceived advantages of FGM/C were challenged. Changes in norms were followed by abandonment of the practice as evidenced by an increase in the number of girls abandoning FGM/C, uncut girls were getting married, social pressure on uncut girls and their parents was declining, and uncut girls were considered to be modern and educated. Despite changes in norms and practices, girls who decided to remain uncut were still subjected to pressure from mothers-in-law to undergo the cut during marriage. A newly married uncut woman may decide to conform to the norm (undergo FGM/C) if she thinks that her in-laws believe that she ought to (normative expectation) or that other women surrounding her marital home conform to the norm (empirical expectation).

The situation in Fafan was different. Shifts related to FGM/C were mainly limited to awareness of the health consequences of FGM/C. Significant alterations of FGM/C norms and practices were not observed. The association between FGM/C and marriageability, purity, virginity, and respect remained very strong. Abandoning FGM/C in Fafan involved

a high social risk as sanctions against uncut girls/women were severe. Abandonment of FGM/C was difficult as parents believed that other parents were cutting their daughters (empirical expectation); that community members expected every girl to undergo FGM/C (normative expectation); and that uncut girls would face negative sanctions including social exclusion. Despite slight changes towards the less severe type of FGM/C (Sunna cut) in urban areas, infibulation was still highly cherished and widely practiced.

Implications for programmes and research

Programmatic implications

- An integrative approach in programme implementation, with a clear focus on engaging community members in values deliberation, especially in West Arsi is likely to facilitate community wide FGM/C abandonment.
- Informed selection of change agents and building their capacity to facilitate normative behaviour change will be key in spearheading implementation of interventions to end FGM/C. Since health extension workers and religious leaders are highly valued and listened to in the community, their involvement in

programme implementation will be crucial in accelerating abandonment of the practice.

- Given that findings from the two sites present differing scenarios, there is no single set of interventions that will work in all settings. There is a need for tailored programming that is sensitive to the local realities.

Research implications

- A quantitative survey measuring communities' readiness for FGM/C abandonment is needed as a follow-up inquiry in both the West Arsi and Fafan administrative zones.
- Expansion in the application of vignettes and indirect questioning methods for sensitive issues such as FGM/C in contexts where social desirability is high.

National Assessment of the Effectiveness of Youth Personality Development Centers in Ethiopia

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Introduction

Young people aged 10–24 years constitute 28% of the world's population. In Ethiopia, the proportion of those aged 15 to 29 accounts for about a quarter of the total population of the country and the number of people in this age group is projected to rise significantly in the near future. Ethiopia is demographically a country of young people and it needs to do

[8]Presented on September 24 2020 by Dr Melese Getu, is Assistant Professor at School of Social Work at Addis Ababa University. This study was financially supported by the Federal Ministry of Women, Children, and Youth and was authored by Belay Tefera, Befekadu Zeleke, Melese Getu, and Yekoyealem Desie. It was published in the *Ethiopian Journal of the Social Sciences and Humanities* (EJOSSAH): V. 16, No. 2.

justice mainstreaming its developmental agenda along the needs of its young citizens.

Youth constitute the period in the life span characterized in terms of transition from childhood to adulthood. They are, on the one hand, replete with potentials such as vigor, optimism, and optimal physical functioning for high level productivity, community agency for development and positive socialization of the self. On the other hand, however, youth is a period of challenges, instabilities and quests for sense of direction and purpose that conspire against healthy transitioning to adulthood. Hence, youth services, opportunities, and support (SOS) need to be put in place to buffer the vice against them and orchestrate effective and healthy transitioning to adulthood.

“Services” are developmentally oriented activities provided by health systems, school settings and recreational projects /facilities/ or actions done to or for youth with the intention of enhancing health, safety, performance, and other forms of essential youth wellbeing and psychosocial functioning. “Opportunities” (to learn, explore, play, interact, try-out, serve, work) represent the extent to which youth are provided with meaningful and real experiences to practice and expand on

what they know and learn either through work, service, or non-formal learning in a more sustained manner. “Supports” are activities that are done with youth to facilitate access to interpersonal relationships and resources in any one or all of its forms: emotional, motivational, and strategic.

Youth centers are developmental settings in which services, opportunities, and supports are provided to young persons in an integrated and sustained manner. They have been a popular approach for engaging youth, particularly in urban contexts. They are considered as useful settings for enhancing young people’s participation and empowerment, and offering training in vocational and life skills. Youth centers have also been promoted as a means of bringing sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services to youth and providing safe places for youth to interact.

Recognizing the potentials of young Ethiopians and the optimism and contributions they have shown over the years, on the one hand, and the realization that such efforts were compounded by a host of internal and external factors, different government and non-government measures have been taken in the past decades to redress the needs of young person’s ranging from policy formulation to implementation of

the policies. Formulation of the Ethiopian Youth Policy (MoYS, 2004) was a major leap in working towards addressing the developmental needs of young persons in Ethiopia.

Working also towards implementing the designed policy and strategies, attempts were made to establish youth centers and avail services to promoting the development of young persons. In this regard, over 3,000 youth centers have been established in the country at large; though only about half of them (1,545 centers) were functional and the rest were not operational due to various problems. These centers were established based on a standard set forth for establishing, directing, and coordinating youth centers in which youth personality development centers are viewed in terms of four levels: model, multipurpose, medium, and small youth centers (MoYS, 2009b; MoYS, 2017).

In light of these experiences, the present study aimed to investigate the extent to which the youth centers in Ethiopia are serving the intended purpose of promoting the development of young people. Specifically, the study sought to examine the extent to which youth centers contribute to the positive development of youth in terms of promoting general positive impacts, constructive use of time, acquisition of

knowledge and experience, changing undesirable behavior, building personality, and development of job creation skills.

Data sources

This study is part of a larger national assessment on the effectiveness of youth personality development centers in Ethiopia. Hence, sample was drawn from all the nine regions and the two city administrations so that drawing inferences would be possible. Initially out of the total 3000 youth personality development centers in the country, 1,545 functional youth centers were taken as the sampling frame. Out of the 1,545 functional youth centers (see Table 1), 94 of them were drawn as a sample based on proportional stratified random sampling technique. Sampling of the centers was made in such a way that the different types/levels of youth centers in each region can be represented in the sample. The youth centers are classified into four levels/types based on the revised standard of youth personality development centers (MoWCY, 2017):

Model youth center: a youth center which is capable of providing 16 different types of services. *Multipurpose youth center*: The one which provides 12 of the 16 services that are

listed in the youth centers service provision standard guideline.

Medium level youth center: a youth center which provides 9 different types of services, and

Small scale youth center: a youth center which provides 5 of the 16 services listed in the youth centers service provision standard guideline.

Discussion

Youth centers are basically establishments that provide for the proactive than reactive, preventive than curative, educative than therapeutic needs of young people. Positive, strengths-based and pleasant experiences are characteristically built into these centers. They act as a hub for providing holistic and integrated services that ultimately ensure participation and empowerment of young people. Along this line, proliferation of youth centers in Ethiopia particularly in the last couple of decades underscores a changed philosophy of support for youth development that is indeed encouraging and promising. No matter how functional they are, over 3000 centers have been established so far. While there is a need for further expansion to address the

growing population of young people in this country, there is, on the other hand, a need for concerted efforts revamping those already in place. The study on which this article draws on was conducted to pave the ground for this revamping exercise by delineating the contributions and then draw implications for improving future engagements. Data were collected through direct observation of 94 youth centers and a structured questionnaire administered to a total of 2165 service providers and beneficiaries.

A lot of work and expenditure have been put forth in establishing youth centers in different regions of the country not because this in itself is a goal, but rather it is a means to expediting personality development of young people in the country. However, because of the fact that implementing these projects with the objective of establishing youth centers have been a very expensive, tiresome, and time consuming job, there seems to be a tendency to consider the exercise as an end in themselves. However, youth center establishment is rather the beginning or a means than completion of the work.

Youth centers should be viewed as a catalyst for change. If youth centers are developed in partnership with young

people, youth centers can be a useful way to provide young people with bits of information and services as well as providing them with a space to develop broader life skills and personality. Youth centers can provide invaluable contributions if they are safe, enriching, and supervised environments for children and youth during out of school time.

At the youth level, the contribution of youth centers to youth personality development was noted from the data suggesting that youth centers can be valuable resource for young people and communities and provide a second home (where young people can relax, feel safe and have fun) and school (where young people acquire experience that build their knowledge, skills, and desirable habits). However, it was also found, in this connection, that although the contributions of youth centers may not be contested, the level of sustainable and positive impacts associated with these centers do not seem encouraging. In fact, when the good fails to conquer the mind, it may open the gate for the evil to take hold. When the farmer fails to cultivate the land and plant seeds, then it is the law of nature that the unwanted weed gets the chance to prevail on the farm land.

It is noted, on the one hand, that strong positive impacts are not taking hold. In the absence of this, evidences seem to unfold, on the other, that some negative impacts are taking hold basically showing unsupervised, unmonitored, unguided and, more importantly, non-participatory services. Particularly, youth participation should not be negotiated by putting young people in the periphery from their own affairs; but need to be viewed as equal partners in developing the center, its activities and management.

At the community level, youth centers also present an important opportunity to facilitate community change and to open a dialogue within the community on challenging issues; despite the fact that this has not been the case of the youth centers examined in this assessment. A number of projects have demonstrated that wide-scale community change and acceptance of young people's wants and needs is possible when parents and community and religious leaders are trained on youth services and enabled to support youth programs. Moreover, it is becoming increasingly apparent that service approval by young people is stimulated more by community acceptance of young people's needs than by creating new youth services.

At the national and/or political level, youth centers should be seen as an important advocacy tool which can be used by organizations and communities to lobby for change. A successful youth center – which engages young people and their communities in young people's priority demands and rights – provides an ideal platform from which to advocate for the improvement of national youth policies and for the inclusion of young people's wants and needs in diversified service delivery policies and guidelines. Youth centers can also provide a place from which new and innovative policies and practices can be implemented, with feedback provided to relevant policy makers and practitioners in different fields.

Conclusions and implications

In the light of the findings presented, we can generally conclude that the effectiveness of the youth center is not as much meaningful as it is supposed to be.

Firstly, although establishment and proliferation of youth centers is very encouraging, it appears, however, that this exercise in itself seems to have become a goal rather than a means for expediting personality development of young people.

Secondly, positive contributions were not, therefore, loudly evident on the beneficiary youth; some evidence also indicate possibilities for negative impacts though to a lesser extent.

Finally, differences were noted in terms of the above measures by respondent type (usually service providers giving better impressions as expected) and level of youth centers (those providing more services apparently receiving better ratings).

The following measures can be taken to address some of the major problems and related other concerns:

- Strengthening the youth centers by improving the quality of services would enable them make better impacts.
- A more systematic monitoring and mentoring program be put in place in the youth centers so that negative impacts can be put to control.
- Providing training to service providers to impart knowledge and skills so that they can handle beneficiary youth properly - in an ethically sound and fair manner (without prejudice and favoritism), and also

to inspire confidence on the youth to feel comfortable to communicate their needs.

- Creating experience sharing forum among youth centers across the country can help youth to learn important lessons from one other.

Characteristics of Brokers in Relation to the Migration of Girls and Young Women in Ethiopia

Dr Annabel Erulkar,
Population Council[9]

Introduction

Contrary to popular belief, the majority of internal, rural-urban migrants in Ethiopia are female and not male. According to research by The World Bank, among rural migrants to Addis Ababa, 69 percent were female;1 likewise, 56 percent of rural migrants to other urban areas of Ethiopia were female. Migrants tended to be adolescents or young adults, with migrants to Addis Ababa being, on average, 22 years old. The World Bank study highlighted the difficulty in transitioning to paid work once reaching one's destination, especially for females.

[9] Presented on October 29 2020, Dr Annabel Erulkar is the Ethiopia Country Director of Population Council. The report was published on 15 October 2020. www.popcouncil.org/uploads/pdfs/2020PGY_EthiopiaBrokers.pdf

Brokers (known as *delalas* in Amharic) are intermediaries or “go-betweens” that facilitate transactions across a number of sectors in Ethiopia, such as purchase or rental of housing, vehicles, and other services such as insurance. Brokers are also active in job placement, connecting employers with employees, and frequently supplying households, restaurants, and bars with domestic workers, waitresses, or bar staff. Newly arriving migrants frequently turn to brokers to help place them into jobs, especially when they migrate without a job already in place.

In Ethiopia, brokers are required to register with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs which includes reporting income and paying taxes. However, many do not register and remain unlicensed and work illegally. Those who possess licenses may work from offices and employ others in the business. Unlicensed brokers typically do not have offices and operate without a fixed address, simply staying in places where brokers congregate or running their business over a mobile phone.

Therefore, the role of brokers is an integral part of the migration experience of many girls and young women, and their activities and actions may have a significant impact on

the well-being of migrant females. In addition to offering job placements to migrants, brokers may be mechanisms for other sources of support and advice for girls who are new to the city, or they may represent a source of risk for girls, including sexual exploitation.

Methodology

In 2016, the Population Council undertook large scale research among out-of-school migrant girls and young women in Ethiopia. The study took place in 10 Ethiopian cities: Adama, Addis Ababa, Dessie, Dire Dawa, Gendawuha, Gondar, Harar, Mekelle, Metema, and Shashamene. The study used mixed methods: an initial qualitative research phase, followed by a quantitative survey.

In each city, locations where a large number of rural-urban migrants are located were identified. In these sites, an initial household survey was undertaken to identify girls and young women who were eligible for the survey. Ultimately, migrant girls and young women aged 15 to 24 were selected for the study.

Previous research revealed that a significant proportion of commercial sex workers were migrants. As a hidden

population not readily sampled in household surveys, commercial sex workers (among those who self-identified as such) aged 18 to 24 were also recruited using snowball sampling. In the study, 4,540 out-of-school female migrants were interviewed.

In addition, we interviewed 20 brokers in the qualitative study and 270 brokers in the quantitative survey. Respondents were selected using snowball sampling. To facilitate entry into locations where brokers operate, trained interviewers spent time in places where brokers were known to work, especially in the vicinity of bus stations—which are the arriving points for migrant girls in cities—as well as market areas.

Once interviewers became familiar with the people who frequented those locations, they were able to identify the brokers who operated in those areas. Brokers were then approached for interview and informed consent was obtained. In the qualitative survey, interviews were tape recorded and respondents were interviewed over several visits.

The approach of multiple subsequent interviews was utilized because respondents typically become progressively more candid with the interviewer. In the quantitative survey, 30

brokers were interviewed in each city— except Gendawuha and Metema, where 15 brokers were interviewed in each city.

Among those interviewed in the quantitative study, 165 were unlicensed and 105 were licensed. Only four brokers were female (two licensed and two unlicensed). To our knowledge, this is the first survey of job placement brokers in Ethiopia, which provides new information about patterns of practice among this profession.

Discussion and Recommendations

Brokers (or *delala*s) are a common work role in Ethiopia, with many sectors such having intermediaries who make connections between buyers and sellers or two different parties. Brokers are required to be licensed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, but many operate on an informal, unlicensed basis.

Brokers for job placement are an important and, frequently, first point of contact for girls who migrate from rural areas. Upon arrival into the city, migrating young women frequently seek out available brokers to place them into jobs; they may have their phone number before departure, or are approached by brokers upon arrival. As such, arriving girls and young

women who do not have other support systems in the city are highly dependent on brokers during their initial days in the city. Perhaps, for this reason, brokers are often located in the vicinity of bus stations, so that they can easily be located by arriving girls.

Brokers can provide support to girls that goes beyond job placement. They report providing girls with necessary help in their initial days, including financial assistance, short-term lodging, and food. Alternatively, brokers can be a source of considerable risk for girls. It was reported that brokers often exploit newly arriving girls for sex, expose them to drugs and alcohol, and place them into risky situations through deception and coercion—including sex work.

Our research suggests that brokers who are unlicensed are more prone to these behaviors, while licensed brokers felt that such actions gave the profession a bad name.

Based on findings from this descriptive research, we make specific recommendations for policymakers and programmers:

Programmatic support and attention to newly arriving migrant girls.

Recent research highlights that girls who migrate experience heightened vulnerability upon arrival to their destinations, where they frequently lack jobs, a place to stay, support networks, and familiarity with the surroundings.6,7 Brokers are often their first point of contact in the city. Therefore, the intentions and actions of brokers have a profound impact on the trajectory of the girl and her safety and well-being.

Brokers fulfil an important function in connecting them to employers and supporting them in navigating life in a city. Harnessing the capacity of brokers to increase and extend this support would potentially benefit girls on the move. This could include building their understanding and capacity on referral services, including shelters, and establishing affiliation and partnership with local bureaus of women, children, and youth affairs. Our research also showed that brokers need

sensitization on gender issues and the capabilities of girls and young women.

Enforcement of licensing among brokers and enforcing code of conduct among brokers.

Our research suggested that brokers take advantage of girls, including through deception, abuse, and exploitation. There were some second-hand reports of broker behavior that would constitute trafficking.

There were indications that unlicensed brokers are more likely to carry out harmful or illegal actions. Licensed brokers should be required to adhere to a code of conduct that promotes ethics in the profession, including adherence to labor laws and assurance of the safety and well-being of clients they support. Unlicensed brokers should be required to obtain a license and enforcement should be strengthened in this regard. Greater oversight of brokers is needed to ensure practitioners adhere to ethical standards in the profession. In addition, migrating populations need to understand the difference between licensed and unlicensed brokers and be encouraged to verify a broker's license.

Education and awareness-raising for migrating girls

Many girls and young women in Ethiopia migrate from rural areas during adolescence, often on their own and without any planning.8 Many migrating girls lack understanding of the risks that they may encounter in the migration journey and unwisely put their trust in strangers, such as brokers, who may do them harm.

Additional initiatives are needed to make girls aware of the potential pitfalls in undertaking migration and encourage them to make appropriate plans for their safe travel and initial days in their destination. This could include proper planning to include prior linkage with trusted friends and relatives who can receive them and give them safe accommodation and better awareness of the potential for abuse and exploitation.

Findings from the fifth wave of Young Lives qualitative research on 'Transitions to Adulthood in Ethiopia'

Dr Yisak Tafere and Nardos Chuta, Young Lives Ethiopia[10]

Introduction

This is a summary of the report on the fifth wave of Young Lives qualitative research across ten communities in five regions of Ethiopia. The research sought to document the current circumstances and recent life changes of the two cohorts of children included in Young Lives: the Younger Cohort (now aged 18) making the transition from childhood

[10]Presented on April 30 2020. Dr Yisak Tafere is the Young Lives Ethiopia Lead Qualitative Researcher and Nardos Chuta is the Young Lives Assistant Qualitative Researcher. This presentation is a summary of a paper on *Transitions to Adulthood in Ethiopia Preliminary Findings: Summary and Policy Issues* published in June 2020. www.younglives.org.uk/sites/default/files/migrated/YL-Ethiopia-Wave5-Summary-May20-LowRes.pdf.

into adulthood, and the Older Cohort (aged 25) already experiencing early adulthood life.

The data collection involved a total of 241 individual interviews with young people, their caregivers/or spouses, key informant interviews with 59 local service providers and 40 focus group discussions with a total of 200 young people and community representatives.

The study analysed young people's interrelated transitions to adulthood with respect to schooling, work/employment, marriage and having children. It also explored the resources and services available in the study communities that influence these transitions. While the analysis is mainly based on the qualitative data, these qualitative findings are contextualised within the main Young Lives Round 5 survey carried out in 2016.

The study revisits the dominant theoretical discourses that describe transitions from childhood to adulthood, with a view to understanding how well these discourses align with the realities of Ethiopian youth. Conclusions are drawn on the markers of the transitions, including schooling, employment, marriage and having children. Finally, the services available

for young people in the communities and the challenges they encounter are reviewed.

Major Findings

Education/schooling

The data indicate that the majority of the young people were unable to progress beyond a certain level of schooling. While the majority were in school, they were attending either primary school (28.5%) or secondary school (45%) while only about 15.5% reached university level. Disparities based on cohort, gender and location were visible.

Cohort: More Younger Cohort young people were attending primary and secondary education, while somewhat more Older Cohort young people were at university or college.

Gender: More girls were at university, but there was little gender disparity in attendances at other educational levels.

Location: Almost half of the students from rural communities were still in Grade 10 or below.

Employment/work

Youth unemployment is widespread in the study communities, but because of poor recording, it is difficult to fully establish its magnitude. Different factors contribute to the low level of youth employment. In all communities, job opportunities were too limited to absorb the large number of young people leaving school, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) colleges and universities.

Moreover, the governmental agencies responsible for helping young people get employment are poorly organised. Although the national Youth Fund is supposed to provide revolving credit for unemployed youth, it was reported to be too bureaucratic to respond effectively to increased demand from young people.

Marriage and having children

In the context of unsuccessful schooling and constraining cultural practices, many girls are pushed into early marriage and childbirth. On the contrary, young men delay marriage, mainly because it takes them a long time to ensure their economic independence. The study found that male youth

have more economic responsibility for setting up new households than young women.

Parents also play a large role in helping their grown-up children move into an independent life. However, gender equality in accessing resources, particularly land in rural areas, is therefore an area that warrants policy attention.

Health services

The study explored the health services available and delivered in the study communities, and found that community health insurance is being introduced, institutional delivery in childbirth is growing quickly, but childcare services remain weak.

Conclusion

This study explored the transition from childhood into adulthood using the social markers developed by social theorists. The models established five major pathways young people should pass through in the process of becoming adults: finishing school, finding a job, leaving home, getting married, and having children.

The young people in the study are at an ‘adult age’ but most are in ‘child life’. Two conclusions can be drawn. First, the transition from childhood into adulthood is not a universal phenomenon. Instead, it involves diverse trajectories shaped by different contexts and actions of young people. Second, under such circumstances there is not a single leap from childhood into adulthood. The data, therefore, suggest that the transition requires an extended period involving ‘emerging adulthood’3 and mediated by ‘youth life’.

In general, the study suggests that the transition from childhood to adulthood has not followed the ideal, generally accepted routes set out by social theorists. The pathways have generally been influenced by unfavourable contexts, but on the other hand, the success stories of some youth were influenced by their individual agency and support from their families.

The Unrealised Promises of Education: The Challenges of School to Work Transition in Ethiopia

Dr Yisak Tafere,
Young Lives Ethiopia[11]

Introduction

Since the late 1990s, the Ethiopian government has expanded educational opportunities. Primary schools were built at the community level, including in remote and historically marginalised areas. In response, parents sent their children to school, investing the scarce resources they possess. Children also dreamed that they could reach the highest levels of education. As they went through school, young people hoped that their education would translate into

[11]Presented on October 29 2020. Dr Yisak Tafere is the Young Lives Ethiopia Lead Qualitative Researcher. This presentation is a summary of a Working Paper by Yisak Tafere and Nardos Chuta published in December 2020. www.younglives-ethiopia.org/sites/default/files/2021-04/YL-WP190-5.pdf.

gainful employment and that they would achieve better lives than their parents.

In Ethiopia, education is categorised into primary (Grades 1-8), secondary (Grades 9-10), preparatory (Grades 11-12), and university levels. Post-secondary technical and vocational education and training (TVET) has been adopted (Ministry of Education 2008) to provide middle-level skills that would help young people join the labour force. TVET aims 'to create competent and self-reliant citizens to contribute to the economic and social development of the country, thus improving the livelihoods of all Ethiopians and sustainably reducing poverty' (Ministry of Education 2008).

The expansion of schooling and skills training requires corresponding employment opportunities. However, with ever-increasing numbers of graduates and new labour market entrants every year, many young people are either underemployed or unable to find employment. Every year, more than two million youth are estimated to enter the labour market (JCC 2020). The increased number of unemployed youths has created a push for institutional arrangements that would help the transition from school to work. In response, the federal government established the Job Creation Commission

(JCC) in 2018 to coordinate all government and non-governmental endeavours to create job opportunities in Ethiopia. Its main objectives are to: (1) provide a clear institutional framework for employment management and promotion; (2) promote productive and freely chosen employment for all job seekers; and (3) support the development of a globally competitive, skilled and productive workforce.

The JCC is mandated to coordinate national activities to tackle the fast-growing youth unemployment in Ethiopia, through different implementing government offices at the local level. The civil service prioritises highly skilled and university graduates, while other sectors take a lower-skilled workforce. In the last decade, among those engaged in wage employment, 48 per cent are employed in the public sector, and 52 per cent in the private sector.

Data Sources

The paper is based on data from Young Lives, an international study of childhood poverty and transitions to adulthood following the lives of 12,000 children in four countries (Ethiopia, India,3 Peru and Vietnam) since 2001. Young Lives

aims to provide high-quality data to understand childhood poverty and inform policy and programme design. In Ethiopia, Young Lives follows 3,000 children in two cohorts (2,000 in the Younger Cohort born in 2000/1 and 1,000 in the Older Cohort born in 1994/95), from 20 communities across five regions (Amhara, Oromia, SNNP, Tigray, and Addis Ababa). The study involves surveys every four years with the young participants and their households. Since 2007, it has also conducted qualitative research with a sub-set of the children and their families, including a longitudinal study following more than 100 girls and boys across a 13-year period from childhood into early adulthood. Round 6 of the survey, which was due to be carried out in 2020, has been postponed and replaced with mobile phone surveys.

Young Lives Ethiopia has so far carried out five rounds of survey and qualitative study. The paper is mainly based on fifth-wave core qualitative data, but also draws on previous qualitative studies and the Round 5 survey. The analysis focuses on the Older Cohort, who have already experienced the transition from school to work.

Key research findings

- There is a clear link between poverty and child work – children from poor families engage in paid work at the expense of their schooling. Nineteen of the 27 young people in our sample left school before finishing their secondary education to find work.
- Children and young people often have high aspirations, which are not matched by available job opportunities. In all communities, job opportunities are too limited to accommodate the growing number of young people seeking employment. Among our sample, only six of those who left school for work made it to formal employment.
- There is a marked difference between urban and rural young people. In urban areas they are mainly running their own small businesses, while in rural areas they continue with family work, such as subsistence agriculture, rather than undertaking formal jobs.
- The gender gap is relatively narrow when children are at school but widens during the transition to the labour market. For example, among the 13 members of the cobblestone cooperative in Zeytuni, only two are women, and they are doing clerical work.

- The Government's Technical, Vocational and Educational Training (TVET) scheme does not meet the demands of the existing job market, nor is it seen by young people and their families as a positive route into work.
- The Government's Job Creation Commission and Youth Revolving Fund do not sufficiently address the needs of young people from poor families, nor is there enough coordination between various institutions and with the private sector.

Policy recommendations

1. Poverty alleviation

Young people's poor educational levels are mainly related to poverty. Children from poor families are doing paid work at the expense of their schooling and skills training, and this affects the kinds of jobs they are able to get. The Government's poverty alleviation programme, with a focus on youth employment and social protection for young people from poorer and vulnerable households, should remain a major priority.

2. Education: quality and equity

In order to achieve UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)4, the Government should improve the quality of education in state-run schools so that more children who are willing and able can pass national exams and move to the next level, such as college and university education. The Government intends to make Grade 12 the formal end of secondary education, instead of Grade 10, which could result in young people being better prepared for the labour market. Extended and uniform schooling would help the transition either to university education or to TVET. This would make a transition from ‘full schooling’ to ‘full employment’ possible.

3. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

TVET needs to be seen as a realistic and positive route to work. Options for improvement could include the following:

- Expanding the scheme to include those who fail in Grades 11 and 12 and are not currently allowed to join TVET;
- Strengthening TVET so that it prepares young people to fit the demands of the existing job market by

providing high-quality and relevant training in entrepreneurship, and soft and technical skills training, as well as supporting young people to pass Levels III and IV, which the market demands;

- Providing context-focused training that takes into account the local job market. In Young Lives sites this includes skills training in vegetable growing, cobblestone production and other agricultural activities. It should also include career guidance (see below);
- Ensuring that all levels of training are available across the country so that young people get equal access to it (as promised in SDG 4), irrespective of their economic status, location or gender;
- Expanding access to the scheme, and providing the necessary equipment and resources, as well as qualified trainers;
- Enhancing coordination between TVET and employers to facilitate young people's transition into paid work.

4. Career guidance

The young people in this study did not receive any career guidance during their school and work lives. Career guidance should be included in the curriculum and integrated into the TVET scheme. In the context of slow school progression and limited job opportunities, professional guidance plays a crucial role in career choices.

5. Gender

TVET colleges and cooperatives favour young men over young women. This calls for serious consideration in school to work transition programmes, which should provide equal access to males and females. Young women should be encouraged to train in traditionally male-dominated skill fields (e.g. auto mechanics or machine operating). Job training and apprenticeships in the informal sector, which involve more young women, should also be part of TVET.

6. Social norms and community attitudes

Many adults expect the Government to take on the entire responsibility for youth employment. They are also reluctant to share their resources to support youth enterprises. The Job

Creation Commission and local authorities should create programmes to raise awareness of the importance of youth employment so that communities can be a part of the solution.

7. Encouraging private investors and supporting decent work

Growing private investment and public projects in the study communities have directly benefited young people. All the respondents considered the expansion of job opportunities to be a national priority to reduce youth unemployment. The Government should encourage private investors, and local authorities need to coordinate with local communities to share resources for youth self-employment. Job opportunities, as much as possible, need to reflect the skills and aspirations of young people. They also need to be in line with the International Labour Organization's definition of decent work so that young people are paid adequately and working conditions are improved. This would enhance human capital development by encouraging families and young people to invest in education and thereby contribute to national economic growth.

8. Coordination of youth employment institutions

For a better process of transition from school to work, it is important to improve the coordination of the institutions and bodies involved namely schools, TVET colleges, private colleges, universities and employers. The process entails schooling, training, career guidance, job allocation and the promotion of equity. The Job Creation Commission should play a greater role in facilitating communication.

9. Capacity of the Job Creation Commission

The Job Creation Commission and other local agencies are playing a vital role in facilitating youth employment. However, this study found many issues that need attention. The offices are poorly funded and staffed, which means they are unable to carry out their plans. In some areas, local institutions were able to cover less than 50 per cent of planned tasks. Their resources need to be increased and their coordination capacity should be strengthened so that they can respond to the growing employment demands of young people.

10. Resources for youth employment

The Government's Youth Revolving Fund is helping young people start their own businesses. However, both young people and officials agree that the collateral of 10 percent and interest of 8 percent were too high particularly for poor young people and their families. This discourages young people from taking out loans to start work. The collateral requirement should be removed and the interest rate lowered. Young people want go to school and find decent work, but they often face many challenges in doing so.

While the Government has improved education and set up a number of schemes to support young people to make the move from school to work, the specific improvements suggested in this study would go a long way towards achieving gender equality and supporting young women and young men, particularly those from poorer families, to be able to fulfil their childhood aspirations and improve their livelihoods.

Jobs, Businesses and Cooperatives: Young Men and Women's Transitions to Employment and Income Generation in Ethiopia

Dr Alula Pankhurst,
Young Lives Ethiopia[12]

Introduction

The international literature on children's work is mainly concerned with the dangers of child labour, and similar debates have been reproduced in the African and Ethiopian. In Ethiopia one in four children are considered to be engaged in child labour. Once they are over 18, young people's major concerns are unemployment and the need for decent jobs to be created.

[12]Presented on November 26 2020. Dr Alula Pankhurst is the Young Lives Ethiopia Country Director. This presentation is a summary of a working paper authored by Alula Pankhurst and Yisak Tafere, published in December 2020. www.younglives-ethiopia.org/sites/default/files/2021-04/YL-WP191-3.pdf.

In the Ethiopian context, rapid agricultural development, industrialisation, and international and local private investment, along with government job creation initiatives, have brought about radical changes in the employment landscape for young people. The paper contributes to the understanding of the work of young men and women in different contexts, both in paid employment and self-employment and other types of income generation, as they transition to adulthood amidst these changes in the labour market.

Methodology

The paper is based on the fifth wave of Young Lives qualitative research, carried out in mid-2019 in ten communities in five regions of Ethiopia: Addis Ababa, Amhara, Oromia, SNNP and Tigray.

The research involved interviews with 122 young men and women from both the Older and the Younger Cohort in the ten sites, interviews with caregivers and key informants, and focus group discussions with older men and women and young women and men (Tafere and Chuta 2020a). This paper uses 59 interviews with young people, focusing on 47 main

cases of young men and women. Where relevant we incorporate insights from interviews with their caregivers and spouses. A few interviews with key informants are used in relation to work, notably with kebele (local administration) workers, wereda (district) job creation experts, and employers.

Key research findings

- Young people's transition to the labour market is slower in Ethiopia than in the other Young Lives countries.
- Most of the young people are working for themselves, mainly in the informal sector, but only a few of these have managed to establish viable businesses.
- There is a mismatch between the jobs available and educated young people's expectations of office jobs.
- Daily labour in agricultural and industrial work provides a useful source of additional income. However, wages are low and conditions are poor and most young people seek to move on as soon as they can to other jobs or their own businesses. Moreover, health and environmental risks are causes for concern.

- The Government's preferred job creation model promoting youth cooperatives has faced many challenges. These include limited involvement of women and graduates, problems with loan modalities, and young people's preference for working independently or with groups of their own choice

Policy recommendations

1. Address the mismatch between the jobs available and young people's expectations

Young people who have gone through the school system expect to find office jobs but these are very limited. Addressing this requires improving the relevance and performance of Technical and Vocational Education colleges, fostering partnerships between government and the private sector and the promotion of private sector jobs by the Job Creation Commission. It also involves facilitating business and entrepreneurial ventures by reducing bureaucracy and improving access to credit, as well as putting more emphasis on non-farm rural investment and supporting a more diverse range of occupations in the job creation schemes.

2. Promote safe and flexible part-time work for older adolescents

Many adolescents in their mid-teens work as well as attend school, especially those from poorer families, who need to earn income to support their families. Options for more flexible schooling, including shift, part-time, evening and weekend, and distance learning should be more readily available, while ensuring that quality is not compromised. Preventing harmful and underpaid child labour requires the promotion and regulation of appropriate work for adolescents.

3. Address the barriers to women's active involvement in the labour force

Young women are under-represented in the labour force. Redressing this imbalance requires greater promotion of education and training, and of equal working opportunities, for girls and women. Women who do work outside the home face challenges in combining domestic work and childcare with paid and income -generating work, and many are obliged to give up other work when they get married or have children. Improving women's opportunities requires more flexible working conditions. It also requires an improvement in

childcare services, without which women are unable to leave the home. Furthermore, there is a need for more general changes in social norms relating to paid and unpaid work and the division of labour between women and men in the home.

4. Improve working conditions and pay in agricultural and industrial work

Agricultural and industrial developments have created more job opportunities for young people. However, in some cases health and environmental risks require further monitoring and mitigation measures. Low pay and in some cases poor working conditions mean that many young people only engage in such work if they have no other options. Further regulation of working conditions is required, while workers' pay and conditions should be improved.

5. Safeguard and improve the livelihoods of the poor and vulnerable

Young men and women from very poor families and those facing economic or social shocks are more likely to do wage labour and work in low-paid menial jobs. Providing better opportunities for their education, training and work, and improving access to credit and social protection for vulnerable

families can help prevent these young people from dropping out of school early and enable them to combine school and work, find appropriate work or establish their own businesses.

6. Address challenges with the youth cooperative model

The MSE cooperative model of youth group job creation faces a number of challenges. The limited involvement of graduates requires the types of work included in the scheme to be rethought. Non-farming rural enterprises and individual businesses should be supported. The de facto exclusion of women in many youth groups requires the promotion of types of work in which women can engage, establishing more women's groups and prioritising young women's private enterprises.

7. Improve cooperative group and loan modalities for young people

- Broaden the scope of what loans can be used for to better address youth preferences.
- Enable existing self-initiated groups to form cooperatives.
- Remove the requirement for parental loan guarantees.

- Reduce bureaucracy and red tape and prevent nepotism and corruption in the setting up and running of group and individual businesses.

Most importantly, the job creation model needs recalibrating to put more emphasis on supporting individual businesses and entrepreneurship.

Who Decides? Fertility and Childbearing Experiences of Young Married Couples in Ethiopia

Nardos Chuta,
Young Lives Ethiopia[13]

Introduction

This study aims to understand how early marriage correlates with high fertility, low bargaining power and poor health. It builds on other Young Lives studies in Ethiopia to assess how the 42 poor young people in the study who entered into marriage early manage fertility, child spacing, and the number of children they have, as well as how they use sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services.

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[13]Presented on November 26 2020.NardosChuta is the Young Lives Ethiopia Assistant Qualitative Researcher. The presentation is a summary of a working paper authored by Nardos Chuta, Kiros Birhanu and Vincenzo Vinci, published in December 2020. www.younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP196.pdf.

The study is concerned with how patriarchal communities and the relative powerlessness of women perpetuate early marriage, pregnancy and motherhood in some Ethiopian communities. It addresses policy issues around gender inequality within the context of strong patriarchal norms as well as women's wider empowerment. Ethiopia has made some strides with respect to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), yet there is still some way to go in the general empowerment of women and there are still gaps in the provision of gendered, equitable SRH services.

Data and Methods

The paper draws on Young Lives6 longitudinal qualitative data gathered in 2007, 2008, 2011, 2014 and 2019 in eight Ethiopian communities (five rural, one urban and two semi-urban). It also uses Round 5 survey data for the Ethiopian sample on the prevalence of early marriage and fertility. Four of the study communities are from the qualitative sites and four from the quantitative sites.

The paper is based on 42 young people from both cohorts in the eight sites who have experienced early marriage and fertility. Longitudinal qualitative data were gathered from a sample drawn from selected Young Lives sites and the full sample. Data from a sub-study that was carried out by the Young Marriage and Parenthood Study in 2018 has been added to the longitudinal qualitative study. The sub-study included additional young people from the wider quantitative sample who have experienced early marriage. We explore the longitudinal data to see general trends of early marriage, and then focus on the eight selected communities to see young people's contraceptive use experiences and factors that determine and change childbearing experiences over time. An inter-cohort comparison using both survey and qualitative data allows us to see such trends and changes.

Key findings and Conclusions

The paper has investigated the fertility and childbearing experiences of young mothers and fathers, as well as the factors that affect the dynamics of their decisions on fertility and childbearing over time. Overall, the decision-making capacities of young couples are affected by different factors in differing contexts.

Fertility is the most important factor in population dynamics as it contributes to changes in the structure of a population. Patriarchal gender norms influence many aspects of family planning and contraception use, as well as the age at marriage.

The study findings show there is gender inequality in determining fertility decisions and contraceptive use. First, there is limited communication and unequal bargaining power between husbands and wives on issues of contraceptives and child spacing, with husbands tending to dominate. Contraception use is considered one of the important determinants of fertility, yet it is dominated by the decisions that husbands make. Husbands generally make these decisions alone or, if they do decide jointly with the wives, the husband's view is the final one. Husbands also have limited involvement in SRH, either because they lack knowledge or because of they consider this to be purely a woman's issue. Some husbands are involved, but this is usually in secret without their wife's knowledge. Traditional gender norms hold girls and women back from exercising their rights. Gender inequality persists and prevents young women challenging of their subordinate position within the household and the authority of their husbands over them.

Poverty impacts young married couples' fertility and childbearing decisions in two contrasting ways, with it both impeding and enabling childbirth and child spacing. First, young women living in poverty are more likely than young women from wealthier households to become pregnant or give birth before the age of 18. Among the Young Lives Older Cohort sample, about 10 per cent of the young women have had a child either at or before the age of 18. All of these young women are from poor households, and poverty is constraining their capacity to make decisions about their fertility. Both early marriage prevalence and poverty are strongly linked to low contraceptive use and high fertility rates (Raj et al. 2009). Young women who do not receive enough to eat, especially in the rural study communities, prefer not to use contraceptives or else choose other options they assume have less impact on their health.

Second, some couples actively delay the first pregnancy because they do not have the resources to start a family. As children's life trajectories are largely determined by the family they are born into, some couples do not want to perpetuate the cycle of poverty and wish for better economic standing for their unborn children, while others want to have more children because of their future economic contribution. In rural areas,

women marry and bear children early, yet because early marriage and childbearing among young people are considered ‘normal’, the later negative outcomes are given little attention.

Young mothers are highly constrained in their ability to navigate and negotiate fertility and SRH across a broad range of domains. The current use of contraception varies with ease of access, religion, social norms and economic status, and to a certain extent with education. Access to contraceptives affects their use by young couples, and couples struggle to get the contraceptives they prefer. While private health facilities provide a wide range of contraceptive options, young couples from poor households cannot afford these. These young couples mostly seek contraceptives from government-owned health facilities, usually health centres and health posts which have very limited choice. The Government should therefore widen the choices of contraceptives, especially for those living in poverty, who cannot afford to buy them from private health facilities.

Negative perceptions of contraception use obstruct contraception uptake among young women in urban and rural settings, and this is exacerbated by a lack of knowledge and

underlying social and religious norms. It has been seen even with educated health extension workers who were supposed to be educating and encouraging fellow women about family planning methods and encouraging them to use them.

Parents also influence the use of contraceptives. The study has shown how educated parents encourage their early married girls to use contraceptives, while parents with little education push young girls to fall pregnant soon after marriage. Similarly, husbands with better education encourage the use of contraceptives while those who have never been educated seem to know little about the use of contraceptives. There are also differences regarding decision-making over fertility and childbearing depending on location, with young women in the urban areas of Bertukan and Kok and those with better education more knowledgeable about contraceptive use and experiences of contraceptives.

Knowledge and information about SRH are very important in childbearing and fertility decisions. Since most of the young couples had either been to school up to the primary level or dropped out at lower secondary grades, they had gained little knowledge about SRH while at school. As a result, they had very limited knowledge about contraception and childbearing,

and were therefore at greater risk of the associated disadvantages than were urban couples.

Young couples' decision-making capacity is influenced by a wide range of factors. Couples are assumed to have little or no say about the timing of the first birth, yet their interest in delaying the second and third births is also constrained. Normally couples need to demonstrate their fertility and give birth to a child soon after marriage, yet family pressure does not seem to stop even after the first birth. Community and family expectations play a key role here. Children are regarded as status symbols and sources of economic gain in rural areas, and hence families and the community keep pushing couples to have a large family.

Policy Implications

Some key policy recommendations and suggested further interventions are given below.

Gender inequality regarding decisions about fertility and childbearing

Many reproductive health approaches overlook the role of masculinity in their programmes. This should be addressed by

engaging men in SRH and other health initiatives in the following ways:

- Devise stronger gender perspective approaches in family planning policies and programmes that aim to address the health needs and rights of both men and women. This can be done by designing reproductive health programmes that address men's behaviour in their roles as sexual partners, husbands, fathers, household members, community leaders, and gatekeepers to health information and services.
- Increase men's knowledge of services to change their attitudes and behaviour regarding SRH.

The fact that men play breadwinning roles within a family makes women adhere to the needs of their husbands. Policies to promote gender parity in fertility and childbearing should therefore aim to do the following:

- empower women both economically and educationally so that they have room to negotiate equally with men about fertility and childbearing. The concept of women's empowerment here is generally associated with delayed marriage, smaller families, access to

accurate information, and the ability to discuss freely their family planning needs with spouses and other household members and the community. It also needs to influence norms that confine women to unpaid domestic work and low-paid productive work.

- work with men and boys to challenge traditional ideas around masculinity.

Knowledge and information gap

- Formal communication interventions, including media, are needed, targeting different actors such as friends, families and neighbours, at different levels within households, schools and the community.
- Offering age-appropriate comprehensive sex education by ensuring that young people have the appropriate information before their first sexual experience is vital. Sex education with specific content and pedagogy, taught by trained teachers, can affect behaviour and increases the use of contraceptives.
- Effective mass media interventions should be used to increase communication about contraception and reproductive health education.

Gender norms

The following interventions have proved to be promising in improving SRH, enabling the partners to have an equal say in decisions, and encouraging gender-equitable norms and behaviours:

- including the wider community, especially mothers-in-law, as well as religious leaders, officials and others in programmes;
- devising integrated intervention approaches that combine group education for men and boys, mass media activities, and community mobilisation and outreach.

Sexual and reproductive health rights

Policies that aim to promote the SRH rights of women should aim to consider wider social norm approaches by doing the following:

- involving key community gatekeepers, including religious leaders, in SRH rights education at the community level to enforce changes in power relations,

economic inequalities, and the persistent ideologies, and cultural and religious norms;

- promoting school-based information services for both boys and girls.

Poverty and contraceptives

The Government, with the support of development partners, should do the following:

- increase knowledge about the choice of contraceptives at the community and kebele levels;
- ensure contraception is genuinely affordable to the poorest families;
- ensure the supply of contraceptives by making family planning a permanent line item in the budgets of healthcare systems.

When Things Fall Apart: Separation and Divorce among Adolescents and Young Couples in Ethiopia

Dr Alula Pankhurst,
Young Lives Ethiopia[14]

Introduction

In Ethiopia, first-time marriage and parenthood remain vital turning points in a person's life course and key markers in the gendered transition from childhood to adulthood. In past generations, marriage and motherhood in childhood was the social norm for girls, but this is increasingly seen as incompatible with expectations for modern. The law prohibits girls and boys from marrying before age 18, and any marriage

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before that age is considered a ‘child marriage’, one of several ‘harmful traditional practices’ that affect girls in particular.

In recent years, Ethiopia has garnered global attention for the progress it has made in reducing levels of child marriage, having set a goal to eliminate the practice throughout the country by 2025. Policy and programmes addressing child marriage have reflected this prevention.

Meanwhile, most research has focused on identifying the drivers, social determinants, and immediate impacts of child marriage on girls, but qualitative studies of the everyday lives of married girls and boys and young couples are scarce; and few programmes have targeted married adolescents and youth.

Even less is known about the pathways leading to divorce or separation for these early unions, and understanding of young people’s strategies for coping and how these interact with local government interventions is also lacking. There has been very little investment and programmatic focus on the lives and well-being of divorced and separated young people, and there is much to learn about the influence of gender and other social factors on their varied experiences and outcomes.

Addressing these gaps, the paper examines separation and divorce from the perspective of young women and young men with relevant experiences, based on multi-year and multi-sited qualitative research conducted by Young Lives in Ethiopia. The paper addresses two inter-related research questions:

- How do young men and young women describe their experiences of divorce and separation, including their access to support, and the perceived impacts on their current and future lives?
- What are the impacts of poverty, age, gender and location on their differing experiences?

In Ethiopia, the Revised Family Code 2000 stipulates that a marriage involving persons below the age of 18 may be dissolved if an application is made, giving equal rights to spouses and requiring equal division of all assets between the husband and wife upon. However, married adolescents frequently lack the legal, emotional, social and economic resources to use these laws to their own benefit. Indeed, the study found that the families of girls and young women played a crucial role in the pursuit of legal and social justice, rendering young women who lacked family support particularly vulnerable.

Methodology

The data used in the paper come from the Young Lives study of childhood poverty that has been running in Ethiopia since 2001, using surveys and qualitative research to follow the life trajectories of 3,000 girls and boys born in different parts of the country. Two age groups, and their households, participate; a Younger Cohort of 2,000 children born in 2001 and an Older Cohort of 1,000 children born in 1994, in five regions: the capital city, Addis Ababa, Amhara, Oromia, Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples, and Tigray. The Young Lives sample is pro-poor, meaning that the wealthiest households were excluded, and while the sample is not strictly representative, it covers a diversity of social and economic circumstances and backgrounds in 20 sites across the country.

Conclusions

The paper set out to address two related questions: first, about how young men and young women describe their experiences of divorce and separation, including their access to support, and the perceived impacts on their current and

future lives; and second, about the impacts of poverty, age, gender and location on their differing experiences.

The findings on separation and divorce point to the importance of tracing back to the reasons and circumstances behind the formation of these relationships in the first place. Their unions reflect numerous drivers and motivations, a variety of influencing actors and societal pressures, and a spectrum of consent and choice by the young people involved.

According to the accounts of young people, their generation has had a greater say in deciding when and whom to marry, with fewer ‘forced’ marriages at younger ages. Yet young people find themselves caught between traditional norms, in which marriages are arranged, and modern values of young people making their own decisions. The data show that their choices remain constrained, not least by material poverty, but also because society does not approve of female adolescent sexuality and premarital relations, and unwed motherhood is also stigmatised.

There were also still a few cases of abduction and rape, notably among more vulnerable women, including migrants.

Fear of being accused of being in a relationship and of unplanned pregnancies drove many young people into longer-term unions for which they felt financially, socially and psychologically unprepared. Some desired independence and to live life as a married couple, but the reality of living together and of running a household often did not meet expectations.

There were many economic and social pressures on couples that contributed to separation or divorce. Across all sites, perceived failures to live up to their male and female roles, including the squandering of the household budget and accusations of infidelity, troubled young relationships. Moreover, patriarchal norms of husbands not wanting wives to work outside the home, restricting their socialising, and not providing enough for household expenses and wives' personal needs led to conflict. These tensions sometimes led to violence, often made worse by alcohol abuse.

In the urban context of insecure livelihoods or instable or declining income, loss of work due to illness or other shocks are major causes for separation. In the rural sites lack of sufficient income and parental inability or unwillingness to provide resources, notably land and livestock to establish a

separate household, are major constraints on young people becoming independent and explain why some have children without getting married.

Unexpectedly, we also found that poverty was a reason behind the separation of young couples who wanted to remain together but simply could not afford the costs of housing and of sustaining a young family; young fathers separated from their children as a result of poverty found it especially difficult to fulfil their parental aspirations.

Not everyone facing troubles was able to access the help they needed. Those involved in trying to reconcile couples – whether families, elders or legal services – frequently prioritised preserving the marital union, even if this resulted in young women remaining in unfulfilling and abusive relationships.

Likewise, while local government institutions seek to protect women and children, the social courts and the police are often dominated by men and tend to reflect patriarchal values, which seek to avoid divorce, especially where children are involved, often justified as being in the best interest of children. Young women are especially vulnerable in the face

of unintended pregnancy, separation, divorce and single parenthood, and the formal support available to them is inadequate and uneven.

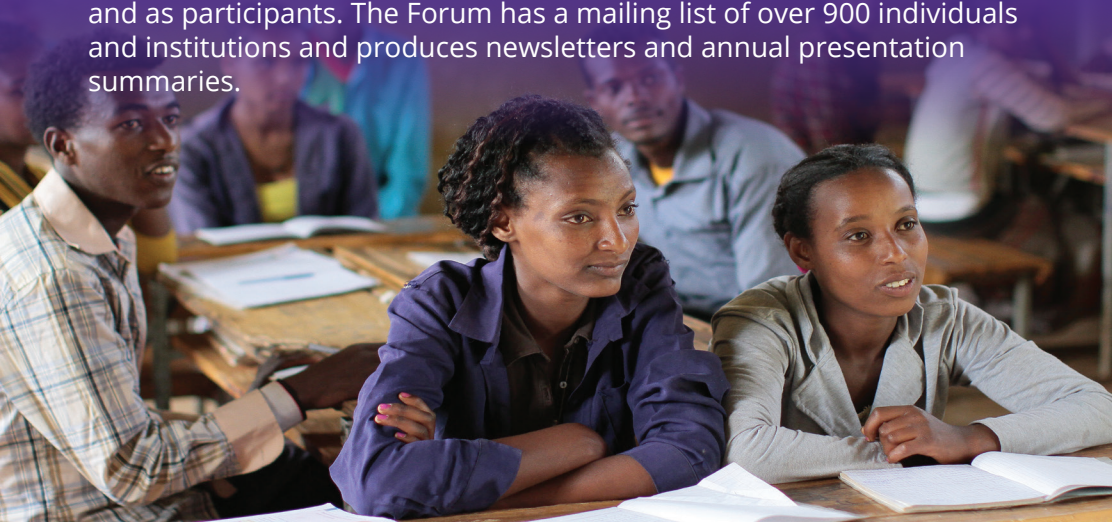
About the *Child Research and Practice Forum* (CRPF)

The need for a link between research, policy and practice on issues of children and youth 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 Child Research and Practice Forum is to create a stronger connection between research, policy and programmes related to children and youth in Ethiopia by presenting and discussing evidence based research.

The CRPF 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 900 individuals and institutions and produces newsletters and annual presentation summaries.



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