

Editor's Note

Dear readers,

We are pleased to welcome you to the December 2019 CRPF quarterly newsletter. This edition presents news on the National Costed Roadmap to end Child Marriage and FGM/C and summaries of research pieces presented at the Ministry of Women, Children & Youth CRPF monthly seminars. These include summaries from Young Lives Key messages from 15 years study, and studies of adolescent pregnancy and nutrition, and social accountability

We look forward to your comments, suggestions and contributions. For more information, please contact us via crpf.ethiopia@gmail.com or 011 1540121.



News

National Costed Roadmap to end child marriage and FGM/C launched

The Ministry of Women, Children and Youth has launched National Costed Roadmap to End Child Marriage and FGM/C 2020–2024. The National Roadmap aims to meet the Ethiopian government's commitment to ending child marriage and FGM/C which had been envisioned at the 2014 Girls' Summit in London.

The National Roadmap is an evidence-based costed plan which outlines the key strategies, packages of interventions, and expected results, targets and milestones towards the elimination of child marriage and FGM/C in all contexts in Ethiopia, including in humanitarian and emergency situations.

The National Roadmap identifies five pillar strategies in order to achieve the goals of eliminating child marriage and FGM/C. These are: Empowering adolescent girls and their families, Community engagement (including faith and traditional leaders), enhancing systems, accountability and services across sectors, creating and strengthening an enabling environment and increasing data and evidence generation, and its use.



Research Summaries from CRPF presentations

Twelve key messages from Young Lives Longitudinal research Alula Pankhurst (PhD)

Young Lives Background

Young Lives is a longitudinal comparative research project following 12,000 children growing up in poverty. The sites included a range of urban and rural types, with a deliberate bias towards poorer areas. In Ethiopia the longitudinal research has followed two cohorts of children in 20 sites selected from the five main regions of Ethiopia. The research followed one cohort as they grew from infancy to adolescence (aged one to 15), and the second as they grew from early childhood to early adulthood (aged 8 to 22).

Twelve Key messages

Young Lives has the following twelve key messages based on evidences obtained from over the last 15 years of research.

Message 1: Tackling child poverty in all its forms should be an urgent priority

Over the fifteen-year study Young Lives' evidence has demonstrated important improvements in living standards, nutrition, food security and diet diversity, and access to services, notably sanitation, water, education and electricity, with important implications for child well-being. However, multi-dimensional child poverty still remains to be a big challenge and further progress requires implementing policies and programmes effectively and equitably within and across sectors, recognising age- and gender- specific needs, with a focus on the early years, and protecting the poorest and most vulnerable households and children.

Message 2: Building on major gains requires further emphasis on addressing inequalities

Although there have been greater improvements among the poorest and rural households, the gaps based on wealth, location, education and household conditions remain massive, as reflected in differences in undernutrition, food insecurity and lack of access to services. There has been considerable efforts to tackle inequities and further emphasis on rural, remote and pastoralist communities can reduce inequalities, while a greater investment in the early years can avoid gaps widening.

Message 3: Improving support to children entails addressing the needs of different age groups

The needs of children and adolescents vary by age from early infancy through to adulthood, often intersecting with gender, poverty, deprivation, ill- health and other household shocks. Young Lives has shown that a life-cycle approach is important to understanding and addressing the different needs of children as they grow up.

Message 4: Enhancing children's well- being involves addressing gender issues

Young Lives' evidence highlights increasing gender differences as children grow up, often compounded by other inequalities based on wealth, location and education.

Policies on children and youth, as well as sectoral policies in health and education, should address gender issues, which require further support and targeted plans and programmes.

Message 5: Prioritising investment in the early years can yield the best returns

Young Lives' evidence shows how important early life is to later prospects. Children having better nutrition and pre-school education have shown better gains in later life. Prioritisation of investments during infancy and promotion of integrated approaches can dramatically improve outcomes, including child survival, development and well-being. Greater focus on social protection for households with young children and prioritising rural and disadvantaged areas, as well as households and children at risk, can accelerate progress and reduce inequalities.

Message 6: The potential for nutritional recovery offers a second chance beyond infancy

Young Lives demonstrated that, as children grow up, they can re-

cover after infancy from early undernutrition, but also that they can be at risk of falling back into undernutrition in later childhood. A greater emphasis on nutritional interventions beyond infancy, and institutionalisation of appropriate feeding approaches in day care, pre-school and primary school can ensure recovery and protect vulnerable children from faltering.

Message 7: Consolidating gains from pre- school expansion requires improving the system

Access to pre-primary education has massively increased, notably through the recent expansion of O-Class provision. However, there are considerable implementation challenges and improvements to the system, including teacher preparation, support and deployment, and resource allocation with community involvement can improve school readiness and ensure that the considerable potential gains from early learning materialize.

Message 8: Progress to universal learning involves further promotion of quality and equity

Young Lives' research confirms a remarkable expansion of access and opportunity in primary education. However a lot remains to be done in terms of quality and equity. Targeted and contextualised support for the poorest and most disadvantaged groups from rural, remote and pastoralist communities to ensure they continue in school and learn adequately can increase equity in education gains.

Message 9: Child labour legislation needs to be implemented sensitively to be effective

Young Lives' evidence shows that most children do some work from a young age and working is part of children's lives and relationships.

Social protection addressing family poverty, and providing insurance against vulnerabilities can reduce the need for children to work and promoting child care provisions can reduce pressure on girls to cover domestic care work. Support with flexible education can ensure that children who need to work are able to access schooling.

Message 10: Promoting well-being in adolescence requires prioritising support for girls

Young Lives' evidence shows that in adolescence girls face major challenges and particular risks. They face greater risks of gender- based violence, notably female genital mutilation/ cutting (FGM/C), abduction and child marriage. Existing activities for enhancing the well-being of adolescent girls and ensuring their protection, require further support and targeted programmes for their effective implementation.

Message 11: Benefiting from educational investments involves improving transitions to work

The education policy has implemented reforms and prioritised secondary, technical and tertiary education. However, training, skills development and linkages with the job market and youth unemployment present major challenges and further efforts are required to ensure that the benefits from investment in education translate into greater economic involvement of youth.

Message 12: Ensuring the well-being of children and youth requires promoting safe environments

Young Lives' evidence shows that there are risks of violence in the home, school and community with certain categories of vulnerable children more at risk of abuse. Ensuring children's protection and well-being requires changing social norms to promote safer environments, including in rapidly urbanising contexts, addressing the deep-seated poverty that often exacerbates violence, training and deploying social workers, and expanding, enhancing and integrating preventative and remedial services.■

Find more on: www.younglives-ethiopia.org

Research Summaries

Childbearing and undernutrition during adolescence and its linkage with newborn birth outcome and infant growth in a cohort of young pregnant women and their infants in Ethiopia Abdulhalik Workicho (PhD)

Background

There are 70 million childbrides worldwide. One third of the world's girls are married below the age of 18 years. In Ethiopia the legal age of marriage is 18 years. 41% of women 20-24 are married before the age of 18 years and 16% of women 20-24 are married by the age of 15 years.

The median age of marriage is 16.1 and 12% of the girls 15-19 years are married/ pregnant. Teenage pregnancy is associated with maternal mortality, premature birth, stillbirth, health risks like obstetric fistula and interruption of education.

Rationale

The rationales to conduct the study are:

- ◆ Increasing numbers of adolescent population
- ◆ Too many adolescent girls getting married and pregnant
- ◆ Limited studies on the effect of adolescent pregnancy on birth outcomes and subsequent growth of infants
- ◆ Pathways to affect birth outcomes not well understood
- ◆ The existing evidence only from cross-sectional data and demographic and health surveys

Objective

To assess the level of under nutrition among adolescent pregnancies and its effect on infant linear growth

Specific objectives

- 1.Undernutrition and anemia in adolescent pregnancies
- 2.Undernutrition and birth outcomes in adolescent pregnancies
- 3.Adolescent pregnancy and infant linear growth

Methods and data source

The data for the study was obtained from Empowering New Generation in Nutrition and Economic opportunities (ENGINE) birth cohort study

There was follow-up period of 2nd trimester to 12 months after birth. The study sites are Gomma, Tiro Afeta and Woliso which found in Oromia region.

Measurement and analysis

A sample of 1,393 (15-24 years) were recruited for objective 1. MUAC for undernutrition, HemoCue Hb 201 DM for anemia were used to collect information from study participants and Hierarchical regression analysis was used.

A sample of 1,424 (15-24 years) were recruited for objective 2. MUAC, Length, Birth weight considered and Mediation analysis was used.

A sample of 1,370 (15-24 years) were recruited for objective 3 and mixed-effects model was used.

Results

Undernutrition and anemia

- ◆ The study revealed the prevalence of undernutrition to be 38% with MUAC <23cm.
- ◆ The prevalence of anemia was found to be 22% with Hemoglobin level <11g/dl.

- ◆ The prevalence of both conditions (Undernutrition and anemia) was found to be 12%.

Determinants

The study revealed that improved educational status (14%), improved economic status (28%), higher MDDW (13%), increased maternal height (4%/cm) and ASF consumption (18%) reduced the risk of undernutrition and anemia among pregnant women.

The study also revealed that young maternal age (15-19) (14%), antenatal depression (36%) and maternal undernutrition (MUAC) 30% increased the risk of anemia among pregnant women

Undernutrition, Adolescent pregnancy and birth outcomes

- ◆ Younger maternal age (15–19), RR = 1.20, 95% CI [1.07, 1.33], and using an unimproved toilet, RR = 1.41, 95% CI [1.07, 1.86], were significant risk factors for anemia.
- ◆ Infants from adolescent mothers tend to have lower length for age Z score (LAZ) at birth compared to those born to 20-24 years old mothers ($\beta = -0.27$, $P = 0.032$).
- ◆ However, the association didn't remain significant over the follow-up time ($P = 0.105$).

Conclusions

- ◆ There is high risk of undernutrition and anemia among adolescent pregnancies.
- ◆ An improved SES and dietary diversity leads to a decrease in undernutrition & anemia.
- ◆ Improved nutritional status during pregnancy leads to improved birth outcomes.
- ◆ Young maternal age is associated with decreased physical growth during early infancy.
- ◆ There is no effect on overall linear growth of infants

Recommendations

- ◆ Promotion of adolescent girls' nutrition
 - Preconception & antenatal nutritional care (energy and nutrient requirements)
 - Nutrition sensitive and specific interventions (diversity, production, supplement)
- ◆ Enforcing laws against early marriage
 - Involve all key players (religious & community leaders, government & NGO, etc.)
 - Identify the barriers in implementing laws
- ◆ Promoting girls empowerment
 - Educational empowerment
 - Economic empowerment
- ◆ Targeted health services to reproductive and nutritional needs of adolescents.
- ◆ Planning broader and long term interventions
- ◆ Multisectoral collaboration between Health, Education, Agriculture, Economy and others. ■

Research Summaries

The Role of Social Accountability Programme in Improving Quality of Primary Education Service Delivery Strategies Tadios Tesfaye

Background Social Accountability

Social Accountability is an emerging issue in Ethiopia to improve service delivery quality and enhance citizen's participation. Social Accountability was introduced in Ethiopia the early 1990s by development agencies and civil society groups to improve public service. Since then, Social Accountability has been used as a mechanism to build the community's social capital and to inform and educate citizens of their constitutional rights and responsibilities. It was also used as a means to inform citizens about their basic entitlements and service standards and engage communities in improving relations with public officials and service providers using different social accountability tools.

Methodology

The research is a cross-sectional study. Quantitative and qualitative methods were used to gather information during the research. The research was conducted in 3 primary schools located three woredas (Woreda 7, 8, and 9) of Arada Sub-City in Addis Ababa City Administration.

Findings

1.Characteristics of Respondents

- ◆ 61 % of the social accountability clubs in schools are male and the rest (38.9%) are female.
- ◆ 76.4 % of the social accountability members are 11-14 years old and 16.7% are above 15 years old.
- ◆ 87.5 per cent of the respondents are attending primary (5-8th grades) and the remaining 12.5% are attending primary (1-4th grades).

2 The Extent of the Social Accountability Programme Implementation to improve Quality of Primary Education Service Delivery

2.1 Accessing Information (Building Blocks of Social Accountability-1)

(87.5%) of the respondents knew about their entitlements as a citizen to demand voice for proper provision of quality of primary education; 47.2 % of respondents had access to information on educational developmental plans of the schools and 50% of participants approached a service provider in the past years.

2.2 Making the Voice of Citizens Heard (Building Blocks of Social Accountability-2)

(71%) of the respondents said there is a means to submit any complains to school administrations, 39.2% of the respondents had submitted complaints together with social accountability committee members and the remaining 15.7 % submitted complaints individually. Children are empowered especially by members of the social accountability clubs/committees that have become change agents. 42.3 % of respondents indicated that they don't want to complain about their concerns because they feel that they will not get responses from the duty bearers.

2.3 Engaging in a Process of Negotiation for Change (Building Blocks of Social Accountability-3)

(52.8%) of the participants' service providers have taken positive steps to respond to complaints and to resolve the problems expressed in the surveys on users. 66.7% of the participants responded that forums/meetings are regularly/occasionally organized by school administrations to hear citizens' voices on provision of quality education services.

3 Contributions of Social Accountability Programme in Improving Quality of primary Education Services Deliveries.

The Social accountability programme made a contribution on the national indicators: the following are the degree of responses said to have had a very good contribution. The percentage of primary school teachers with at least diploma qualification was 38.9%, Primary School Students/Textbook Ratio was 32.4%, Primary education (1-8) Student/Teacher Ratio was 34.7%, Primary education (1-8) Student/Section Ratio was 27.8%, The completion rate at grade 5 was 26.4%, and the completion rate at grade 8 was 33.3%.

Recommendations

- ◆ Social accountability programmes should be institutionalized in the school administrative system using the existing school structures.
- ◆ Social accountability and social work concepts complement each other especially in the concept of empowerment; thus, courses on social accountability can be included in social work curriculum.
- ◆ The social accountability programme is a good approach to empower citizens, thus this program should be resourced by the government instead of being largely a donor driven program.
- ◆ Continuous capacity building program is required to empower citizens and implement the program to achieve results at scale.
- ◆ To ensure "Quality Education for All", the social accountability program should be scaled up and implemented in all primary schools.

Interested to know about CRPF?

The Child Research and Practice Forum (CRPF) was established in 2010 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 are also available at the Young Lives Ethiopia website.

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If you want to know more, please contact us via crpf.ethiopia@gmail.com.