



Editor's Note

Dear readers,

We are pleased to welcome you to the March 2021 CRPF quarterly newsletter. This edition presents two summaries of research presented at the monthly CRPF seminars. These are from papers on, 1) patterns and experiences of mobility and migration among children, adolescents and young people in Ethiopia, and 2) parenting experiences of young mothers and fathers, and children's health. It also addresses news on a learning event about eliminating child marriage and the Young Lives third phone survey headline report on COVID-19.

We look forward to your comments, suggestions and contributions. For more information, please contact us via crpf.ethiopia@gmail.com or 011 1 540121.

A Learning Event held to Promote Eliminating Child Marriage

A learning event on initiatives, approaches, evidence and tools to eliminate child marriage was held on February 25 2021, in Addis Ababa. At the Save the Children coordinated event, the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth (MoWCY), UNICEF Ethiopia, Young Lives Ethiopia, CARE, Population Council, Norwegian Church Aid, Plan International Ethiopia, PSI Ethiopia, and GAGE participated. The event follows on from the National Coasted Roadmap to end child marriage and FGM/C 2020 – 2024 launched by the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth.

Presentations were made by the various organisations based on their research and programmes; followed by extensive and fruitful discussions on ways forward.



Young Lives Third Phone Survey Headline Report on COVID-19 released

Ethiopia has seen a rapid increase in confirmed COVID-19 cases since the publication of Young Lives second Headline Report in November 2020, and has significantly impacted the economic and social life of people in Ethiopia.

The longitudinal Young Lives research team that has followed 3000 children in Ethiopia for 20 years since 2001 has investigated in its third round COVID-19 phone survey, the short-and medium-term impact of the pandemic on education, employment, mental health and food shortages among youth and came up with interesting findings.

The results build on findings from the first two phone surveys: Call 1 took place between June and July 2020, and Call 2, conducted between August and October 2020: the third call of the Young Lives phone survey took place between 1 November and 8 December 2020 and reached 2,021 young people.

Further information here:

<https://younglives-ethiopia.org/node/969>

Research Summaries from CRPF presentations

“A stranger in all places”: Patterns and experiences of mobility and migration among children, adolescents and young people in Ethiopia Alula Pankhurst (PhD)

Introduction

Ethiopia has a fast-growing population, and it is estimated that 70 per cent are young people under the age of 30 (Central Statistical Agency 2013). Three-quarters of the population live in rural areas, some very remote. Land shortages, poverty, the reduction of livelihood opportunities in rural areas, and increasing urbanisation are driving internal migration among youth. More children, adolescents and young people leave their natal home today than when their parents were young, so this has become a common experience.

In Ethiopia, Young Lives follows 3,000 children from two cohorts (2,000 in the Younger Cohort, born in 2000/1, and other 1,000 in the Older Cohort, born in 1994/95). The study focuses on 20 communities drawn from five regions: Addis Ababa, Amhara, Oromia, Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples’ Region (SNNPR), and Tigray. Since 2007, there has also been a longitudinal qualitative study of 100 children and their caregivers from five communities, as well as numerous qualitative sub-studies. To date, Young Lives Ethiopia has carried out five rounds of surveys and five qualitative rounds.



Research questions

- What are the patterns of mobility and migration among adolescents and young people?
- What are the drivers of movement among adolescents and young people?
- What are the mobility and migration experiences of adolescents and young people?
- What are the aspirations of young people for internal and international migration?

Key research findings

- Young people are **leaving home for education or work in greater numbers than their parents**, due to land shortages, the reduction of livelihood opportunities in rural areas, urbanisation and aspirations to achieve secondary education and above.
- The policy focus is often more on international migration, but **internal movement needs more attention from government** as it involves greater numbers of young people and they are a critical investment for Ethiopia’s political and economic transformation.
- **Gender plays an influential role in young peoples’ decision to migrate.** Both girls and boys leave home for education, but it is mainly girls and women who move for family reasons, including marriage. Young men tend to migrate within the country for work while young women work abroad, particularly in the Middle East.
- Young people **moving for secondary or tertiary education** may find it challenging to adapt to their new environment and it is often difficult to find suitable work near home once they complete their education.

- Some girls are still married against their will or abducted, and some elope with boyfriends. Even those married as adults customarily move away from familiar environments to start a new life. **This brings difficulties and advantages:** they miss their families and friends and some find it hard to adjust, while others feel they have more freedom as a couple.
- **Increasing numbers of young people move to find work within the country but it is not easy.** For women, there are concerns about sexual and physical violence and abuse. However, some young men in particular are successful in saving and learning skills, which they are able to use productively when returning to their communities.
- **International migration is less common.** The reality is often harsh, and migrants face many risks. But it gives some young women better choices in marriage and improving their livelihoods.



Policy recommendations

Ethiopia's economy is changing, with greater industrialisation, urbanisation and globalisation. In the coming decade, this is likely to lead to increased movement and migration, particularly from rural areas where more than two-thirds of the population still lives. It is clear from this study and others that policies need to be inclusive and take into account the differing needs of children and young people according to age and gender.

1. **Support children's and young people's education**, including those who migrate for secondary and higher education. The study shows how children and young people can benefit from migrating for education, but it is also clear that **giving greater priority and resources to secondary schools** should be part of the Government's plans to increase funding for education and allocation of funds within the education sector budget.
2. **Support children, especially girls, who move for secondary school.** The study reveals that there is a need to **expand access and support**. The 2018 Gender Strategy for the Education and Training sector has "including the provision of stipends, scholarships, and low-cost hostels", all of which could support girls in these situations.
3. **Protect migrant children and young people.** Children and young people who leave home must be protected from **potential abuse and exploitation**. The Government needs to invest in a social welfare/ protection system including developing a planned and resourced **para-professional or professional social service workforce** capacitated to address the protection issues facing all children, including migrant children and youth. This workforce can support efforts for early detection, prevention and response and ensure child safeguarding, as that children have the information they need to protect themselves and know where to go for help. There is also an important protective role that **community members** and community institutions such as Community Care Coalitions (CCCs) linked to the Social Protection Policy and Strategy can play. The development of and investment in social and protection services at a local level should be a priority.
4. **Support efforts to prevent child marriage, as well as support to those who are married, build young people's agency and invest in gender transformative efforts**, as outlined in the Government's National Costed Roadmap to End Child Marriage and FGM/C 2020-2024. Current approaches to **prevent child marriage and abduction** should be given greater support at a local level, along with promoting greater agency of young women and men over **marriage decisions**, and their access to appropriate **information and peer support**. Young people, including young couples, should be able to obtain **land and access to resources and livelihoods**.

5. **Provide meaningful work for young people, both in their home areas and if they migrate.** There needs to be a focus both on the rural areas from which migrants come, and the urban areas to which they move, as well as learning from experiences of those who have already migrated. In rural areas, this means increasing **opportunities for youth employment and investment**, especially non-farm livelihood options. In urban areas, it means ensuring that migrants have **better and safer access to housing and services, improved working conditions and better pay** – including in the informal sector .
6. **Improve training for aspiring young migrants and agreements with receiving countries** with further initiatives by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The current efforts by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs at promoting legal migration should be reinforced through **better training for aspiring young migrants** and further agreements with receiving countries to promote **better jobs, avoid deportations and enhance protection** in their work and life abroad in line with the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.
7. **Recognise the important role of returnee migrants** in line with the approaches developed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and with the support of the International Organisation for Migration. Improved **skills development, financial advice, access to credits** well as the **facilitation of legal remittances** can enhance the livelihoods of returnee migrants and their role in stimulating development in their home communities. The investment of income generated through migration for **productive ventures** should be promoted with a special focus on empowering women returnees.
8. **Improve research with young and internal migrants.** Most policy focus has been on adult and international migration, so that more emphasis on the experience and aspirations of migrant children and young men and women is needed to better inform policy and programmes.

Research Summaries from CRPF presentations

‘Caring for a baby is a mother’s responsibility’ - Parenting experiences of young mothers and fathers, and children’s health

Agazi Tiumelissan

Background

The International Labour Organization found that in every region of the world, women spend more time on unpaid care work than men, ‘ranging from 1.7 times more in the Americas, 2.1 times more in Europe and Central Asia, 3.4 more in Africa, 4.1 times more in Asia and the Pacific, to up to 4.7 times more in the Arab states’. This problem is more pronounced in developing countries, where mothers are often dependent on their husbands for financial support and constrained by social and gender norms, even when they are engaged in productive agricultural activities.

The Federal Constitution (FDRE 1995), the Women’s Policy (TGE 1993) and the National Gender Mainstreaming Guidelines (MoW 2010) give equal rights to women and men, including within the family, which should have positive ripple effects for children’s health and well-being. Nevertheless, despite good policy intentions, and some improvement in gender equality, gender inequality is still a huge problem in Ethiopia.



Main research questions

1. How does the gendered division of labour operate for young parents?
2. What are the participants' experiences of health service access?

Data

The study was conducted in Young Lives sites, which with a pro-poor selection, including equal proportions of girls and boys. These children were selected from 20 sentinel sites in the five major regions of the country – Amhara, Oromia, Tigray, Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (SNNPR) and the capital city, Addis Ababa.

29 cases of young parents were interviewed in ten study sites. In 15 cases both parents were interviewed, in 10 cases only the mothers, were interviewed and in four cases only the fathers.

Findings

- Because of patriarchal norms that prevail in the communities, all the young mothers had almost exclusive roles in direct childcare. The responsibilities for childcare and household work did not seem to diminish even when the young mothers also had to engage in income-generating activities outside the home.
- In cases of divorce, there were single mothers who assumed responsibility both for generating income to support their household and for caring for their children, with no, or only nominal, support from the fathers of their children. When this support existed, it was not regular, and only occurred when the fathers felt like giving it or when they had money to spare, and the fathers did not believe that supporting their children was their obligation.
- There seemed to be agreement between young mothers and fathers that the role of young fathers is mainly to provide income. The lack of direct involvement of fathers in childcare did not appear to concern most young mothers.
- There were a number of cases of exceptionally supportive young fathers, who at times were acting contrary to the widely held norms of

their communities. Some were caring for their wives during their pregnancy and beyond.

- There were also a number of cases of husbands who were completely unsupportive of their wives when it came to childcare, and did not even provide financial support, though most of the young fathers did not admit this, and this information came from their wives.
- The role of the extended family cannot be overstated, as grandparents were highly involved in caring for and supporting their grandchildren and the young parents' family. Grandmothers on each side, depending on proximity and availability, were critically important in socialising the new young mothers. The role of siblings from either family was also found to be essential. The other source of support that is noteworthy is neighbours.
- As in the case of parenting, children's health, starting from home remedies, regular health service follow-ups and care in times of sickness, seemed to be the responsibility of the young mothers.

In all the communities, the young parents mentioned that Health Extension Workers (HEWs) were supporting them with childcare by teaching them about what new parents needed to do, which was found to be helpful, especially with their first children.



Policy issues

Most aspects of children's well-being have been covered in the relevant policy documents; however, implementation mechanisms and processes are often lacking. The National Children's Policy, for instance, emphasises the importance of providing training for parents in how to care for their children as part of its family-strengthening component. However, apart from HEWs conducting awareness-raising on some limited parenting issues, this policy guideline does not seem to have been implemented at the local level in the communities, and there is a need to devise ways of reaching families and supporting them with childcare.

The Constitution and the Women's Policy are clear that women have equal rights to men, and also that there is a need to lighten their workload, especially of rural women. However, childcare responsibilities are shouldered largely by women. There is therefore a need to raise awareness to change norms. Given the extra burden on working women, more emphasis is required on providing affordable day care systems that can give mothers space and time to engage in productive activities. This is especially important in the face of some evidence of declining social and family community ties. Better support for women to engage in income-generating activities can improve their decision-making and agency by enabling them to become more actively involved in the labour force, while safeguarding children's well-being and safety.

Since most of the burden on women stems from patriarchal cultural norms, which exert a formidable influence on existing policy, there is a need to engage not just women but also men about the importance of promoting more equal roles in all aspects of household responsibilities, including childcare, for the betterment of the family and society at large. This could be done through a conscious and sustained attempt to transform social and gender norms, and by implementing economic policies that will promote better livelihoods and security for vulnerable households. Positive examples of young men engaging in various aspects of childcare should be used to provide role models.

Commendable progress has been achieved in terms of health outcomes in the country, especially children's health, following the expansion of the health extension system. One such move that is admired by the members of the communities is the Community-Based Health Insurance (CBHI). However, the concern of some of the young parents – that the free medical treatment is not followed by the provision of essential medication – needs further attention.

Although the Ministry of Women, Children, and Youth produced a National Strategy and Action Plan on Harmful Traditional Practices against Women and Children in 2013, the focus was mainly on child marriage, abduction and female genital mutilation. The Constitution and the Criminal Code also prohibit Harmful Traditional Practices (HTPs). However, even when they are not frequently raised, unlike early marriage and female genital mutilation, HTPs related to childcare and rearing such as uvula cutting using unsterilised equipment and giving new-born babies butter are still happening in some communities. Therefore, there is a need to work on all forms of HTPs, including those used in childrearing practices.



Interested to know about CRPF?

The Child Research and Practice Forum (CRPF) was established in 2010 under the Ministry of Women Children and Youth, to promote work on child research, policy and practice. CRPF makes use of monthly seminars, quarterly newsletters and annual publications as a means to achieve its objectives. The publications including earlier newsletters and annual summaries are available at the Young Lives Ethiopia website (www.younglives-ethiopia.org)

The CRPF has been organised and managed by Young Lives over the past ten years with funding from OAK foundation from 2010 until 2018, GAGE in 2019, and UNICEF in 2020 in collaboration with Young Lives. It is currently working with technical support from MoWCY, UNICEF, Young Lives and other research projects and national and international NGOs.

If you want to know more, please contact us via
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