

**BREAKING THE CYCLE: CHILDREN AND PERSISTENT POVERTY
A POLICY SEMINAR FOR SENIOR SCANDINAVIAN SPECIALISTS**

Two key areas of concern are currently emerging in international policy debates on poverty: How can we tackle persistent poverty and, intimately linked to this question, what can be done to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty?

Young Lives is a global research programme investigating the changing lives of 12,000 children in four countries over a 15-year period, matching the timeframe of the Millennium Development Goals. Launched in the year 2000 it has set out to understand how poverty affects children's lives, how it persists, and to provide the kind of detailed, in-depth evidence needed for the development of effective solutions.

Our long-term nature and innovative design mean that rather than simply measuring poverty, our research is documenting and exploring changes over time, why these happen, and what they mean for poor children and their families and communities.

Our work is unusual when it comes to longitudinal studies, not least because we:

- work across four study countries so we can see common patterns and differences as the two cohorts of children grow up;
- take a multi-dimensional view of poverty and are evolving a holistic understanding of children's development, which includes assessing the impact on children's social, emotional and psychological well-being;
- distinguish between different children in the same household (gender, siblings, age, birth order etc.),
- perceive children as actors in their own lives, rather than passive victims, many of whom show remarkable resilience and resourcefulness in the face of adversity.

Our research methods integrate regular questionnaire based-interviews with the children and their carers every three years, with more in-depth qualitative work using participatory methods with selected children, and monitoring of relevant government policies, budgets and actual spending on services such as health and education at community level.

A team of specialists based at the University of Oxford coordinates a multidisciplinary international team, including four country teams based in Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam. We work in partnership with the Open University, the Institute of Education (University of London) and the international NGO Save the Children-UK.

AUDIENCE AND MEETING PURPOSE

This event is hosted by the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is by invitation only for senior Scandinavian policymakers, practitioners and scholars working with an interest in poverty, childhood poverty and related policy issues.

With Round 2 of the Young Lives data collection now complete, we are for the first time in a position to begin to share our initial findings and comparative analysis as well as our methods. We believe this to be of interest to Scandinavian stakeholders who often lead in policy and practice on tackling poverty. The event is designed to stimulate and facilitate high-level exchange of new questions and ideas to progress policy debates on childhood poverty.

Hosted by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden

Venue: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Fredsgatan 6, Stockholm (Room: Vinskanen)

Date: Thursday 4 December 2008

For further information, please contact: Caroline Knowles, Communications Manager, Young Lives

E-mail: younglives@younglives.org.uk

www.younglives.org.uk

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THURSDAY 4 DECEMBER 2008

AT THE SWEDISH MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, FREDSGATAN 6, STOCKHOLM

PROGRAMME

From 10.00 Arrivals and Coffee

10.30 Welcome and Introduction by the chair

Mats Harsmar, Chief Analyst, Division of Policy, Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs

10.45 Young Lives Methods and Findings

Growth, inequality and childhood poverty: the picture so far

Dr Jo Boyden, Director, Young Lives, University of Oxford

Using longitudinal research to understand the dynamics of childhood poverty

Dr Rozana Himaz, Young Lives Quantitative Research Officer, University of Oxford

Early childhood and basic education in Young Lives countries: issues of access, equity and quality

Professor Martin Woodhead, Young Lives International Child Research Director, The Open University

Discussants: Prudence Woodford-Berger (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Discussion

12.30 Child profiles: Young Lives children

12.45-13.30 LUNCH

13.30-14.15 Young Lives Research into Policy

Education, work and gender: lessons from Young Lives in India

Professor Uma Vennam, Lead Qualitative Researcher, Young Lives India

Child poverty research and influencing poverty

Caroline Knowles, Young Lives Communications Manager, University of Oxford

14.15-14.30 COFFEE

14.30-15.30 Conversation café:

What are the implications for breaking the poverty cycle?

What does a multidimensional approach for poverty mean for policymaking?

What do we need to build international consensus on tackling childhood poverty?

15.30-16.15 Panel Reflection: Breaking the poverty cycle

Invited participants: Mats Harsmar (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Dr Jo Boyden (Young Lives), Sigurd Johns (Save the Children Norway), Anne-Trine Kjørholt (NOSEB), Birgitta Jansson (SIDA), Liana Gertsch (Bernard van Leer Foundation)

Chair: Professor Martin Woodhead, The Open University

16.15 Close (Jo Boyden, Director, Young Lives)

24 November 2008