

Young Lives/Niños del Milenio Peru-based lead qualitative researcher

Young Lives seeks to appoint a Peru Lead Qualitative Researcher based in Lima.

Background

Young Lives (www.younglives.org.uk) is a unique international study of childhood poverty following the changing lives of 12,000 children in 4 countries – Ethiopia, India (Andhra Pradesh), Peru and Vietnam – over 15 years. In Peru, Young Lives is called Niños del Milenio (www.ninosdelmilenio.org).

We are following two groups of children in each country:

- 2,000 children who were born in 2001-02; and
- 1,000 children who were born in 1994-95.

The purpose of Young Lives is to improve understanding of the causes and consequences of childhood poverty and inform the development and implementation of policy and practice that will reduce childhood poverty.

Young Lives is using a combination of quantitative methods – a regular survey of all 12,000 children and their primary caregivers – together with in-depth qualitative research with a sub-sample of 200 children in order to build up a broad-based understanding of child development and childhood in developing countries at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Three survey rounds have already taken place: in 2002, 2006 and 2009. These will be followed by further rounds in 2013 and 2016. Two rounds of qualitative fieldwork have already taken place in 2007 and 2008 and a third round is in the final stages of planning for 2011, with a fourth round anticipated in 2014, making Young Lives a unique cross-country longitudinal dataset. We are placing increased emphasis on carrying out analysis drawing on both our survey and qualitative data and are keen to promote mixed methods research to provide new evidence to influence policy and practice.

Globally, children are the largest age group affected by poverty and deprivation which may have both severe and lifelong consequences for children, households, communities and countries. To break national and global patterns of the transmission of inequality and poverty, childhood is the place to start. The fact that our work spans 15 years in the lives of these children – covering all ages from early infancy into young adulthood – means that we are also able to examine how children change over time, whether growing up in rural or urban contexts, poor or not-so-poor areas, in large families or as migrants, and a variety of other factors.

Young Lives is core-funded from 2001 to 2017 by UK aid from the Department for International Development (DFID). It is co-funded from 2010 to 2014 by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Young Lives is led by a team based at the University of Oxford (www.qeh.ox.ac.uk) under the directorship of Jo Boyden.

In Peru, there are two Young Lives collaborative partners:

- Grupo de Análisis para el Desarrollo, GRADE (www.grade.org.pe)
- Instituto de Investigación Nutricional, IIN (www.iin.sld.pe).

Professor Santiago Cueto is the Young Lives Peru Coordinator. Other senior members of the Peru team include Dr Javier Escobal (Principal Investigator), Dr Mary Penny (Co- Principal Investigator) and Virginia Rey-Sanchez (Communications Coordinator).

Young Lives Analysis and Policy Themes

Our research analysis and policy engagement work are clustered around 3 themes that are central to the lives of poor children and young people.

The dynamics of childhood poverty: This area of work explores how the different dimensions of poverty overlap to influence different children's life-chances. Here we investigate the long-term trajectories that children, young people and their families follow, in order to understand what factors help some to move out of poverty while others remain trapped. We also explore the continuing inequalities that mean that some children do better than others, and the impact of shocks and adverse events on household livelihoods and individual children. The importance of government policy in breaking the cycle of poverty is central to this theme, especially the role of social protection schemes and programmes to help households manage risk and chronic poverty.

Children's experience of poverty: The entry point here is children's well-being and of their own experiences of poverty. Again we analyse the multiple dimensions of poverty – looking at 'subjective' indicators (children's own perspectives on poverty, their aspirations, choices and priorities) as well as the 'objective' indicators of child well-being such as health, nutrition, and school outcomes. The importance of policy initiatives on how children experience 'risk', especially child protection policies, intersects this area of our work.

Learning, time-use and life transitions: Here we focus on children's daily lives in the context of poverty, and the structures, institutions and processes that accompany children through their childhood as they grow up and become young adults. We look at the importance of education, what children learn through formal schooling and informally in the family and community, and how this prepares them for later life – how and where they acquire the skills they need to enter the labour market, marriage, and full participation in their communities. Important elements of this are how children do in school, their work, their relationships in their families and with their peers, and the importance of community norms and the impact of modernisation.

The Longitudinal Qualitative Component

The longitudinal qualitative research component is premised on the recognition of children as social actors who provide an essential source of information about how poverty impacts on their lives and well-being. Children's own understanding and perspectives are a major source of qualitative data, along with key adults in their lives. The research is applied with a stratified sub-sample of children who we visit every few years; we work with approximately 50 children in Peru, spread across four contrasting communities. The research combines in-depth enquiries of a case-study nature involving both collective and individual semi-structured and unstructured methods. Examples of techniques used in previous rounds of data collection include timelines, risk and resource maps, photo elicitation and well-being drawing exercises. With each new round of qualitative data collection we add to the cumulative picture we are building of the case study children, and of their households and communities, alongside the panel data that we collect with the full Young Lives sample through the survey.

Plans are well underway for the third round of qualitative data collection in Peru which has been designed collaboratively among the UK-based qualitative team and country-based teams. The main questions guiding the fieldwork will be:

1. What shape have children's life trajectories taken, and what are the processes explaining these patterns, including factors related to poverty? In what ways do children's trajectories reflect intergenerational change or continuity? Are there differences between groups of children – for example, by gender, caste, ethnicity, religion, household, location, community types?

2. What have been the major transitions influencing changes in children's life trajectories? How have these been experienced by children and families, including children's own roles in decision-making?
3. What have been the main sources of support and risk to children's transitions, including their interpersonal relationships and their resources at individual, household and community levels?
4. How have different transitions shaped children's life trajectories? Have these opened up or constrained opportunities for children's present and future lives?

Main Responsibilities

The Peru lead qualitative researcher will be responsible for the in-country planning and implementation of the Young Lives qualitative research component in Peru, through to delivery of published outputs and conference presentations.

The lead qualitative researcher will work under the guidance of the Oxford-based Young Lives team and the Peru-based Country Coordinator. S/he will be aided by an experienced assistant qualitative researcher and receive some logistic support from the country-based Young Lives team who lead on the survey work. The core Young Lives team in Oxford will provide training, when necessary, and support on research methods, sub-sampling, data collection, analysis and dissemination.

Specifically:

- Plan and implement the child-focussed qualitative research in Peru (N.B. plans for the third round of qualitative research due to take place in May/June 2011 are already well advanced). Ensure fieldwork is carried out appropriately, to schedule, and in accordance with ethical protocols.
- Ensure data quality, through supervising accurate recording and cleaning of data across a wide range of qualitative methods so that other researchers in Peru or internationally can use the data.
- Lead on country-level analysis, and author or co-author high quality written outputs and conference presentations based on the qualitative research and on the survey data.
- Supervise the work of an assistant qualitative researcher and any other fieldwork and support staff working on the Peru qualitative research team.
- Work collaboratively with the other members of the Peru-based team and the international Young Lives team to ensure an integrated range of research and research to policy outputs and strong engagement with relevant stakeholders.

Selection Criteria

1. A doctorate in a relevant area of social science (notably anthropology, sociology, psychology, development studies, education).
2. Experience of carrying out qualitative research involving children and young people, preferably community-based research, and including fieldwork experience in Peru. Proven ability to plan a range of qualitative research methods (e.g., semi-structured interviews, PRA and case study methods). Experience of research ethics, project management and leading a team.
3. Good understanding of recent approaches to the social study of children and youth. A wide range of research interests relevant to Young Lives analysis and policy themes relevant to the life phase of Young Lives children from 2011 onwards (i.e. 10 years+ and 17 years+).

4. Proven, excellent writing skills and ability to produce high quality articles for publication in peer-reviewed journals in both Spanish and English with interest and preferably experience of undertaking mixed methods research.
5. Competence in and/or willingness to be trained in qualitative analysis techniques (e.g. Atlas.ti or other qualitative analysis techniques).
6. A track record of research collaboration and a strong interest in working closely with the other members of the Peru-based and Oxford-based Young Lives team. Excellent interpersonal skills and the ability to act with initiative where appropriate.
7. Good organisation skills and ability to deliver to schedule.
8. Able to devote between 50% and 100% time to Young Lives for a minimum of 3 years. Residence in Peru and willingness to travel and stay for short periods of time in the research sites and to make international visits. Ability to work effectively in both Spanish and English (spoken and written).

Conditions of Employment

Our expectation is that the lead qualitative researcher would be based in GRADE, although we are willing to consider alternative arrangements.

The start date is negotiable, but ideally as soon as possible. The appointed person would be expected to participate fully in the third round of qualitative data collection.

Further conditions of employment are negotiable depending on level of experience.

To Express Interest

Please, email a letter (in English) addressing the selection criteria, a résumé/curriculum vitae, and the names and contact details of two referees. Please send this information **by 28 February 2011** to younglives@younglives.org.uk. There is no application form. Interviews for short-listed candidates are likely to be scheduled in March 2011.

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