

Country Report



Young Lives Ethiopia Lessons from Longitudinal Research with the Children of the Millennium

Alula Pankhurst, Tassew Woldehanna, Mesele Araya,
Yisak Tafere, Jack Rossiter, Agazi Tiumelissan and
Kiros Birhanu

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Acronyms

ACERWC	African Union Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
ACPF	African Child Policy Forum
ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
AEP	Agricultural Extension Programme
CCRDA	Consortium of Christian Relief and Development Associations
CRC	The Convention of the Rights of the Child
CRPF	Child Research and Practice Forum
CSA	Central Statistical Agency
DFID	United Kingdom Department for International Development
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
EDHS	Ethiopian Demographic and Health Survey
EDRI	Ethiopian Development Research Institute
ESDP	Education Sector Development Program
EGS	Employment Generation Schemes
EU	European Union
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FGM/C	Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting
FSCE	Forum on Sustainable Child Empowerment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
GPI	Gender Parity Index
GTP	Growth and Transformation Plan
HDR	Human Development Report
HFIAS	Household Food Insecurity Access Scale
IGE	Imperial Government of Ethiopia
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoFEC	Ministry of Finance and Economic Cooperation
MoFED	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
MODA	Multiple Overlapping Deprivations Analysis
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoJ	Ministry of Justice

MoLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
MoWA	Ministry of Women Affairs
MoWCA	Ministry of Women and Children Affair
MoWCYA	Ministry of Women Children and Youth Affairs
MoYS	Ministry of Youth and Sports
MoYSC	Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture
MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Index
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NNP	National Nutrition Programme
NPC	National Planning Commission
OAU	Organisation for African Unity
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPHI	Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative
OSSREA	Organisation for Social Science Research in Eastern Africa
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PASDEP	Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
PPVT	Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test
PSM	Propensity Score Matching
PSNP	Productive Safety Net Programme
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SDPRP	Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program
SNNPR	Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region
TGE	Transitional Government of Ethiopia
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organisation
WMS	Welfare Monitoring Survey

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The images throughout our publications are of children living in circumstances and communities similar to the children within our study sample. © Young Lives/Aida Ashenafi; Antonio Fiorente.

Preface

This report presents findings from the Young Lives research carried out over 15 years in Ethiopia and three other countries. Young Lives is a unique longitudinal study providing important policy relevant insights for Ethiopia. As a study across four countries it enables comparisons with India, Peru and Vietnam – all three middle-income countries – with useful lessons for Ethiopia's quest to reach lower middle income status by 2025. The five survey rounds from 2002 to 2016 present exceptionally rich data over a decade and a half, during which time Ethiopia made considerable progress with very high growth rates and significant poverty reduction. The broad approach of the study allows conclusions for a wide range of sectors including nutrition and food security, health, sanitation and water, and education, as well as for cross-cutting issues on child protection and wellbeing and youth development, presented in the different chapters of the book. The tracking of two cohorts with a seven year gap provides evidence of changes over time at ages 8, 12 and 15, confirming considerable improvement, notably in access to services.

The collection of data in 20 communities in five regions of Ethiopia with the same households and children over the entire period documents changes as the children grow up and provides important complementary data to the cross-sectional nationally representative Demographic and Health, Household Income and Expenditure and Welfare Monitoring Surveys. The longitudinal approach, tracking children from infancy to early adulthood, enables the study to offer key insights into the long term consequences of early deprivations, highlighting the importance of early investments in nutrition and education for later outcomes. The inclusion of three rounds of school surveys, with additional sites in Afar and Somali regions- bringing the total to 30 sites in seven regions - provides important insights about differential learning progression and how the education system can be improved to promote quality and equity in learning outcomes. The mixed methods approach, with a qualitative sub-sample, allows the voices and aspirations of children and youth to be heard, and the case material provides important illustrations and explanations of trends detected in the surveys. The additional thematic studies address key policy issues, notably regarding food security and safetynets, child labour, early learning, child marriage, violence affecting children and urban relocation.

The Ethiopian Development Research Institute (EDRI) has led the research in Ethiopia and carried out the five rounds of surveys ensuring that the data are collected by trained and experienced researchers to rigorous scientific and ethical standards. The data have been checked, stored and publicly archived in collaboration with the University of Oxford with funding from the United Kingdom Department for International Development in order to facilitate global access by researchers worldwide. The fact that the cohorts were tracked over the 15 years with a comparatively very low attrition rate testifies to the rigour and quality of the data collection. EDRI staff have carried out analysis of the research producing a large number of working papers, journal articles, policy briefs, fact sheets and blogs, together with the rest of the Ethiopia team, often in collaboration with colleagues at the University of Oxford and in the three other study countries. These are available on the Young Lives international website (www.younglives.org.uk) and the Ethiopia-specific publications on the Ethiopia website (www.younglives-ethiopia.org).

EDRI has also organized regular workshops for policy makers, parliamentarians, national and international organisations and the public at large in collaboration with Save the Children and Pankhurst Development Research and Consulting Plc. The findings and recommendations have been disseminated over the five rounds to ensure that the implications of the research are well understood and inform further policy development and effective programme implementation. Young Lives also played a leading role in the establishment of the Child Research and Practice Forum within the Ministry of Women, Youth and Children Affairs which has been holding monthly

seminars for eight years, with dissemination to over 500 people by email, regular newsletters and annual summaries of presentations.

The Young Lives findings on Ethiopia presented in this report complementing similar reports for the other countries and cross-country international reports, provide important conclusions and recommendations on a wide range of topics, with chapters on the policy context, poverty dynamics, child nutrition, health and cognitive development, education and learning, and wellbeing and protection of children and youth. The research confirms considerable reduction in poverty, although inequalities based on location, education and gender still present challenges. There has been notable progress in food security and reduction of undernutrition, but levels of stunting and thinness still require further attention. Young Lives has demonstrated that children can recover from stunting after infancy but also face risks of faltering in their growth following undernutrition, which underscores the importance of interventions beyond infancy, notably school feeding. Access to education has been shown to have improved by comparing the two cohorts, but learning levels still fall short of what is expected and transitions to the labour market require further emphasis on skills development. Social protection policies and programmes have been established and offer safetynets, while orphans and vulnerable children have received particular attention, especially in the *National Children's Policy*. Legal provisions for protecting children from excessive or harmful work, corporal punishment and gender-based violence, child marriage and FGM/C are in place. Young Lives research confirms considerable progress and points to the need for implementation to involve a wide range of stakeholders within communities, to address social norms, prevent resistance and bring about rapid change in line with the targets set by the Ethiopian government.

In order to ensure that the legacy of the Young Lives study continues, a recent initiative established the Ethiopian Centre for Child Research (ECCR) based within EDRI with an advisory committee composed of representatives from national government institutions and Addis Ababa University with support from UNICEF. Important research has already been carried out based on Young Lives data, notably a study of multidimensional poverty, and in 2017 the Centre co-hosted a major international conference on child poverty.

The importance of the Young Lives study for understanding the lives of children during the MDG period has been amply demonstrated and this report offers an impressive array of highlights from the research findings which are further developed in more than 200 publications available on the websites. EDRI believes that it will be crucial to continue to track the Young Lives children into adulthood during the SDG period. This will be vital to understand the key challenges facing youth, notably transitions from education to the labour market, youth employment, household formation and parenting. Further rounds of surveys will also be important in assessing the extent of inter-generational transmission of poverty and inequality and advocating ways of breaking negative cycles and promoting inclusive growth. The rich data sets will also be useful in assessing the impact of Growth and Transformation Plans for children and youth, monitoring progress and promoting effective and appropriate change.

We hope that the readers of this report will find the chapters interesting and relevant to their work, and that the study will be able to continue to make a useful contribution to social science research in Ethiopia as a basis for assessing and promoting the country's growth and transformation.

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Summary

Highlights

- There have been massive advances in reducing poverty and improving children's well-being and access to public services notably in health and schooling. However, major inequalities based on location, wealth and gender, remain, which need to be addressed for all children to reach their potential.
- Children's poverty is related to a variety of factors, including location, education of carers, gender of family head, and number of dependents. The effects of childhood poverty are multi-dimensional, including health, education and well-being. Effective strategies therefore require greater collaboration across sectors.
- Investments in nutrition and education in infancy have been shown to have positive effects as children grow up. There has been a huge expansion of pre-school. Further attention to improving the system and quality of early childhood development particularly in infancy can yield the best returns and reduce inequalities.
- There has been notable progress in reducing undernutrition and food insecurity. However, undernutrition remains pervasive, hindering physical and cognitive development. Attention to nutrition and diet diversity is beneficial at all ages: in the early years, it can promote development; as children grow, good nutrition can result in recovery and prevent faltering; and as girls move into adulthood, nutrition is important for healthy mothering.
- Widespread school enrolment has been achieved. However, learning and grade levels progression have fallen below expectations. Attention needs to focus on quality and improving outcomes, especially for disadvantaged children.
- Policies and systems for addressing harm and violence have been developed. Effective protection of children from hazardous or excessive work and gender-based violence requires holistic attention to social and economic contexts.
- There have been significant gains in girls' education and protection from harmful practices. However, further progress requires addressing the special challenges girls face throughout childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood.
- There has been massive expansion of education beyond primary school. However, more attention is required to ensure the education system is geared to the demand for jobs and promotes youth enterprise in order to ensure more effective involvement of young men and especially young women in economic development.

Introduction

The Young Lives Ethiopia Country Report presents results from a fifteen-year longitudinal study, which followed two cohorts of children in 20 sites selected from the five main regions of Ethiopia, from 2002 to 2016, as a component of a larger multi-country project. 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). The study relates conditions early in the lives of children to later outcomes, and so improves understanding of the effects of poverty on children's life trajectories. It also provides information on the effects of policies and changes on the lives of children, and offers evidence-based guidance for policies to improve children's chances of developing into integrated and productive members of society.

The report first outlines the Young Lives project and the context in which the Ethiopian study took place, including the engagement between researchers and the Ethiopian government's efforts to improve the lives of its children. It presents key findings and policy implications on four main areas of study: poverty dynamics; child health and nutrition; education and learning; and well-being and child protection. The report concludes with implications of the findings for future policy, and the benefits of continuing the research.

Young Lives

Young Lives is a longitudinal comparative research project designed to collect information on children growing up in poverty. The project is co-ordinated from the University of Oxford (UK), and the research was conducted in four low- and middle-income countries: Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam. In each country, a sample of 2000 children born at the time of the Millennium was surveyed in five rounds from 2002 to 2016, collecting information on the children and their families. The sites included a range of urban and rural types, with a deliberate bias towards poorer areas. The survey data were supplemented by qualitative research on smaller samples of the children, which collected more detailed information about their lives, including information about families, schools and communities. Qualitative research included discussions with children and relevant adults, together with observations and techniques to record the children's views and aspirations, enabling a fuller appreciation of their well-being. The qualitative data provide a fuller picture of how trends indicated in the surveys affected children's lives, and of specific cases that do not follow the trends. Data collected regularly from the same children over time show how events and experiences at early stages in their lives can affect their later lives, and sometimes how they can overcome difficulties. A second sample in each country of 1000 children seven years older than the children born at the Millennium allows a comparison between the lives of the two cohorts at the same age, seven years apart, which indicates the effects of policies and changes, and provides a means to measure progress.

The regular qualitative and quantitative research was complemented by a number of specific thematic studies on topics of interest for policy and intervention, conducted in collaboration with other interested parties. In Ethiopia, these included studies relating to healthcare financing, safety-nets, child labour, early learning, child marriage, violence, and urban relocation.

The Ethiopian context

The study coincided with rapid economic growth in Ethiopia, and with a range of policies and programmes designed to address poverty and to improve the situation of children. The 1990s saw Ethiopia introduce a number of policies to improve the situation of vulnerable women and children. In the first two decades of the new Millennium, there has been increasing institutional awareness of issues concerning children and youth, with the establishment of ministries that include specific mandates to attend to these. In the first decade, national plans and strategies

aimed at sustainable development and the reduction of poverty, paying attention to children primarily in the spheres of health and education; the *Growth and Transformation Plans* of the second decade pay broader attention to children and youth, along with women's affairs, as components in the transformation of society. The national *Social Protection Policy* initially focussed on four areas, all of which affect children: social safety-nets, livelihood and employment support, social insurance and access to health, education and other social services; it subsequently added a fifth area specifically protecting vulnerable groups including children from various forms of violence, abuse and exclusion. Further progress is evident in increasing prominence given to legislation and planning concerning children and youth. Children have received increasing access to public services, including schooling at all levels, health and nutrition, and child protection services. These improvements have culminated in a comprehensive revised *National Children's Policy* approved by Parliament in 2017, focussing on children in a variety of difficult circumstances. A *National Youth Development and Change Strategy* promises attention to continuing transformation.

Findings

Poverty dynamics. The data reveal that from 2002 to 2016, there has been an overall increase in household wealth and reduced poverty measured in a number of dimensions, including household wealth, consumption measures, health and nutrition, education, and access to safe water and sanitation. There has been a significant reduction in numbers of severely poor households, and a smaller reduction of moderately poor households. Improvements have been greater among the poor households and in rural areas, indicating that the poverty gap has been reduced, both within areas and between urban and rural areas. Nevertheless, a significant number of households have remained persistently in poverty, and a few have fallen into poverty during the course of the study. The severely poor households remain concentrated in rural areas. Factors associated with poverty include: larger numbers of household dependents; female household heads; lower education of household members; and socio-economic shocks such as illness, employment loss, or livestock deaths. Factors reducing the likelihood of poverty included: women working outside the home; access to credit and irrigated land; and living in urban areas within households headed by men. In urban sites, boys are less likely to face chronic poverty than girls.

Nutrition, health and cognitive development. During the course of the study, there have been substantial improvements in access to sanitation, clean drinking water, and health services, especially in rural areas. Nutrition remains a matter of concern, particularly since poor nutrition is associated with poorer cognitive development later, measured by language and maths scores and school outcomes.

Household perceptions of food security, together with diversity of foods consumed improved, although the drought of 2015/16 appears to have damaged the security of some households, and many households remain food insecure. Undernutrition, measured by stunting, declined between 2009 and 2016, with the largest decline among the poorest households, and some recovery from stunting was observed, underlining the importance of attending to nutrition in early childhood. It remains a matter of concern that over a quarter of the sample remained affected at age 15 and about a fifth were persistently stunted up to age 12, with the highest proportion among the poor and less educated households. Short-term undernutrition, measured by thinness, increased between the two cohorts at age 12 (2006 to 2013) due to drought and inflation of food prices, a trend that was reversed three years later. Girls and children in rural sites and from poor families were much more likely to be thin in both cohorts at both times.

Education. Since the 1990s, Ethiopia has paid increasing attention to formal education from primary through to tertiary education, and recently including pre-primary. This attention has resulted in a remarkable expansion of access to primary education: virtually all children now

receive some schooling. However, progress through grades is frequently slow and the majority of children are in grades below what is expected for their age. Students' performance in maths and literacy remains generally far below levels appropriate for their grades. The high aspirations of children at age eight drop in the face of failure to achieve goals. The investment in education does not therefore produce the expected or potential results in skilled young adults.

Pre-primary education has expanded radically, from around 5 per cent in 2010-11 to 50 per cent in 2015-16, largely in reception classes attached to schools predominantly in rural areas. The aim of preparing children for school is appreciated by parents. Nevertheless, enrolment remains low in rural areas, and is lower for girls than for boys; moreover quality needs improving to prepare children adequately for school.

Children from the wealthiest households dominate in secondary and tertiary institutions. In spite of the expansion of the educational system, inequities remain; the poorest, those in rural areas, girls in secondary school, and children whose parents have little education are likely to drop behind and drop out of the school system.

Well-being and protection. Apart from general information on child well-being, the Young Lives project in Ethiopia collected data relating to child protection in six specific areas of interest: social protection, orphans, work and labour, harmful traditional practices, violence, and urban relocation.

Social protection programmes have provided important protection against food insecurity and improved child nutrition. While public works have provided significant community benefits, in some cases they appear to have increased children's work either through direct involvement of children or when children replace work in the home of adults who are engaged in public works. More generally most children undertake some work and poorer children, particularly in response to economic shocks or when parents are earning, often have extended workloads that can interfere with schooling. Work can also bring benefits, including satisfaction in helping families and covering costs of schooling. Child protection policies and interventions, therefore, need to consider the overall situation of the children to be protected.

The importance of social context appears in other areas of protection. Children who have lost a parent are often supported by kin, but are particularly vulnerable in situations of poverty. While progress has been made in reducing FGM/C and child marriage, intervention needs to understand remaining community adherence to these practices, sometimes supported by the girls. In urban relocation, movement to improved housing can disrupt social lives.

Risks of violence against children are widespread in rural and urban settings, and corporal punishment and/or emotional abuse is common in home and school settings, while fighting between boys and the harassment of girls is frequent in community contexts. There are gender and age differences, and certain categories of children are particularly vulnerable to violence, which is exacerbated by poverty.

Policy implications

Achievements of current policies. Young Lives research has shown that much has been achieved through the government policies of the past two decades, including: reduction in poverty, especially among disadvantaged groups; improved nutrition; better access to water and sanitation; widespread access to education; reduction in some harmful traditional practices; and reduced gaps between urban and rural areas, and between rich and poor. These results endorse current *Growth and Transformation Plans* advancing economic growth particularly in rural areas, the *Social Protection Policy* providing social protection, and the *National Children's Policy* promoting the interests and well-being of children.

However, poverty, food insecurity and undernutrition remain endemic, and are passed on across generations; economic and other adversities still damage the chances of many children; outcomes of schooling show limited learning and failure to complete schooling by many in disadvantaged groups; and risks of violence against children continue in a variety of forms. The research data indicate how policy can be more precisely targeted for further improvement.

Remaining inequalities. Social protection policies can be strengthened to target the most disadvantaged. More attention is needed to improve standards of living in rural areas. Since economic shocks are particularly damaging to the chances of children in poverty, more attention is required to dealing with environmental disasters, especially in rural areas, and providing social protection against individual setbacks such as sickness and death in the family. Since such variables as education of care-givers, larger numbers of dependents, and female household heads are also associated with vulnerability to poverty, a collaborative multi-sectoral approach is required.

Nutrition. Although current policies have brought about improvements in nutrition, stunting and thinness remain at unacceptably high levels, and affect cognitive outcomes. However, recovery from early undernutrition is possible, while some children falter into undernutrition after early childhood. To take advantage of the potential of young people, therefore, nutrition programmes need to be extended beyond infancy, through childhood, and into adolescence and young motherhood, notably through school feeding programmes.

Education. In spite of the rapid expansion of primary and pre-primary education, outcomes are below expectations, and children from disadvantaged groups frequently drop out of the system early, suggesting the need for a number of policy adjustments.

Pre-primary education in rural areas can be made more effective by improving quality through training of teachers and more precise targeting to ensure that children in disadvantaged groups and areas receive adequate preparation for schooling.

Focus should continue to shift from enrolment to quality of education to enable children to reach expected outcomes at their expected ages, paying special attention to children in groups disadvantaged by low household wealth, rural location, low parental education, and gender. Also the system of education should enable children to progress even while attending to competing needs, such as responding to crisis at home or seasonal work.

To capitalise on expansion, education financing reforms might redirect a higher share of resources towards children at the pre-primary and lowest primary levels (perhaps through complementary programs such as feeding). They might also permit greater variation in support so that spending rates are substantially higher in the most disadvantaged areas.

Child protection. Risks of violence against children remain endemic, especially in the form of corporal and emotional punishment, and the harassment of girls by adults and boys. The pressure of household work by girls and work to offset poverty can interfere with progress through school. While work is a component of community life and can impart useful skills, pressure on children in impoverished families can result in excessive and exploitative work. Much violence against children is exacerbated by poverty. Moreover, protection against a hazard in one area can have unintended consequences in others. Child protection programmes should therefore be linked with social protection, and policies should be integrated across sectors. Since cultural norms and values are related to some forms of violence, the involvement of different stakeholders within communities at the local level is essential to protect children from such violence.

Conclusions

While there has been tremendous progress under policies developed to protect children, reduce poverty and promote growth, further progress depends on implementing policies and programmes effectively and equitably within and across sectors, with a focus on the early years, and protecting the poorest and most vulnerable households and children. Apart from social protection for the poor households within communities, this requires further attention to areas lacking resources and especially to remote and pastoralist areas. Improving equity is especially challenging in the field of education, where apart from providing access, support is needed for children disadvantaged by poverty, by having poorly educated carers, or by geographical environment.

Effective implementation of policies requires recognition of the different needs of children at different ages. In early childhood, undernutrition, childhood diseases and early learning are crucial. In middle childhood, priorities include access to adequate and diverse diets and quality education, and protecting vulnerable households from shocks, and children from excessive or harmful work and violence. In adolescence, post-primary education, training and transitions to the labour market are important, as well as protecting girls from gender-based violence.

To enhance children's well-being, gender issues must be addressed. Girls' chances of pre-primary and post-primary schooling are often curtailed by social norms. In adolescence, girls face risks of greater burdens of work and gender-based violence. And in the transition to adulthood, they face gender-based challenges in access to education and employment after marriage.

The transition to adulthood, with marriage, parenting and a focus on productive work in an environment of limited employment opportunities remains an important challenge, of which the Ethiopian Government is well aware and for which it is developing policies and strategies. These need to be based on evidence, and the Young Lives research is only beginning to collect information on this stage of the life cycle of young people. There is need to continue the research programme in Ethiopia to observe the two cohorts while they make this transition.

Key messages

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 wellbeing. This longitudinal research has also shown how formative the early years are, with differences between social groups emerging from early childhood. Despite significant gains, child poverty remains persistent and pervasive, and is multidimensional, with negative impacts on children's life chances and with societal loss of human capital and potential. Moreover, children are over-represented among the poorest people, so that a child focus is an important means to address overall poverty. Policies addressing children's issues have been increasingly developed since 2000, culminating in the *National Children's Policy* in 2017. 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

Wealth levels have risen over the study period and multidimensional poverty has decreased. 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. Ethiopia's development plans and policies have been pro-poor and the *Social Protection Policy and Strategy* provides an important basis for addressing the needs of vulnerable households and children. Furthermore, the *National Children's Policy* focuses on children in difficult circumstances, which includes disabled children, orphans, refugee, displaced or migrant children, and domestic child workers and street workers. Further emphasis on rural, remote and pastoralist communities can also 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. In early childhood, interventions to address undernutrition, childhood diseases and early learning are crucial. In middle childhood, priorities include ensuring access to adequate and diverse diets and to good quality education, and protecting vulnerable households from shocks and children from excessive or harmful work and violence. In adolescence, promoting post-primary education, training and transitions to the labour market are important, as is protecting girls from gender-based violence. The implementation of sectoral and cross-cutting policies and programmes could be strengthened by improving targeting on the basis of age categories in conjunction with gender and other intersecting inequalities. For example, improving coverage of Early Childhood Development for young children and reducing violence for adolescents would be important age-related priorities.

Message 4: Enhancing children's wellbeing 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. Girls are less likely to be sent to pre-school, whereas in primary school boys are more at risk of dropping out. Girls face pressure in combining school with work in the home as well as for pay. Girls' chances of post-primary education are often constrained by social norms. In adolescence, gender roles become accentuated and girls face risks of greater work burdens and gender-based violence. In the transition to adulthood, adolescent girls face challenges and difficult choices in prioritising or combining education, work, marriage and parenting. These patterns of gender disadvantage further constrain women's opportunities in adulthood. 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 shows how important early life is to later prospects. Early undernutrition has profound and lasting consequences for learning and later health. Children with access to good pre-school education show better later educational achievements. The *National Strategy for Newborn and Child Survival* addresses key health concerns, while the *National Nutrition Programme* and the *Early Childhood Care and Education Framework* provide the basis for strengthening integrated interventions. Further prioritisation of investments during infancy and promotion of collaborative approaches can dramatically improve outcomes, including child survival, development and wellbeing. 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

The first 1,000 days are known to have a crucial impact on children's nutrition and later outcomes. Young Lives has further demonstrated that, as children grow up, they can recover after infancy from early stunting, but also that they can be at risk of becoming stunted in later childhood. The *National Nutrition Programme* acknowledges the multidimensional factors affecting nutrition, and school feeding programmes have been expanded in recent years partly in response to drought crises. 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. Promoting adequate nutrition and diet diversity for girls in adolescence before they become mothers can play a vital role in breaking cycles of inter-generational undernutrition.

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. Young Lives longitudinal evidence suggests that good quality pre-primary education can have an important impact on later educational and cognitive outcomes. However, there are considerable implementation challenges to responding at a national scale to community needs and demand for good quality pre-schooling. The current *Education Sector Development Programme* has prioritised the rapid expansion of pre-primary education. 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 materialise. Promoting enrolment of girls and targeting the poorest households and rural, remote and pastoralist communities can improve equity and redress emerging inequalities.

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. Progress through grades is, however, slow and intermittent. Performance levels and learning outcomes are low by international standards and for the majority of students are much lower than expected in the curriculum. The current *Education Sector Development Programme* prioritises addressing quality and reforms are underway. Prioritising investment in pre-primary and early primary grades and implementing system reforms which promote the attainment of minimum learning expectations among all young people can ensure more balanced foundations for later schooling and employment. 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. Some work can be benign or beneficial, contributing to household livelihoods, the costs of schooling, and skills development, although excessive or hazardous work is harmful and should be prevented. The *National Action Plan on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour* and the *National Children's Policy* provide important protection for children that needs to be implemented sensitively, involving parents and communities to have the best effects. 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 wellbeing in adolescence requires prioritising support for girls

Young Lives evidence shows that in adolescence girls face major challenges and particular risks. They carry a greater burden of work in the home and often for pay, putting pressure on their schooling performance and their wellbeing. Adolescent girls also face greater risks of gender-based violence, notably female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), abduction and child marriage. In transitioning to adulthood adolescent girls face challenges over access to reproductive health, and constraints in their decision-making regarding education, marriage, work and parenting. Given the rising enrolment of girls, schools and girls clubs can provide important platforms for addressing such issues and service delivery. The *Harmful Traditional Practices Strategy*, the *Adolescent Reproductive Health Strategy* and the *Youth Development and Change Strategy* provide frameworks for enhancing the wellbeing of adolescent girls and ensuring their protection, but they require further support and targeted programmes for their effective implementation.

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

Young Lives evidence shows that there has been considerable progress in access to education, but grade progression, learning levels and completion rates are below expectations. 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. The *Youth Development and Change Strategy* and corresponding *Package* seeks to promote job creation and youth entrepreneurship, with attention to urban, rural and pastoralist youth. Further efforts are required to ensure that the benefits from investment in education translate into greater economic involvement of youth. A focus on the capabilities and specific needs of young women and youth in urban, rural and pastoralist communities can ensure that interventions are tailored to differential needs in order to promote effective youth engagement in economic development.

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

Young Lives evidence suggests that there are risks of violence in the home, school and community, including corporal punishment, and emotional and gender-based violence, affecting children at different ages, with certain categories of vulnerable children more at risk of abuse. Existing social norms can underpin violence, while new risks have emerged with globalisation and urbanisation. The *National Children's Policy and Strategy*, the *Youth Development and Change Strategy* and the *Social Protection Policy and Strategy* provide safeguards and identify sectoral issues and categories at risk, while the *Strategy on Harmful Traditional Practices* protects girls from gender-based violence. Protective, counselling and remedial measures have been piloted. 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.



1. Introducing Young Lives: A study of the Millennium Children

Alula Pankhurst

1.1. Introducing this summative country report

By following children over 15 years in four countries Young Lives has amassed a large body of evidence on child poverty and inequality. This report, one of four country summative reports, aims to provide an overview of the research in Ethiopia and a summary of key findings emerging from the longitudinal research and policy-related messages across different sectors. Young Lives is also producing multi-country reports on specific issues, notably on tracing the consequences of child poverty,¹ adolescent pathways and responsibilities,² children's experiences of violence,³ children's work,⁴ and transitions to the labour market.⁵

Young Lives: An international study of childhood

Young Lives is a unique international study of children growing up over the 15 years period of the Millennium Development Goals.⁶ The study has been following the lives of 12,000 children in four countries: Ethiopia, India,⁷ Peru and Vietnam since 2002. The study provides high-quality evidence about the changing lives of the same children as they grow up in conditions of poverty, and the linkages between policy change and children's well-being, thus promoting pro-poor and pro-child policies and programmes. By collecting information on children from a range of backgrounds within each country, the study has shown how early circumstances shape later outcomes. The four countries are in each of the major developing regions of the world. The countries span low and middle-income country circumstances, as well as a range of political and governance structures. Lessons from Young Lives have a relevance and resonance beyond the core study countries. Evaluation of the Young Lives study suggests a number of key findings across the different stages of childhood, providing insights on how to improve opportunities for children, across the different stages of childhood. Since the survey data is archived and accessible online, the research comprises a contribution to knowledge expansion and sharing as a public good. By engaging on policy-relevant findings with a wide range of stakeholders, including governments, development partners, international and local non-government organisations and civil society at both national and international levels, the study contributes to the reduction of poverty and inequality in the study countries and worldwide.

1 Boyden, Dawes, Dornan and Tredoux (forthcoming).

2 Boyden, Winter, Crivello and Espinoza Revollo (forthcoming).

3 Pells and Morrow (2018) http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-ViolenceAffectingChildren-A4-Feb18_0.pdf.

4 Morrow and Boyden (2018) <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-RespondingToChildrensWork-A4-Jan18.pdf>.

5 Favara and Sanchez (forthcoming).

6 Dornan (2010), <http://www.younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-PP2-Fragile-Gains-and-Deep-Inequalities.pdf>; Pells (2013) <http://www.younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/Growing%20up%20with%20the%20promise%20of%20the%20MDGs.pdf>, Feeny and Knowles (2015) <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-Children-of-the-Millennium.pdf>.

7 In India the study was carried out in two states: Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

Children in the Millennium Development Goals period

Child poverty has become a crucial global concern. Recent decades have seen rapid changes in low- and middle-income countries, particularly during the MDGs period. Over that period there have been large gains in survival, basic services, school enrolment and social protection. But there has also been rising concern over entrenched economic and social inequalities. There has been only slow progress on reducing child malnutrition. There are also growing concerns that increased access to services has not resulted in good quality provision in many countries. Child survival was central to the MDGs; the challenge for the follow-on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is to improve human development with equity. Better research and data can increase awareness and concerns over child poverty. Poverty in childhood results in massive squandering of human potential, all the more so since children are over-represented among poor people. Poverty in childhood undermines later life chances, increasing the likelihood of poverty in the next generation. Following a Younger Cohort of 2000 children born around the year 2000 over the 15 years of the MDGs in each country has provided important evidence on the determinants and consequences of child poverty and inequality and insights on how conditions can be improved.

Towards youth in the Sustainable Development Goals period

Young Lives has tracked an Older Cohort of 1000 children in each country from age eight in the year 2000 to the age of 22 by the fifth round in 2016. Increasingly Young Lives moved beyond a focus on early and middle childhood to understanding the dynamics of adolescence and youth transitions to adulthood. In education, moving beyond improvements in access to addressing improved quality and learning outcomes became central. With adolescence, gender issues became more salient and the issue of child marriage came to the fore. Moreover, transitions from education through training to the labour market became key issues. With Ethiopia's population currently having the highest proportion of 15-24 year-olds in the world (22.8%),⁸ the importance of making the most of this demographic dividend by appropriate investments in human capital and inclusive economic growth is a crucial imperative for Ethiopia's transformation and its ambition to reach lower-middle-income status.⁹ Nevertheless, there are many barriers to the active participation of youth in socioeconomic, political, and cultural life and the country is still characterised by a low youth development index and was ranked 125th of 170 countries in 2013.¹⁰ Lately, youth unemployment has become a particularly pressing issue, at times resulting in out-migration of young people to towns and abroad. In recognition of this, the government established a *Rural Job Opportunity Creation Strategy* and a *Youth Revolving Fund* in early 2017 to provide financial assistance for young people to organise in groups and obtain training and credit to establish businesses.¹¹ The involvement of Youth in achieving the SDGs is well recognised¹² and the key role of youth in Ethiopia is well acknowledged. The fifth round of the Young Lives study paves the way for a potential baseline of changing youth lives.

1.2. Young Lives in Ethiopia

During the period of the MDGs Ethiopia has witnessed rapid growth and transformation. From the early 2000s two poverty reduction strategies followed by two growth and transformation plans provide the planning context within which sectoral interventions have sought to improve access

8 Population Reference Bureau (2017).

9 Donnenfeld *et al.* (2017).

10 Youth Policy (2014).

11 http://www.younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/ETHIOPIA-Youth-Factsheet-Jan18_0.pdf.

12 www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/09/why-young-people-are-key-to-achieving-the-sdgs.

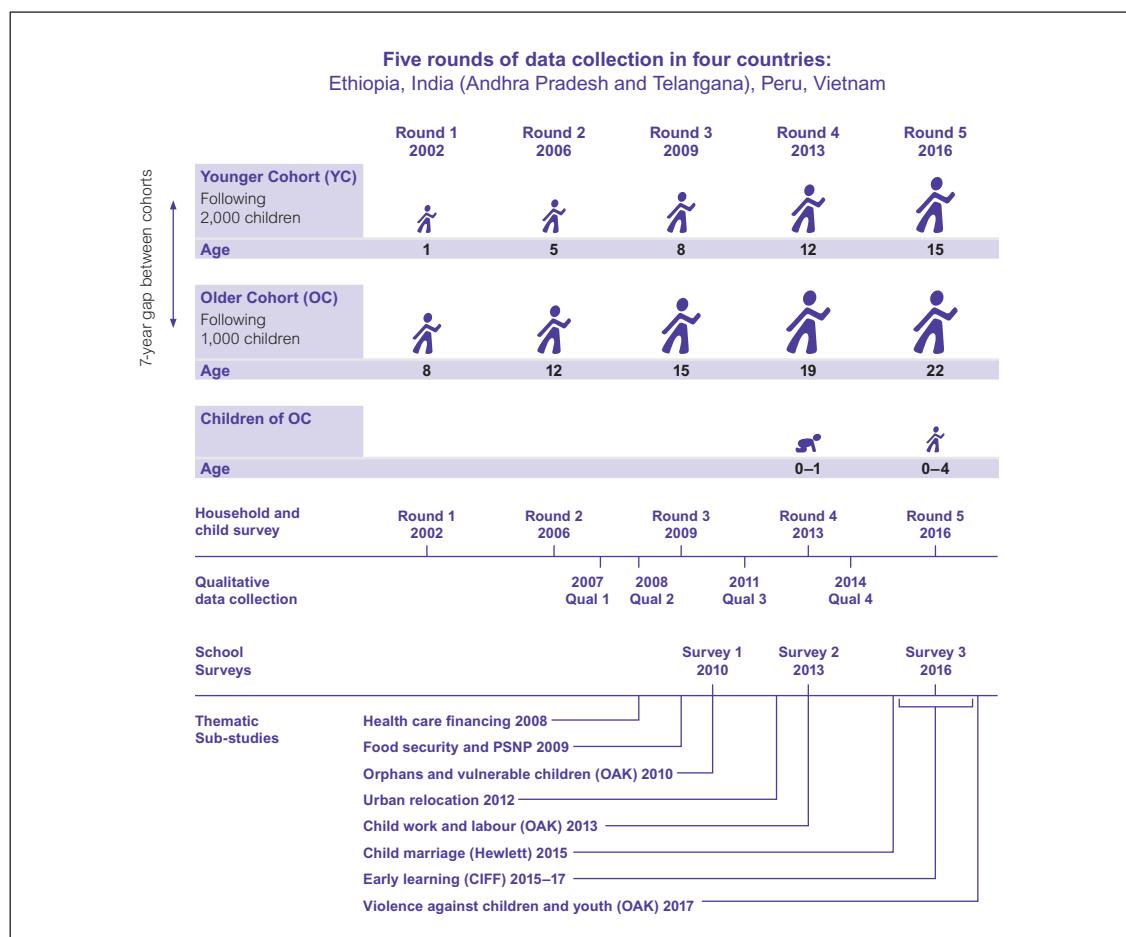
to services, livelihoods and children's well-being. Young Lives provides important evidence about how children's lives have changed as they grow up, and differences notably between boys and girls, children living in rural and urban areas and in different regions, between children from poorer and better-off households, and those with caregivers who are more or are less educated. Young Lives is a mixed-methods study involving surveys as well as qualitative research that foregrounds children's perspectives, enabling them to express their views and concerns.

The Young Lives study in Ethiopia comprises five major components, the first four involving research and the last one drawing together the findings to make them useful for policy and practice: 1) the quantitative surveys, 2) the qualitative research, 3) schools surveys, 4) thematic policy-focused studies and 5) engagement with government and other stakeholders.

1.2.1. The longitudinal survey

Five rounds of quantitative surveys involving questionnaires for children, households and communities have been conducted by the Ethiopian Development Research Institute (EDRI). The first round was carried out between October and December 2002 when the Younger Cohort children were aged around one year and the Older Cohort around eight years old. The subsequent surveys have always been carried out at the same time of year: in 2006 (Round 2), 2009 (Round 3), 2013 (Round 4) and 2016 (Round 5). The fifth round was conducted when the Younger Cohort children were aged around 15 years old and the Older Cohort around 22 years.

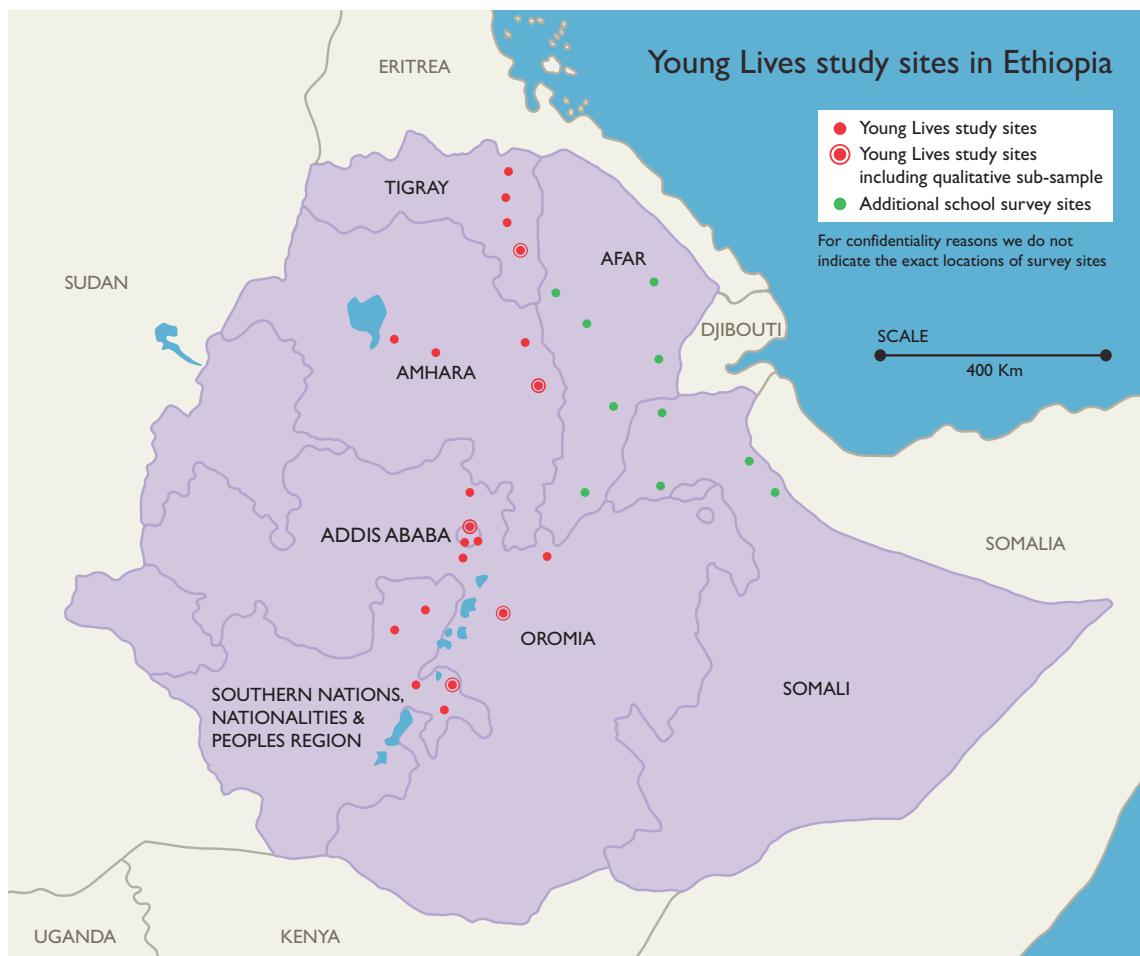
Figure 1: Components of the Young Lives research



1.2.2. Sample design

The children were selected from twenty sentinel sites¹³ following a four-stage selection process based on national administrative structures. First, the regions were selected; four regional states (Amhara, Oromia, Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region (SNNPR) and Tigray), and one city administration (Addis Ababa), were selected out of the country's nine states and two city administrations. The five selected regions account for 96 per cent of the national population. Second, the *woredas* (districts) were selected within each region; between three and five *woredas* were selected in each region, with a balanced representation of poverty levels, urban and rural areas, and a mix of types of urban site: capital city, intermediate city and small urban areas (district centres). Among the *woredas* with food deficit status within each region, three with the highest proportion and one with the lowest proportion were selected. Third, at least one *kebele* (local administrative area) in each *woreda* was chosen.¹⁴ Finally, 100 households with a child born in 2001-2 and 50 households with a child born in 1994-5 were randomly selected in each site.¹⁵

Map 1: Young Lives Ethiopia main survey, qualitative sub-sample and additional school survey sites



13 The concept of a sentinel site comes from health surveillance studies and is a form of purposive sampling where the site (or 'cluster' in sampling language) is deemed to represent a certain type of population and is expected to show typical trends affecting those people or areas.

14 To protect the anonymity of the sites, locations on the map have been slightly modified and are only approximate.

15 Outes-Leon and Sanchez (2008) <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-TN1-OutesLeon-Sampling-Approach-In-Ethiopia.pdf>.

Over the five survey rounds from 2002 to 2016, the proportion of children who were no longer in the survey by the last round - the attrition rate, which includes those who were untraceable and living abroad and those who did not want to continue to be part of the survey – was 5.3 per cent for the Younger Cohort and 17.7 per cent for the Older Cohort, especially due to migration abroad.¹⁶ The attrition rate in Ethiopia is low compared with other longitudinal studies.¹⁷

1.2.3. Comparison with national data sets

Young Lives is not intended to be a nationally representative survey such as the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) or the Welfare Monitoring Survey (WMS). Rather, as a longitudinal study it is intended to show changes for households and individuals over time and the impact of earlier circumstances on children's later outcomes. It can also provide important data about differences notably by gender, age, wealth and location. However, a comparison with the DHS and WMS from 2000, indicates that the Young Lives sample includes a wide range of living standards akin to the variability found in the Ethiopian population as a whole. Even if poor children have been to some extent over-sampled, access to services amongst those sampled may be somewhat better than the national average and the Young Lives sample covers the diversity of children with a wide variety of attributes and experiences.¹⁸

1.2.4. Longitudinal qualitative research

Four rounds of qualitative research have been collected between 2007 and 2014. Five of the twenty sites in the main survey were selected, one from each region. Three of these are rural and two urban, including a site in the capital city. From each site twenty children were selected with equal proportions of boys and girls and Older and Younger Cohort children, making a total of one hundred children.¹⁹ Of these, 60 were selected for in-depth follow-up and 40 were kept as reserves, from among whom children who dropped out were replaced.²⁰ The first round was carried out in 2007 when the Younger Cohort were aged five-six years and the older cohort 12-13; the second round in 2008, the third round in 2011 and the final round in 2014, by which time the Younger Cohort were 12-13 and the Older Cohort 19-20.²¹

The methods involved interviews with children, caregivers, service providers and community leaders, and included focus group discussions as well as individual interviews and observations by the fieldworkers. Young Lives made use of child-focused participatory methods, including creative tools designed to investigate particular areas of children's lived experiences, such as children's time use, perceptions of risk and wellbeing, sources of social support and social networks. These included drawings,²² diaries, community mapping and timelines, mobile interviews and child-led walks, vignettes and story completion, body mapping, video and photo-elicitation.²³

¹⁶ Outes-Leon and Dercon (2008) <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-TN5-OutesLeon-Survey-Attrition.pdf>; Young Lives Survey Design and Sampling (Round Five) http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/ETHIOPIA-SurveyDesign-Factsheet-Jan18_0.pdf.

¹⁷ For summary studies on attrition in developing countries, see Baird, S, J. Hicks and D. Miguel (2008).

¹⁸ Outes-Leon and Sanchez (2008) <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-TN1-OutesLeon-Sampling-Approach-In-Ethiopia.pdf>; Outes-Leon and Dercon (2008) (2008) <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-TN5-OutesLeon-Survey-Attrition.pdf>.

¹⁹ To protect the anonymity of the sample and sites, throughout this report and other Young Lives publications pseudonyms are used for all the children and the sites.

²⁰ Tafere (2016).

²¹ Crivello and Wilson (2016) <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-TN34-Qual4-fieldwork-guide.pdf>.

²² Such as wellbeing and illbeing drawings and poverty trees, and life course 'draw and tell'. See Tafere (2016); Crivello *et al.* (2013).

²³ Crivello *et al.* (2013) <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/TN26-qualitative-guide-for-researchers.pdf>; Crivello (2015).

1.2.5. School surveys

Three rounds of school surveys were carried out. The first in 2010 followed Younger Cohort children into schools to gather information about their educational experiences. The sample for the second school survey in 2012-3 included the 20 core Young Lives sites in five regions and was extended to include ten sites in the ‘emerging’ regions of Afar and Somali,²⁴ to better understand the conditions in agro-pastoral areas that have had less access to education. This second school survey focused on the transition between the end of the first cycle of primary education (Grade 4) and the beginning of the second cycle (Grade 5). The survey was carried out in two periods at the beginning and the end of the school year in order to be able to assess the extent of students’ progress in different circumstances. Likewise, the third school survey was carried out in the 30 sites in seven regions, this time focusing on children towards the end of primary school (Grades 7 and 8), also with two periods at the beginning and the end of the school year.²⁵ In all cases the research was carried out in close consultation with the Ministry of Education and in the third survey additionally with the Education Strategy Centre.

1.2.6. Thematic studies

In addition to the main survey and the school survey and qualitative sub-sample research, Young Lives has carried out eight additional thematic policy-relevant studies between 2009 and 2017, which are discussed further in the chapter on children’s wellbeing and protection.²⁶ Five of these were carried out with funding from foundations, three funded by the Oak Foundation,²⁷ and one each by the Hewlett²⁸ and Child Investment Fund Foundation.²⁹

The first study, carried out in 2008, was a mixed-methods study about health care financing considering attitudes towards user fees, combining data from the survey with a qualitative sub-sample in four sites in different regions.³⁰ The second study, carried out in 2009, was also a mixed-methods study about food security and safety nets, adding a qualitative study in four rural sites in different regions to the quantitative survey data to investigate the effects on children.³¹ The third study, undertaken in 2010, was a qualitative study of orphans and vulnerable children in two cities in different regions to understand the longer term impacts of orphanhood.³² This was followed in 2012 by a study of urban relocation in four sites, considering views of children and caregivers about the neighbourhoods they live in and their aspirations and concerns about potential relocation due to urban redevelopment.³³

In 2013, a study of child work and labour considered the work of children disaggregated by gender and age in three sites, two urban and one rural, to understand how children’s work

24 See map.

25 Rossiter *et al.* (2017) <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-CountryReport-Ethiopia-Oct17.pdf> and education chapter in this report.

26 See Figure 1.

27 On OVC, child work and labour, and violence affecting children and youth.

28 On married women’s experiences.

29 On early learning and education.

30 Barnett and Tefera (2010) <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP59-Barnett-HealthcareFinancingInEthiopia.pdf>.

31 Tafere and Woldehanna (2012) http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP83_Tafere_revised_Jan2013.pdf; Tafere and Woldehanna (2012) (2013).

32 Crivello and Chuta (2012).

33 Pankhurst and Tiumelissan (2013) http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP105_Pankhurst_Redevelopment-urban-slums.pdf; Pankhurst and Tiumelissan (2014) http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP126_Beyond%20Urban%20Relocation.pdf; Tiumelissan and Pankhurst (2013) <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP106-Pankhurst-Moving-to-Condominiums.pdf>.

relates to their schooling, the rest of their lives and their relationships with family, peers and employers.³⁴ The study included a workshop with researchers from other African countries and led to the production of a joint brief with the African Child Policy Forum and Save the Children and an edited book jointly published with the Organisation for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa.³⁵

In 2015, a qualitative study on child marriage focused on the consequences of early marriage on women's empowerment and decision-making in three rural sites in different regions.³⁶ From 2015 to 2017 Young Lives has worked closely with the Ministry of Education on policy and practice in early learning. Young Lives provided international evidence as an input to the Education Sector Development Program V,³⁷ carried out a stakeholder mapping and review of the national data, followed by consultations with regional education bureaux, the findings of which were reported to the Ethiopian National Early Childhood Care and Education Task force and provided inputs for the Education World Forum in 2016. This was followed by a study of the supply side with Colleges of Teacher Education, and an exploratory study of demand with community stakeholders.³⁸

The final qualitative study concerns violence affecting children and youth carried out in 2017 in three sites in different regions, one within a large city, the second in a small town and the third in a peri-urban rural area. The findings were presented at the Ministry of Justice to the inter-ministerial committee on violence affecting children and youth and the civil society child protection advisory group.³⁹

1.2.7. Ethical issues and procedures

Given the sensitivities of carrying out research with children, Young Lives has followed strict guidelines developed by the University of Oxford, has carried out intensive and careful training of fieldworkers, and has worked closely with Save the Children on procedures in case of problems. The survey and qualitative instruments have been approved by the University of Oxford Central Research Ethics Committee and, within Ethiopia, the Addis Ababa University College of Health Sciences Institutional Review Board. Additionally the thematic study on violence was approved by the Ethiopian Public Health Institute Institutional Review Board.

1.3. Engagement with government and other stakeholders

The Young Lives research has been carried out in partnership with the Ethiopian Development Research Institute (EDRI) which has undertaken the surveys over five rounds. EDRI initially collaborated with the University of Reading and Save the Children UK, then with the London School of Tropical Hygiene and Medicine, and from 2005 with the University of Oxford.

EDRI is a semi-autonomous research think-tank with close contacts with government. Its former Director, Ato Newai Gebre-Ab was Chief Economic Advisor to the Prime Minister, with the rank of Minister. This has meant that it has been possible for Young Lives to present its findings directly to high-level policy makers and ensure national ownership of the data that has been collected over fifteen years and five rounds and has been publicly archived for international dissemination.

34 Pankhurst, Crivello and Tiumelissan (2016) <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP147-Childrens%20work%20in%20family%20and%20community%20contexts.pdf>; Pankhurst and Tiumelissan (2015).

35 http://www.younglives.org.uk/files/Child%20Work%20and%20Well-Being_ACPF_SCI_YL%20June%202014_FINAL.pdf; Pankhurst, Bourdillon and Crivello (2014); Pankhurst and Tiumelissan (2015).

36 Chuta (2016) <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP166-Chuta%20%282%29.pdf>.

37 Rossiter (2016).

38 Woodhead *et al.* (2017) <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP163-Woodhead%20%282%29.pdf>.

39 Chuta *et al.* (forthcoming).

Young Lives worked closely with Save the Children UK in Ethiopia from the outset of the project till that organisation merged with the other Save the Children branches in Ethiopia, and until 2016 following the merger with Save the Children International. Joint activities in policy and communication focused on dissemination of findings through joint workshops, policy briefs and the Young Lives Ethiopia website.

Furthermore, Young Lives has engaged with the Ethiopian government, the United Nations and international and national non-governmental organisations in four main ways: 1) launches of country reports and fact sheets, 2) participation in conferences, workshops and events, 3) through the Young Lives international and Ethiopia websites and 4) through the Child Research and Practice Forum.

1.3.1. Country reports and fact sheets

After each of the first three rounds of the survey the initial results were compiled in a country report,⁴⁰ and in the fourth round in three thematic fact sheets, on 1) nutrition and health, 2) education and learning and 3) youth and development, with a fourth fact sheet on the survey design and sampling. The four fact sheets were also compiled into one report. In the fifth round four thematic fact sheets were produced, on 1) growth and nutrition, 2) education and learning, 3) youth transitions: skills, work and family formation and 4) poverty and intergenerational change, with a further fact sheet on the survey design and sampling. The education surveys and pre-school findings, produced in close collaboration with the Ministry of Education, have also often been launched alongside the main findings.

The country reports and fact sheets have been presented first at regional workshops in each of the regions where Young Lives works, with useful feedback provided, and then at national stakeholder workshops and to Ethiopian parliamentary representatives from relevant Standing Committees.

1.3.2. Conferences, workshops and events

Young Lives researchers from Ethiopia have presented at both international and national workshops, often organised by the University of Oxford, such as the annual conference of the Centre for the Study of African Economies; Young Lives' 2016 conference on Adolescence, Youth and Gender; the International Conference of Ethiopian Studies abroad, such as in Warsaw in 2015 and, within Ethiopia, in Dire Dawa in 2012; and at the annual conferences of Ethiopian Economics Association and the Ethiopian Society of Sociologists, Social Workers and Anthropologists. Team members have also participated in workshops bringing together researchers across the four Young Lives country studies, in Oxford and in each of the study countries.

Young Lives researchers have also participated in workshops and trainings within Ethiopia, organised by various ministries, notably the Ministries of Education, Labour and Social Affairs, and Women, Children and Youth Affairs, by development partners (notably the UK's Department for International Development, the European Union and the World Bank), and UN organisations (in particular UNICEF, UNFPA and UNDP), international and local research organisations (such as the Population Council, the Forum for Social Studies, and the Organisation for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa), and international and national NGOs (such as Save the Children, Family Health International , Girl Hub, Girl Effect and CHAD-ET).

40 See Alemu *et al.* (2003); Woldehanna *et al.* (2008) <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-CR2-Ethiopia-2008.pdf>; Woldehanna *et al.* (2011) http://www.younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-CR3_Ethiopia_Report_0.pdf.

Young Lives Researchers from Ethiopia have also participated in international events, such as the Girl Summit in London in 2014 and the World Education Forum in London in 2016, and events within Ethiopia in Addis Ababa, such as the National Girl Summit in 2015, and the international conference '*Putting Children First: Identifying solutions and taking action to tackle poverty and inequality in Sub-Saharan Africa*' in 2017.⁴¹ Young Lives team members have also been involved in annual events organised by the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, such as the Day of the Girl Child on October 11 and the Day of the African Child on June 16, by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs for the Day Against Child Labour on June 12, conferences of the African Child Policy Forum and meetings of the African Union Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. Researchers from Young Lives have also participated in networks, notably meetings of the National Alliance to End Child Marriage and the Civil Society Child Protection Advisory Group.

1.3.3. International and Ethiopia Young Lives websites

Young Lives Ethiopia researchers have produced a large number of articles and working papers which have been posted on the Young Lives international website⁴² which has more than 200 publications on Ethiopia, with more than half of them including Ethiopian authors. The Young Lives Ethiopia website⁴³ provides information exclusive to the Ethiopian part of the research, with publications, news and events and blogs, and a page on the activities of the Child Research and Practice Forum. The websites have been an important means of disseminating the research findings to audiences within Ethiopia and abroad.

1.3.4. Child Research and Practice Forum

The Child Research and Practice Forum (CRPF) was established in 2010, following a consultative workshop organized by Young Lives where findings were presented on research about orphans and vulnerable children (OVC). Participants suggested that a regular forum should be established to enable researchers to interact with policymakers and practitioners and promote wider use of research evidence. An informal network was established and three successive grants were secured from the Oak Foundation to finance hiring a coordinator, monthly activities and quarterly newsletters alongside consecutive research on OVC, Child Work and Labour and Violence Affecting Children and Youth.⁴⁴

The CRPF has been holding regular monthly meetings hosted by the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs for eight years, with support from UNICEF. The CRPF has an emailing list of over 500 people to whom information about the presentations is forwarded before the events and the presentations themselves afterwards. In addition the CRPF produced 11 newsletters and six booklets of annual summaries of the presentations, with funding from the African Child Policy Forum, UNICEF and Young Lives.⁴⁵ The Forum has enabled Young Lives to present findings alongside other researchers and organisations bringing together stakeholders from Government, UN and other international organisations and local NGOs. Over the years the CRPF has also

41 *Putting Children First: Identifying solutions and taking action to tackle poverty and inequality in Africa.*
<http://www.crop.org/Workshops-and-Events/CROP-Events-2017/Putting-Children-First.aspx>.

42 <http://www.younglives.org.uk>.

43 <https://www.younglives-ethiopia.org>.

44 Initially the CRPF members included African Child Policy Forum , CHAD-ET, Plan Ethiopia, Concern World Wide, Forum on Sustainable Child Empowerment , Oak Foundation, Save the Children, Consortium of Christian Relief and Development Associations, Norwegian Church Aid, Young Lives and UNICEF. The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs has played a lead role since the meetings have been held within the Ministry.

45 <https://www.younglives-ethiopia.org/child-research-and-practice-forum>.

had thematic focus areas, often on topics about which Young Lives has carried out research, including early learning, nutrition, child labour, child marriage and violence affecting children.

1.4. The establishment of the Ethiopian Centre for Child Research

In order to institutionalise research on children and ensure that the legacy of Young Lives carries on, a new centre named the Ethiopian Centre for Child Research (ECCR) was established in 2017 within the Ethiopian Development Research Institute (EDRI) through discussions with various government and non-government stakeholders and with initial support from UNICEF. The ECCR seeks to become a centre of excellence that promotes multidisciplinary research and policy-relevant evidence to inform the development, equity, wellbeing and protection of children in Ethiopia. The ECCR has a memorandum of understanding with Addis Ababa University and a steering committee involving key stakeholders. The ECCR co-hosted the international conference on African child poverty in October 2017.⁴⁶ The Centre has produced research on multidimensional poverty based on Young Lives data and is currently engaged in a research project on child marriage and parenthood coordinated by Young Lives at the University of Oxford in collaboration with the Young Lives teams in India, Peru and Vietnam and Child Frontiers in Zambia, and funded by the International Development Research Centre. The ECCR is also undertaking a study of the impact of urbanisation on children. Future plans include research on topics including the impact of monetary poverty on children, child labour, poverty and education in pastoralist areas, transition to the labour market, unemployment and risky migration.⁴⁷

1.5. Learning from Young Lives and taking the agendas forward

We hope that the evidence and stories about children's lives in different domains, across sectors and over the life stage from early childhood to early adulthood will contribute to policy discussions and the implementation of child- and youth-sensitive programmes at what is, demographically and developmentally, a challenging and transformative moment in Ethiopia's recent evolution.

We believe that the evidence from the two cohorts, with a mixed methods approach – including publicly archived survey data complemented by insights from children, caregivers and community members and supplemented by additional policy-relevant thematic research – will contribute to the development of the body of social science research in Ethiopia and inform the design and implementation of policies and programmes for children and youth.

It is our hope that data, analysis and findings will be considered sufficiently important for follow-up research with the Young Lives cohorts to be funded, designed and carried out in order to better understand the transitions from adolescence to adulthood. This can provide insights on youth issues to inform the evaluation of the outcomes of the second and subsequent *Growth and Transformation Plan*, and Ethiopia's targets for 2025 and for the Sustainable Development Goals agenda. We also hope that Young Lives' approach and findings will stimulate and guide the design of further policy-relevant research on children and youth.

1.6. Report structure

Following on from this introduction this summative country report has five further chapters. The first is an introduction to the policy context, reviewing the developments during the first and second decades of the new millennium, with an annex listing the policies relevant to children.

46 <http://www.theimpactinitiative.net/event/event-putting-children-first-identifying-solutions-and-taking-action-tackle-poverty-and>.

47 <http://www.edri.org.et/index.php/2014-03-30-05-55-49/2017-08-03-12-28-02>.

The second chapter is concerned with poverty dynamics, adopting a multidimensional approach and examining movements in and out of poverty over the survey rounds, complemented by qualitative examples from case material. The third chapter considers child nutrition, health and cognitive development, presenting evidence of the linkages, with a focus on food security, dietary diversity, access to safe drinking water and sanitation and children's growth trajectories and cognitive development. In particular this chapter explores the dynamics of undernutrition over the survey rounds, presenting evidence of both recovery and faltering. The fourth chapter deals with education and learning, considering changes at different education levels over the period and documenting the change from an emphasis on increasing school access to issues of equity, quality and learning outcomes. The fifth chapter addresses the following six sets of issues relating to wellbeing and protection of children and youth on which Young Lives has carried out thematic policy-relevant studies: 1) child-friendly social protection, 2) orphans and vulnerable children, 3) child work and labour, 4) harmful traditional practices, 5), violence affecting children and youth and 6) urban development and relocation. A conclusion summarises the key findings and policy implications from each of the chapters and then considers broader conclusions on positive trends, remaining challenges and lessons, and implications from longitudinal research over three stages of childhood.

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2. The policy context for children and youth in Ethiopia

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Development of institutions and policies relating to children and youth prior to the establishment in 1995 of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) was limited. In the imperial period the 1957 *Penal Code*, the 1960 *Civil Code*, and the 1961 *Criminal Procedure Code* included basic provisions relating to children's rights, and a situation report on children was produced in 1966.⁴⁸ Under the Derg Government (1974-1991) an autonomous National Children's Commission was established in 1985 and produced a *National Children's Strategy*, to facilitate care and support for orphans and vulnerable children.

After the Derg was overthrown, the incoming Transitional Government of Ethiopia in 1991 ratified the Convention of the Rights the Child (CRC), which has since been translated into Amharic and 11 other national languages. In 1993 the *National Population Policy* was adopted, noting the impact of displacement and natural disasters on children, and was further developed in the 1993 *National Disaster Preparedness Strategy*.

Once the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) was established in 1994, children's issues began to be included in new legislation and institutional responsibilities were defined. Children's affairs were entrusted to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) which established a National Committee on the Rights of the Child in 1994 and drafted a *National Social Policy*, while the Ministry of Education produced an *Education and Training Policy* in 1994. The *National Policy on Women* adopted in 1994 set out to protect women's rights, including from harmful traditional practices, with significant implications for girls and young women.

An important milestone was the 1995 FDRE Constitution, with Article 36 devoted to the Rights of Children, protecting them from exploitative practices, harmful work and corporal punishment in school and other institutions. There is also a provision for special protection for orphans and the encouragement of institutions promoting their adoption, welfare and education.

In 1996 a *National Programme of Action for Children and Women* was endorsed by the government and an Inter-Ministerial Committee chaired by the Minister of Economic Development and Development was established to monitor its implementation. By the end of 1996 the *Developmental Social Welfare Policy* prepared by MoLSA was approved, targeting vulnerable categories including children and youth in difficult circumstances. The *Cultural Policy* produced in 1997 encouraged developing the cultural identity of youth and discouraged activities detrimental to their wellbeing.

2.1. The first decade of the new millennium: child-focused institutions and policies

Since the Young Lives study started, Ethiopia has had four guiding policy documents, two Poverty Reduction Strategies and two Growth and Transformation Plans. From the first decade of the new millennium overarching policy documents were produced and clearer policies focusing on children began to take shape.

48 For a list of policies relevant to children by institution, sector and focus see Annex Table 1.

The first poverty reduction plan period (2002/3-2004/5)

The first Poverty Reduction Strategy, the *Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program*, had a strong focus on reducing child malnutrition and increasing primary school enrolment in accordance with the Millennium Development Goals. There was an emphasis on increasing educational access and coverage as well as promoting equity and increasing access in pastoralist regions. There was a separate section on cross-cutting issues, including gender but not mentioning children.⁴⁹ However, five-year sector development programmes and policies and strategies were formulated, with those on education and health having important consequences for children.⁵⁰

Institutionally, youth issues were given prominence through the establishment in 2001 of the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture with a mandate to promote youth training and their involvement in development.

In 2000 the Revised Family Code, outlined the rights and responsibilities of parents and children, notably setting the minimum age for marriage at 18 for both spouses. In 2002 Ethiopia ratified the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) adopted by the Organisation of African Unity in 1990. The ACRWC presented further elements beyond the basic tenets of the CRC, recognising important socio-cultural and economic realities and cultural values particular to Africa. The 2004 Criminal Code prohibited violence against children, including protection against maltreatment, abduction, harmful traditional practices – notably female genital mutilation (FGM) and child marriage – trafficking of children and child pornography.

The second Poverty Reduction Plan period (2005/6-2009/10)

By the time the initial Young Lives results were being produced and disseminated, the second Poverty Reduction Strategy, the *Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty* (PASDEP) was formulated, with more emphasis on children's issues, with a strengthening of the role of education and health in national development, notably through a change of focus from access to quality of services. The PASDEP also had a much clearer focus on children, explicitly discussed in a page specifically addressing 'Particular needs of children', which recognised the importance of tackling poverty in a holistic and child-sensitive manner, and considering the impacts of economic growth and poverty reduction policies on households and individuals differentiated by gender and age. The PASDEP also recognised the need for a special policy focus on children and young people as having distinct developmental needs and experiences of poverty. There was in addition a recognition that poverty is multidimensional with differential impacts on diverse groups and children of different genders and ages and living in different locations. The PASDEP also specifically recognised the risks of poverty at an early age having longer term consequence and being transmitted to the next generation.

Following the PASDEP guidance, in addition to sectoral programmes several ministries formulated a whole raft of strategies and action plans relevant to children's wellbeing and protection, with the lead for children taken by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) and the Ministries of Youth, Sports and Culture (MoYSC), Women's Affairs, Health and Education developing additional policies. *The National Plan of Action for Ethiopian Children*, approved by MoLSA in 2004, aimed to promote children's welfare through improved school participation, child health and HIV/AIDS interventions, as well as programmes to protect children from abuse, exploitation, and violence. The Plan also sought to improve the situation of children

49 Jones, Gutema, Tefera, and Woldehanna (2005) <http://www.younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP22-Jones-MainstreamingChildren.pdf>.

50 See Table 1 and chapters on health and nutrition and education and learning in this report.

in difficult circumstances, such as orphans and those affected by conflict, and to protect children from harmful traditional practices. In 2006 MoLSA went on to develop the *National Action Plan on Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children in Ethiopia* to promote protection of victims, rehabilitation and reintegration and monitoring of interventions. In 2009, MoLSA produced the *National Employment Policy and Strategy*, calling for a balance between allowing older children to work under decent conditions to generate income to meet their basic needs and supporting them in terms of schooling and skills development. For its part, the MoYSC approved a *National Youth Policy* in 2004 aimed at enhancing the professional competence, skills and ethics of youth so that they can participate in and benefit from a democratic system and accelerated development. The Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) produced the *National Action Plan for Gender Equality* in 2006 focussing among other things on women's and girls' economic empowerment, education and training, reproductive rights, health and HIV status, and on reducing violence against women and girls and protecting their human rights. MoWA also produced *Alternative Child Care Guidelines* in 2009, addressing community-based childcare, reunification, reintegration, foster care, adoption, and institutional care services, followed by *Standard Delivery Guidelines for Orphans and Vulnerable Children's Care and Support Programmes* in 2010. The Ministry of Health produced the *National Child Survival Strategy* in 2005 to reduce infant and under-five mortality rates, and in 2007 the *National Adolescent and Youth Reproductive Health Strategy* to promote the reproductive health and wellbeing of children and youth aged ten to 24, calling for a multisectoral approach to address the sociocultural and economic factors shaping reproductive health.

2.2. The second decade of the new millennium: increasing policy salience of children's issues

During the second decade of the new millennium, further policies relating to children have been developed, children's issues were linked with women's affairs, and for the first time a ministry with a specific mandate on children in its designation was established. Particular policies on child labour and on social protection and highlighting gender aspects of education were developed, as well as two cross-sectoral initiatives.

The first Growth and Transformation Plan period (2010/11-2014/5)

With rapid growth in GDP and increasing infrastructure and service development, the focus shifted away from a primary concern with poverty reduction to growth promotion, and the government formulated the five-year *Growth and Transformation Plan* (GTP) in 2010, with further emphasis on improving the quality of services and greater attention to issues of inequality. The GTP integrated children's issues along with gender as cross-cutting issues. It recognised that children are particularly vulnerable to man-made and natural risks, and noted that the PASDEP had taken measures to strengthen and protect children's welfare and rights, and that the Family Law and Penal Code were amended to increase and ensure the safety and security of children. The GTP also noted the establishment of children's parliaments, and said that action should be taken to coordinate care for orphans and children at risk. Targets were set relating to children, including mainstreaming children's affairs, support and care for vulnerable children, community-centred care for children at risk, and reducing sexual assault, labour abuse and child migration and trafficking. The implementation strategy included preparing a *Comprehensive Children's Policy*, promoting community care for vulnerable children and taking measures to reduce child abuse in the labour market, sexual assault, and child trafficking.⁵¹

51 Kassa and Alemayehu (2014).

A major institutional boost to policy on children was the inclusion in 2010 of children and youth under the Ministry of Women Affairs to form an integrated Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs (MoWCYA), with a Directorate of Child Rights Promotion and Protection, while MoLSA remained responsible for child labour, trafficking, children with disabilities and social protection issues. The new MoWCYA drafted a *National Children's Policy* in 2011 dealing with three areas: 1) development and growth, 2) prevention and protection and 3) rehabilitation, care and support.⁵² MoWCYA also approved a *National Strategy and Action Plan on Harmful Traditional Practices against Women and Children in Ethiopia* in 2013, with a particular focus on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), child marriage and abduction. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Justice, in preparing the *National Criminal Justice Policy* in 2011, included references to problems facing vulnerable children, notably victims of FGM, early marriage, child labour, neglect and abuse, and children in conflict with the law.

While the primary responsibility for children was shifted to the new MoWCYA, MoSLA developed two important strategies with important implications for children. The *National Action Plan on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour* was approved in 2012, with the aim of eradicating the worst forms of child labour by 2015 and creating a conducive environment to address all other forms of child labour in the long term. Subsequent to Ethiopia's experience with the Productive Safety Net programme since 2005 and the adoption of the African Union's 2009 Social Policy Platform, an Ethiopian Social Protection Platform was established under the leadership of MoLSA which prepared a *National Social Protection Policy* from 2011 to 2014. The earlier versions had four focus areas: 1) social safety nets, 2) livelihoods and employment support, 3) social insurance and access to health and 4) education and other social services. The final version, approved by the Council of Ministers in 2014, included a fifth focus area with important implications for child protection, that is, addressing violence, abuse and exploitation, with a recognition of the risks of social exclusion, disempowerment and violence affecting children, with specific mention of child marriage, FGM, child trafficking, beatings and sexual abuse. Meanwhile the Ministry of Education in 2013 highlighted gender issues by producing a *National Girls' Education and Gender Equality Strategy* and in 2014 a *Code of Conduct on School-Related Gender-Based Violence*.

Two areas of cross-cutting children's issues received particular attention. First, a particular emphasis was given to early childhood with an integrated approach leading to a *National Policy and Strategic Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education* being produced in 2010 jointly by the Ministries of Education, Health and Women's Affairs. The importance of a multisectoral approach to addressing nutrition was underscored by the 2013 National Nutrition Programme involving nine ministries including Health, Education, Women, Children and Youth Affairs, Labour and Social Affairs, Agriculture, Trade, Industry, and Finance and Economic Development.

The Second Growth and Transformation Plan Period (2015/6-2019/20)

The second and current *Growth and Transformation Plan* (GTP II) continues promoting the transformation of the economy and the transition in service delivery from access to quality. In education the emphasis has been on learning and quality of education, with a focus on expanding early learning, improving completion rates, particularly among disadvantaged groups, and emphasising secondary and higher education, through the fifth sectoral development programme. GPT II continues to consider children, along with women and youth, as a cross-cutting issue. Protecting children from harmful traditional practices and increasing girls' participation at all levels of education are highlighted. The objectives of GTP II include empowerment of children and ensuring their welfare and rights, and the strategies involve access

52 Alemu and Birmeta (2012); Centre for Human Rights (2013); Mulatu and Messele (2014).

to good quality education, increasing community awareness and participation in order to protect children from the risks of harmful traditional practices, and enabling orphans to join their families through community engagement. The welfare and rights of children are to be closely monitored and evaluated. Sectoral programmes have been produced which follow the GTPII guidelines, with those on education and health being crucial for children. In 2015 the Ministry of Health also produced a *National Strategy for Newborn and Child Survival in Ethiopia* to further reduce infant and under-five mortality, scale up interventions, reduce inequalities and eradicate preventable child deaths by 2035.

At the end of 2016 further ministerial reorganisations resulted in Youth being removed from the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs to form a Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS) and a more focused Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA) was established. These changes gave a boost to policymaking on both children and youth. Children received more attention within the new MoWCA. By the end of 2016 it had revised the 2011 Draft *National Children's Policy*, which was finally approved by Parliament in April 2017. The *National Children's Policy* has as its major objective the creation of a conducive environment for the promotion and protection of children's rights and welfare. The major policy concerns include protecting children's civil rights, care within the family, promoting a conducive environment for children's health, education and development and their involvement in culture, art and leisure. There are also sections on children in difficult circumstances notably promoting alternative domestic care arrangements, and protecting children from abuse, trafficking, child labour and harmful traditional practices. Young Lives was asked to provide comments on the drafts in 2010 and 2016 and, among the suggestions raised, a greater focus was included on child malnutrition and stunting, and on risks facing children from addiction including cigarettes, alcohol and drugs. A policy implementation strategy was drafted in 2017 and Young Lives provided comments on a first draft in October 2017. A second draft in March 2018 incorporated comments such as addressing the worst forms of child labour and different forms of physical, emotional and sexual violence. Further comments have been provided on this second draft.

For its part, the new MoYS produced a *National Youth Development and Change Strategy* and an accompanying Package in 2017, with the objective of enabling youth to benefit from active participation in the economic, social and political development of the country. In economic terms the strategy focuses on addressing the issues of youth employment, speeding up the transformation of the country from an agrarian economy and ensuring youth involvement in green economic development. In broad social terms the emphasis is on youth participation and benefitting from the education and health sectors, expanding youth centres and voluntary services, reducing illegal migration, and preventing foreign harmful influences. In political terms, the emphasis is on youth participation in national consensus- and peace-building, leadership and decision-making, generational succession, and strengthening democracy and good governance. The strategy also includes a focus on differential needs, including those of urban and rural and pastoralist and semi-pastoralist youth, young women, youth with disabilities and youth with special needs.

2.3. Conclusion

This brief review of the trajectory of policies on children and youth, focusing on the past two decades, highlights some important changes and transformations. First, in institutional terms there has been an increasing awareness of children and youth issues, with a widening of the policy space far beyond the development and inclusive growth agendas. Important changes have involved the establishment of ministries that include in their designation and mandates Youth (since 2001, along with Sports and Culture) and Children (since 2010, alongside Women and Youth). The changing responsibilities for Youth (initially with Sports and Culture from 2001, then

with Women and Children after 2010, and then again with Sports in 2017), reveals some ambivalence regarding how youth are conceptualised. However, as we have seen, the reorganisation also provided an impetus to policy development with the finalisation of both a *National Children's Policy* and a *Youth Development and Change Strategy* by the newly formed separate ministries in 2017, providing cross-cutting planning frameworks.

Second, in terms of overarching National Plans there has been important progress. While the first Plan, the SDPRP, had no specific mention of children beyond sectoral policies in health and education, the second Plan, the PASDEP, included a page on children's needs; GTP I included children along with gender issues as a cross-cutting issue while GTP II considered children and youth along with women's affairs and set objectives with indicators to be monitored. Given the large numbers of youth and high proportion within the population, the crucial importance of education and transitions to the labour market, the need to take advantage of the demographic dividend and to involve youth in constructive transformation, it can be hoped that children and youth issues will receive even greater prominence in future national guiding plans.

Third, sectoral legislation and planning concerning children and youth has received increasing prominence through the five-year sectoral plans and programmes, notably in education and health, as well as through specific additional policies and plans. Some of these are targeted in terms of age, such as, in health the *National Strategy for Newborn and Child Survival* and the *Adolescent and Youth Reproductive Health Strategy*. Others have a clear gender focus such as, in education the *National Girls' Education and Gender Equality Strategy*, and more broadly the *Strategy on Harmful Traditional Practices against Women and Children*. There have also been important policies relating to child protection, notably the *National Action Plan on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour* and the *Social Protection Policy* and subsequent Strategy. Examples of cross-sectoral cooperation are still fairly limited, although notable exceptions include an integrated approach to Early Childhood Care and Education produced jointly by the Ministries of Education, Health and Women Affairs, and a multisectoral approach to the National Nutrition Programme involving nine ministries.

Fourth, children are increasingly in touch with public institutions and benefitting from services to a greater extent than ever before. Pre-school coverage has massively increased, the vast majority of children go to primary school, secondary and tertiary education has been considerably expanded, health care provision has improved dramatically with the health extension service (two workers in each community), and the development of community-based health insurance. There has been a strong focus on addressing mother and infant nutrition and diseases and on adolescent reproductive health. Child protection and gender issues have received considerable prominence both within specific sectoral approaches and across sectors. However, in a context of pervasive and persistent poverty, reaching the most remote and marginalised children remains a considerable challenge, as evidence from Young Lives and other research demonstrates, whether it is out-of-school or working children, migrants, trafficked children or child domestic workers, children from pastoralist, semi-pastoralist or very poor households, and those affected by violence reinforced by social norms.

Finally, the achievement in 2017 of producing a *National Children's Policy* followed by an Implementation Strategy and a *Youth Development and Change Strategy* with its accompanying Package suggests that cross-cutting policies on children and youth are finally coming of age in the Ethiopian policy context. However, effective implementation of these policies presents considerable challenges, and child poverty and inequalities remain serious constraints as the chapters in this report reveal. In particular, Young Lives evidence suggests the need for a greater focus on ensuring that a life cycle approach is integrated so that the policies and programmes address the specific needs of children, adolescents and youth of different ages and genders. There is a focus in the *Children's Policy* on various kinds of children in difficult circumstances and

those at risk of different forms of abuse, and in the *Youth Strategy* on urban and rural youth, youth in pastoralist areas, young women, youth with disabilities and youth with special needs, but the broader issues of poverty, protection from shocks, and redressing inequalities based on urban/rural and regional location, and wealth and education will require greater attention and emphasis to ensure effective and equitable implementation of programmes.

Table 1: List of policies relevant to children and youth by institution, sector and focus area

Year	Institutions, Laws, Policies	Approving institution	Sector	Focus/ relevance for children/youth
IMPERIAL PERIOD				
1957	Penal Code	Imperial Government of Ethiopia (IGE)	Justice	Punishments for young offenders (over 15 years of age)
1960	Civil Code	IGE	Justice	Children's rights and duties; protection from exploitation and abuse
1961	Criminal Procedure Code	IGE	Justice	Provisions regarding crimes against minors
DERG PERIOD - PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA				
1985	National Children's Strategy	National Children's Commission (under military Derg Government)	Children	Overall strategy for addressing children's needs and protection
TRANSITIONAL PERIOD – TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT OF ETHIOPIA				
1993	National Population Policy	Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE)	Population	Impact of natural and man-made disasters on vulnerable groups including children
1993	National Disaster Preparedness Strategy	TGE	Food Security	Addressing and mitigating risks and child malnutrition
EPRDF PERIOD – FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA				
1994	National Policy on Women	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE)	Women	Women's equality and rights, and protection from harmful practices
1994	Education and Training Policy	Ministry of Education (MoE)	Education	Overall education policy framework
1995	FDRE Constitution	FDRE	General	Rights and protection of children
1995	Health Sector Strategic Plan I (1995/6-2000/1)	MoH	Health	First five-year sector plan; focus on reducing maternal and infant malnutrition and major illnesses
1995	Education Sector Development Program I 1995/96-2000/01	MoE	Education	First five-year sector programme; focus on expanding access and enabling environment
1996	National Programme of Action for Children and Women (1996-2000)	FDRE	Women and children	Four-year framework for children's and women's programmes.
1996	The Developmental Social Welfare Policy	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA)	Social Welfare	Protection and rehabilitation of vulnerable groups, including children
1997	Cultural Policy	Ministry of Information and Culture	Culture and Youth	Promoting youth cultural identity and discouraging detrimental activities
2000	Health Sector Strategic Plan II (2000/1-2005/6)	MoH	Health	Second five-year overall plan; introduction of health extension services; focus on maternal and infant malnutrition
2000	Education Sector Development Program II (2000/1-2005/6)	MoE	Education	Second five-year overall programme; focus on improving access and reducing regional disparities
2000	Revised Family Code	FDRE	Justice	Children's rights and family obligations; raised age of marriage to 18.
2001	National Action Plan on Gender Equality (2002-6)	Women's Affairs Office	Women	Women's rights, protection from violence and economic empowerment

Year	Institutions, Laws, Policies	Approving institution	Sector	Focus/ relevance for children/youth
FIRST POVERTY REDUCTION PLAN PERIOD (SDPRP - 2002/3-2004/5)				
2002	Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program (SDPRP - 2002/3-2004/5)	MoFED	General	Poverty reduction; child malnutrition, education and health access; gender as cross-cutting issue
2003	Labour Proclamation	FDRE	Labour	Bans child labour under 14 and regulates for children aged 15-18.
2004	National Plan of Action for Ethiopian Children (2004-10)	MoLSA	Children	Survival, development, protection and participation of children
2004	National Youth Policy	Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture (MoYSC)	Youth	Participation in development, good governance, culture and sports; access to services, protection from social evils and for vulnerable youth
2005	Health Sector Strategic Plan III (2005/6-2010/11)	MoH	Health	Third five-year plan; expansion and decentralisation of health extension service; focus on maternal health, reducing infant mortality, combatting HIV/AIDs malaria, TB etc
2005	Education Sector Development Program III (2005/6-2010/11)	MoE	Education	Overall third five-year sector programme; pivot from schooling to learning; curriculum revision, improving school management
2005	The Criminal Code of the FDRE (2004)	FDRE	Justice	Protection of children from violence. Prohibits harmful traditional practices.
2005	The National Child Survival Strategy	MoH	Health and nutrition	Reducing under-5 mortality, morbidity and malnutrition
SECOND POVERTY REDUCTION PLAN PERIOD (PASDEP -2005/06 -2009/10)				
2006	Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP - 2005/6-2009/10)	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development	General	Rapid poverty reduction; child-sensitive approach to tackling poverty; addressing distinct needs of children and youth of different genders and ages
2006	Multi-Sectoral Youth Development Strategy Plan (2006-15)	MoYSC	Youth	Including Rural and Urban Youth Package
2006	The National Action Plan on Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children in Ethiopia (2006-10)	MoLSA	Children	Reducing sexual abuse and exploitation of children; prevention, protection, rehabilitation of child victims
2007	The National Action Plan for Gender Equality (2006-2010)	Ministry of Women Affairs (MoWA)	Women	Mainstreaming gender; focus on violence against women and girls
2007	The National Adolescent and Youth Reproductive Health Strategy (2007-15)	MoH	Adolescent health	Addressing access of adolescents and youth to reproductive health services and reducing risks they face
2007	Adolescent/Youth Development Programme in Ethiopia (2007-11)	MoWCYA/UNICEF	Adolescents	Participation of adolescents through life skills, provision of HIV/AIDS care and progress towards a child-friendly justice system
2008	National Nutrition Strategy	MoH	Health and nutrition	Promoting better nutrition and strategies for avoiding malnutrition
2008	National Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Strategy	MoE	Education and training	Develop a comprehensive, integrated, outcome-based and decentralised TVET system
2009	Alternative Child Care Guidelines	MoWA	Orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs)	Community-based childcare, reunification and reintegration, foster care, adoption and institutional care for OVCs
2009	The National Employment Policy and Strategy	MoLSA	Child labour	Prohibiting child labour under the age of 14 and limits work and protects young workers aged 15 to 18

Year	Institutions, Laws, Policies	Approving institution	Sector	Focus/ relevance for children/youth
FIRST GROWTH AND TRANSFORMATION PLAN PERIOD (GTP - 2010/11-2014/5)				
2010	Growth and Transformation Plan in 2010 (GTP - 2010/11-2014/5)	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development	General	Focus on growth and economic transformation; children seen as cross-cutting issue along with gender
2010	Health Sector Strategic Plan IV (2010/11-2014/5)	MoH	Health	Fourth five -year sector plan, improving health service delivery and quality of care; focus on maternal and newborn health
2010	Education Sector Development Program IV (2010/11-2014/5)	MoE	Education	Fourth five-year education sector programme, emphasis on quality and inequality; improving access to disadvantaged areas
2010	National Policy Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education	MoE, MoH and MoWA	Early learning	Promoting integrated early childhood care and education
2010	National Girls' Education Strategy	MoE	Gender	Removing obstacles to girls' education and promoting their involvement in schooling
2011	National Criminal Justice Policy	Ministry of Justice (MoJ)	Justice	Rights of child victims of crime and children in conflict with the law, particularly vulnerable children; care and support for victims of crime and children in conflict with the law
2011	National Children's Policy draft	Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs (MoWCYA)	Children	Promoting child development, growth, protection and rehabilitation and care of children in difficult circumstances
2012	The National Action Plan on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (2013-5)	MoLSA	Child labour	In line with ILO Convention 182 prohibition of harmful work and listing of worst forms
2013	National Strategy and Action Plan on Harmful Traditional Practices (HTPs) against Women and Children in Ethiopia	MoWCYA	Gender	Prevention of HTPs with a focus on FGM/C, child marriage and abduction
2013	National Girls' Education and Gender Equality Strategy	MoE	Gender	Promoting girls' education and equality in schools.
2013	National Nutrition Program (2013-55)	FDRE, Ministries of Health, Education, Women, Children and Youth Affairs, Labour and Social Affairs, Agriculture, Trade, Industry, and Finance and Economic Development	Nutrition	Reduction of malnutrition through multisectoral approach
2013	National Policy and Strategy on Disaster Management	Ministry of Agriculture	Food security	Disaster risk management, vulnerable populations and children
2014	National Social Protection Policy	MoLSA	Social Protection	Overall social protection, section on vulnerable groups including children
2014	Code of Conduct on School-Related Gender-Based Violence	MoE	Gender-based violence	Guidelines to prevent gender-based violence in education and remedy the problem

Year	Institutions, Laws, Policies	Approving institution	Sector	Focus/ relevance for children/youth
SECOND GROWTH AND TRANSFORMATION PLAN PERIOD (GTP II - 2015/16-2019/20)				
2015	Growth and Transformation Plan II (GTP II - 2015/6-2019/20)	National Planning Commission	General	Further promotion of growth and industrialisation; children addressed in cross cutting section along with women and youth
2015	Health Sector Transformation Plan V (2015/6-2019/20)	MoH	Health	Fifth five-year plan, equity in access; quality in service provision; strengthening community engagement; towards universal coverage
2015	Education Sector Development Program V (2015/6-2019/20)	MoE	Education	Fifth five-year sector programme, emphasis on quality and inequality, pre-primary and school readiness
2015	National Strategy for Newborn and Child Survival in Ethiopia (2015/6-2019/20)	MoH	Child health and nutrition	Addressing infant mortality, morbidity and malnutrition
2016	National Social Protection Strategy	MoLSA	Social Protection	Implementation strategy of the social protection policy to expand protection and promote social transformation
2017	Ethiopian Youth Development and Change Strategy	Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS)	Youth	Promoting participation of youth in the economic, social and political spheres; emphasis on vulnerable youth
2017	Ethiopian Youth Development and Change Package	MoYS	Youth	Different packages for youth in urban, rural and pastoralist areas
2017	National Children's Policy	FDRE	Children	Promoting child development, growth, protection and rehabilitation, and care of children in difficult circumstances

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3. Poverty Dynamics

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3.1. Key findings

- Household wealth has improved over the five rounds of Young Lives surveys from 2002 to 2016 as measured by the wealth index. Despite differences in wealth especially based on location persisting, the greater increase in rural sites and among the poorest suggests possible economic convergence.
- The reduction in three measures – absolute poverty, the poverty gap and the severity of poverty – suggests an overall improvement and a decline in inequality, with more upward mobility in urban sites. Nonetheless, earlier poverty status is predictive of later status, suggesting a strong persistence of poverty.
- Multidimensional poverty analysis also reveals a consistent decline over the rounds, confirming more general improvements in wellbeing. The biggest gains were in health, education, and access to safe water and sanitation, with lesser improvements in the information dimension and fluctuations in the shelter dimension.
- In considering degrees of poverty, we find greater proportions of poor people in rural areas, and greater proportions of non-poor people in urban areas. However, we see an overall shift of severely poor people to moderately poor people, and from the latter to non-poor people with some location and cohort differences.
- The most important factors that are associated with poverty were found to be the following: larger numbers of household dependents and children under 18; lower education level of household members; and socio-economic shocks such as illness of a household member, loss of employment, or livestock deaths.
- Factors reducing the likelihood of poverty included: the presence of women working outside the home; access to credit and irrigated land; and living in urban areas within households headed by men. Boys in urban sites were less likely to face chronic poverty than girls.

3.2. Policy messages

- Despite important reductions in poverty and inequality, persisting differences by location and wealth status suggests the need to continue to prioritise pro-poor policies.
- Although the study shows some convergence between the rural and urban areas, and between the poor and the non-poor, the disparities have continued to persist over time, so that continued emphasis on expanding services to rural and more remote areas is important in order to reduce inequalities.
- The greater probability of families with more dependents and children facing transient or chronic poverty implies the need for continued attention to promoting family planning.
- The fact that the presence of working females within the households reduces the likelihood of households experiencing poverty suggests the need to promote female employment.
- The lesser probability of households with a better average education level facing poverty suggests that the high government expenditure on education is justified and should continue to be focused on areas with less access to education.

- The fact that socio-economic shocks such as loss of employment and death of livestock are associated with a greater likelihood of households facing poverty suggests the need to strengthen the implementation of the Social Protection and Disaster Risk Management policies.
- The strong association of illness in the household with the likelihood of experiencing poverty calls for the expansion of health insurance schemes to protect vulnerable households and children.
- In urban areas the greater likelihood of women heading households and girls facing chronic poverty suggests that further support should be targeted to single women and girls.

3.3. Introduction

Poverty is commonly measured and reported by looking at the extent to which people are able to acquire goods and services with their disposable income. However, in recent years there has been a growing consensus acknowledging the multidimensional nature of poverty, and key advances have been made in its measurement. This has been recognised in the Sustainable Development Goals which include a specific goal to halve the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty *in all its dimensions* according to national definitions by 2030⁵³.

Ethiopia ranks as a lower income country, with a GDP of US\$1,608 per capita in Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) in 2017 and a rank of 164th out of 187 countries⁵⁴. After decades of low income levels and sluggish growth, the country has shown impressive economic growth rates since 2004. According to the World Development Indicators, Ethiopia's growth rate has been higher than those in most African countries and Ethiopia overtook Kenya as East Africa's largest economy in 2017⁵⁵. In an effort to reduce poverty and achieve this growth, the country has been implementing a series of poverty-focused development strategies since the beginning of the 2000s, as noted in the previous chapter. These include the Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Programme (2001/2-2005/6); the Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (2005/6-2009/10), and from 2010 the Growth and Transformation Plans I and II (GTP I 2010/11-2014/5 and GTPII 2015/6-2019/20) with an explicit focus on promoting growth. The GTPs are characterised by huge investment in infrastructural facilities and ambitious development projects. Some studies suggest that there has been a significant decline in extreme poverty.⁵⁶ However, despite impressive economic growth and a substantial decrease in national poverty headcount ratio from 44 per cent in 2000/1 to under 24 per cent in 2015/6,⁵⁷ a significant proportion of children, especially in rural areas, still remain in vicious cycles of poverty and are vulnerable to environmental and socioeconomic shocks.

This chapter reports on poverty dynamics experienced by Young Lives households, particularly by the sample children, since the baseline survey in 2002. It looks at the movement into and out of poverty using two measures: income deprivation and Multiple Overlapping Deprivations Analysis (MODA), complemented by qualitative data and case material reporting from the children themselves. The MODA approach builds on the global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) which is an international measure of acute poverty covering over 100 developing countries that complements traditional income-based poverty measures by capturing the severe

53 SDG 1.2, emphasis added.

54 World Bank (2017).

55 IMF (2017).

56 See OPHI's report on reduction of severe destitution: Alkire *et al.* (2014).

57 NPC (2017).

deprivations that each person faces at the same time with respect to education, health and living standards. The global MPI was developed by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for inclusion in UNDP's flagship Human Development Report (HDR) in 2010, and has been published in the HDR ever since.⁵⁸ Major differences between the MPI and MODA approaches are that the former is based on the capabilities approach and takes the household as the unit of analysis whereas the latter, developed by UNICEF, is based on child rights and takes the child as the unit of analysis, adding age-specific indicators,⁵⁹ and therefore sheds more light on children's deprivations. The dimensions of MODA and the targets of the sub-indicators are based on international standards such as the Convention of the Rights of the Child (1989), the World Summit on Social Development (1995) and the Millennium Development Goals and therefore can be considered more relevant to addressing child poverty.⁶⁰

Traditional poverty assessments on income-based measures are incomplete since they disregard some measures that are equally vital for improving the design and effectiveness of poverty reduction policies.⁶¹ Therefore, in addition to looking at the dynamics of poverty in terms of household expenditure, we adopt MODA to look at the determinants of multidimensional poverty and poverty transitions by focusing on deprivation of health, nutrition, education, information, shelter, sanitation and access to safe water. This quantitative part of MODA is enriched with qualitative analysis of the different dimensions of MODA and how they interact. In particular, we draw on qualitative data provided by children themselves when interviewed individually and in groups to explain the impact of poverty on their overall wellbeing and to describe their experiences of poverty over the course of their lives.

In this chapter we first consider the wealth index over five survey rounds from 2002 to 2016, showing that the increase has been much greater in rural sites and among the poorest quintile, suggesting possible economic convergence despite persisting differences based on location and wealth.

In the second section we review measures of consumption expenditure which show improvements in absolute poverty and a reduction in the poverty gap, indicating that households are coming out of poverty in different dimensions. Furthermore, the poverty severity index has reduced between the second and third surveys, suggesting an overall decline in inequality among sample households, which is also supported by the evidence of a larger proportion of households moving out of absolute poverty as compared to the proportion moving into poverty over the period 2006-9. However, differences in location show that, in addition to some regional variations, in urban areas a much smaller percentage of households moved into poverty and a higher proportion escaped poverty, suggesting greater upward mobility in urban sites. We then consider the effect of households' previous poverty on their later status showing that earlier poverty is predictive of later status, suggesting the persistence of poverty.

The third section deals with multidimensional poverty and our use and adaption of the MODA approach. We compare the indicators in the seven MODA dimensions with children's own definitions from Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and find a close correspondence. We then consider the changes in deprivations over the first four rounds by dimension, revealing fairly consistent declines over the rounds and indicating substantial improvement in children's wellbeing, with some differences in the extent for the various dimensions. The biggest gains were

58 <http://ophi.org.uk/multidimensional-poverty-index>.

59 Hjelm *et al.* (2016).

60 De Neubourg *et al.* (2012).

61 Ballon and Krishnakumar (2010).

in health, education, and access to safe water and sanitation, with lesser improvements in the information dimension, and fluctuations in the shelter dimension.

An analysis of the number of deprivations experienced over the rounds shows that the proportion with no deprivations has increased while the proportion with greater numbers of deprivations has reduced, with some cohort differences. To ascertain overall multidimensional poverty status we first classify the children into poor and non-poor, demonstrating an increase in those who are non-poor over the rounds. We then divide the poor into moderately and severely poor people, revealing some inter-cohort differences, and consider rural/urban differences, showing that the severely poor are concentrated in rural areas and the non-poor in urban areas. The data also suggest a shift from severe poverty to moderate poverty and from the latter to non-poverty, with some location and cohort differences.

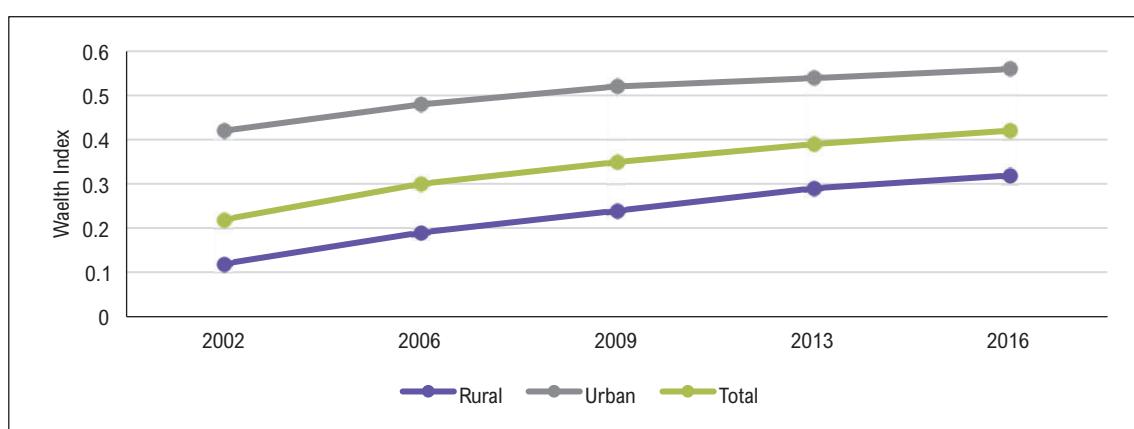
Finally, we analyse which variables are significant in explaining multidimensional poverty, including household factors such as the number of children, the education level of household members, the gender of the head of the household and of the child, and whether a household member has experienced illness, and we address policy variables relating to access to credit, land area and irrigation, and access to extension services. We found that poverty was associated with the number of dependents, the education level of household members and socioeconomic shocks, and that access to credit and irrigated land reduced the likelihood of poverty.

3.4. Wealth, consumption and poverty

Wealth Index:⁶² aiming to track households' economic changes over the course of time, Young Lives has been collecting data on the wealth level of households in each survey round.

Figure 2 exhibits the wealth index showing substantial growth over the five rounds of the survey for the Younger Cohort sample. The wealth index was higher for urban areas than for rural areas throughout, but the growth rate was much higher for rural areas (at 150%) than for urban areas (18%).

Figure 2: *Wealth index over time for Younger Cohort households*



Source: Young Lives data

⁶² The wealth index reflects the ownership of assets as indicated by housing quality, possession of consumer durables, and access to services. The measure of housing quality covers the material of the floor, roof and walls, and the number of rooms relative to household size. The service component is the average of the indicator variables on the availability of electricity, piped water, fuel for cooking and toilet facilities. The consumer durables measure is the sum of the indicator variables related to households' ownership of radio, TV, refrigerator, bicycle, motorcycle, car, mobile phone, landline phone and fan. The wealth index and its components range from zero to one. While a value close to one means the child is from an affluent family, any value near zero implies the child is a member of a poor family.

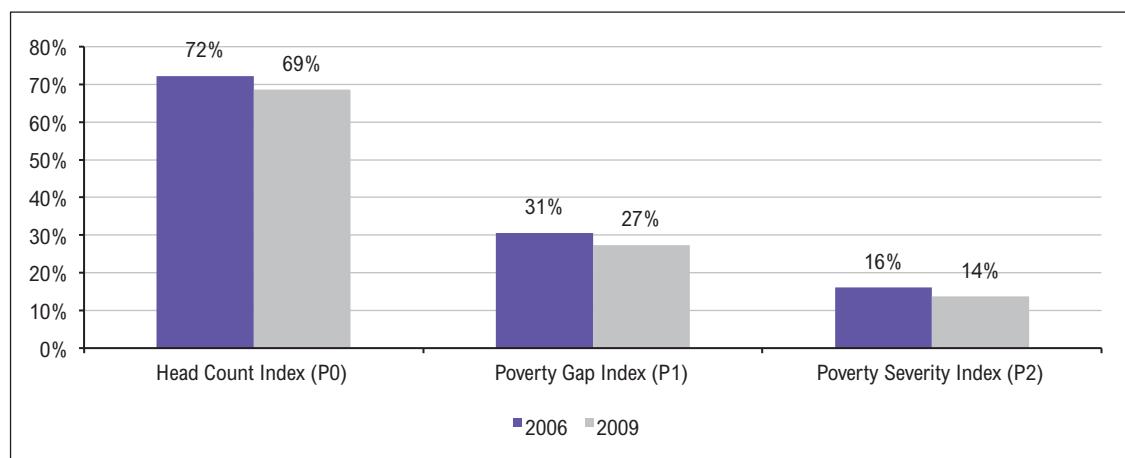
Although the average wealth index of all of the wealth quintiles increased over the first three rounds, an exceptionally high rate of change was recorded for the poorest quintile (748%, although from a very low base). The smallest change (17%) was observed for the richest quintile.⁶³ This suggests some economic convergence between rural and urban households over the course of the Young Lives study, although the gap still exists.

To identify the factors that triggered the large increase in wealth index, particularly in the poorest wealth quintile, the result was further disaggregated into a consumer durables index and a services quality index. The percentage change in the consumer durables index is very large and significant, especially for the poorest quintile. This means that the change in wealth index was largely driven by increases in the ownership of consumer durables among the poorest households.

3.4.1. Poverty as measured by consumption expenditure⁶⁴

Figure 3 shows a decline in absolute poverty based on the households' consumption expenditure. The poverty gap (aggregate poverty deficit of the poor relative to the poverty line) also declined, as did the poverty severity index, the latter indicating an overall decline in inequality among Young Lives sample households. The reductions in both the percentage of households in absolute poverty and the poverty gap indicate that households are coming out of poverty in different dimensions.

Figure 3: Poverty headcount, gap and severity indices in 2006 and 2009



Source: Young Lives Younger Cohort data.

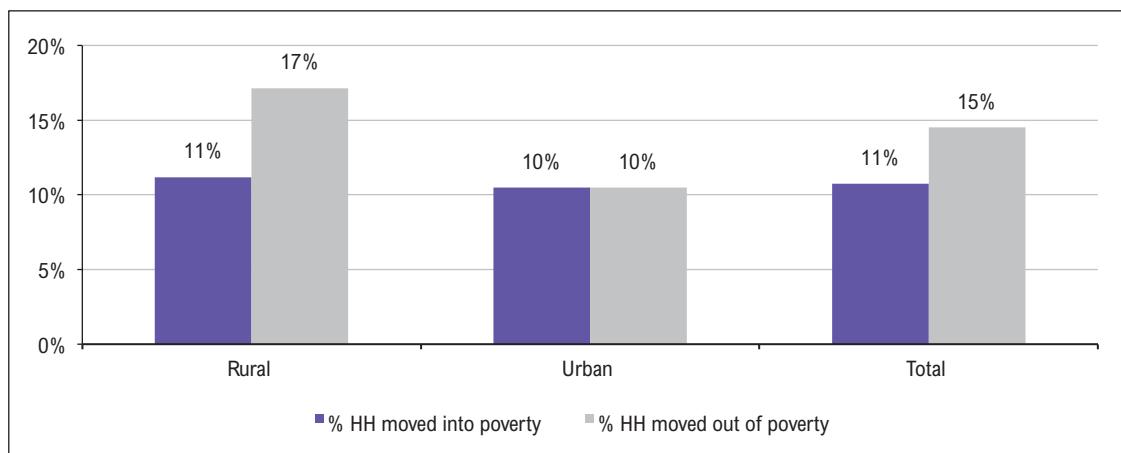
However, to have a better picture on the movement into and out of poverty over time, we calculate the percentage of households who made a transition in either direction. Figure 4 presents the movement into and out of poverty over the period 2006–9, both location. The percentage of households that moved into absolute poverty in Round 3 was lower than the percentage moving out of absolute poverty. The data show that of the households that became poor the majority were located in rural sites; since most of the sample is rural this may not be surprising, although the regional analysis does suggest that most of the mobility happened outside of Addis Ababa sites, suggesting that the rate of mobility both into and out of poverty was higher in more rural areas. Movements out of poverty could be attributed to the wide-ranging and

63 Woldehanna and Hagos (2013) http://www.younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP109_Woldehanna_Dynamics%20of%20Poverty%20in%20Ethiopia.pdf.

64 The calculations use the Foster-Greer-Thorbecke (FGT) (1984) method.

multifaceted pro-poor programmes that have been implemented in rural areas of the country, such as intensification of agriculture, infrastructural development and the emergency food aid distributed during droughts (MFED, 2013), whereas movements into poverty may be related to drought, inflation and other livelihood problems.

Figure 4: Movement into and out of poverty, 2006–9 (%), total households (HH) = 1883



Source: Young Lives Younger Cohort data

Rural households included in the qualitative study indicated that a series of years with good weather and less frequent years of drought helped to increase agricultural yields. Livelihood diversification also played a big role in helping households improve their economic status. During the consecutive fieldwork home visits, researchers witnessed changes in some households, as exemplified by the case of Hadush's⁶⁵ family (Box 1) living in a site in Tigray, where the use of modern inputs coupled with non-farm activities helped them move out of poverty.

Box 1: Household livelihood Improvements in a rural site in Tigray

The household's circumstances have improved a lot over the years. They had better harvests between 2006 and 2009. They have graduated from the productive safety net programme, designed for food deficient households. His father says, 'Now, we are living well. We have enough food and livestock. We have our house roofed with corrugated iron. ... This is because we use fertilisers and animal manure to increase the productivity of our land. We obtained loans from the savings and credit scheme and we sold our oxen to pay back the loan. Then we purchased other oxen. I also do masonry and earn some money. We are now middle in wealth.' (Hadush's father, Zeytuni, 2011).

We estimated the effect of the sample households' previous poverty status on the risk of their being poor in the current period. Of those households that were observed to be poor in Round 3, 75 per cent had also been poor in Round 2, with negligible differences between rural and urban sites. Similarly, a significant number of the non-poor households in Round 3 were able to maintain their previous status. This indicates that the current poverty status of households is highly correlated with their previous status; once the household slips into poverty, it is more likely to stay poor.

⁶⁵ To protect the anonymity of the sample and sites, pseudonyms are used for all children and sites.

This is well illustrated in the qualitative study. Households which were initially poor continue to live in poverty, as exemplified by the family of Defar (Box 2) living in a site in Amhara region.

Box 2: Persisting poverty in a household in an Amhara site

Defar's family was very poor, owning insufficient land and few livestock. As a food-insecure household, the family depended on productive safety net support. Defar used to earn some money by carrying stones from his neighbourhood and selling them in the nearby town. As a result he had severe headache and sometimes collapsed when working on sunny days. He tried to attend school up to Grade 5. However, after 2010 he left school because his family said, 'We cannot afford your schooling.' He then ran away to town to live on his own, portering for small cash and sharing a room with friends. When he had no money, he had to sleep outside. In 2011, when he was 17, he explained his difficult life: 'I usually sleep on the veranda with other poor boys. ...I caught a cold. I became ill and lost weight because of the hunger and cold.'

The nature of the shocks and the type of deprivations households experience vary, mainly based on their location. In rural areas, community-levels shocks such as drought, hailstorms, floods, death of livestock and other natural calamities affect the economic situation of households. In urban areas, lack of income opportunities and high prices of consumer goods have a similar effect. Idiosyncratic shocks, however, affected all families irrespective of where they lived. A serious shock found to be statistically correlated with poverty is illness in the family, as illustrated by the case of Tsega, a young girl from the city of Hawassa (Box 3).

Box 3: Impact of a caregiver's illness in an urban household in SNNP

Tsega's explained how her mother's illness led to family problems which meant they had to leave their home. 'Because of my mother's long illness we remained dependent on her uncle. I remember when I was nine, we quarrelled with her uncle and he kicked us out of the house.'

In rural communities, households can be affected by a combination of compounding shocks and then find it difficult to move out of poverty, as exemplified by the household of Ayu in a site in Oromia (Box 4).

Box 4: Environmental and family problems facing a household in rural Oromia

Ayu's family was hit by three successive floods, leading to poor harvests and a big increase in the price of maize. The family was also affected by the illness of Ayu, whose treatment required further expenses. Three years later, the older son in the family bought two horses on credit to generate income using a horse cart, but one was stolen and the other soon died. The family remained in debt and they continued to experience poverty over the years.

In urban areas, lack of a regular income, increases in food prices, and the high cost of living have affected families. Poor households remained vulnerable to numerous and lengthy shocks, as illustrated by the case of Tagesech (Box 5), who had moved from a rural area and was trying to make ends meet in an urban site in SNNP.

Box 5: Migration, divorce and illness of a female head of household in an urban SNNP site

Tagesech's mother had experienced poverty in both her rural and urban life. She married in the rural area as young as 15 years of age and gave birth to Tagesech a year later. She had complications during the delivery and had been sick ever since. Her husband abandoned her and she had to move to a large town to live with relatives. She began selling food on the street. She shares a room with many family members as well as other relatives. The successive shocks of early marriage, divorce, migration and protracted illness forced her to live in poverty. Throughout the field work between 2007 and 2014, we witnessed the family living in extreme poverty.

Poor households have distinct characteristics compared to non-poor households. Households with large families, more economically dependent members and an older household head were found to be poorer. Similar trends could be observed when we look more closely at these characteristics for absolutely poor and non-poor households separately for both Rounds 2 and 3. Two education indicators, namely mean schooling or grade (in years) of the household head and mean grade of all members in a given household are used to see the link between educational level and poverty status. Households with low levels of education are more likely to be chronically poor. We can also see a clearer pattern when households were categorised into poor and non-poor in both rounds of the survey. This may indicate that better education leads to higher wealth status. High educational achievement improves the extent to which households are able to move out of consumption poverty by increasing their average income.

There is much continuity in poverty status over time. Looking at households across surveys we find that the levels of consumption later on are largely dependent on their earlier consumption levels. and there is a clear relationship between earlier and later poverty status, showing that households in poor communities are frequently trapped in poverty – their status today depends on their well-being and poverty in the past.

3.5. Multidimensional poverty among children

Having considered the trend of wealth index and poverty statistics using a consumption expenditure approach, we now look at the multidimensional poverty of the children to gain a broader and more accurate picture of poverty than the traditional approach. MODA looks into child wellbeing in a holistic manner by focusing on the children's access to goods and services that are vital to their development.

3.5.1. Identification of dimensions and indicators:

MODA uses a range of indicators clustered into four categories: survival, development, protection and participation.⁶⁶ The study uses the longitudinal dataset from the Young Lives Study between 2002 and 2013, which allows for a dynamic analysis of the multidimensional wellbeing of children and which contains indicators that capture children's early circumstances. The indicators used in the study have been chosen by comparing MODA indicators with those identified by children during FGDs as suitable to measure child poverty in its different dimensions and linked to the Convention of the Rights of the Child.

⁶⁶ Dimensions used as proxies for deprivations and to measure children's wellbeing are related to nutrition, health, education, water, sanitation, protection, information, shelter and participation.

Table 2 lists categories in relation to their respective dimensions, indicators and thresholds. If a child is deprived in one of the indicators in one dimension, the child is considered deprived in that dimension.⁶⁷

Table 2: Comparing poverty indicators in MODA and focus group discussions conducted with children

Dimensions	Indicators and Deprivation Thresholds
Age group 0-5	
Nutrition	<i>Underweight</i> : Deprived if children are below two standard deviations from the median of the reference population
	<i>Wasting</i> : Deprived if children are below two standard deviations from the median of the reference population
	<i>Number of meals per day</i> : Deprived if the child has eaten less than three times in a day
	<i>Number of food items consumed per day</i> : Deprived if the child has consumed less than three food items per day
Health	<i>Skilled birth attendant</i> : Deprived if the child was not born with a skilled birth attendant
	<i>Measles vaccination</i> : Deprived if the child has not received measles vaccination
	<i>BCG vaccination</i> : Deprived if child has not received BCG vaccination
Age group 5-17	
Education	<i>School enrolment</i> : Deprived if the child is not enrolled in school
	<i>Primary school</i> : Deprived if the child is older than 14 years but has not finished primary school
Information	<i>Access to information</i> : Deprived if the child does not have access to any of these items: radio, television, phone and computer
All age groups	
Shelter	<i>Overcrowding</i> : Deprived if living with more than four household members per room
	<i>Roof and floor material</i> : Deprived if unsustainable roof and floor material such as mud and thatch
Water	<i>Access to improved water source</i> : Deprived if no access to a protected water source
Sanitation	<i>Access to improved sanitation</i> : Deprived if the child does not have access to a flush toilet or pit latrine

During the qualitative study in 2011, children were asked to identify what poverty meant for them. Across all sites, they indicated that lack of good food, housing, clothing, education and other resources suggest whether or not the families live in poverty or not. These are similar to the MODA indicators, the only difference being that children did not mention information as a poverty indicator. While the rural children focused on agricultural resources, urban children focused on income and housing to identify poverty status. The complete list of poverty indicators as described by boys and girls living in rural and urban sites is provided in Table 2.

⁶⁷ A mix of union and intersection approaches has been used to identify deprivation, which represents an adaptation of the MODA approach.

Table 3: Summary of children's definitions of poverty

Urban children	Rural children
Lack of basic necessities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living in confined housing • Inability to provide basic necessities for the family and children • Inability to attend school regularly • Inability to get the necessary things for life 	Lack of basic necessities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The poor have nothing, even nothing to eat • Poverty is the inability to provide basic needs for the family and children • Inability to attend school regularly • The poor child lives in a thatched and smaller house • Poverty means being starved, facing health problems • Doing paid work instead of going to school
Resource ownership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A family not having income or housing • Lack of privately owned house • Many houses share the same latrine and one electric connection. 	Resource ownership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not having any livestock • Inability to plough our land; sharecropping instead • The poor have no farmland, no cattle and no food to eat. • No land or private house • Not having TV and other materials
Overall scarcity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not having enough of anything! • Leading a miserable life • Unable to do what you want • Leading a destitute life 	Overall scarcity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lacking everything in life • Depending on others for survival • Unable to buy anything one needs

Threshold: After aggregation of the level of overlapping deprivations, we framed thresholds for levels of deprivation.⁶⁸ Children that are deprived in more than 30 per cent of dimensions are considered moderately poor, while children deprived in more than 50 per cent of the dimensions are considered severely poor. Building on studies on chronic poverty and drawing on the MODA to identify the deprivation status of children, the study proceeded to categorise children as never poor, poor only once in four rounds, transient poor (poor in two or three rounds) and chronically poor (poor in all four rounds) to investigate the dynamics and transition of childhood deprivations across the four survey rounds.⁶⁹

3.5.2. Deprivation by dimension among all children

Using MODA we find a decline in children's deprivation in all dimensions. Table 3 below reports the extent of overlapping deprivations experienced by both cohorts of children. For the Younger Cohort the percentage of children who are deprived in the health dimension declined significantly in Round 2. In contrast, the nutrition dimension saw a sharp increase.⁷⁰ Similarly, the percentage of children in the Younger Cohort who are deprived in the education dimension declined from Round 3 to Round 4. The same was found to be true for the information dimension, although the reduction is modest when compared to the education dimension. Moreover, the proportion of children who are deprived in their access to safe water declined progressively across the four rounds from 53 per cent in the first round to 11 per cent in the final round.

68 The study used and adapted Alkire and Foster's method (2010).

69 However, in the case of poverty dynamics and transitions analysis, only the 30 per cent deprivations threshold of Alkire and Foster (2010) is used to categorise children as poor in multiple dimensions in each of the survey rounds.

70 The rise is triggered by the introduction of the dietary diversity indicator to the nutrition dimension, which was not included in Round 1 because the children in the Younger Cohort were only one year old at that time and hence the dietary diversity indicator did not apply to them. While the requirements for a child to be deprived in the nutrition dimension were either weight for age or weight for height z-scores being two standard deviations below the sample mean in Round 1, we added the requirement of having at least three meals a day and having at least three food items per day in Round 2.

For the shelter dimension, the percentage of children who are deprived fluctuated across survey rounds. The percentage of Younger Cohort children who are deprived in the shelter dimension decreased across the first three rounds while it increased by five percent in Round 4. This can be explained by the increase in household size in Round 4, increasing the number of children that are living in overcrowded households, which is one of the components determining the shelter dimension. The proportion of children in the Younger Cohort who are deprived in the sanitation dimension decreased progressively across the four rounds.

Table 4: Percentage of children deprived by dimension among all children

Dimensions	Younger Cohort				Older Cohort			
	Round 1 2002	Round 2 2006	Round 3 2009	Round 4 2013	Round 1 2002	Round 2 2006	Round 3 2009	Round 4 2013
Health	48.0	17.1						
Nutrition	0.3	22.1						
Education			23.3	5.4	34.4	5.2	83.0	56.3
Information			36.9	25.2	57.8	40.1	33.9	13.1
Shelter	73.5	59.8	53.9	58.9	72.1	55.6	49.4	60.4
Safe water	53.4	24.1	16.2	11.1	55.6	24.1	16.8	10.8
Sanitation	62.1	45.3	27.0	22.6	63.1	44.1	24.7	23.3
N	1,998	1,912	1,884	1,873	1000	980	973	907

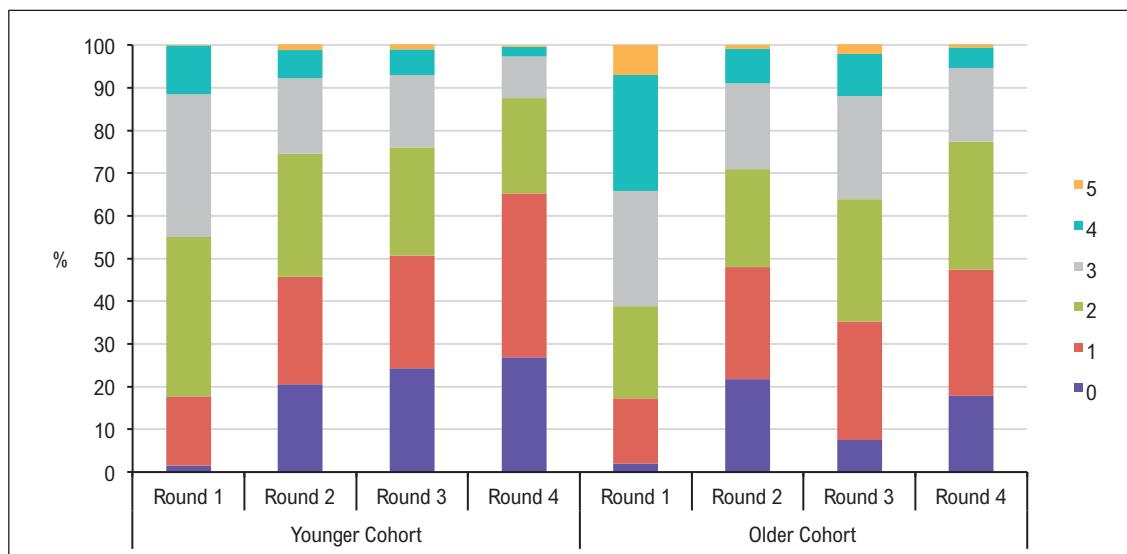
In the first round the children in the Older Cohort were eight years old. Hence, unlike the Younger Cohort, we do not need to substitute the health and nutrition dimensions with the education and information dimensions. Given their age, we use the education and information dimensions in all four rounds. The percentage of children who are deprived in the education dimension declined from the first round to the second. However, when we include the criterion of primary school completion it increased significantly in Round 3, even beyond the level in Round 1. Although it declined in Round 4, it remained above the percentage of children who were deprived in education in Round 1. The substantial increase in the percentage of children who are deprived in the education dimension can therefore be explained by the introduction of a primary education completion requirement. The children in the Older Cohort were fifteen years old in Round 3, which is beyond the primary school age designated by the Ministry of education (between seven and 14 years). The addition of the primary education completion component in Round 3 to school enrolment was the only indicator used to designate children as deprived in education below 14 years. Since the substantial rise in the percentage of children who are deprived in this dimension can be explained by the large number of children beyond primary school age that have not completed primary school, caution is required in interpreting the results and comparing children across the rounds.

Unlike the education dimension, the percentage of children in the Older Cohort who are deprived in the information dimension declined consistently across the four survey rounds. A similar trend is observed for the access to safe water and sanitation dimensions. This trend resonates with that of the Younger Cohort, which also showed a consistent decline in the proportion of children deprived in access to safe water. In contrast, a fluctuation was observed in the percentage of children deprived in the shelter dimension. Despite the consistent decline in the first three rounds, a rise was observed in the last round. The same trend was observed for the Younger Cohort. The increase in Round 4 is likely to have resulted from the rise in household size leading to an increase in the incidence of overcrowding in children's households.

3.5.3. Number of deprivations among all children

In addition to the extent of deprivation by proportion it is important to examine the overlapping deprivation by number. Figure 5 below shows the number of deprivations experienced, by cohort. The proportion of Younger Cohort children facing increasing numbers of deprivations has decreased over the rounds. There has been a considerable increase in the proportion facing no deprivations in any of the dimension to over a quarter by Round 4. In the first two rounds most children faced two or three deprivations but by Round 4 most children faced only one or no deprivations. A similar pattern can be seen for the Older Cohort, with a substantial increase in the proportions facing no deprivations over the four rounds, and most children in Round 1 facing three or four deprivations, whereas by Round 4 most faced two or three deprivations.

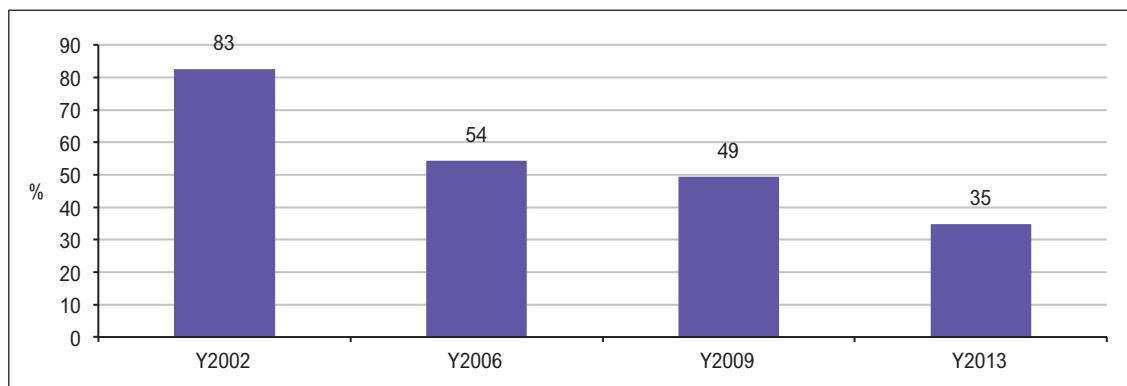
Figure 5: Percentage trends in number of deprivations among all children



3.6. Multidimensional poverty status

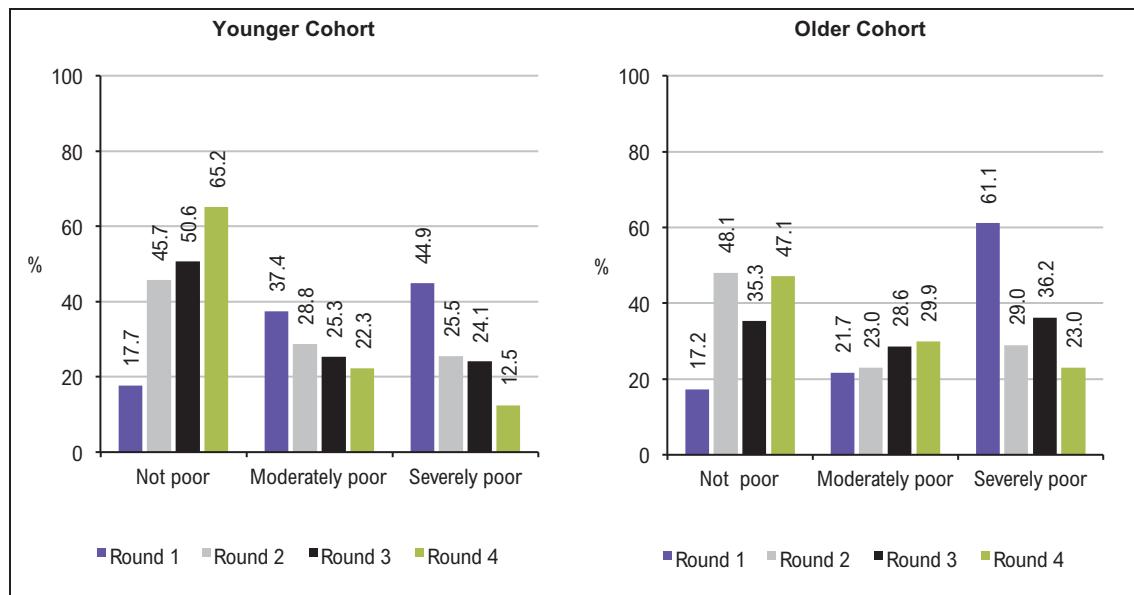
We classified the sample children into two broad groups – ‘poor’ and ‘non-poor’ – with those deprived in at least 30 per cent of dimensions classified as poor. We found that the proportion of children who are multidimensionally poor declined from being a large majority in 2002 to about a third in 2013, indicating a substantial improvement in children’s wellbeing (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Percentage of children who are multidimensionally poor (Younger Cohort)



The study further refined the categorisation by dividing the ‘poor’ into two sub-categories thus creating three categories: ‘non-poor’⁷¹ (deprived in less than 30 per cent of dimensions), ‘moderately poor’ and ‘severely poor’ (deprived in more than 50 per cent of dimensions). (See Figure 7). The percentage of Younger Cohort children that are non-poor increased significantly over the survey rounds, while the proportion of moderately poor children declined consistently over the four rounds, and the proportion of severely poor declined sharply, particularly between Rounds 1 and 2 and between Rounds 3 and 4. For the Older Cohort too we see an increase in the proportion who are not poor from Round 1 to Round 2, although in Round 3 there was an artificial decrease related, as noted earlier, to the introduction of the primary school completion criterion. By Round 4 fewer than half are non-poor compared to more than two-thirds of the Younger Cohort. The proportion of Older Cohort children who are moderately poor increased slightly over the rounds, unlike for the Younger Cohort, whereas the proportion in the severely poor category fluctuated, starting off very high in Round 1, decreasing sharply by Round 2, increasing slightly in Round 3 for the reasons stated above, and declining again in Round 4.

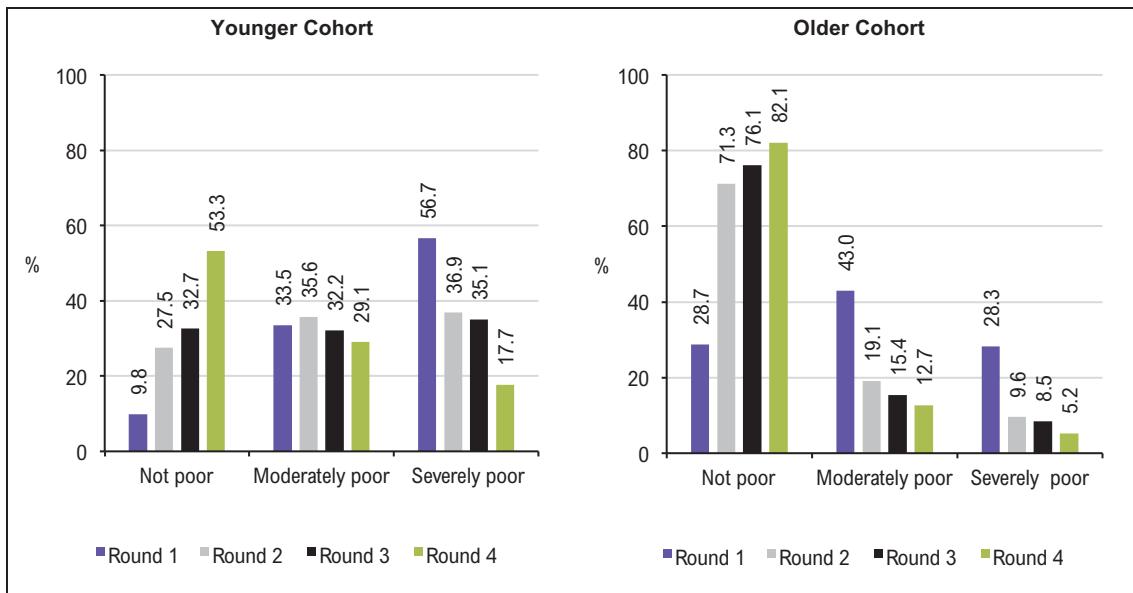
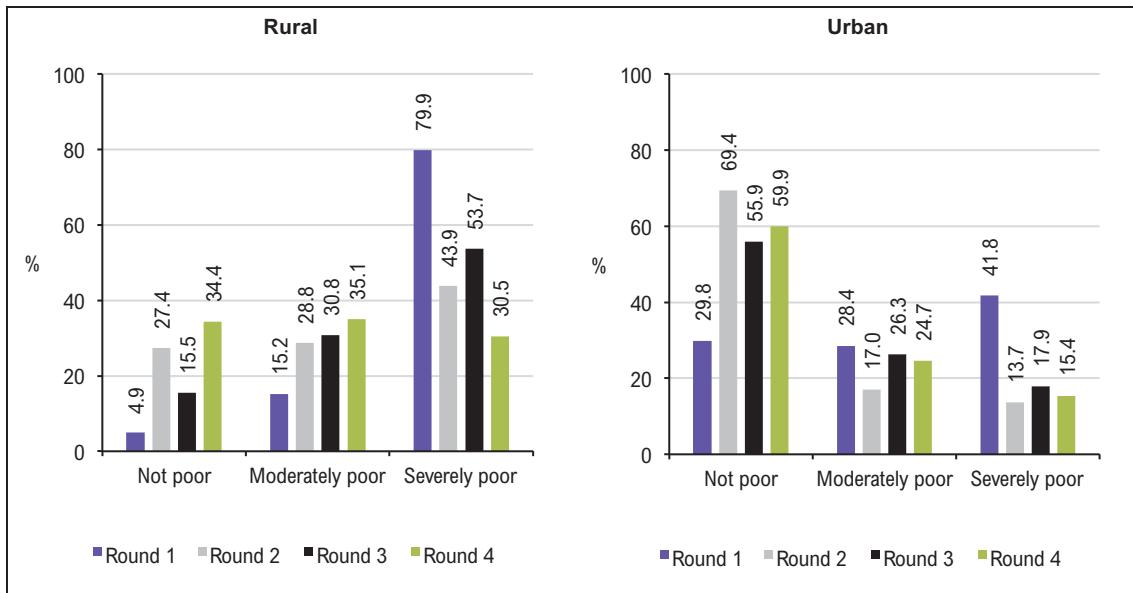
Figure 7: Trends in multidimensional poverty by cohort



3.6.1. Multidimensional poverty status by location

Children's poverty status when disaggregated by location (Figures 8 & 9) shows that for both cohorts the proportion of non-poor is greater in urban areas, whereas larger numbers of the severely poor are found in rural areas. For the Younger Cohort, the decline in the proportions of moderately poor and severely poor was marked for the urban children, particularly from Round 1 to Round 2, whereas the decline was less marked in rural areas for the moderately poor but was significant for the severely poor, particularly between Rounds 1 and 2 and Rounds 3 and 4. For the Older Cohort, the proportion of rural children who were moderately poor increased, whereas that proportion for urban children decreased somewhat. The proportions severely poor decreased, with a particularly sharp decline for the rural children between Rounds 1 and 2.

71 It is important to remember that throughout this chapter when we speak of ‘poor’, ‘non-poor’, ‘moderately or severely poor’ we are considering poverty to be understood in terms of multiple overlapping dimensions.

Figure 8: Status of poverty by rural/urban residence: Younger Cohort**Figure 9:** Status of poverty by rural/urban residence: Older Cohort

3.7. Associations and dynamics of multidimensional poverty

The study uses econometric methods and qualitative analysis to identify factors associated with multidimensional poverty, of which the following are noteworthy:

- A positive association between the number of household dependents and children's deprivation: the greater the number of dependents in the households, the more children are multidimensionally deprived.
- While the presence of working females reduces children's deprivation, the presence of male working age members does not show any significant association with children's deprivations.
- The average education of household members had a statistically significant effect in affecting children's experience of deprivations.

- Households' experience of idiosyncratic socioeconomic shocks such as loss of employment and death of livestock is positively associated with chronic multidimensional overlapping deprivations.⁷²

We further divided the poverty transition variable into four categories with a base outcome of 'never being poor' and the three alternative outcomes of being in chronic poverty (Multiple Overlapping Deprived: poor in all four rounds), in transient poverty (poor in two or three rounds) and poor in just one round. We considered a number of variables relating to household characteristics, including the number of children, the average education of household members, the location of the household, the gender of the household head, the gender of the child, and whether a household member had experienced illness. We found that factors that were associated with poverty included living in rural areas, in households with higher numbers of children below the age of 18, and in households facing illness. Factors associated with less likelihood of being in chronic poverty included in rural areas access to more land, irrigation and credit, living in urban areas, and within urban areas living in male-headed households, being boys rather than girls, and living in households with higher than average level of education.

3.8. Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates the importance of considering multidimensional poverty over time. The all-round increase in the wealth index for Young Lives households over five rounds from 2002 to 2016 shows that overall household wealth has increased significantly, with important positive implications for children's wellbeing. The fact that there has been a greater increase in the rural areas and among the poorest suggests some economic convergence, despite persisting inequalities. This implies that the pro-poor policies that have been promoted over the past decade and a half have produced positive results. However there is still a long way to go to reduce poverty and inequality. Consumption expenditure measures also suggest a decline in inequality, and a greater proportion of households have moved out of poverty than into poverty over the survey rounds. However, greater upward mobility in urban areas suggests that the government's greater emphasis on rural development promotion to reduce disparities is justified and should be continued. Moreover, the evidence that households' previous poverty is predictive of their later status suggests that poverty is persistent particularly among the poorest, and once households slip into cycles of impoverishment and face multiple shocks they are less likely to be able to escape poverty. The implementation of the recent Social Protection and Disaster Risk Management Policies can therefore play a key role in protecting and assisting vulnerable households and children.

The study's analysis of multidimensional poverty over four rounds reveals substantial improvements in all seven dimensions but to different extents, with the biggest gains in health, education, and access to safe water and sanitation, lesser improvements in the information dimension, and fluctuations in the shelter dimension. However, the inclusion of the school completion indicator resulted in a drop in the education dimension in Round 3 in 2009, and overcrowded housing led to a decline in the shelter dimension in Round 4 in 2013. In terms of the number of deprivations, the proportions facing no deprivations have increased for both cohorts over the rounds, while proportions facing several deprivations have reduced. Similarly, a division of the cohorts into poor and non-poor reveals decreasing proportions of non-poor. When we distinguish between the moderately and severely poor we find the latter concentrated in rural areas, and we see a movement over the rounds from severe poverty to moderate poverty and from moderate poverty to the non-poverty.

72 Woldehanna, Hagos and Tafere (2017).

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4. Child nutrition, health and cognitive development

Tassew Woldehanna, Mesele Araya and Yisak Tafere

4.1. Key findings

- Young Lives research shows that household perceptions of their food security have improved steadily between 2009 and 2016. However, food insecurity remains a concern among the poorest, in rural sites, and for children with less educated parents. Moreover, between 2013 and 2016 some households moved from being food secure to facing mild food insecurity, probably due to the El Niño-driven drought.
- Food diversity – consumption of four major food groups – increased slightly comparing between the two cohorts at age 15 with a seven year gap. The Younger Cohort in 2016 consumed fewer milk and milk products than the Older Cohort in 2009, but more pulses, legumes and meat. However, children from poorer households, in rural sites or with less educated parents had a less diverse diet.
- Regarding services, there has been considerable improvement in access to sanitation between 2002 and 2016, most notably among the poorest and in rural sites. Likewise, access to clean drinking water has increased substantially over this period in almost all regions.
- Undernutrition declined comparing stunting within cohorts as they grew up and between cohorts between 2009 and 2016. Yet stunting levels, at over a quarter of the Younger Cohort in 2016, remain a cause for concern. Boys in both cohorts are more affected than girls, and stunting is more common among poor families, in rural sites and for children with less educated parents. However, children in poor households and boys showed greater improvement between 2013 and 2016.
- Short term undernutrition, measured as ‘thinness’, increased in comparing the two cohorts at age 12, no doubt owing to drought and food inflation in 2013, whereas by age 15 we found an improvement. However, girls, children in rural sites and those from poor families were much more likely to be thin in both cohorts at both 12 and 15 years of age.
- Regarding the dynamics of nutrition, we documented recovery from stunting of undernourished children and faltering of children who were previously well nourished. In gender terms, a slightly larger proportion of boys were persistently stunted and fewer never stunted and yet the proportion of boys who recovered was much greater, whereas fewer girls were persistently stunted but more faltered. There were also big differences by socioeconomic group in terms of wealth, location, and parental education. However a higher proportion of rural children than urban children recovered.
- Stunting seems to be associated with lower language and maths scores, later school enrolment and slower progression in school. Stunting was also highly associated with poverty, limited or lower levels parental education and rural residence. Children who recovered had better scores than those who faltered or were persistently stunted.

4.2. Policy messages

- Despite improvements, continuing high levels of stunting require further investment in nutritional interventions, particularly at times of crisis.

- Interventions to promote dietary diversity are important in order to improve nutritional status, particularly among disadvantaged groups with a less diverse diet.
- As boys were found to be more affected by stunting and thinness but showed greater signs of recovery, while girls were less affected but were more likely to falter, nutrition interventions should be made more gender-sensitive.
- Early investments in nutrition are associated with improved test scores and cognitive achievement. While interventions in the first one thousand days are crucial, later recovery is possible so that nutritional interventions including in day care and school feeding can be important.
- More generally, as poverty plays a key role in children's nutrition, policy measures directed towards improving households' livelihoods can have a further impact in improving child health and consequently in their cognitive development and schooling outcomes.

4.3. Introduction

Undernutrition as measured by stunting (low height-for-age) affected about 23 per cent or 155 million children under five years of age globally in 2016 and contributes to nearly half their deaths.⁷³ The situation is much worse in Sub-Saharan Africa, where about 37 per cent of all under-five children were stunted in that year. According to the Demographic and Health Survey of Ethiopia, national prevalence of chronic infant undernutrition has remained severe despite improvement over the last decade, down from 51 per cent in 2005 to 38 per cent in 2016.⁷⁴ The levels of wasting and underweight have also declined over the same period. Yet, despite these improvements over the last decade, the levels of stunting remains far too high compared to the global average (23%).

With the aim of reducing the prevalence of undernutrition among children, nutrition is now clearly included in the second goal of the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): 'to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition ...'. In line with this aim the Ethiopian government has outlined medium- and long-terms goals. As indicated in the Health Sector Transformation Plan 2015/6–2019/20⁷⁵, the target for the prevalence of stunting in children aged less than five years is a reduction from its current level of 38 per cent to 26 per cent, prevalence of wasting from nine per cent to five per cent and prevalence of underweight from 25 per cent to 13 per cent by 2019/20. In terms of long-term goals, the Ministry of Health, through its second National Nutrition Programme (NNP II), has declared a commitment to end child undernutrition by 2030 in the 2015 *Seqota Declaration*, which recognises the role of nutrition in propelling sustainable development. To do this, health extension workers⁷⁶ are tasked at the national level to transfer knowledge and skills to families so that households will have better control over their own health and their children's nutritional status. To address the problem of food insecurity, the Ethiopian government established the Productive Safety Net Programme in 2005, reaching eight million people annually since 2006, involving cash or food transfers through public works as well as direct support to vulnerable categories.⁷⁷

This chapter presents empirical evidence from the Young Lives longitudinal study in Ethiopia over 15 years on the association of early childhood nutrition, health and cognitive development of

⁷³ UNICEF/WHO/World Bank (2017).

⁷⁴ Central Statistical Agency (2016).

⁷⁵ Ministry of Health (2015).

⁷⁶ The plan is for the number of health workers per 1,000 of the population to increase from 0.84 to 1.6 in 2019/20.

⁷⁷ For a discussion of Young Lives evidence on the PSNP and child sensitive social protection, see Chapter 6.1.

children. It reports on the major changes that have taken place in key nutrition indicators for the sample children since the first round of data collection in 2002 by looking at the degree of family food security, diversity in children's diet, relative change in access to safe drinking water and to sanitation, children's growth trajectories and their cognitive development as measured by various cognition tests.⁷⁸

In the first part we consider households' perceptions of their food security and find a steady improvement between 2009 and 2016. However, over a quarter of households remained food-insecure, and more than a third among the poorest, and just under a third for rural sites and among children with parents who have not had a formal education. Moreover, a greater proportion of households are found in the moderately food-insecure category and some households which were food-secure in 2013 moved down into the mildly food-insecure category in 2016, which may well be related to the 2015 El Niño-driven drought.

The second section considers the link between food diversity and nutrition, which is a critical factor in children's cognitive development. We found that grains or roots and tubers were consumed by almost all children and consumption of legumes was widespread. However, meat, poultry, eggs, and milk and milk products were consumed by fewer children, whereas the consumption of fruit and vegetables and of food cooked in oil or fat has increased over time. The Younger Cohort consumed more milk and milk products in 2016 than in 2013, but less pulses, legumes, and meat. Comparing across the cohorts at age 15 with a seven year gap, we found a slight increase in the food diversity. The Younger Cohort in 2016 consumed less milk and milk products than the Older Cohort in 2009, but more pulses, legumes, and meat. We also found notable inequalities, with children from poorer households, rural sites or with parents without formal education having a less diverse diet.

The third section addresses changes in access to water and sanitation, that combine with nutrition to affect children's health and wellbeing. The data show that there has been considerable improvement in access to sanitation between 2002 and 2016, most notably among the poorest and in rural sites. Likewise, access to clean drinking water has increased substantially over this period, apart from more recently in sites in Tigray Region.

The fourth section addresses the dynamics of undernutrition. The proportion of children who are stunted has declined, both as they grow up and comparing across cohorts, from slightly under a third of 15-year-old Older Cohort children in 2009 to somewhat over a quarter of the Younger Cohort in 2016. This is still far too high and a cause for concern. Boys in both cohorts are more affected, and stunting is more prevalent among poorer families and in rural sites and for children with parents without education. However, children in poorer households made greater improvements between 2013 and 2016. To understand short term undernutrition related to shocks such as drought and food price inflation, we use 'thinness' that reflects a lower body mass relative to age for comparison, comparing 12-year-olds in 2006 and 2013 and 15-year-olds in 2009 and 2016. Whereas at age 12 the extent of thinness had increased, no doubt owing to drought and food price inflation in 2013, at age 15 we found an improvement. However, boys and children in rural sites and from poor families were more likely to be thin in both cohorts at both 12 and 15 years of age.

We then consider changes over the first four survey rounds, dividing the Younger Cohort children into four categories: 1) those who were never stunted, representing almost half the sample, 2) those who were persistently stunted over the period, representing almost a fifth, and those whose condition changed, 3) those who were stunted but who improved, which we term 'growth

78 These include a language test known as the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT) and a maths test known as the CDA –Q Cognitive Development Assessment quantitative test.

recovery', and who make up almost a quarter, and 4) those whose condition worsened, referred to as 'faltering, representing ten per cent. In terms of gender, undernutrition was found to be a more severe problem for boys since a somewhat higher proportion of boys were persistently stunted and a slightly higher proportion of girls were never stunted. However, in terms of nutrition dynamics over time, a much larger proportion of boys recovered, while a larger proportion of girls faltered. Regarding social groups, we see big differences in terms of wealth, parental level of education and location, with much higher proportions of children in households in the bottom tercile, children with parents who have not had formal education, and children living in rural sites experiencing persistent stunting. Higher proportions of these categories also experienced faltering, whereas conversely much higher proportions of children in households in the top tercile and with more educated parents had never been stunted or had recovered. Interestingly, however, a higher proportion of rural children than urban children recovered, suggesting greater improvements in rural areas and persisting undernutrition in the poor urban sites.

In the fifth part we assess the relationship between stunting and cognitive achievement and how this links with school readiness. The results show that stunted children had lower scores at ages five and eight in language and maths tests, were less likely to enrol in formal school at age seven and progressed slower to Grade 8 than non-stunted children. We also found that children who were stunted at age one were more likely to be stunted at age five, and that this was highly associated with poverty, parental education and rural residence. While non-stunted children performed better at age 12, those who recovered had higher scores than those who faltered or were persistently stunted. We also found that favourable parental socioeconomic status – wealth, parental education and urban location – played an important role in providing adequate nutrition to avoid stunting, in part directly by enabling better nutrition and access to health care, but also indirectly through providing the means and commitment to enable pre-school attendance. Finally, we found some evidence that parental stunting at age eight was predictive of children's stunting at age one, suggesting a correlation between parental and child health reinforcing intergenerational inequalities.

Overall, the results of this chapter highlight the importance of early investment in child health and nutrition for the cognitive performance of children not just in the first one thousand days but within the first five years and beyond, suggesting that later interventions such as school feeding may also be important. More generally, as we shall see, poverty is found to play an important role in children's nutritional status, so that policy measures that are directed towards improving households' livelihoods can have a further impact on improving child health and consequently their cognitive development and educational outcomes.

4.4. Household food security

Food security is a multidimensional concept over whose specific definitions and measures there is ongoing debate.⁷⁹ The literature generally defines it in terms of access to sufficient food by all household members at all times to lead a decent life. For example, USAID defines food security as 'a state in which all people at all times have both physical and economic access to sufficient food to meet their dietary needs for a productive and healthy life'.⁸⁰ This definition considers the supply of food in terms of availability and capacity of people to obtain a sufficient amount by their own means. Based on this view, we review levels of household food security for the Young Lives

79 See Coates *et al.* (2007).

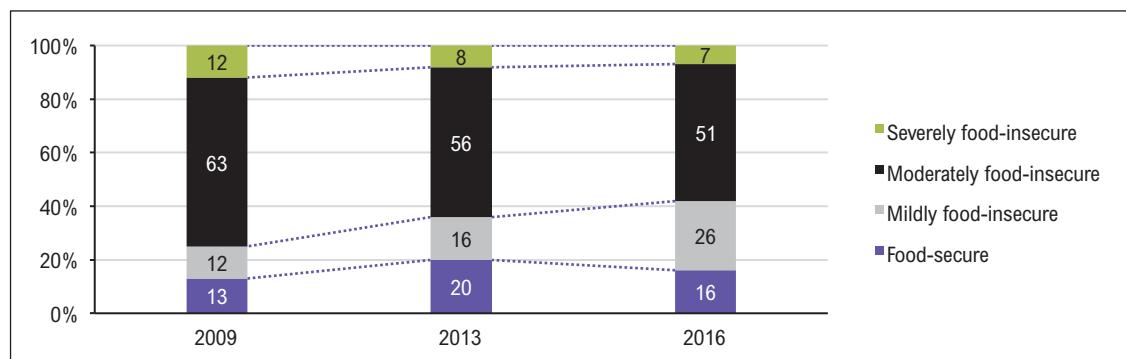
80 USAID (1992).

children. We use the Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS)⁸¹ which categorises households into four levels of food security.

Household Food security. Figure 10 indicates the level of perceived (self-reported) food insecurity for the households of the Younger Cohort children in the third and fourth rounds. Despite high levels of food insecurity, there has been improvement, that is, more households were food-secure or mildly food-insecure in 2013 than in 2009. Although the majority is consistently clustered in the moderately food-insecure category, that proportion decreased, implying some improvement.⁸²

We also estimate food insecurity using the Household Food Insecurity Scale (HFIAS) that computes nine ‘occurrence questions’. The Young Lives data show that the percentage of households who are severely food-insecure decreased over time (Figure 10). The intensity of food insecurity has also on average declined over time between 2009 and 2016. However, a high percentage of households are consistently clustered in the moderately food-insecure category (62.9 per cent in 2009, 51 per cent in 2016), which suggests that households eat limited or undesirable kinds of food either sometimes or often, and/or have insufficient food intake (limited portion size or number of meals) either occasionally or sometimes. It also seems that some households who were food-secure in 2013 have moved into the mildly food-insecure category in 2016. The decline in the percentage of food-secure households between survey Rounds 4 and 5 could be related to the 2015 El Niño-driven drought that drastically affected many parts of the country,⁸³ although this decline has mainly been due to an increase in the numbers who are mildly food-insecure.

Figure 10: Percentage of household-level food insecurity over time (Younger Cohort)



We also considered differences in household food security by gender of the child, wealth level, parental education and location. The proportion facing food insecurity was three times higher for children whose caregivers had no formal education compared to those with Grade 8 or above (Table 4), implying that increasing parental human capital is important for reducing food insecurity. Moreover, the proportions facing food insecurity are ten percentage points higher in rural areas than in urban areas. Wealth is also an important factor, with under a quarter of those in the top wealth tercile affected compared to over a third of those in the bottom tercile. Furthermore, there are mixed trends across regional sites, where food insecurity has decreased in sites within SNNPR and in Tigray but has increased in sites in Addis Ababa, Amhara and Oromia. The decline in food security in the site within Addis Ababa in 2013 might be attributed to increased internal migration, food price shocks and high rates of inflation in recent years.

⁸¹ As presented by Coates *et al.* (2007).

⁸² This means that households eat limited or less preferred kinds of food either sometimes or often, and/or have insufficient food intake (limited portion size or number of meals) either sometimes or rarely.

⁸³ UNICEF (2015).

Table 5: Food insecurity among Younger Cohort households (%)

	8 years old 2009	12 years old 2013	15 years old 2016
Caregiver education			
None	42.7	37.1	32.4
1 to 4 years	41.6	35.8	31.0
4 to 8 years	27.9	26.5	19.1
More than 8 years	16.6	13.5	12.3
Wealth Index			
Bottom tercile	43.9	36.7	36.0
Middle tercile	39.9	37.4	31.6
Top tercile	29.7	25.5	16.6
Location			
Rural	40.2	34.3	32.5
Urban	32.9	30.4	19.8
Sites in Regions			
Addis Ababa	24.2	37.3	23.8
Amhara	31.5	44.8	25.4
Oromia	31.2	38.4	43.7
SNNP	51.2	21.1	28.4
Tigray	42.7	28.1	18.7
Average of all children	37.8	33.0	28.2
Sample size	1779	1779	1778

4.5. Food diversity and nutrition

As the number of food items consumed by children on a daily basis can be an indicator for their household food security and an important proxy for their nutritional status and health outcomes, it is useful to examine the diversity of children's diet, the number of food groups eaten in the last 24 hours at the age of 12 years old for both the Younger and Older Cohorts (Figure 11). Food diversity⁸⁴ has increased slightly for the Younger Cohort in 2013 compared to the Older Cohort in 2006.

However, within these averages we see some inequalities emerging, not between boys and girls but between wealth levels, where children from poorer households are half as likely regularly to eat meat or eggs as children from better-off families. There is a clear relationship between household wealth and whether children had regular access to fruit and vegetables, meat and poultry, eggs or foods cooked in oil and fat, although milk products are available to a majority of rural households.

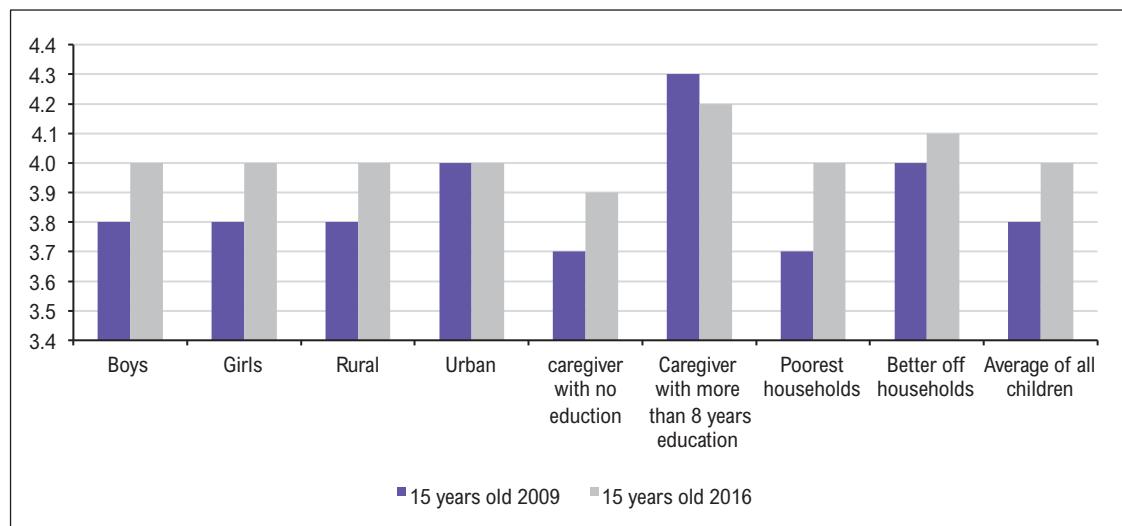
The qualitative data suggest mixed perceptions as to the type of food that would help children grow properly. Most parents and children understand the importance of food variety for children's growth. However, children's food intake is much constrained by the capacity of the family to afford it. Parents were asked what types of food would help their children grow well and if they could afford them. A few of them seem to be more concerned about the amount of food than its variety. Two parents from the same rural community in Amhara site, interviewed in 2014, gave different perspectives. One argued for quantity saying: 'what matters is food, not to be hungry; kids will grow if they get any food, it doesn't matter!' Another, the mother of Frazer, a boy from

⁸⁴ This is measured by seven food items: (1) grains, roots and tubers; (2) Vitamin A, fruit and vegetables; (3) meat, poultry and fish; (4) eggs; (5) Pulses and legumes; (6) milk and milk products; (7) foods cooked in oil or fat.

the same community, believes in the importance of food variety but she was unable to afford it. She had the following conversation with the fieldworker.

'We provide them [children] with what we have, like *injera* [the staple grain pancake] made of wheat, and *teff*. For instance, this week I went to the nearby town to buy *teff*, but I did not get any. Consequently, they [my children] have been eating *injera* made of wheat. We are also giving them roasted cowpeas and horse beans... If they get vegetables, that is good. But we do not get them. We give them *injera* with *shiro wot* [a stew made of pea flour], linseed and boiled potatoes. We sometimes use some vegetables like tomatoes, though many people do not get them. We buy these things with the money we have and provide them [to our children] at least once a week. (Amhara site, mother of Frazer, boy, 2014).

Figure 11: Number of food groups eaten in the last 24 hours at the age of 15 years: inter-cohort comparison



When we consider dietary diversity over Rounds 2, 3 and 4 we find that grains, roots or tubers have been consistently consumed by almost all children, and the consumption of pulses and legumes is also very common (Table 5). Food groups the consumption of which has remained stable but with a lower percentage of children accessing them, are animal products (meat and poultry, eggs, and milk or milk products). We have also seen a significant increase in the percentage of children accessing the two remaining groups: fruit and vegetables, which increased almost 20 percentage points to over 90 per cent, and foods cooked in oil or fat, which increased by about 12 per cent to over 90 per cent (Table 5).

Table 6: Statistics for five dietary diversity variables in the last 24 hours, Rounds 2, 3 and 4

	Round 2 (N=1883)		Round 3 (N=1883)		Round 4 (N=1873)	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Dietary diversity based on 13 food items including pulses, legumes and root crops	4.81	1.60	4.78	1.55	5.16	1.60
Dummy ⁸⁵ for consumption of animal products	0.35	0.48	0.34	0.47	0.37	0.48
Dummy for consumption of fruits and vegetables	0.73	0.45	0.8	0.4	0.91	0.28
Dummy for consumption of oil/fat, butter or oil seeds	0.78	0.42	0.77	0.42	0.90	0.30

Source: Computation from Young Lives survey data

⁸⁵ A dummy variable is a numerical variable used in regression analysis to represent subgroups of the sample that takes the value 0 or 1 to indicate the absence or presence of an expected categorical effect.

4.6. Access to water and sanitation

Since the introduction of the 1993 National Health Policy remarkable progress has been made in improving access to primary health care provision through massive expansion of health centres and health posts as well as deployment of low- and mid-level health workers.⁸⁶ The improvement is, however, from a low base and there is still a long way to go for the country in the health sector. Access to water and sanitation is also an aspect of the Young Lives study which has important implications for children's health and nutrition and their wellbeing. Access to safe sanitation⁸⁷ has increased almost threefold for the households of the Younger Cohort between 2002 and 2016 (Table 6), due in large part to the establishment of health posts in all rural and urban *kebeles* and the expansion of the health extension system, which also provides information and training to women about disease prevention and control, hygiene, solid and liquid waste disposal, water supply, and safety measures. While the government has been working hard to increase access to safe drinking water recently, many of the established safer drinking water sources such as water wells are ageing and timely maintenance remains a problem, as is the high cost of digging new wells.

Table 7: Percentage with access to services: Younger Cohort in 2002 and 2016

	Access to safe sanitation (%)		Access to clean water (%)	
	2002	2016	2002	2016
Caregiver's education				
None	23.5	71.4	42.5	58.0
1 to 4 years	34.3	76.4	52.7	73.2
4 to 8 years	56.3	83.5	66.8	83.5
More than 8 years	89.6	89.0	90.7	97.5
Location				
Rural	19.2	68.9	37.0	55.1
Urban	72.7	86.4	84.5	89.2
Sites in Regions				
Addis Ababa	87.7	93.7	87.1	96.2
Amhara	18.9	74.8	60.3	79.7
Oromia	26.2	62.8	53.5	72.9
SNNP	35.3	82.6	34.6	75.7
Tigray	34.1	71.2	45.1	28.5
Average of all children	37.1	76.0	52.9	69.0
Sample size	1779	1778	1774	1778

4.7. Undernutrition and its effects: growth recovery, faltering, persistent stunting and thinness

Stunting is the result of persistent undernutrition, which in turn results in the failure of children to grow both physically and cognitively.⁸⁸ Young Lives data reveal that, although there is about a five percentage point decline in stunting levels among 15-year-olds comparing the Older Cohort in 2009 with the Younger Cohort in 2016, the level of stunting remains as high as 27 per cent

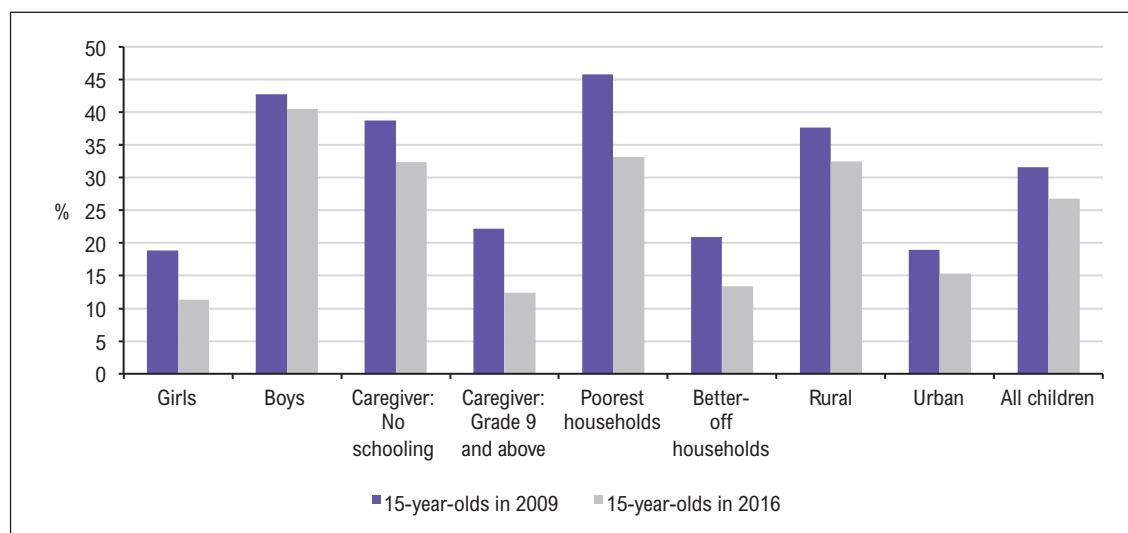
⁸⁶ Ministry of Health (2015).

⁸⁷ Basic sanitation is counted as safe when a household has its own access to a flush toilet, septic tank in dwelling or pit latrine within the household.

⁸⁸ Stunting is considered moderate to severe when a person is below minus two standard deviations from median height for age of the reference population. Woldehanna, Behrman and Araya (2017b).

(Figure 12). Among all social groups, stunting levels of 15-year-olds from the poorest households has seen the largest decline. In both cohorts, boys are affected by stunting more than girls. That more boys than girls are stunted at the age of 15 may be a function of the differential timing of the pubertal growth spurts in Ethiopia. If so, this finding may reflect the age at which the survey was conducted and the gap may narrow when boys have experienced later adolescent growth. Children from the poorest households whose primary caregivers have had no schooling and those from rural sites were also more likely to be stunted than children of the non-poor and children in urban sites both in 2009 and 2016. Overall, in reference to the worldwide average of 23 per cent, stunting is declining slowly among the Young Lives 15-year-olds. This may imply that chronic undernutrition rates remain high in late childhood, which in turn needs the attention of health policymakers.

Figure 12: Prevalence of stunting among 15-year-old children

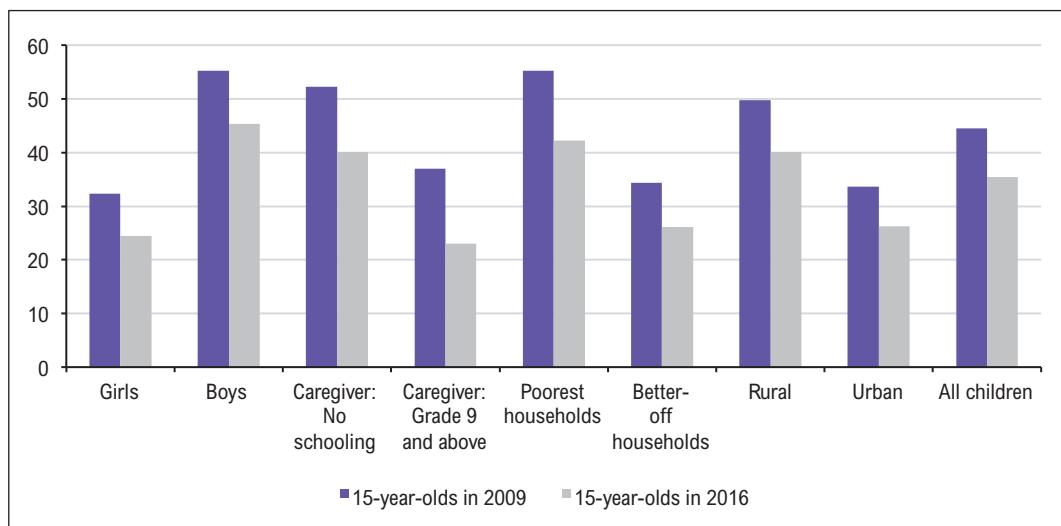


Thinness⁸⁹ reflects a low body mass relative to age. If thinness occurs over the short term, it reveals a rapid and severe weight loss or the failure to gain weight (also called wasting) which in turn is associated with acute hunger or severe disease.⁹⁰ A child who is moderately or severely wasted has an increased risk of death, but treatment is possible.⁹¹ The Young Lives data show that, despite some reduction in the rate of thinness between the Older Cohort measured in 2009 and the Younger Cohort measured in 2016, undernutrition resulting in thinness remains widespread compared to the national average (9%) estimated by Ethiopian Demographic and Health Survey in 2016. This may mean that some children possibly suffer from both stunting and thinness at the same time, although there are currently no estimates for rates at which these conditions co-occur at a national level. In the Young Lives sample about 15 per cent were suffering both stunting and thinness at the same time in 2015, down, however, from 22 per cent in 2009.

⁸⁹ A child is moderately or severely thin if he or she has less than 2 SD of the WHO Child Growth Standards median, World Health Organisation (2010).

⁹⁰ See WHO website <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/malnutrition/en/>.

⁹¹ UNICEF /WHO/World Bank (2017).

Figure 13: Prevalence of thinness among 15-year-old children

The economic gradient for thinness remains prominent, with the percentage for the Younger Cohort from the poorest families, considerably higher than for better-off families in 2016. A marked difference is also observed by gender, and children whose primary caregivers had no formal schooling and those from rural sites also experienced the worst level of recent undernutrition.

As noted, the high level of undernutrition recorded when the children were one year of age in 2002 had fallen considerably by the time the children were 12 in 2013. However, the details of the dynamics of undernutrition over time reveal a more complex picture, in which we can distinguish four categories. Almost half the children (48%) had never been stunted. About a fifth (19%) were persistently stunted over the period. Among those whose condition changed, the biggest proportion (27%) improved their status, which we refer to as growth recovery, whereas ten per cent showed a decline, referred to as faltering. We now consider each of the categories in terms of gender and other social categories.

4.7.1. Never stunted

Slightly under half the sample did not experience stunting before becoming teenagers, with the proportion being slightly higher for girls than for boys. Among social groups, there were higher proportions of children who did not experience stunting from urban, better-off families, those with better educated caregivers, and those residing in Addis Ababa compared to those from rural areas, poor households, those with less educated caregivers, and those living outside of Addis Ababa.

Persistently stunted⁹²

Almost a fifth of the Younger Cohort children were persistently stunted between the ages of one and 12 years. The gender differentials are small, but there are noticeable differences by family wealth level, with the proportions three times higher for poorer families, by parental level of education, with the proportions twice as high for children with parents without formal education, by location, with the proportions almost double in rural areas, and with the proportion lowest in sites of Addis Ababa and highest in Amhara and Tigray.

⁹² A child is said to be persistently stunted if he/she does not move out of stunting in the course of their life or at least during the period under consideration.

The qualitative data show that children from poor families continue to suffer from persistent stunting due to multiple factors. Poverty is the underlying reason but problems facing the household and illness also affect children's physical state. For instance, the family of Miruts, a boy from a Tigray site in a poor household, could not afford his schooling.

Box 6: Food shortage and work affecting a boy in a rural site in Tigray

Miruts dropped out of Grade 1 schooling and started working on carving cobblestones for sale. The work is heavy and once he injured his finger but could not get treatment. Although he generates income for the family, he doesn't get enough food. In 2014 he reported that he had been going to work without having breakfast. The interviewer observed: 'He was wearing tattered trousers and a jacket which was dirty. He had plastic shoes.' (Zeytuni site, 2014.)

Families stress the importance of variety of food for child growth. However, poverty remains a hurdle. The father of Yibeltal, a boy from an Amhara site explains the importance of food variety in helping children grow well.

Box 7: Views on the importance of food, cleanliness and clothing in a rural Amhara site

The child should be clean and get bread and tea on a timely basis. If you give him only *injera*, [staple pancake] he may not grow properly. It would have been good if they got tea in the morning. If they have a change of clothes and wash regularly, they may grow as quickly as a eucalyptus tree [sic]. But our children did not get these things because they were born into a poor family. They did not grow properly. (Father of Yibeltal, Tach Meret, 2014).

Growth recovery⁹³

Almost a quarter of the children improved their status. However, growth recovery differs by gender and other backgrounds, with the proportion of boys recovering ten percentage points higher than that of girls. As may be expected, the proportions recovering was greater among wealthier households than among the poorest tercile. Interestingly, the proportions of growth recovery among rural children was slightly higher than among urban children. However, growth recovery does not seem to be affected much by the extent of caregivers' education. In terms of regional sites, the highest percentages of recovery were among children from sites within Oromia and Amhara and the lowest were for children from sites within SSNP and Tigray.

Improvements in household economic status usually translate into improvements in the food intake and physical state of the child. Biruktawit, a girl from Hawassa, is one of the children who were stunted at an early age but later recovered following the improved economic situation of her family. She had the following conversation with the fieldworker in 2014:

⁹³ Growth recovery in this context is defined as the passing from stunting to non-stunted physical growth of children as measured by the improvement of the z-score of height-for-age above -2.

Box 8: Better nutrition with improved household circumstances in an urban site in SSNP

Previously, there was a problem of money in your house. In general, when you compare with the past, how do you see the change now? Do you think you are positively changed?

Now things are becoming better and we have food to eat. But before we were poor. I was sorry for my grandmother. In my mother and father's home, we always eat *injera*. Here [in my grandmother's house] there was a time when we spent the whole day without food. Now things have changed.

Now you eat. How many times do you eat each day?

Now we eat three times a day.

Aha, but previously there was a time when you spent the day without eating?

Yes.

(Birkutawit, girl aged 12, 2014, Hawassa)

However, growth recovery is not always associated with improvement in the economic status of the household. Despite economic deterioration some households have shown an improvement in their physical situations. For example, Debasit has improved her physical status between the ages of one and 12 although the economic situation of the household has declined from moderately poor to very poor. The mother explains how she offers her daughter all she can:

Box 9: Growing awareness of the importance of diversity of diet in a site in rural Tigray⁹⁴

'My daughter gets a sauce of lentils, vegetables and meat when there is a feast, but when it is fasting season *shiro* [pea or bean flour] and *gogo* [traditional bread, farmer's food]. Now it is *shiro*. You know, in the town people can change their food frequently. But here we can't get those types of foods because the market is very far away. We change our sauce when it is market day. ... As I told you, it is because I can't go to the market all the time. Sometimes, I don't have anyone to look after the house if I want to go to the market.'

The mother goes on to show her clear awareness of the need for diversity in diet despite the inability to afford the cost. She said: 'Now, we are aware of the importance of improving our food habits. In the past, there was no such knowledge.' (Mother of Debasit, Zeytuni, 2014).

Faltering

About ten per cent of the Younger Cohort children who were not stunted at one year of age, became stunted by the age of 12. The proportion of this kind of faltering was higher among girls and for children of the poor, in rural areas, with non-educated caregivers, and for those living outside of Addis Ababa.

There are different causes for the growth of children to be affected and some face faltering over the course of their lives. Among them is Tsehaytu from a Tigray site, who was in good physical condition during the first qualitative study field visit of 2007, when she was one year old.

94 Faltering refers to when children move in terms of physical growth from non-stunting to stunting as the result of a lack of adequate nutritional intake as they grow up.

However, following the death of her mother in 2008, Tsehaytu's life has changed for the worse and her overall wellbeing has declined. The economic status of the household has deteriorated over the years. The survey data show that the household was moderately poor in the first round but it has remained very poor thereafter. This was reflected in the physical condition of the child.

Box 10: Deteriorating nutrition due to family problems in a household in rural Tigray

Tsehaytu's grandmother shared her concern about her granddaughter: 'Sometimes Tsehaytu doesn't get enough food because her step-mother complains that she does not have enough food to give her. So, the child leaves for school without having eaten. This worries me a lot.' (2014)

During the same field visit, the field researcher who interviewed Tsehaytu for four rounds noted: 'The child's physical condition seems to show that she is not living a good life when compared to the last visit.'

Table 8: Dynamics of physical growth of Younger Cohort children between the ages of 1 and 12 years (%)

	Persistently stunted	Faltering	Recovered	Never stunted
Gender				
Male	19.9	7.8	27.5	44.9
Female	17.8	12.5	17.3	52.3
Location				
Urban	12.0	8.0	20.7	59.3
Rural	22.6	11.1	23.8	42.5
Household wealth level				
Bottom Tercile	24.8	12.8	23.8	38.5
Top Tercile	8.5	7.2	19.5	64.8
Caregiver's education				
No education	23.1	10.6	24.0	42.4
More than 8 grade	11.3	6.6	25.0	57.0
Sites within regions				
Addis Ababa	7.5	6.0	21.3	65.3
Amhara	28.0	9.9	26.8	35.3
Oromia	16.6	9.4	28.2	45.8
SNNPR	18.5	11.4	18.7	51.4
Tigray	21.3	12.0	19.4	47.3
Average of all children	18.9	10.0	22.7	48.4
Sample size	1,826	1,826	1,826	1,826

4.8. Cognitive achievement, school readiness and early grade progression

One of the most important issues in this chapter is whether early childhood stunting really limits the cognitive performance of children and can delay their school progress. To this end, we look at the cognitive outcomes and school readiness of the sample children in relation to their nutrition status.⁹⁵

⁹⁵ We initially tested for an overall t-value using the Hotelling T^2 test to check the issue of capitalising on the mean difference of the cognitive outcomes and school readiness. As seen at the bottom of Table 8, the T^2 value is highly significant (Hotelling $T^2=35074.27$ and $P<0.01$) indicating that we don't capitalise on chance when computing multiple t-tests.

Table 8 provides data on children's cognitive outcomes, enrolment and grade progression at the ages of five and eight years for the Younger Cohort. Stunted children had lower cognitive scores in language and maths tests than their non-stunted counterparts at the ages of both of five and eight.⁹⁶ Furthermore, stunted children were less likely to enrol in formal schooling at the age of seven, or had slower early grade progression at the age of eight than non-stunted children.

Table 9: Cognitive achievement and school enrolment of the Younger Cohort

	All children (n=1883)	Stunted at age 5 (n=587)	Non- stunted at age 5 (n=1296)	Mean Difference (a)
	Mean	Mean	Mean	
Standardized core of PPVT test at age 5 (out of 204)	67.54	63.25	69.44	-6.19***
Standardized core of PPVT test at age 8 (out of 204)	78.51	69.99	82.36	-12.37***
% Standardized core of PPVT test at age 5	33.11	31.00	34.04	-3.04***
% Standardized core of PPVT test at age 8	38.48	34.31	40.37	-6.06***
# of correctly answered CDA-Q test at age 5 (out of 15)	8.21	7.74	8.43	-0.69***
# of correctly answered CDA-Q test at age 8 (out of 29)	6.34	4.62	7.12	-2.49***
% of math questions correctly answered at age 5	54.76	51.60	56.18	-4.58***
% of math questions correctly answered at age 8	21.87	15.94	24.55	-8.60***
Dummy variable for a child begun formal school at 7	0.77	0.64	0.84	-0.20***
Grade completed at the age 8	0.79	0.59	0.88	-0.30***

Source: Young Lives survey data

Note: *p < 0.1; **p < 0.05; ***p < 0.01

(a): Test that all means are the same: Hotelling T² = 35074.2; Prob > F = 0.0000

Woldehanna, Behrman and Araya carried out further analysis⁹⁷ to investigate whether undernutrition that causes stunting also causes cognitive impairment. The results show stunting at an earlier age becomes a fairly reliable indicator of cognitive impairment at later ages. As expected, early household circumstances such as baseline household wealth index, level of education of caregivers and residential areas (in favour of urban area) were found to be negatively associated with being stunted at the age of five. The analysis confirms that there are cognitive achievement advantages from not experiencing stunting in the early years. For maths, the effect of childhood stunting magnifies as the children get older, implying that eliminating stunting is likely to produce cognitive benefits. The results offer support for the view that nutrition is one of the key intervention points for the development of children's brain and cognitive development.

96 These involved Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test scores, Cognitive Development Assessment quantitative tests and maths tests.

97 Woldehanna *et al.* (2017a). They employed Propensity Score Matching (PSM) techniques in which they run first stage logit model estimation of stunting at the age of five so as to predict propensity scores of stunting that are used for matching to estimate average treatment effects of the treatment (stunting) on the treated (stunted). Variables potentially associated with the probability of a child being stunted (treatment) and cognitive developments (outcomes) are included in the first stage logit regression model. Those variables mainly include dummy for a child being stunted at the age of one, which is expected to capture the carry-over effect that might exist starting from birth, number of months the child was breastfed, relative size of the child at birth, dummy for a child who had health problems such as acute respiratory illness or malaria (as reported by caregivers) by one year of age, baseline household wealth index, the child's gender, household size, and parental education levels in years.

4.9. Growth recovery, faltering and cognitive outcomes

We also consider whether children experiencing growth recovery over their childhood can show improvement in terms of cognitive abilities, and conversely, whether those who faltered show lower cognitive scores.

Table 9 reports the cognitive performance for the Younger Cohort differentiated according to their post-infancy growth up to the age of 12.⁹⁸ The results confirm that children who were never stunted scored higher across all measures of cognitive development than children who were persistently stunted, faltered and even those who showed a recovery. Persistently stunted children and those who faltered scored lower in all the cognitive measures, while those who recovered from stunting scored better than the persistently stunted and faltering children. The implication is that the home environment and continued efforts by the household seem to pay off in childhood development.⁹⁹

Table 10: Post-infancy growth and cognitive performance of Younger Cohort children aged 12 in 2013.

	Persistently stunted	Faltered	Recovered	Never stunted	All
Raw score in Language Test at age 12	6.09	5.99	6.33	7.24	6.72
Percentage correct in Language Test at age 12	25.37	24.97	26.37	30.16	28.02
Raw score in Maths Test at age 12	8.87	8.85	10.06	11.54	10.49
Percentage correct in Maths Test at age 12	31.67	31.60	35.92	41.21	37.47
Raw score in PPVT at age 12	34.61	34.78	38.67	40.54	38.47
Percentage correct in PPVT at age 12	62.94	63.24	70.30	73.71	69.94

Source: Young Lives survey data

4.10. Parental socioeconomic status and cognitive achievements: mediation process through pre-school access¹⁰⁰

In addition to nutrition, it is also important to explore the effect of household socioeconomic status on children's cognitive development. About one quarter of the Younger Cohort children had the opportunity to attend pre-school between the ages of four and six, with significant disparities by family wealth, level of education and region.¹⁰¹ Although a quarter of the total sample had the opportunity to attend pre-school, this figure hides considerable disparities between urban (56.9%) and rural (3.3%) areas.¹⁰² We consider whether these socioeconomic factors are also predictors of child cognitive performance by creating opportunity for pre-school access. We considered the combination of **direct** effects from improved health and nutrition and parental behaviour, and **indirect** effects arising from household wealth, education level and region through the influence of pre-school attendance.¹⁰³ The results indicate that the effects are

⁹⁸ The cognitive performances of the children is approximated in this case by raw scores in Language Test, percentage correct in Language Test, raw scores in Maths Test, percentage correct in Maths Test, raw score in PPVT, percentage correct in PPVT at the age of 12 in 2013.

⁹⁹ See Crookston *et.al.* (2013).

¹⁰⁰ For a discussion of the recent expansion in pre-primary school and Young Lives' work with the Ministry of Education on improving the pre-school system, see the chapter on education.

¹⁰¹ Woldehanna (2016).

¹⁰² Given the very small number of pre-school observations in rural areas (n=38) and hence to take the advantage of large sample in the mediation process, we only computed the data for the urban children of the Younger Cohort, with a total number of 745 children at the age of eight.

¹⁰³ To analyse the causal chains we ran mediation analyses following the procedures outlined by MacKinnon, Fairchild, and Fritz (2007).

statistically significant, implying that pre-school attendance is a means by which the influence of family wealth, education level and location has an indirect effect on child cognitive performance, with the effects from wealth and urban background much larger than that of parental education in both language and maths tests (Table 10).

Table 11: Results of mediation analyses (pre-school attendance as a mediator)

Dependent variable	Observed	Bootstrap	Bias-corrected	
	Coef.	Std.err.	Confidence interval (95%)	
Log of Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT) at age 8				
Indirect effect of family wealth	0.209	0.040	0.137	0.301
Indirect effect of parental education	0.006	0.001	0.003	0.008
Indirect effect of regional urban residence	0.134	0.018	0.101	0.173
Total indirect effect	0.349	0.052	0.253	0.461
Proportion of total effect mediated	0.247			
Ratio of indirect to direct effect	0.326			

Dependent variable	Observed	Bootstrap	Bias-corrected	
	Coef.	Std.err.	Confidence interval (95%)	
Log of Maths score at age eight				
Indirect effect of family wealth	0.296	0.063	0.184	0.431
Indirect effect of parental education	0.008	0.002	0.004	0.012
Indirect effect of regional urban residence	0.191	0.035	0.128	0.265
Total indirect effect	0.495	0.091	0.341	0.703
Proportion of total effect mediated	0.233			
Ratio of indirect to direct effect	0.301			

Note: n=745

4.11. The intergenerational cycle of undernutrition

Good early-life nutrition also has been shown to have important effects decades later on adult cognitive skills and wage rates, and on the nutritional status of the next generation.¹⁰⁴ By the fourth round of the Young Lives survey it had become clear that teen parenting is very common in Ethiopia as more than four per cent of the Older Cohort (43 adult children out of 908) became parents by the age of 19. It therefore became possible to examine whether children's health is related to the health of their parents as well as to explore whether there is an intergenerational transmission of undernutrition as measured by stunting of children of the Older Cohort.

We compared the stunting of parents at the age of eight with their children at about one year of age. The results show that more than half (56.7%) of the children were found to be stunted at the age of one, which is a considerably higher rate of stunting than that of their parents (37.5%) at the age of eight. We found that the probability that a parent who was stunted by the age of eight would have a stunted child by the age of 19 is about 16 per cent. This implies a notable correlation of health status between parents and their offspring. It further suggests the existence of intergenerational health inequality, which could be investigated by following the Younger Cohort children into adulthood. In terms of health policy, this suggests that without appropriate intervention at the proper time the intergenerational effect of undernutrition can be profound and persistent across generations with potentially considerable detrimental effects on the offspring's health.

104 Behrman *et al.* (2009); Hoddinott *et al.* (2008); Maluccio *et al.* (2009).

4.12. Conclusion

This chapter provides empirical evidence in support of the claim that nutrition in the early years of life can have a profound effects on children's health status as well as their achievement as measured in language and maths tests, and more broadly on their cognitive abilities.

Regarding perceived household food security, although there was an improvement between 2009 and 2016, a quarter of households remained food-insecure, with greater proportions among the poor, in rural sites and among children with less educated parents. An increase in the proportions reporting moderate food insecurity between 2013 and 2016 may be related to the El Niño-driven drought, since the pro-poor sampling meant that food-insecure sites were deliberately oversampled. While the relatively high prevalence of food insecurity and the inequalities based on socioeconomic status may suggest the need for further interventions targeted at the most vulnerable, the short-term increase in mild food insecurity may require further strengthening of emergency food assistance.

Regarding diet diversity, the slight increase over time and especially consumption of legumes is good news, although children's access to protein still needs improving, particularly among the poor and in rural households. Considerable improvements in sanitation and access to safe water over the years can also be assumed to have beneficial effects on children's nutrition and health. Access to sanitation has increased considerably, from 37 per cent of households in 2002 to 76 per cent in 2016. The increase is most prominent for the poorest households and in rural sites. Access to clean drinking water for the Younger Cohort households has also increased during the period (from 53 per cent in 2002 to 69 per cent in 2016). While most regional sites experienced an increase, access in sites within Tigray decreased from 45 per cent in 2002 to 29 per cent in 2016, possibly explained by ageing infrastructure, lack of timely maintenance and the high costs of new investments.

Our analysis of undernutrition dynamics shows a decrease in stunting as children grow up and comparing across cohorts at the same ages of 12 and 15. However, despite the decline, over a quarter of the Older Cohort were still stunted at 15 years of age, with higher proportions among poor and less educated households and in sites in rural areas, which remain causes for concern. Moreover, evidence of the short-term shocks from drought and price inflation in 2013 underscore the importance of protection from shocks including through emergency assistance, drought insurance and the implementation of the social protection strategy, particularly for more vulnerable households. The evidence of slightly larger proportions of boys being affected by persistent stunting and fewer never being stunted, but greater recovery among boys and more faltering among girls, suggests a need to consider potential gender-sensitive targeting of interventions. The notable disparities by wealth, education level of caregiver and regional location further suggest the importance of focusing assistance on the most vulnerable.

The high proportions of persistent stunting over the early life of the children indicates that there is much to do in relation to nutrition in the early years, and since abject poverty seems to be the major driver of such persistent stunting, anti-poverty interventions that include improving early childhood nutrition may have more substantial and persistent effects on children's growth trajectories. What we can derive from the date on both growth recovery and faltering is that even if it is widely accepted that the first thousand days are critical for the full development of children, there is a need for continued investment after infancy. This result is in line with the findings of Behrman and Duc,¹⁰⁵ who found a fair amount of movement in both directions between the ages

¹⁰⁵ Behrman and Duc (2014).

one and 12, which suggests that at least in terms of height, the experience in infancy may not be irreversible with appropriate nutritional interventions.

As for the link between stunting and cognitive achievement, our evidence suggests that better scores in maths and language tests and improved school readiness and early grade progression among non-stunted children can be largely related to parental socioeconomic status, notably wealth, education and urban residence, enabling better access to nutrition and health, partly mediated through access to pre-school. We also found evidence of parental stunting being a predictor of child stunting thus persisting inter-generational inequalities.

The policy implications that we can draw from our empirical findings are the importance of early investment in child health and nutrition, not just during the first one thousand days – rightly recognised as a vital window of opportunity to avoid the detrimental effects of undernutrition on the cognitive performance of children – but also during early childhood, as our evidence on growth recovery demonstrates. Since providing a balanced diet and health services is the key for children's nutritional achievements, further efforts and increased resources should be devoted to improving pre-natal and post-natal care, parental education, school feeding and other related environmental factors. Because poverty is found to play an important role in children's nutritional achievements, policy measures that are directed at improving household livelihoods may have further knock-on impacts in improving children's health, and consequently their growth and cognitive development.

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5. Education and learning

Jack Rossiter

5.1. Key findings

- Young Lives longitudinal evidence indicates a link between good quality pre-primary education and later outcomes. There has been a rapid expansion of pre-school, but substantial challenges exist in establishing a programme of sufficient quality which responds to the needs of families at a national scale.
- Young Lives research over 17 years confirms that Ethiopia has produced a remarkable expansion of access and opportunity in primary education.
- This expansion has increased equity, but Young Lives evidence shows that early gains are slowing and that progress through grades is slow and intermittent, particularly among children from the most disadvantaged groups.
- The combination of Young Lives household and school survey data reveals that children are learning over time, but that performance levels are substantially lower than the curriculum would expect, damaging prospects for mid-level skills development.

5.2. Policy messages

- Although education ‘quality’ is a clear policy priority, progress to universal learning by 2030 may require major reforms including financial policies that increase allocations for the pre-primary and early primary years.
- Additional targeted and contextualised financial, material and technical support to the poorest and most disadvantaged groups from rural, remote and pastoralist areas can increase equity in education gains, thereby capitalising on the potential and the aspirations of all children and young people.
- Further promotion of pre-school, with an emphasis on quality through improving teacher preparation, support and deployment, and resource allocation with community involvement could ensure that the considerable potential gains from early learning materialise.
- To build on significant gender-based improvements in primary school, continued promotion of girls’ education is important, particularly where differences are greatest, notably in pre-primary and post-primary stages.

5.3. Introduction

Young Lives has five rounds of survey data from index households, linked to school surveys conducted in primary Grades 4, 5, 7 and 8. These data offer a unique perspective on some of the achievements and challenges at every stage of the Ethiopian education system. They complement the national average picture and reveal variations in educational outcomes between groups of interest.

Using these data, this chapter spans pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary levels in an attempt to summarise the changes observed during the period of Young Lives. It highlights the remarkable enrolment gains in the last two decades and investigates the challenges that children and schools face, which slow progress at each stage. These challenges are then linked to

reforms that might be needed to complete the transition from mass schooling to mass learning and to reduce persistent inequalities observed between student groups.

In this chapter we draw attention to important inequalities as dominant markers of differences in child and household circumstances in terms of: (a) gender, (b) household wealth, (c) rural or urban location and (d) parental level of education (Table 11). When interpreting these differences, in general, (a) is independent but can interact with (b) – (d), e.g. in poorer households the burden on girls to undertake household chores can be larger; while (b) – (d) are not independent, e.g. parents with more education are likely to be working for a salary and this is more likely to be work that is available in a town or city.

Table 12: *Markers of difference in child and household circumstance*

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
Gender	Household wealth	Location	Parental education
<i>In many cases, these three markers of difference will depend on one another.</i>			

The chapter has six sections. These sections are linked to the chronological order of Ethiopia's education system from pre-primary to tertiary (see Box 11). Where relevant, information from different levels will be combined and findings will be supported by children's and community stakeholders' voices.

Box 11: The structure of Ethiopia's education system

Pre-primary: lasts for up to three years, depending on programme, from age four to six. Some non-formal programmes, such as Accelerated School Readiness, will last for a couple of months before entering primary grades; others such as Kindergarten will last for three years and are delivered as full-time programmes.

Primary: lasts for eight years, split into two cycles of four years each, although there is no formal assessment that must be completed to progress between cycles. Students are expected to enter Grade 1 at the age of seven and will complete with a Regional Examination at the end of Grade 8. The Regional Examination will determine promotion to secondary grades.

General secondary: lasts for two years and on completion of Grade 10 students will sit the Ethiopian General Secondary Education Certificate Examination (EGSECE). Performance in this first national examination will determine entry into further education and training. A student who passes smoothly through all levels from Grade 1 is expected to complete general secondary education at the age of 16 or 17.

Preparatory secondary: students with the highest scores (variable by year) in the Grade 10 EGSECE, will complete two further years of secondary education, as preparation for university. In Grade 12 students will sit the Ethiopian Higher Education Entrance Certificate Examination (EHEECE) which determines entry to university and course placement (e.g. those with the highest scores enter medicine programmes).

Tertiary: includes Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), teacher training programmes and university. Programmes will last from a few months (in the case of TVET) to multiple years in the case of university, depending on the course. Students will enter tertiary programmes at the end of Grade 10 – for those not going to Preparatory Secondary – or at the end of Grade 12 in the case of those completing Preparatory Secondary.

Section 1 begins by setting the scene with a review of the education policy context and how it has evolved since 1994. In Section 2 we reflect on the massive expansion of pre-primary education, put forward indications of a link between exposure to kindergarten programmes and outcomes at

secondary and tertiary levels, and raise some of the current challenges of providing a pre-primary programme of sufficient quality which responds to the needs and wants of communities.

In Sections 3 and 4, we move on to the primary grades, first highlighting the remarkable expansion of access and opportunity, then balancing this with a review of issues of slow progress and intermittent educational trajectories for many young people. Section 5 focuses on the learning outcomes of children as they approach age 15 and puts this in the context of readiness for secondary schooling and higher-level skills development. Finally, in Section 6 we reflect on school quality as a current policy priority and the reforms that might support the Government of Ethiopia's ambition for universal learning by 2030.

5.4. Education sector priorities

Ethiopia's education sector's priorities are elaborated in the Ministry of Education's five Education Sector Development Programs (ESDP I to V). These programmes have been implemented over the 24 years from 1996 to 2020, spanning the Young Lives period, and have served as the strategic implementation plans for the 1994 Education and Training Policy. Programmes have responded to the prevailing issues of their three- to five-year terms and programme priorities have progressed from an initial focus on the decentralisation of authority and capacity to a system-wide focus on quality.

- ESDP I (1996/7 to 2001/2) focused on expansion of access and on securing an enabling environment through decentralisation and 'democratisation of the administration and content of education', for a relevant, effective and equitable education system to emerge.¹⁰⁶
- These processes continued through ESDP II (2002/3 to 2004/5), but with a priority to reduce regional disparities in access by pursuing cost-effective schooling options, such as multi-grade classes, and increasing non-formal and time-flexible models for particularly disadvantaged areas with little or no history of formal schooling.
- ESDP III (2005/6 to 2009/10) set in motion the pivot from schooling to learning, calling for curriculum revision every five years to update and maintain relevance, the introduction of National Learning Assessments 'to identify major influencing factors for appropriate policy interventions', and the strengthening of school supervision, leadership and management.¹⁰⁷
- Since 2010, ESDP IV (2010/11 to 2014/5) and ESDP V (2015/6 to 2019/20) have progressed the improvement of quality and quality assurance and afford greater attention to issues of inequality. These plans include many strategies to improve service delivery to areas and groups that remain disadvantaged, with a shift in ESDP V to supporting pre-primary education in order to increase school readiness for all children.

5.5. Pre-primary education

A wave of pre-primary expansion, if managed well, has the potential to drastically improve equity, children's readiness for school and schools' readiness for children, and a solid foundation of school readiness and basic skills developed in the early years can support the pivot from universal schooling to universal learning over the next decade. With the launch of ESDP V, the Government of Ethiopia has prioritised early learning and aims to provide every child with at least one year of pre-primary education by 2020.¹⁰⁸ Young Lives evidence indicates an association

¹⁰⁶ Ministry of Education (2002).

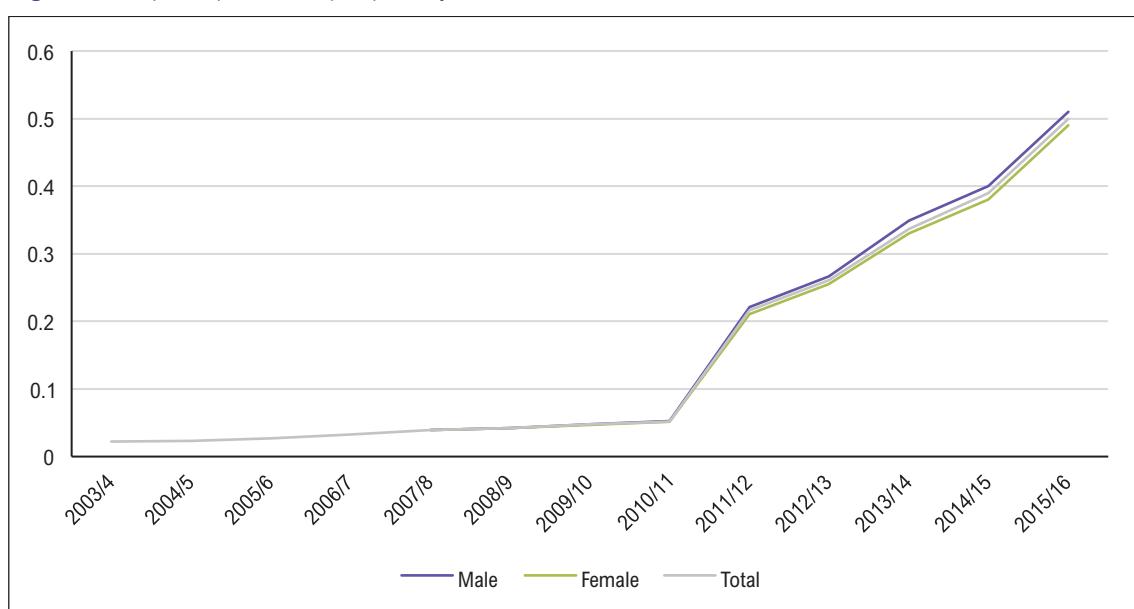
¹⁰⁷ Ministry of Education (2005).

¹⁰⁸ Ministry of Education (2015).

between pre-primary exposure at ages four to six and later secondary and tertiary enrolment outcomes.¹⁰⁹ It is not entirely clear how much of the later differences are accounted for by the pre-primary programme itself, nor whether such a result would hold for the different types of pre-primary programme abundant in Ethiopia today.¹¹⁰ Nonetheless, the direction and the scale of the relationship suggest that the Government of Ethiopia's rapid expansion of pre-primary services has great potential.

Already on its way, pre-primary Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) has grown rapidly, from 5 per cent in 2010-11 to 50 per cent in 2015-6 (Figure 14), but this impressive growth is tempered by an important gender gap.¹¹¹ Most of this expansion is in public O-Class – a reception class attached to schools predominantly in rural areas.¹¹² The latest data suggest, however, a national Gender Parity Index (GPI) of 0.95 across pre-primary and getting slightly worse with time. Action will be needed to address this trend and bring the GPI to 1.0, otherwise there may emerge crucial differences in child readiness according to gender, which will affect later outcomes.

Figure 14: Rapid expansion in pre-primary Gross Enrolment Rate from 2003-4 to 2015-6



Source: Ministry of Education of Ethiopia, Education Statistics Annual Abstracts 2003-4 to 2015-6

An ongoing collaboration between Young Lives and the Ministry of Education supports pre-primary policy developments. This collaboration has included consultations with seven Regional Education Bureaux which revealed interesting variations in local Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) policy and implementation, and particular problems in human resource supply. This led to a follow-on study with Colleges of Teacher Education, which raised questions of: suitability of the teacher training curriculum and its coherence with the student curriculum that

109 Woldehanna (2016). See also the related discussion on the impact of pre-schooling in the previous chapter of this report.

110 At the moment Ethiopia has four main pre-primary programmes: kindergarten, O-Class (a reception year before Grade 1), Child-to-Child (a non-formal school readiness programme linking older children with small groups of five- or six-year-olds) and Accelerated School Readiness (a three-month programme in the summer months). Young Lives evidence on the long-term associations between pre-primary and secondary and higher outcomes relies on children's enrolment in kindergarten only. There are certainly substantial differences between a kindergarten programme that Young Lives Older Cohort children attended and any of the four modalities on offer today. It is therefore not clear what the associations would be for today's programmes.

111 Ministry of Education (2017).

112 Rossiter (2016).

teachers are expected to implement in classrooms; uncertainty around the differences between O-Class and Kindergarten; and how newly trained teachers would progress through their career.

Young Lives' latest exploratory study turned to the demand side and asked what it is that community stakeholders want and need for their children. From that study it is apparent that parents welcome O-Class for its potential to support their children's readiness to learn and that school directors and parents have a common understanding of what the programme is for.

Box 12: Parents have high expectations of pre-primary education

'My daughter knows many things about the school rules and regulations. Her discipline at home greatly improved after she started O-Class. She is confident...never afraid of expressing her ideas. She always argues with us if we speak unnecessary things like backbiting. She has learnt the Amharic and English alphabets. I think Grade 1 will be easy for her. If my older children had had this chance, things would have been different now.'

(Fathers' Focus Group, Amhara, 2017)

Alongside these benefits, however, are concerns that O-Class is not always living up to the standards that the Government of Ethiopia has set for it, that schools do not yet allocate enough human or material resources to the programme and that O-Class cannot provide the same moral and spiritual guidance that children receive (or used to receive) in religious pre-primary settings.¹¹³

Box 13: Parental reflections on O-Class service

'Our children in secondary school now did not get the opportunity to learn in O-Class... They were compelled to join Grade 1 directly at the age of seven without having any early learning experience... In terms of religious education, they went to church and mosques in order to learn spiritual education... but now in O-Class they are trying to count numbers and learn alphabets that are more helpful to them to become ready for Grade 1.'

(Mothers' Focus Group, Oromia, 2017).

Moving forwards, resource targeting to the poorest communities – and improving the enrolment of girls – can improve equity and quality in pre-primary education. In order to improve all children's cognitive and social development and readiness to learn in school, it will be important that pre-primary content and standards are regularly evaluated and adjusted to reflect the needs of communities and young children. If equity is a programme objective – as stated in ESDP V – then progress will require improved targeting of human and financial resources to the schools and local government offices serving the poorest communities, in which the supply of good early learning services remains limited. Alongside these efforts, action to understand why pre-primary enrolment of boys is growing faster than that of girls can inform steps to eliminate a growing gender gap. While Ethiopia's initiative to scale-up O-Class is a welcome indicator of a policy commitment to Sustainable Development Goal Target 4.2, there is a risk that low quality pre-primary programmes will not deliver on the potential of early childhood education and that children, especially poor children, will be the losers.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Young Lives (2018).

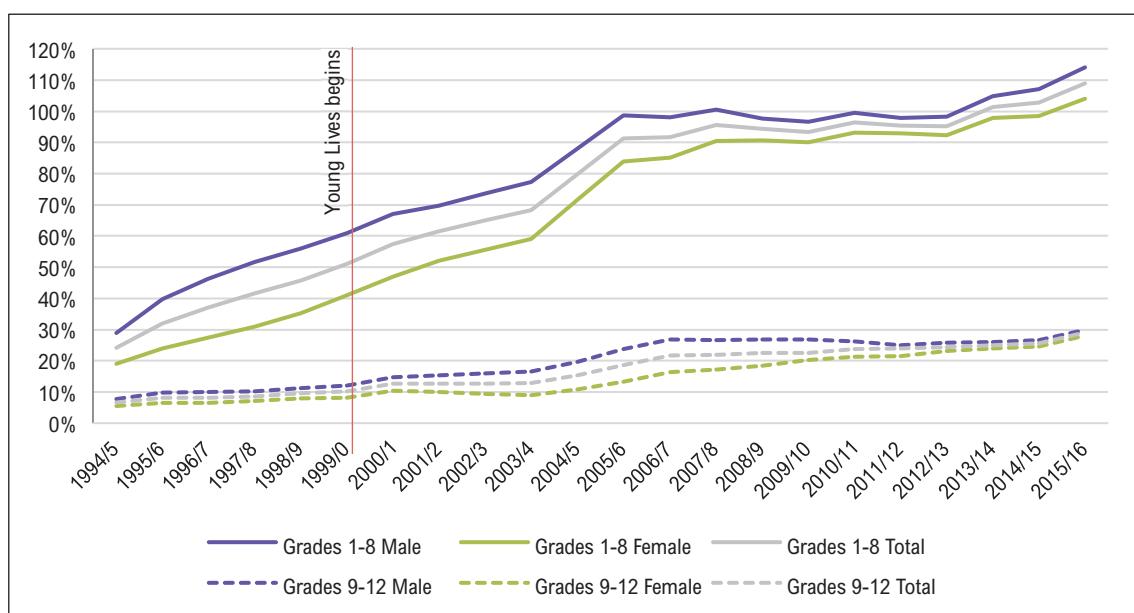
¹¹⁴ Woodhead *et al.* (2017) <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP163-Woodhead%20%282%29.pdf>.

5.6. Primary education expansion

We have witnessed a remarkable expansion of access and opportunity in primary education. At the time of the enactment of Ethiopia's Education and Training Policy (1994), Ethiopia's education system served only a minority of children and was characterised by striking regional and structural imbalances.¹¹⁵ Three in four of the population aged 15 years had no formal education¹¹⁶ and the Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) for Grades 1 to 8 was 24 per cent.¹¹⁷ Gross disparities in educational opportunities existed between regions, between urban and rural areas, and between boys and girls.

In the 24 years since 1994 – and in the Young Lives period most noticeably – the Government of Ethiopia has shown a strong commitment to education sector development, making significant strides in terms of access to primary education and the opportunity to learn. By 2000-1, Young Lives' first year of operation in Ethiopia, GER in Grades 1 to 8 had more than doubled, to reach 57 per cent (Figure 15).¹¹⁸ It continued to climb rapidly until 2005-6 and carried on to reach 100 per cent by 2013-4.¹¹⁹ What is more, in 2014-5, the Net Intake Rate, which reflects the share of seven-year-olds that entered Grade 1 (as expected) that year, reached 100% and the Grades 1 to 8 Net Enrolment Rate reached 94 per cent.¹²⁰ The first grades of the education franchise now extend to all groups in society. As a result, half of the children sampled by the Young Lives household survey are in their family's first generation to participate in formal schooling.¹²¹

Figure 15: Gross Enrolment Rate in Grades 1 to 8 and 9 to 12, 1994-5 to 2015-6, by gender



Source: Ministry of Education, Education Statistics Annual Abstracts 1994-5 to 2015-6 and Ministry of Education The Education and Training Policy and its Implementation.

115 Ministry of Education (2000).

116 UNESCO (2012).

117 Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (2004).

118 Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (2004).

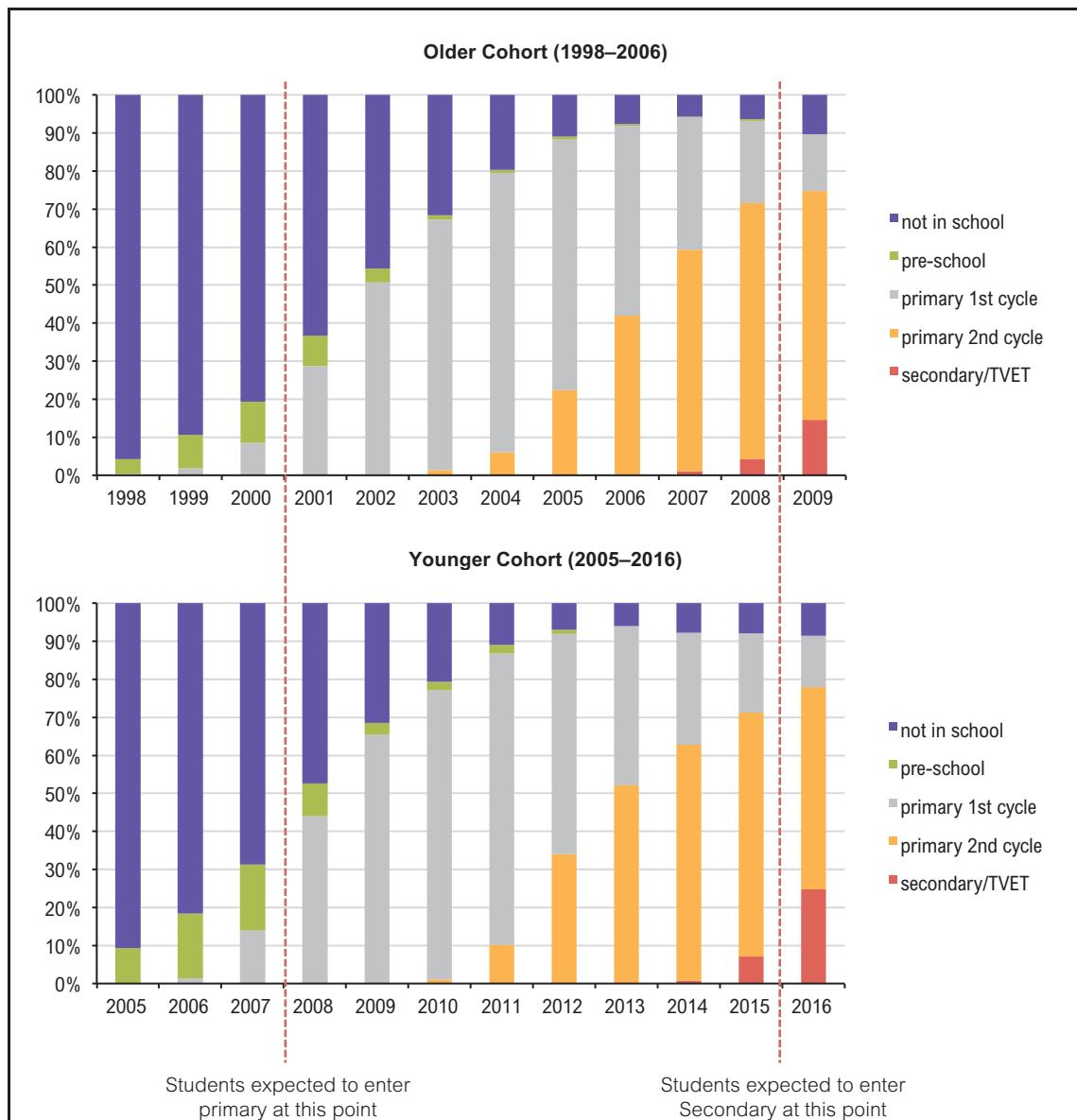
119 Ministry of Education (2016).

120 Ministry of Education (2016).

121 Woldehanna *et al.* (2014) <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/Ethiopia-Education-and-Learning-Factsheet.pdf>.

Increased supply of schooling has tended to increase equity, favouring those children from poorer, typically rural, backgrounds. Figure 16 shows that Young Lives Younger Cohort children (school entry age, seven, in 2008) have enjoyed, at all ages, better access to schools, higher enrolment levels and better grade progression than their Older Cohort peers (school entry age, seven, in 2001). Cross-sectional evidence from the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) reinforces this finding at the national level and reveals the largest enrolment gains for communities in the middle, poorer and poorest wealth quintiles between 2000 and 2011. Young Lives research on school management points to the decentralisation of powers to local government and the vital roles of *kebele* and *woreda* administrations in making parents and communities aware of new education policies and opportunities. In the mainly rural schools studied, increased enrolment and reduced drop-out were possible ‘because of the increasing participation of the ‘Kebele’ Education and Capacity Building Board’.¹²²

Figure 16: Enrolment status of Young Lives children, and change between cohorts, 1998–2009 and 2005–2016



Source: Young Lives Rounds 4 and 5 Household Survey Data on Educational Histories

¹²² Based on qualitative data collected in 2010, as reported in Abebe (2012)
http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP86_Abebe.pdf.

Girls have benefited more during the rapid expansion of the system, especially during the first decade of Young Lives. By 2013, 95 per cent of the Young Lives Younger Cohort (12-year-olds) were enrolled and girls were slightly more likely to be in school (96%) than boys (93%).¹²³ This pattern remained in 2016, with 93 per cent of the Younger Cohort (now aged 15) enrolled and girls still more likely to be in school than boys (94% versus 92%). Higher enrolment by Younger Cohort girls holds for all quintiles of wealth at ages 12 and 15, despite social pressures for early marriage and discontinuation of schooling. National data show that the Gender Parity Index (GPI) in Grades 1 to 8 rose from 0.70 to 0.93 in the ten years to 2009-10, but since that point progress has stagnated.¹²⁴ Barriers at the school level may have a role in this. The Young Lives 2016-7 school survey data show improvements in the availability of gender-separate toilets, with nine in ten schools having separate facilities, but female students have a place to wash menstrual rags or a private space to wash in only a small proportion of schools sampled (16 per cent and 14 per cent of schools, respectively).¹²⁵

5.7. Grade progression

While mass enrolment may have been achieved at the primary level during the past five years, enrolment growth has slowed considerably and gains are not transferring into completion of primary school or progression to secondary grades.¹²⁶ Early gains are slowing, progress through grades is slow and intermittent, and students complete more than eight ‘schooling years’ before reaching Grade 8. Rather than a story of students’ smooth progression through an education system, a somewhat different image of intermittent educational trajectories emerges from Young Lives qualitative and quantitative surveys. During different periods of data collection, a substantial number of children were either not enrolled in school or had interrupted schooling.¹²⁷ These intermittent educational trajectories involve, for some, starting late and repeating grades; by the age of 15, for example, the average child in the Younger Cohort had completed six years of schooling rather than the eight expected by that age.¹²⁸ For others, broken progress stems from some periods out of school, often related to family poverty and shocks, notably illness or loss of a parent’s income, or to pursue seasonal labour (see Box 14).¹²⁹ Round 5 data reinforce the findings from earlier rounds that location of residence (in favour of urban), gender (in favour of female), parent’s/caregiver’s level of education (in favour of more education) and economic status of family (in favour of higher wealth) remain important markers of difference in the schooling situation of children.¹³⁰

123 Woldehanna *et al.* (2014) <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/Ethiopia-Education-and-Learning-Factsheet.pdf>.

124 Frost and Rolleston (2013) http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP96_EthiopiaSchRpt_0.pdf.

125 Rossiter *et al.* (2017) <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-CountryReport-Ethiopia-Oct17.pdf>.

126 Rolleston (2016) https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5891bcf9ed915d453500004e/RISE_WP_008_Rolleston.pdf.

127 Tafere and Pankhurst (2015) <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP141-Combining%20Schooling%20and%20Work.pdf>.

128 Young Lives (2017a) http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/ETHIOPIA-Education%26Learning-Factsheet-Oct17_1.pdf.

129 Tafere and Pankhurst (2015). See also Poverty dynamics and nutrition chapter.

130 Tafere and Pankhurst (2015) <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP141-Combining%20Schooling%20and%20Work.pdf>.

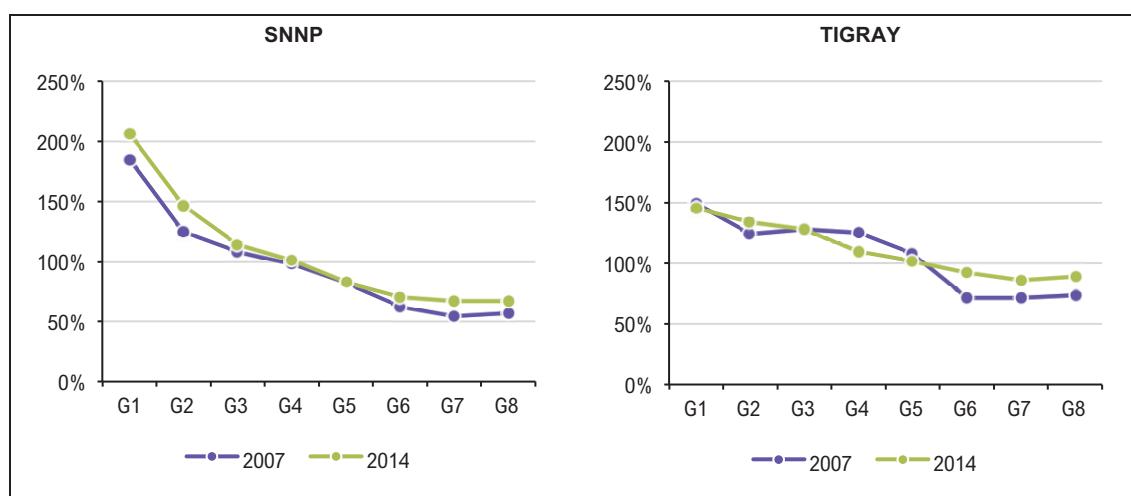
Box 14: A boy's experience of combining work and school in a rural site in SNNP¹³¹

'As there is [an economic] problem in the family, I am less interested in my education. I want to work rather than go to school because I need to earn enough money. I am absent from school at least twice a week.'

(Denbel, a boy from Leku, 2011)

Grade repetition and drop-out remain high in Ethiopia, with 24 per cent of children sampled in the Young Lives school survey having repeated one year by the end of Grade 4 or 5 and 17 per cent having already dropped out and been re-admitted to school.¹³² Using national statistics it is possible to break into the GER evaluated at the Grades 1 to 8 level and demonstrate the regional evolution of enrolment rates over the period 2007-14. Figure 17 compares SNNP with Tigray. Common to both regions is an enrolment pattern with one and a half or twice the number of children enrolled in Grade 1 as there are in the nominal age cohort population. Many are over-age and a few are under-age. Attrition is sharp in SNNP (as it is in Oromia, another large and predominantly rural region) which leads to the participation rate falling to around 70 per cent by Grade 6 and continuing to fall in higher grades. Many countries with high growth in enrolments after the announcement of universal primary education have experienced patterns of enrolment like this, with very high grade-specific enrolment rates in Grade 1.¹³³ In the three other regions (Amhara, Addis Ababa and Tigray), this pattern is starting to evolve, with a translation of high early-grade enrolments into higher later-grade enrolments; a good example is Tigray's reduction in Grade 1 rate, no sharp attrition, and an increase in Grade 8 rate from 2007 and 2014. The consolidation and advancement of these emerging trends will require greater support for, and more effective targeting of resources for, the most vulnerable students in the early grades. The Government of Ethiopia is, for example, supporting the rapid expansion of early learning services such as O-Class, with an expectation that this will improve children's readiness for school (and schools' readiness for children) and improve progress and transition through the earliest grades.

Figure 17: Grade-specific GER over time, indicating recent improvements in transition to higher grades, but still a majority of students in the lowest grades, SNNP and Tigray



Source: Ministry of Education, Education Statistics Annual Abstracts 2007-8 and 2014-5

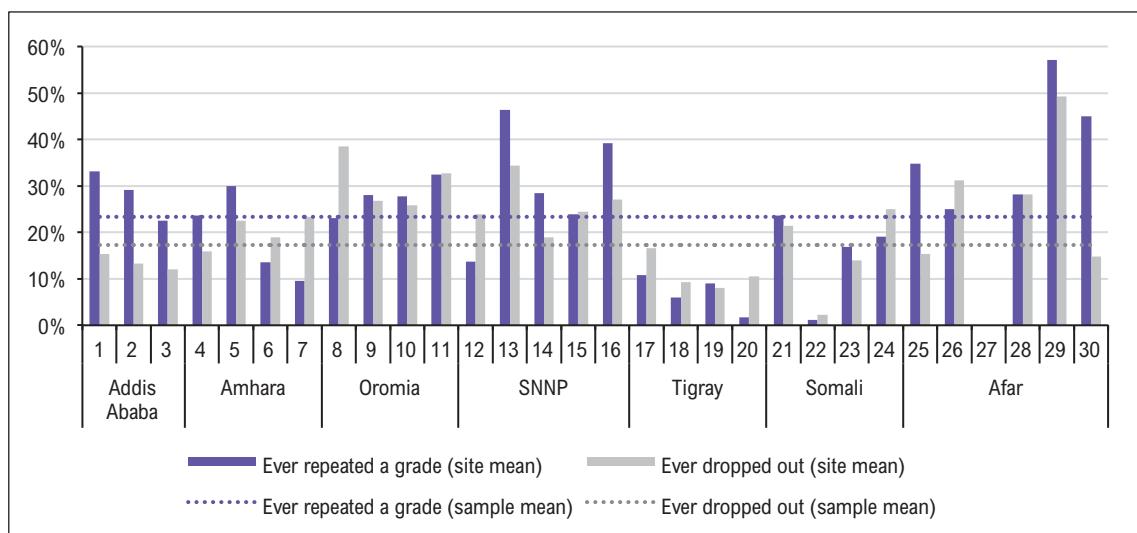
131 Tafer and Pankhurst (2015) <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP141-Combining%20Schooling%20and%20Work.pdf>.

132 Aurino *et al.* (2014) <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP134-Aurino.pdf>.

133 Lewin and Sabates (2009).

Latest data from the 2016-7 Young Lives school survey show large site-level variation in the rates of grade repetition and drop-out. Across the sample, 23 per cent of students report having repeated a grade and 17 per cent of students report having dropped out at some time.¹³⁴ There is, however, quite a lot of variation in grade repetition and drop-out history by region and site. Figure 18 presents percentages of students by site who have repeated a grade or have ever dropped out. Rates are particularly high in sites in Oromia, SNNP and Afar and particularly low in sites in Tigray. It is interesting to note here that Young Lives sites in Tigray are particularly poor – certainly poorer than the average site sampled – yet they challenge the general pattern of higher repetition and drop-out being associated with lower household wealth.

Figure 18: Incidence of grade repetition and drop-out by Young Lives school survey site in Young Lives 2016-7 school survey



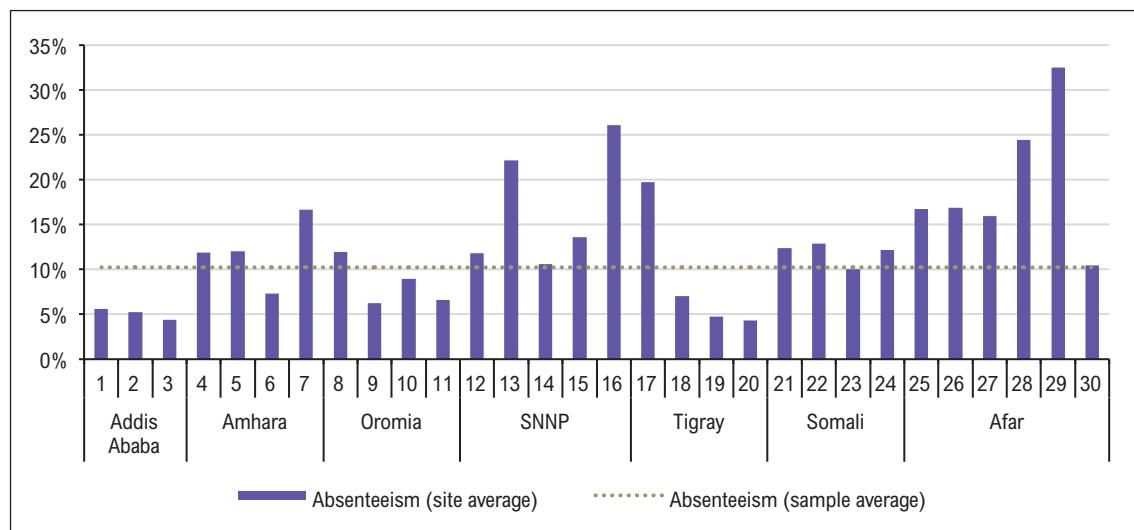
Source: *Young Lives School Survey, 2016-17: Evidence from Ethiopia*

Slow progress through grades can create feedback loops into absenteeism and extra pressures to combine paid work and schooling, both of which affect progress and learning. Research evidence demonstrates links between late entrance to school, slow grade progression and early exit.¹³⁵ 2016-7 data on student absenteeism for all students in Young Lives' 30 school surveys were collected from school administrative records. Overall, students were absent for an average of ten per cent of the time-period measured, ranging from five per cent of total time in the Addis Ababa sites to 17 per cent in the Afar sites.¹³⁶ Significant site-level variation is found (Figure 19), with students in four sites being absent for more than 20 per cent of the time period (i.e. one day per week).

¹³⁴ In this survey 'drop-out' means that a student terminated their learning within the school year, but it does not mean that they have permanently left education. For example, a student who decides after four months of term that they can no longer continue would 'drop out'. This individual could come back to school in the next academic year and, depending on their school's policy, might re-enrol in the grade that they left, or enrol in the grade that they would have reached had they not dropped out. This is a slightly different definition from that used in administrative datasets which compute drop-out as a residual of progression and repetition.

¹³⁵ Frost and Rolleston (2013) http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP96_EthiopiaSchRpt_0.pdf.

¹³⁶ Note that administrative records at schools are generally kept by the 'home teacher' for each section. There is no standardised approach to recording attendance and so efforts were made during data collection to allow for flexibility in teacher reporting. In addition, some home teachers will keep records from both semesters, others will keep records for only one semester. These estimates exclude students for whom very little attendance data (fewer than five weeks) are recorded.

Figure 19: Absenteeism by survey site in the Young Lives 2016-7 school survey

Source: Young Lives School Survey, 2016-17: Evidence from Ethiopia

In the latest Young Lives school and household surveys, participation in work-related activities was prevalent among children.¹³⁷ Round 5 data in 2016 show a persistently strong association between grade progression and household wealth, with richer children far more likely to be enrolled at or close to the correct age than their peers from poorer households. These same data show a similarly strong association with parental education: children with a caregiver who has more than eight years of schooling have completed on average 1.6 grades more than children whose caregivers have no education.¹³⁸

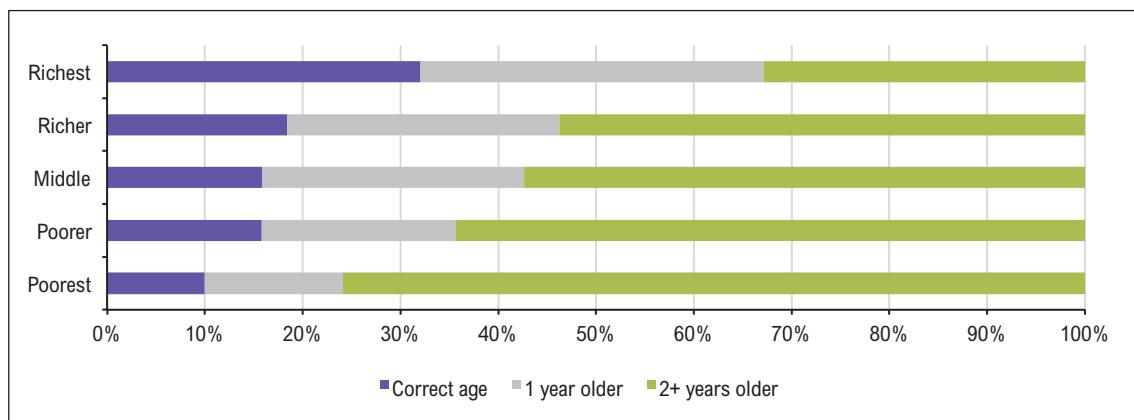
A qualitative investigation of how children combine schooling and work revealed that most children in rural areas were involved in various forms of waged labour and income-generating activities, and in urban areas mainly in informal sector activities or casual employment.¹³⁹ In addition to family tasks, children now have to handle both schooling and work and this interacts with age and gender. ‘Over-age’ status is an important proxy of educational disadvantage, potentially being both a consequence of deprivation in early life and a proximate cause of later disadvantage.¹⁴⁰ Since the start of the Young Lives period, DHS data indicate a general improvement in the proportion of students who are the correct age for grade, but still, in Round 4, the majority of Younger Cohort children were over-age by two or more years (Figure 20). Girls were slightly more likely to be the correct age for grade in all except the richest quintile, but wealth is the dominant marker of difference between children. Those from the poorest backgrounds were considerably more likely to be over-age and will face the strongest pulls into work and family life before having a chance of completing primary and secondary grades.

137 Aurino *et al.*(2014) <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP134-Aurino.pdf>.

138 Woldehanna *et al.* (2017) http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/ETHIOPIA-Education%26Learning-Factsheet-Oct17_1.pdf.

139 Tafer and Pankhurst (2015) <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP141-Combining%20Schooling%20and%20Work.pdf>.

140 See Nutrition chapter and Aurino *et al.* (2014). <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP134-Aurino.pdf>.

Figure 20: 'Age-for-grade' status by wealth quintile, Younger Cohort children in Round 4 (2013)

Source: Young Lives Round 4 Household Survey data

5.8. Learning levels

Gains in access appear to have been achieved without student-level learning gains, perhaps unsurprisingly given that school infrastructure and resources remain stretched.¹⁴¹ Children are learning, but performance levels are substantially lower than the curriculum expects, damaging prospects for intermediate skills development. The unique design of Young Lives with two cohorts of children enables comparisons of how children were doing at the same age seven years apart. This allows us to see the impact of changes in the environment between 2006 and 2016. Such analysis can provide insights into the strength of the system in support of learning.

First, comparing the performance of cohorts at the same ages shows stagnation in achievement over time, but in a system with rapidly increasing enrolment this implies a rising 'total product of education'. Using the same mathematics assessment items to compare performance of Young Lives Younger Cohort children at age 12 with their Older Cohort peers at the same age, a small reduction in student performance was observed.¹⁴² By the time these two cohorts had reached 15 of age, however, an equivalent comparison suggests that there has been no change in average performance on common items.¹⁴³ These findings combined suggest that, over time, the system is not necessarily supporting successive cohorts of children to reach higher levels of achievement or skill but that does not mean that there have been no improvements. The number of children now passing through the education system has increased rapidly and so too the total product of the education system: almost 20 million students enrolled in primary grades in 2015/6 compared with 15.5 million in 2008/9, an increase of around 30 per cent. This suggests substantial progress even if average outcomes have not improved: more students are in schools and learning, with no decline in overall performance.

Second, irrespective of any change in student-level performance, learning levels at 12 years of age are very low relative to international norms. An attempt to anchor Young Lives cognitive assessments to those of TIMSS¹⁴⁴ suggests that around half the children in the household survey failed to reach the low achievement benchmark for fourth-grade children (aged about ten years),

¹⁴¹ Rolleston (2016) https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5891bcf9ed915d453500004e/RISE_WP_008_Rolleston.pdf.

¹⁴² Author's summation from eight common items between Younger Cohort and Older Cohort tests.

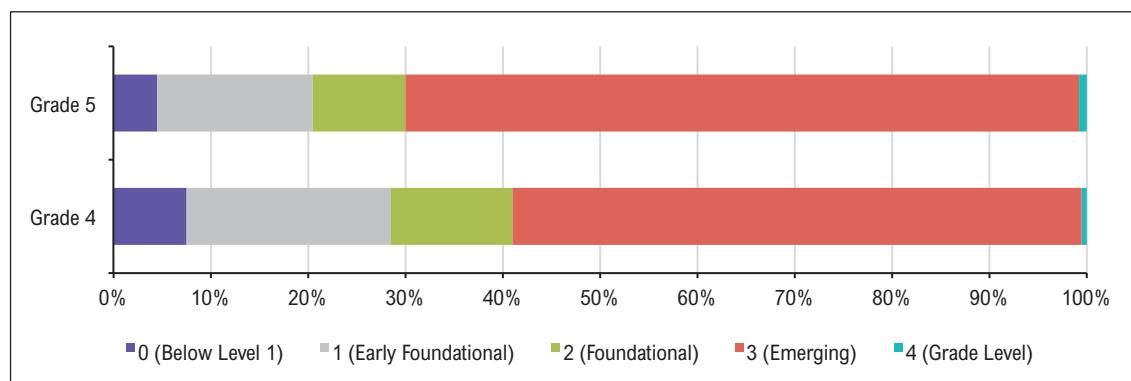
¹⁴³ Woldehanna *et al.* (2017). http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/ETHIOPIA-Education%26Learning-Factsheet-Oct17_1.pdf.

¹⁴⁴ The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) is an international assessment of Mathematics and science at the fourth and eighth grades that has been conducted every four years since 1995. See: <http://timss2015.org/>.

at which level '[s]tudents have some basic mathematical knowledge... demonstrate an understanding of whole numbers and can do simple computations with them'.¹⁴⁵ This is not to say that students aren't learning – Young Lives school survey evidence confirms that students are making progress in basic literacy and numeracy competencies over the course of a school year, but performance levels have not reached anything like the heights of enrolment levels.

Third, in foundational literacy, Young Lives primary school survey data suggest that students are performing around one to two grade levels lower than expected, with eight percent of sampled students in Grade 4 and four percent of sampled students in Grade 5 falling within the 'non-readers' category. In both grades, most students (58% and 69%, respectively) attained the 'emerging' literacy level, which demonstrates competency in basic reading comprehension but with limited ability to interpret intention or to infer wider meaning and purpose of text (Figure 21). Only a very small number of Grade 4 and 5 students (fewer than one per cent) reached the level expected in their grade. Slight differences in reading competency are observed according to gender (favouring girls) but wide disparities exist between students in urban and rural areas. Almost twice as many students in urban areas reach the 'emerging' level in each grade, compared to those in rural areas and almost one-fifth of Grade 4 students in rural areas were within the 'non-readers' category, compared to less than five percent in urban areas.¹⁴⁶ Many children leave early grades without the basic skills to thrive later in the system.

Figure 21: Levels of literacy proficiency observed in the Young Lives school survey, by grade



Source: Young Lives 2012-13 School Survey Data

By the end of primary school, the majority of students in Young Lives' survey sites perform at two or three grade levels below curricular expectations in mathematics. Minor gaps exist between girls and boys (two percentage points) but the far larger differences in achievement at the end of primary schooling exist once again between students from rural and urban sites (eight percentage points). School survey tests were purposely linked to Ethiopia's minimum learning competencies and an approach at anchoring the items included in the mathematics assessment indicates that most children are performing at two or three grades below their grade-level by the time they reach the final grades of primary.¹⁴⁷ This raises questions of both curriculum suitability and teaching at the right level.

145 Singh (2014) http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP124_Singh_learning%20gaps.pdf.

146 Rolleston and James (2016).

147 Note: there are multiple methods that can be applied to construct a criterion-referenced indication of student achievement relative to a curriculum benchmark. Each item in the 2016-7 school survey was prepared in collaboration with the Maths and Science Improvement Centre of the Ministry of Education and is coded according to grade, competency, sub-competency and minimum learning standard statement. In this case, for a student to be classified at any level they had to correctly answer 50 per cent or more of the items at that grade level on items included in our assessment.

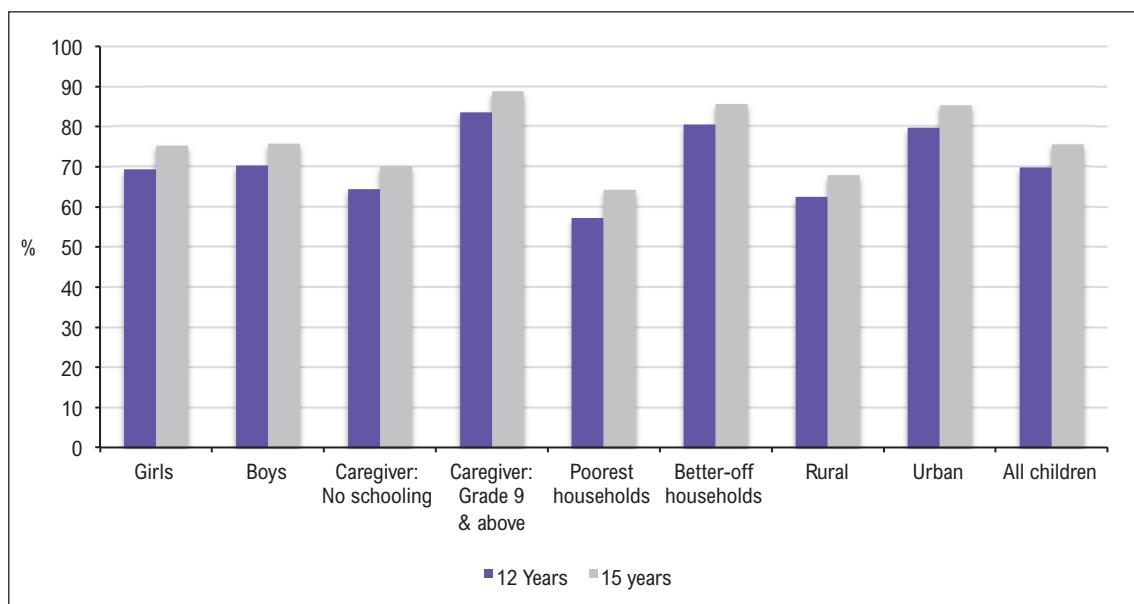
Similar gaps between what students know and what they are expected to know exist in English.¹⁴⁸ Combined, these gaps between curriculum expectations and students' skills, linked with the transition to all teaching and learning in English from Grade 9, will affect students' prospects as they consider that transition into secondary grades. Round 5 data from ages 12 and 15 indicate that the effect will be strongest for children from poorer households, in rural sites or with parents who have little formal education (Figure 22).¹⁴⁹ With the vast majority of education spending going to teachers' salaries, Young Lives qualitative evidence points to the importance of teacher training and professional development, such as provision of continuous professional development – focusing on content knowledge, pedagogy and language skills – in order to improve teacher morale and perhaps increase quality of education in all areas (Box 10).

Box 15: How in-service training can help teachers to improve their skills¹⁵⁰

'I have only seven months of teaching experience. I was involved in two training courses organised by the *woreda* education office. One was on the school improvement programme, the other was on pedagogy. The trainers gave us some methodological courses. It also included experience sharing with each other. Those teachers who have long years of teaching experience share their way of teaching. I have learned a lot from them. There were teachers who had never been introduced to teaching pedagogy. They were very happy to have participated in such training, which they agreed to apply in their teaching.'

(A teacher reporting during the first Young Lives School Survey, 2010)

Figure 22: Vocabulary test score differences over time and between groups of interest, Young Lives Younger Cohort, 2016



Source: Young Lives Round 5 Preliminary Findings for Education Factsheet

148 Rossiter *et al.* (2017) <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-CountryReport-Ethiopia-Oct17.pdf>.

149 Woldehanna *et al.* (2017) http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/ETHIOPIA-Education%26Learning-Factsheet-Oct17_1.pdf.

150 Abebe and Woldehanna (2013) http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP103_Abebe-Woldehanna-Teacher-Training.pdf.

Slow learning progress leads not only to weaker social and labour market outcomes; adverse experiences at school appear to create feedback loops through a reduced valuation of formal education. The educational aspirations of parents and children in the Young Lives sample are exceptionally high, although there was a bias in favour of boys in parental aspirations for their children at age eight, and children's aspirations at age 12 and 16.¹⁵¹ While in better-off households girls and boys have similar educational aspirations, girls in the poorest households are 12 percentage points less likely to aspire to completing their education and going to university than boys.¹⁵² Overall, 80 per cent of students in Grades 7 and 8 report that they expect to complete university¹⁵³ and in recent work with parents of pre-primary-aged children, Young Lives finds that parental aspirations remain high and expectations for quality schooling equally so.

The following case of a boy in a site in Amhara Region is illustrative of children's high educational aspirations.

Box 16: Boy in Amhara inspired to pursue education to the highest levels¹⁵⁴

'My family depends on agriculture. The harvest is sometimes good, at other times poor... My father works day and night because he is a farmer. He spends a lot of energy and may die soon... But I want to finish my education and sit in an office with a monthly salary... I will live longer than my father.'

(Kassaye, a boy from Tach-Meret, 2011)

There is strong demand for good quality education to fulfil these aspirations. As in other studies conducted across Africa, however, the positive valuation of formal education by Young Lives respondents is sometimes tempered by adverse learning experiences at school.¹⁵⁵ To take advantage of the access to schooling that is now afforded to all children – and excitement for education, rapid improvements in preparedness and learning are required in the early years of pre-primary and primary education. Looking further ahead, in order to catch up to OECD levels of achievement, Ethiopia will require a doubling (or more) in productivity of each school year, in the sense of the 'productivity' of a year of schooling leading to student progress on core curricular competencies.¹⁵⁶ Reaching these productivity levels will require major reforms.

5.9. School quality

School and education quality is a policy priority, but progress to universal learning by 2030 may require major structural and financial reforms. This chapter has shown that far more children today are developing the basic skills for later life and employment but it remains the case that individual family background, educational opportunities and achievements tend to reinforce each other, slowing progress and creating inequitable outcomes from the earliest grades.¹⁵⁷ An education system geared towards learning (rather than enrolment) for all children can help to overcome the current shortfall in learning levels and capitalise on the talents of all young

¹⁵¹ Dercos and Singh (2013) suggest that already at age eight parents favour boys and that this bias is transmitted to the aspirations of children at age 12, with boys having higher educational aspirations than girls, which become more pronounced by the age of 15.

¹⁵² Favara (2016).

¹⁵³ Rossiter *et al.* (2017) <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-CountryReport-Ethiopia-Oct17.pdf>.

¹⁵⁴ Tafere (2014) http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP120_Tafere_Education%20Aspirations%20and%20Barriers%20to%20Achievement.pdf.

¹⁵⁵ Boyden *et al.* (2016) http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP161-Boyden%20%282%29_0.pdf.

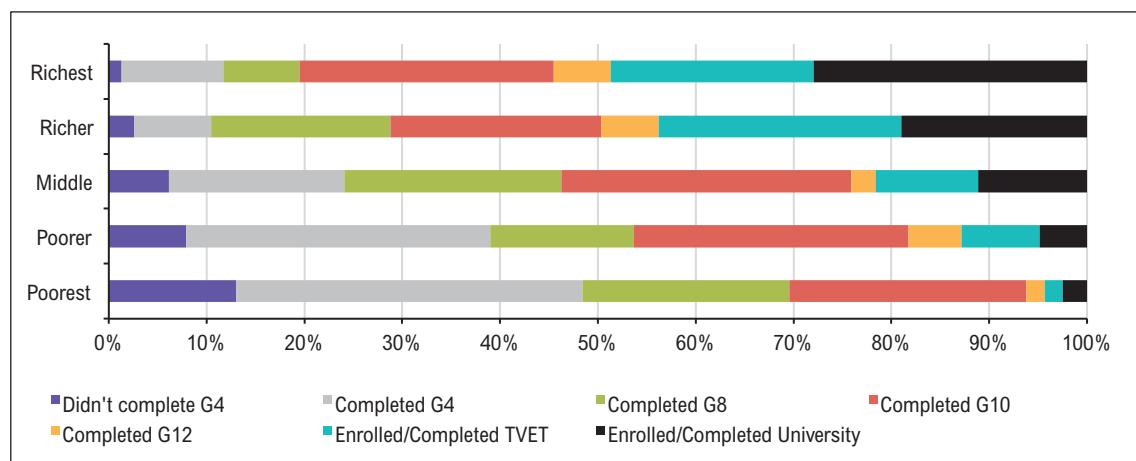
¹⁵⁶ Singh (2014) http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP124_Singh_learning%20gaps.pdf.

¹⁵⁷ Young Lives (2016) http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-PolicyBrief-30FINAL_0.pdf.

people.¹⁵⁸ At the level of the system, this might require a re-alignment of objectives towards assuring learning, for officials, schools, teachers and communities; an associated improvement in the information available on student outcomes, its use and the way it is shared; and financial reforms which reduce the sometimes complex barriers to participation and learning progress for the most vulnerable.¹⁵⁹

In terms of the proportion of the country's budget, Ethiopia allocates a huge amount to education, estimated by UNESCO as 27 per cent of total public expenditure or around four and a half per cent of GDP for the latest year available.¹⁶⁰ This education spending, however, disproportionately favours students who reach secondary and tertiary levels, who tend to be from the wealthiest households. The World Bank's Education Public Expenditure Review uses Young Lives school survey data and woreda-level financial data to show that the recurrent cost of one year of secondary schooling is two and a half times the cost of one year of primary schooling and these ratios grow to 12 and 26 for one year of TVET and of university respectively. (As a reference, typical ratios in OECD countries would be closer to one or one and a half for Secondary/Primary and two or two and a half for Tertiary/Primary.)¹⁶¹ As Young Lives research shows, the students that reach these higher levels tend to be from the wealthiest households (Figure 23), thereby capturing a huge share of public spending on education, even if there is an expectation of partial repayment via cost sharing and a university graduate tax.¹⁶² Comparing data from Rounds 4 and 5, at 19 years of age, about 60 per cent of the Older Cohort children were still in some form of education, with a greater proportion of girls (64%) than boys (56%).¹⁶³ By the age of 22, only one third of them were still in education, with a shift in favour of young men (38%) compared with young women (34%). Of those still in education, however, a large share of young women was enrolled in vocational and higher education, while there were more males yet to complete primary and secondary grades (Figure 24).

Figure 23: Completed education levels of Young Lives Older Cohort children by age 22/23, by wealth quintile



Source: Young Lives Round 5 Household Survey Data

158 Woldehanna *et al.* (2017) http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/ETHIOPIA-Education%26Learning-Factsheet-Oct17_1.pdf.

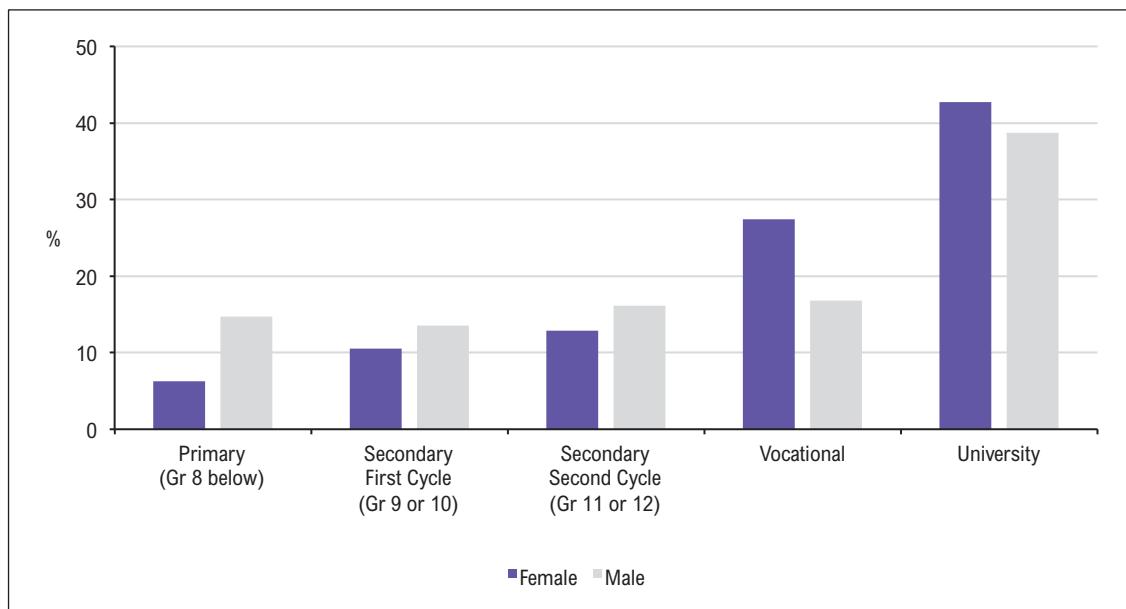
159 Woldehanna and Araya (2016) <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-CountryReport-Ethiopia.pdf>.

160 UNESCO (2017).

161 OECD (2017); World Bank (2018).

162 Frost and Rolleston (2013) http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP96_EthiopiaSchRpt_0.pdf.

163 Woldehanna *et al.* (2018) http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/ETHIOPIA-Youth-Factsheet-Jan18_0.pdf.

Figure 24: Grade of young people still in education at age 22, by gender

Source: Young Lives Round 5 Household Survey Data

An education budget that is re-oriented in favour of broad-based learning at the lowest levels can be an effective support to a system oriented for learning and to the country's 2025-30 middle-income country vision. To capitalise on mass expansion and pivot to providing universal learning, education financing reforms might (a) redirect a higher share of resources, perhaps via complementary programmes such as feeding, towards children at the pre-primary and lowest primary levels; and (b) permit greater variation in support so that spending rates are substantially higher per student in the most disadvantaged areas. Such financing reforms can support a process to provide all students, irrespective of background, with an equal opportunity to perform and to progress based on merit. These individuals can supply the young professional workforce required for Ethiopia to reach the goal of lower-middle-income status by 2025-30.

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6. Wellbeing and protection of children and youth

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6.1. Key findings

- Social protection transfers under the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) have provided important benefits and protection against food insecurity and have improved child nutrition. Public works have provided significant community benefits although in some cases, despite regulations, children were involved.
- Most orphans are cared for by family members and play an important role in supporting their households. Inequalities in schooling and health outcomes are larger between urban and rural children and by poverty level than between orphans and other children. Children's experiences are shaped not only by parental death but also by the wider social and economic contexts of their daily lives, including gender, age, household poverty and shocks.
- Common causes of child work include poverty, shocks and adverse events such as illness or death of caregivers that sometimes require children to leave school and prioritise paid work. Children often face competing pressures on their time from work and school. For some children in poor households working may be essential to pay for school-related costs, though repeated absence may lead to children dropping out of school.
- Remarkable progress has been achieved in reducing both child marriage and female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) in Ethiopia, although significant differences persist between rural and urban areas, and between region and communities. Opportunities for girls through education, training, employment, migration and social protection are still limited, and, given the existence of some resistance, imposing bans can push the practices underground and result in unintended negative consequences.
- Violence against children is often related to and exacerbated by poverty, and gender-based violence by social norms. Certain categories of children, notably child migrants, domestic workers, children living on the streets, and those from very poor households are often more at risk of abuse. Most cases remain unreported or are dealt with through informal mechanisms, although formal institutions are increasingly addressing violence despite constraints on reporting especially by vulnerable categories.
- Relocation is perceived by children in poor neighbourhoods as offering hopes of cleaner and safer living conditions, and condominiums as improving sanitation and privacy. However, many people feared they will not be able to afford the costs of the condominiums and transport, and worry about limited employment options nearby. Some mentioned distance from schools, lack of playgrounds, and risks associated with multi-storied buildings for children, the elderly, the sick and pregnant women.

6.2. Policy messages

- Social protection and child protection can work better together. The PSNP should pay more attention to the implications for children in terms of their work and can provide useful lessons for the design of integrated child-sensitive social protection policies and programmes under the *Social Protection Policy* and recent Strategy. Options could include, in addition to cash

transfers, nutrition interventions as recently included within the PSNP design, child care at the workplace, school feeding and measures to improve school quality and access for the poorest, and health insurance with exemptions for the poorest, in line with the Community Based Health Insurance initiatives.

- Different social policies, notably in nutrition, education, health, and social protection can be better integrated rather than relying simply on sectoral responses, in order better to address multiple risks as suggested in the recent *National Children's Policy*. Supporting all children, including orphans, requires addressing chronic poverty and associated risks. Rather than policies based purely on targeting, increasing the coverage of basic services and social protection schemes, as proposed in the *Social Protection Policy*, would ensure the poorest and most marginalised children are reached.
- Promoting children's wellbeing and development requires an integrated approach which addresses the broader social and economic context in which children's school and work are seen as part of their lives. Child-sensitive social protection should target the age- and gender-specific risks and provide insurance against vulnerabilities and support for children in affected households. Improvements in living conditions could ensure young children access early learning, and reduce work burdens in adolescence can promote continuing in education.
- Intervention focusing exclusively on delaying marriage or stopping FGM/C may not ensure that girls will have a better adult life. Interventions should address all important life trajectories – schooling, work and marriage – so that girls can achieve successful transitions from childhood into adulthood. Winning hearts and minds by involving girls, parents, boyfriends, prospective husbands, community and religious leaders, as well as schools, clubs, youth and women's groups is likely to be more effective than simply strict legal enforcement and punishments of offenders.
- There is a need for greater inter-sectoral coordination on violence, following on from the work of the inter-ministerial committee on violence affecting women and children, to create awareness and implement national policies and plans, and foster greater collaboration within government and with other stakeholders. Initiatives to prevent and address violence affecting children must reach down from the federal level to the regions, *woredas*, and especially the *kebele* and community levels where the violence occurs. Health Extension Workers and Social Workers as well as schools and school clubs can play key roles in countering and addressing violence.
- In urban relocation, as well as housing more emphasis should be given to basic infrastructure, health facilities, day care centres, pre-schools, playgrounds, youth and communal centres, which should be in place before people are moved. The condominium design should pay more attention to safety features for children and prioritising ground floor access for the elderly, the sick and the less mobile. Improved transport links, as well as income generation schemes, employment opportunities and credit programmes could facilitate transitions to newly developed areas.

6.3. Introduction

The Millennium Declaration makes explicit reference to child protection and ensuring the implementation of the Convention of the Rights of the Child, and the subsequent Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) promote health, good quality education, and protection against abuse, exploitation and violence.¹⁶⁴ The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have a stronger

164 UNICEF (2006).

focus on children's wellbeing and protection. The first five goals of ending poverty and hunger, ensuring wealth and wellbeing for all ages, and inclusive and equitable quality education, and gender equality for women and girls are those most directly relevant to children. The indicators for which UNICEF is custodian include those on nutrition and child health and wellbeing (stunting, wasting, neo-natal and under-five mortality and immunisation); on education, including, crucially, early childhood development, on child labour; and on violence including corporal punishment and sexual violence affecting children, as well as FGM/C and early marriage.¹⁶⁵

Within Ethiopia, as we have seen in the policy chapter, child rights are enshrined in the Constitution, and increasingly sectoral policies have addressed children's and youth's wellbeing and protection, culminating in 2017 in the National Children's Policy and Youth Development and Change Strategy.

For over a decade and a half Young Lives has been producing research results with important policy implications in key areas relating to the wellbeing and protection of children and youth. This chapter addresses the following six areas where our findings have contributed to or could enrich debates: 1) child-sensitive social protection, 2) orphans and vulnerable children, 3) child work and labour, 4) harmful traditional practices, 5) violence affecting children and youth, and 6) urban development and relocation. For each of these sections we start by presenting the key findings and policy messages, followed by the policy context and the evidence from Young Lives research. The conclusion pulls together findings from each of the sections and three cross-cutting challenges: 1) targeting differences in age, gender and categories at risk, 2) promoting child-sensitive social protection to address poverty and shocks, and 3) adopting a community-centred, sectorally integrated, multi-stakeholder approach.

6.4. Child-sensitive social protection

6.4.1. Key findings

- Social protection transfers under the Productive Safety Net Programme have provided important benefits and protection against food insecurity. Children in households involved in PSNP direct support spent less time on paid and unpaid work and girls' school attendance was higher.
- However, the evidence on the effects on children in households involved in the PSNP Public Works is mixed, with some data suggesting they spent more time on work, although girls spent more time on domestic work, while other analyses have suggested that they worked less.
- In-depth research found evidence of some children involved in public works as well as children substituting household labour for adults working on public works.
- A recent analysis suggests that the PSNP has had positive nutritional benefits for children at different ages.

6.4.2. Policy messages

- The PSNP should pay more attention to the implications for children in terms of their work and schooling and ensure that the programme prevents children from working on public works and that the amount of time children spend working is not increased as a consequence of their family's participation in the programme through substitute child labour.

¹⁶⁵ <https://data.unicef.org/children-sustainable-development-goals/>.

- Differential gender impacts of labour requirements also need further attention in order to ensure that programmes have positive impacts, and to avoid children and especially girls carrying out substitute work for mothers involved in public works.
- The PSNP should consider including vulnerable children among the beneficiaries of direct support along with other vulnerable categories who are unable to work.
- The experience of the PSNP should provide useful lessons for the design of integrated child-sensitive social protection policies and programmes under the Social Protection Policy and recent Strategy.
- Options could include, in addition to cash transfers, nutrition interventions as recently included within the PSNP design, child care at the workplace, school feeding, measures to improve school quality and access for the poorest, and health insurance with exemptions for the poorest.

6.4.3. Policy context

There is growing recognition globally of the importance of social protection and the need for it to be child-sensitive.¹⁶⁶ The evolution of policy on social protection in Ethiopia emerged out of the context of famine, focusing on child malnutrition. The legacies of the 1973 and 1984/5 famines led to the establishment of relief and rehabilitation institutions and programmes. Following the 2002/3 famine a New Coalition for Food Security was formed between the government, donors and NGOs to move beyond emergency aid, address root causes of chronic food insecurity and set up a predictable system of delivering aid to enable households to 'graduate' out of food insecurity.¹⁶⁷ This led to the establishment of the PSNP in 2005, which has become the largest social transfer programme in Africa outside of South Africa,¹⁶⁸ reaching eight million people annually since 2006. The Food Security Programme was redesigned to focus more on enabling households to graduate out of food insecurity, with a component on Household Asset Building and the establishment of Complementary Community Initiatives focusing on development of medium-scale infrastructure.¹⁶⁹ Recent developments since 2016 with the PSNP IV have included urban safety nets and more of a focus on nutrition issues.¹⁷⁰ This has involved the introduction of soft conditionalities related to utilisation of community-based nutrition and antenatal care services. This is in line with Young Lives findings about the importance of nutrition and the possibility of growth recovery,¹⁷¹ and the suggestion that social protection needs to be more child-sensitive, as argued in several Young Lives papers.¹⁷² The Social Protection Policy, produced by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) and approved in 2014, built on the experience of the PSNP and includes a focus on supporting children within vulnerable households, as recommended by Young Lives.¹⁷³ The National Children's Policy developed by the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA) and approved in 2017, has important sections on children's civil rights and protection, and on children in difficult circumstances.¹⁷⁴

¹⁶⁶ UNICEF and Global Coalition to End Child Poverty (2017).

¹⁶⁷ Devereux *et al.* (2006).

¹⁶⁸ Devereux *et al.* (2008).

¹⁶⁹ Pankhurst and Rahmato (2013).

¹⁷⁰ Ministry of Agriculture (2014).

¹⁷¹ See chapter on nutrition, health and cognitive development.

¹⁷² Woldehanna (2010a); (2010b); Porter and Dornan (2010) <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-PP1-Social-Protection-and-Children.pdf>; Tafere and Woldehanna (2012) http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP83_Tafere_revised_Jan2013.pdf; Tafere and Woldehanna (2013).

¹⁷³ Crivello and Chuta (2012).

¹⁷⁴ FDRE (2017).

6.4.4. Young Lives research

Young Lives research has produced comparative evidence on the impact on children of households' involvement in the Agricultural Extension Programme (AEP), earlier versions of public works known as Employment Generation Schemes (EGS), and the PSNP, including the differences between the effects of involvement in the public works and the direct support programmes, as well as gender differences.¹⁷⁵ Children in households involved in the AEP were found to have spent less time on paid work as well as on unpaid childcare and household chores; furthermore, girls spent more time on schooling and continued to higher grades. The findings suggest that increased income meant that beneficiary households needed less child labour and prioritised girls' schooling. In households involved in the earlier EGS, children spent more time on work and boys spent less time on schooling. With the successor PSNP the effects were mixed. In households receiving direct support, children spent less time on paid and unpaid activities and boys completed higher grades. However, children in households involved in public works spent more time on paid work (though only half as much as in the EGS schemes), and girls spent more time studying. The study therefore suggests that the safety net's design needs to be more aware of the implications for children in terms of their schooling and work and the gender implications of programmes. Support should be more aware of effects on children. The PSNP design should ensure that households with insufficient adult labour receive direct support in order to avoid the risk of substitute child labour, that is, children taking on work in the home previously done by adults – often women – who go for PSNP public works while men from vulnerable households often migrate to do better-paid work.¹⁷⁶

A further mixed-methods study of the impact of the PSNP found evidence from the qualitative sub-sample in four sites of some children involved in PSNP work despite the rules against it as well as finding others involved in wage labour.

Table 13: Children's participation in public work and wage labour at the age of 15

Location	Tach-Meret	Leki	Buna	Zeytuni	Total
Children					
From PSNP households	4	6	4	8	22
From non-PSNP households	4	2	4	0	10
Doing Public Work	3	3	2	3	11
Doing wage labour (all households)	2	8	4	1	15
Doing wage labour (from PSNP)	0	6	2	1	9

Source: Tafere and Woldehanna (2009)

Moreover, in a context of increasing incidence of economic shocks (such as drought and food-price inflation) and idiosyncratic family-related adverse events such as the illness or death of family members, the value of cash and food transfers from the PSNP did not improve between 2006 and 2009, and even declined slightly.¹⁷⁷ Moreover, children spent more time on paid and unpaid work, probably because children substitute for parents at home while parents are

¹⁷⁵ Woldehanna (2009). The data were based on the Young Lives survey of Older Cohort children aged 12 in 2006. <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP40-Woldehanna-ChildrenTimeUse.pdf>.

¹⁷⁶ See also *Young Lives Policy Brief 6 'Impacts of social protection programmes in Ethiopia on child work and education'*, Yablonski and Woldehanna (2008). <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-PB6-Social-Protection-in-Ethiopia.pdf>.

¹⁷⁷ Tafere and Wodehanna (2012). This included survey data from 2002, 2006 and then Round 3 in 2009 from 12 sites and qualitative interviews in four sites with 32 households and their Older Cohort children, as well as other key informants including local officials and Food Security Task Force members. http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP83_Tafere_revised_Jan2013.pdf.

engaged in public works or wage labour, suggesting that the ‘substitution effect’ of the public works component of the PSNP dominated over the ‘income effect’. However, a more recent analysis found a significant reduction in hours worked between 2006 and 2009 by children in families within the PSNP programme, suggesting that the income effect dominates over the substitution effect.¹⁷⁸

Children in households involved in public works spent less time on schooling and studying at home and some had to drop out of school. The following case of Haymanot, a girl living in a site in Tigray with her sick mother, shows how the small amount of PSNP transfers from her sister’s work meant that Haymanot dropped out of school and became involved in paid labour, hoping to save money to continue her education the year after.

Box 17: Girl working for wage labour while her sister works on PSNP public works

‘I live with my three siblings and my mother. I do not know the whereabouts of my father. My mother is usually bed-ridden because of a heart attack. My family is a beneficiary of the PSNP, but only three [of us] are included. I am not included because they said they had “forgotten” me. My sister does the public work for the three beneficiaries. The amount from the PSNP is too small to cover our food and comes very late. When my mother’s illness reached the point that she could not feed us, I decided to drop out of school to work at a private stone-crusher plant. I transport stones using a handcart. I get about 280–300 Birr (US\$15.76–US\$16.88) per month at a wage rate of 14 Birr (US\$0.79) a day. I work for eight hours. I save about 30 Birr (US\$1.70)] a month while we use the rest for buying food grains, clothes and school materials for my siblings. I am saving some money to continue my education next year. I hope I will succeed and my mother will recover.’ Haymanot, girl, 15, Zeytuni

Tafere and Woldehanna (2012)

Although the survey data suggested a positive effect on children’s grade-for-age, half the qualitative sub-sample were working for wages and some on the public works programme, as suggested in the following quote from a food security implementer.

Box 18: Children’s involvement in PSNP public works

‘Parents with children are expected to cover the public work requirements of all their family members including their children. But usually the parents were not able to cover it. They send their children on their own or to assist them to finish their work quotas. Parents send their children, in some instances as young as seven to eight years. But we only accept children who are 13 years or older for the public work, though the law stipulates that only children above 15 years old should participate.’(KFSTFM, Tach-Meret).

Tafere and Woldehanna (2012)

Moreover, working was a factor affecting children’s schooling, leading to repetition of years and drop-out of some children. The authors argue that the low amount of the PSNP transfers may encourage households to send their children to work for the wages. They conclude that the PNSP on its own cannot ensure children’s overall well-being. Though it protects many children from hunger, the PSNP does not ensure lasting food security, and does not guarantee that children attend school. Amid limited resources and in contexts of vulnerability to protracted shocks, there is therefore a need for more child-focused social protection. The authors suggest

178 Porter and Goyal (2016).

that the rules about participation excluding children under the age of 16 should be increased to the age of 18, since their involvement in public work puts extra pressure on them to work. The latest Programme Implementation Manual in 2014 included the suggestion that children under the age of 18 should not be included.¹⁷⁹ Furthermore, the authors make a case for children to be included as Direct Support beneficiaries, along with other categories at risk such as the elderly and disabled. This would mean that the programme would require public work only from adult and able-bodied household members, not just in theory but also in practice. Inclusion of schoolchildren in the Direct Support component of the programme would also make it easier to monitor child labour. The authors further suggest promoting children's school attendance, which, they argue, would protect children from both public work and possible wage labour.

Finally, the authors conclude more broadly that investing in human capital development and adopting child-sensitive social protection requires thinking beyond the PSNP. They suggest that while the PNSP aims at household and community asset building, it could be adapted to address children's vulnerabilities, protecting them from the impacts of shocks by adopting integrated child-focused social protection. A more recent study based on Young Lives data suggests that the PSNP has acted as a safety net for children and has had a positive impact on the nutrition of children of participant households, cushioning them from nutritional vulnerabilities.¹⁸⁰

It is now widely recognised and evidenced that cash transfers can have highly positive socioeconomic impacts, ranging from poverty reduction and improved living conditions to enhanced psychosocial well-being. However, the expanding evidence base also highlights that the provision of cash alone sometimes falls short in achieving long-term second-order impacts such as those related to nutrition, learning outcomes and morbidity, so that a 'cash plus' approach involving additional components has been advocated.¹⁸¹ Options for child-sensitive social protection could include, in addition to cash transfers, child care and school feeding, healthcare, health insurance with exemptions for the most disadvantages and other supporting programmes, some of which are considered in the Social Protection Policy and Strategy and other programmes such as the community based health insurance programme.¹⁸²

6.5. Orphans and vulnerable children (OVC)

6.5.1. Key findings

- Losing a mother during childhood has a significant negative impact on school enrolment and literacy, whereas the death of a father seems to negatively affect the sense of optimism a child feels about the future.
- Inequalities in schooling and health outcomes are larger between urban and rural children and according to household poverty level than between orphans and other children.
- The vast majority of orphans are cared for by family members and play an important role in supporting the households in which they live.
- Children's experiences are shaped not only by parental death and which parent has died but also by the wider social and economic contexts of their daily lives, including gender, age and especially household poverty and shocks.

¹⁷⁹ Ministry of Agriculture (2014). This is noted under eligibility for public works (8.7) although in other sections of the Programme Implementation Manual the age of 16 is still mentioned (3-7, 10-4, and 17-10).

¹⁸⁰ Porter and Goyal (2016).

¹⁸¹ Roelen *et al.* (2017).

¹⁸² See Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (2014); (2016).

6.5.2. Policy messages

- Recognising the impact of a parent's death on children is important, but targeting OVC alone can distract attention from the severe poverty that is the backdrop for many children, including orphans, and which may be more predictive of their later chances.
- There is a need to link and integrate different social policies, notably in nutrition, education, health, and social protection rather than relying simply on sectoral responses, in order better to address multiple risks, as suggested in the recent *National Children's Policy*.
- Supporting all children, including orphans, requires addressing chronic poverty and associated risks. Rather than policies based purely on targeting, increasing the coverage of basic services and social protection schemes, as proposed in the *Social Protection Policy*, would ensure the poorest and most marginalised children are reached.

6.5.3. Policy context

Orphans as a category of vulnerable children came to the fore in the context of the global AIDS crisis. Currently the notion of 'Orphans and Vulnerable Children' (OVC) dominates many of the child protection debates across sub-Saharan Africa.¹⁸³ In Ethiopia, the 1995 Constitution specifically mentions protecting orphans and encouraging institutions 'which promote their adoption and advance their welfare and education',¹⁸⁴ and the 1996 *Developmental Social Welfare Policy* targeted vulnerable categories, including children and youth in difficult circumstances.¹⁸⁵ According to projections produced by the Central Statistical Agency, based on the 2007 census, there were 3.8 million orphans in Ethiopia in 2009.¹⁸⁶ The Ministry of Women's Affairs in 2009 produced *Alternative Child Care Guidelines* relating to community-based childcare, reunification, and reintegration programmes, foster care, adoption and institutional care services, and in 2010 *Standard Delivery Guidelines* for care and support programmes for OVC. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs MoLSA was charged with the development of the Social Protection Policy. The December 2011 draft mentioned support to OVC, while the March 2012 final draft and the approved version in 2014 do not single out orphans but rather consider support to vulnerable children through their households, in line with the recommendations from Young Lives.¹⁸⁷ The *National Children's Policy* also considers a broad category of 'Children in Difficult Circumstances', including OVC, which addresses issues of access to good quality, timely social and economic services, domestic adoption, foster care and community-based programmes, reintegration and reunification of children in institutional care and on the streets, and supporting and protecting disabled children and those affected by natural and man-made disasters and conflicts, internally displaced and returnee children, and those affected by drug production, trafficking, and violence.¹⁸⁸

6.5.4. Young Lives research

Young Lives research enables us to follow orphans for many years after they have lost their parent(s), assess the impact of orphanhood as they grow up and compare their lives with those

183 Pells (2011) <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-PB16-Beyond-Orphanhood-Rethinking-Vulnerability-in-Ethiopia.pdf>.

184 Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (1995), Article 36.5; Alemu and Birmeta (2012).

185 Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (1996).

186 Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, (2017).

187 Pells (2011) <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-PB16-Beyond-Orphanhood-Rethinking-Vulnerability-in-Ethiopia.pdf>; Crivello and Chuta (2012).

188 Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (2017).

of other children living in poverty. In 2009 Young Lives carried out a qualitative study to understand the longer term impacts of orphanhood, which came up with some unexpected findings that challenge prevailing assumptions about orphans and vulnerability. The authors of that study argue against an exclusive focus on orphans and in favour of broader child and social protection policy approaches.¹⁸⁹

An analysis of the survey data suggests that losing a mother during childhood (between ages eight and 12)¹⁹⁰ has a significant negative impact on school enrolment and literacy, whereas the death of a father seems to negatively affect the sense of optimism a child feels about the future. However, paternal orphans also seem to feel that they are treated with more fairness and respect than had their father not died, perhaps since they tend to continue to live with their mothers, whereas maternal orphans often have other caregivers such as grandmothers or other relatives.

Table 14: Comparing schooling outcomes at age 12 for orphans and other children

	Both parents alive at age 12	Mother died between ages eight and 12	Father died between ages eight and 12
School enrolment	95%	78%	92%
Proportion who missed school for at least a week over past year	13%	33%	13%
Drop-out rate	2%	11%	1%
Never schooled	2%	10%	5%
Proportion who cannot read anything or read only letters, not words or sentences	23%	42%	25%
Proportion who cannot write at all, even with difficulty and errors	10%	26%*	9%
Caregiver perception of what grade they would like the child to complete			
Caregivers who are close relatives (parent/grandparent/sibling)	12.0	12.3	11.8
Other caregivers (distant or non-relatives)	0	7*	-

* Significantly different at ten per cent level or more from the group of children with both parents alive.
Source: Camfield *et al.* (2009), adapted from Himaz (2009)

Nonetheless, the survey findings also indicated that inequalities in schooling and health outcomes were larger along other dimensions of vulnerability, such as the location of children's households (rural or urban) and the material circumstances of their households when compared to analysis by orphan status.

The Young Lives qualitative study found that orphanhood does not necessarily result in negative impacts on children's experiences and development outcomes, and some orphans managed to help their poor households survive, as illustrated by the case of Bekele aged 12 who lives with his grandmother, who took him to live with her as soon as his parents died.

¹⁸⁹ Pells (2011) <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-PB16-Beyond-Orphanhood-Rethinking-Vulnerability-in-Ethiopia.pdf>; Crivello and Chuta (2012).

¹⁹⁰ Himaz (2009). The study compares the same children who were seven to eight years old in 2002 and then 12 years old in 2006. <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP44-Himaz-ImpactOfParentalDeath.pdf>.

Box 19: An orphan boy living with a relative going to school and working

Bekele shares a small, makeshift house with six other children, and although there is usually enough food he often eats the same thing every day. For this reason Bekele works hard, both in school and out of school, and when the researchers last visited he described how he earns 55 Birr (about US\$5) each week by working two hours every evening and all day Saturday and Sunday.

Camfield *et al.* (2009)

Moreover, many of the problems faced by orphans are also faced by other disadvantaged children in their communities.¹⁹¹ Some orphans who were well looked after by relatives seemed not to be seriously affected by having been orphaned, as suggested in the following case of Genet, a 15-year-old orphan living in Addis Ababa with her aunt.

Box 20: An orphan girl well provided for by relatives

Genet's mother died when she was five followed by the death of her father two years later. In her view, her aunt and uncle provided well for her, and theirs was amongst the better-off households in our sample. When asked about missing her parents she replied, 'I feel nothing because I didn't know them very well...I feel a little sadness but not so much because I have missed nothing.'

Crivello and Chuta (2012)

Several factors influence young people's experiences of parental death, and the quality of children's care relationships and their material security were crucial among these. However, poverty was often a more pressing everyday risk for many children, and gender-based violence for girls.¹⁹² The meanings and experiences of childhood, family, vulnerability, and orphanhood are highly contextual, such that greater attention to the social dimensions of child vulnerability is needed. Policy for protecting children should also acknowledge the resources that young people bring to bear on their household circumstances through their agency, roles and responsibilities. Many of the types of aid provided to orphaned children target their poverty (food, school materials and clothing). It is therefore important to address universal access to basic support for children, notably through social protection programmes.

Children's experiences are shaped not only by parental death but also by the wider contexts of their daily lives, including gender, age, household poverty, illness and other shocks.¹⁹³ As noted in the later section on violence, gender-based violence, notably harassment and rape, are common fears for teenage girls, and this influences their livelihood opportunities and feelings of insecurity. Positive relationships with caregivers help children in their daily struggles, and, where care and support are strong, children do not refer to parental death as the main factor shaping their current lives. Rethinking orphanhood and vulnerability therefore requires improved understanding of risk factors for children, and further research is needed on the interaction and

¹⁹¹ Crivello and Chuta (2012). The study in two sites, in Addis Ababa and Hawassa, involved 63 individuals with 26 focus children aged nine to 12, caregivers, NGOs, local government representatives, service providers and community leaders. Separate group discussions were held with the children and caregivers. At age eight about ten per cent had lost one or more parent and by 15 the proportion was around 21 per cent.

¹⁹² See section on violence affecting children.

¹⁹³ See also Chuta (2014). http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP128_Chuta_Childrens%20Agency%20and%20Shocks.pdf.

accumulation of risks for children, on the mediating factors that decrease or enhance child vulnerability, and on the importance of contextual factors.

To conclude, while the impact of parental death on children is important, targeting OVC alone can distract attention from the persistent poverty that is the context in which many children, including orphans, live in Ethiopia and which may be more predictive of their later chances. Moreover, parental absence and family illness are common among poor households. As such, tackling poverty is crucial to addressing the needs of all vulnerable children.

6.6. Child work and labour

6.6.1. Key findings

- Gender differences in children's work become more prominent with age. Compared to boys, older girls routinely take on greater responsibility for household chores and care activities and face household responsibilities alongside school and paid work, often affecting their schooling.
- However, boys are dropping out of primary school more than girls, especially in rural areas and among poorer households, largely due to work.
- Poverty, shocks and adverse events such as illness or the death of caregivers, are common causes of children going to work, and sometimes require children to leave school and prioritise paid work.
- Most work that children do contains some risks and benefits. Only some potential risks mentioned were actually reported as harms that children faced, and good and bad features can exist side by side in the same work.
- Children face competing pressures on their time from work and school. Children take pride in being able to contribute to their families' livelihoods.
- For some children in poor households working may be essential to pay for school-related costs, although repeated absence may lead to children dropping out of school.

6.6.2. Policy messages

- Efforts should focus on eliminating the worst forms of child labour, in line with Sustainable Development Goal Target 8.7, ILO Convention 182, and the Ethiopian Government's National Action Plan on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour.
- Promoting children's wellbeing and development requires an integrated approach which addresses the broader social and economic context in which children's school and work are seen as part of their lives.
- Child-sensitive social protection should target the age- and gender-specific risks and provide insurance against vulnerabilities and support for children in affected households. Improvements in living conditions could ensure young children access early learning, and reducing work burdens in adolescence can promote continued education.
- The challenges faced by girls combining domestic and, often, paid work with school, and the risks for children, especially boys, of dropping out of school for work deserve further attention.
- Flexible learning arrangements, including shift schooling or evening or weekend classes, and additional support such as remedial classes can enable working children from poor backgrounds to continue with their schooling.

6.6.3. Policy context

The majority of children in sub-Saharan Africa are engaged in some form of work, whether paid or unpaid.¹⁹⁴ In Ethiopia, evidence from Young Lives shows that 90 per cent of eight-year-olds undertook some form of work.¹⁹⁵ The 1995 Ethiopian Constitution specifies that children should not be ‘required nor permitted to perform work which may be hazardous or harmful to his or her education, health or well-being’.¹⁹⁶ Ethiopia ratified the ILO Minimum Age Convention 138 in 1999 and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention 182 in 2003. Ethiopia’s 2003 *Labour Proclamation* prohibited employment of children under the age of 14, whereas those from 14 to 18 are considered as ‘young workers’ and the extent of their work should be regulated.¹⁹⁷ The *National Employment Policy and Strategy* produced by MoLSA in 2009, calls for keeping a balance between allowing older children to work under decent conditions for income generation to fulfil their basic needs and supporting them in terms of schooling and skills development. The *Growth and Transformation Plan* implementation strategy and targets aim to reduce child labour abuse, migration and trafficking. In 2012 MoLSA produced the *National Action Plan on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour* with the aim of eliminating the worst forms of child labour by 2015 and creating a conducive environment to address all other forms of child labour in the long term. The 2017 *National Children’s Policy* has a section on ‘Child abuse, child trafficking, child labour and harmful traditional practices’, which specifies, in addition to preventing and controlling child trafficking and child labour, creating a favourable working environment for young workers so that they are protected from labour exploitation and hazardous working conditions.¹⁹⁸

6.6.4. Young Lives research

Most Young Lives papers relating to child labour consider the relationship between children’s work and their education. Some of the studies reached the conclusion that children’s work has a detrimental effect on their education and that the more work children do the less likely they are to continue with their schooling and to do well.¹⁹⁹ However, other studies suggest that the issue is more complex than simply that of children’s work impeding their schooling.²⁰⁰ Beyond child work, the school system itself affects school attendance, and school timing and quality and children’s aspirations are also relevant.²⁰¹ Most work that children do contains some risks and benefits. Only some potential risks mentioned were actually reported as harms children faced, although there was some evidence of adolescents being injured during work, with cuts most frequently reported,²⁰² and good and bad features can exist side by side in the same work.

194 African Child Policy Forum (2013).

195 Woldehanna *et al.* (2011) http://www.younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-CR3_Ethiopia_Report_0.pdf.

196 Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (1995): Article 36.1d.

197 Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (2004): Article 89.

198 Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (2017): section 3.8.

199 Woldehanna, Jones and Tefera (2008); Woldehanna and Jones (2009); Woldehanna (2009) <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP40-Woldehanna-ChildrenTimeUse.pdf>; Chuta and Morrow (2015) <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP135-Youth%20Trajectories%20in%20Ethiopia.pdf>; Woldehanna and Gebremedhin (2015) http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP140_Child%20work%20and%20education.pdf.

200 Boyden *et al.* (2016) http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP161-Boyden%20%282%29_0.pdf; Pankhurst *et al.* (2015).

201 Orkin (2012b); Boyden *et al.* (2016) http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP161-Boyden%20%282%29_0.pdf.

202 Morrow, Barnett and Vujcich (2014).

Furthermore, there are also some positive relations between work and schooling. Children's work is part of growing up and of relationships with adults and peers, and is crucial for the livelihoods of poor households notably in rural areas. There were even cases of some children from poor backgrounds who were able to attend school because they were able to buy school materials through the income they acquired by working.²⁰³

There are, however, important location, age gender and wealth differences. Regarding location, at age 15 rural children spent two hours more per day in work than their urban counterparts, for whom workloads were declining.²⁰⁴ However, most children in rural areas, even if they have high aspirations for education, have to work, and many, particularly from poor households, struggle to combine work and education. Young Lives data reveal a reduction in the average time spent at work daily between the two cohorts over a seven year period. However, the reduction was mainly in urban areas, while rural children spent almost the same amount of time working.²⁰⁵ Children from poorer and socially marginalised households and those facing shocks are also much more likely to be spending a greater amount of time working and continue to make important contributions to their households through their work, while most also attend school. Some of these children face grave physical and social risks, and some tolerate unacceptable levels of obligation and time pressure, particularly those in poor rural households.²⁰⁶

Table 15: Hours per day spent on different activities by children at 12 and 15 years of age, in 2006 and 2009

	Age 12 (n=955)						Age 15 (n=970)					
	Rural	Urban	Girls	Boys	All	Rural	Urban	Girls	Boys	Non-poor	Poor	All
Domestic activities (child care and chores)	2.90	2.76	3.59	2.12	2.84	3.54	2.94	4.40	2.25	2.03	2.69	3.30
Unpaid family business outside home	2.33	0.57	1.03	2.18	1.62	1.93	0.49	0.43	2.21	0.73	1.85	1.35
Paid activities	2.17	0.42	0.90	2.01	1.47	0.45	0.36	0.32	0.51	0.01	0.02	0.41
All kinds of work	5.23	3.33	4.63	4.31	4.46	5.91	3.79	5.15	4.97	0.88	0.95	5.06
School	5.12	5.87	5.49	5.36	5.42	5.04	6.22	5.75	5.30	6.10	4.35	5.51
Studying at home	1.59	1.94	1.71	1.75	1.73	1.64	2.19	1.82	1.89	1.26	0.87	1.86

Source: Tafere and Pankhurst (2015)

Children start working for the household at an early age particularly in rural areas, and some children start to be involved in paid work as young as eight, whereas older children are needed for household chores and taking care of their younger siblings.²⁰⁷ At younger ages boys and girls do similar types of work, although boys are often more involved in herding and girls in domestic work. Starting from about the age of 13, the gender differences become more pronounced. Boys become involved more in paid work and less in household chores. However, the economic status, livelihood options and labour composition of the household have strong links with the

203 Orkin (2012a) http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP77_Orkin_Are-Work-or-Schooling-Complementary-or-Competitive-for-Children-in-Rural-Ethiopia_Mar2012.pdf; Orkin (2012b).

204 Tafere and Pankhurst (2015); Boyden *et al.* (2016).

205 Boyden *et al.* (2016). The study compared the two cohort of children at 12 years of age, the first in 2006 and the second in 2013. http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP161-Boyden%20%282%29_0.pdf.

206 Pankhurst *et al.* (2015); Morrow and Boyden (2018) <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-RespondingToChildrensWork-A4-Jan18.pdf>.

207 Pankhurst *et al.* (2014); (2015); Chuta and Morrow (2015) <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP135>Youth%20Trajectories%20in%20Ethiopia.pdf>.

extent of children's engagement in work and schooling.²⁰⁸ In rural areas, households with more cattle were more likely to require some children to look after them and not go to school.²⁰⁹ It is also important to note that as they grow children increasingly spend more time in school than work, that most work children undertake was unpaid and few of the younger children worked for pay, and that work burdens increase with age.²¹⁰

Young Lives evidence shows that girls face a greater work burden and the challenge of juggling domestic work with school, often rising early before school and working late after school, and sometimes they do paid work as well, especially in rural areas. Girls are expected to do the bulk of domestic work in the home, including cleaning, cooking, child care, fetching water and wood, going to mills and markets, as well as some work in the fields and/or daily labour.²¹¹ This in turn creates a cycle of gender discrimination that puts a strain on their ability to study and limits their time for recreation. This can have a detrimental effect on their progress and grades, affecting their likelihood of continuing with schooling, especially in secondary school.²¹² Moreover, the home workload of older girls did not diminish even when they were engaged in paid work outside the home.²¹³ If the family experiences problems such as illness, this can make matters worse, since girls may be further burdened with care work, as the following case illustrates.²¹⁴

Box 21: A girl working to support her sick mother

'My mother tries to do most of the [household] activities even though she has health problems. She does not force me to work. However, I do not want to complain about working because I do not want to see my mother work when she is sick . . . She feels bad when I work, and she is seriously sick. So I want to show my mother than I am comfortable in my work. Maralem 11 years old, Leku.

Pankhurst *et al.* (2015)

However, there have been some changes. Young Lives evidence showed that boys have been dropping out of primary school more than girls in order to work and boys from poorer families are particularly vulnerable. Girls' involvement in paid work is on the rise in some rural areas due to the expansion of commercial farms. Moreover, interventions can affect children's work and gender roles. Girls in households involved in the Agricultural Extension Programme were found to spend less time on both domestic and paid work, whereas children in households involved in the PSNP Direct Support programme spent less time on work.²¹⁵

208 Tafere and Pankhurst (2015b) <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP141-Combining%20Schooling%20and%20Work.pdf>.

209 Chuta and Morrow (2015) <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP135>Youth%20Trajectories%20in%20Ethiopia.pdf>.

210 Morrow and Boyden (2018) <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-RespondingToChildrensWork-A4-Jan18.pdf>.

211 Pankhurst, Crivello and Tiumelissan. (2016) <http://www.younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP147-Childrens%20work%20in%20family%20and%20community%20contexts.pdf>.

212 Tafere and Pankhurst (2015) <http://www.younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP141-Combining%20Schooling%20and%20Work.pdf>.

213 Orkin (2012b); Chuta and Morrow (2015) <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP135>Youth%20Trajectories%20in%20Ethiopia.pdf>.

214 See also Morrow and Boyden(2018) <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-RespondingToChildrensWork-A4-Jan18.pdf>.

215 Woldehanna (2009) <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP40-Woldehanna-ChildrenTimeUse.pdf>.

6.7. Child marriage and Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C)

6.7.1. Key findings

- Remarkable progress has been achieved in reducing both child marriage and FGM/C in Ethiopia, although significant rural/urban, regional and community differences persist.
- Child marriage and FGM/C are expressions of a male-dominated society and traditions shaped by social norms.
- These practices are also linked to contexts of poverty and vulnerability in which parents seek to protect their daughters from social and economic risks.
- In spite of progress there is still some resistance at community level and alternative opportunities for girls through education, training, employment, migration and social protection remain limited.
- Some older girls as well as parents support these practices to the extent that imposing bans can force the practices underground, resulting in unintended negative consequences.

6.7.2. Policy messages

- Promoting a reduction in FGM/C and child marriage requires addressing social norms. Interventions that do not consider the underlying logic and the potential unintended consequences are less likely to achieve their aims and may engender resistance and result in adverse outcomes.
- Variations between communities even within the same region point to the presence of 'hotspots' and areas where interventions may have been more effective, suggesting the need to focus on areas where the problem is most salient and to learn from positive experiences of abandoning early marriage practices.
- Isolated interventions, focusing exclusively in delaying marriage or stopping FGM/C, may not help to ensure that girls will have a better adult life. Interventions should address all important life trajectories – schooling, work and marriage – so that girls can achieve successful transitions from childhood into adulthood.
- Younger girls have less say in decision-making over the choice of partner, so that special protection of pre-teen and early-teen girls needs to be prioritised. Policies and programmes seeking to reduce child marriage should distinguish between early and late teens and pay greater attention to adolescent girls' agency and promote their ability to stand up to parental imposition of early marriage.
- It may be more important to address the issue of forced marriage and parental, peer and suitors' pressure and the incentive of bride payments than merely the age of the girl, in line with the provisions of the revised Family Code.
- Winning hearts and minds by involving girls, parents, boyfriends, prospective husbands, community and religious leaders, as well as schools, clubs, youth and women's groups is likely to be more effective than strict legal enforcement and punishments of offenders.
- Eliminating these practices by 2025 in accordance with Ethiopian Government plans will require multi-stakeholder involvement and the implementation of broader poverty reduction and social protection agendas as well as promoting girls' economic opportunities and social empowerment.

6.7.3. Policy context

Child marriage is common in many parts of the developing world with an estimated 70 million women aged 20 to 24 married before the age of 18.²¹⁶ In Africa over a third of women are married before their eighteenth birthday. Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting often culturally referred to as ‘female circumcision’ has affected an estimated 125 million women in 29 countries, 27 of which are in Africa and up to 30 million girls are considered to be at risk during the next decade²¹⁷. In Ethiopia both female child marriage and FGM/C, have been designated as Harmful Traditional Practices (HTPs) by the Ethiopian government and are proscribed by law, with specified punishments. The National Committee on Traditional Practice in Ethiopia included both practices in its baseline survey in 1997 and the follow-up survey in 2007. The revised federal *Family Code* raised the marriage age from 15 to 18.²¹⁸ The revised *Criminal Code* includes articles on HTPs, physical abuse and abduction.²¹⁹ The *Ethiopian Women Development and Change Package* prepared by the then Ministry of Women Affairs (MoWA) included elimination of HTPs as one of the programmes in empowering women.²²⁰ The *National Reproductive Health Strategy* promoted raising the age of marriage and reducing all forms of FGM.²²¹

The *National Strategy on HTPs against Women and Children*²²² envisions reducing the physical, sexual, psychological, socioeconomic impacts of HTPs to ensure the protection of women’s and children’s rights, thereby increasing their capacity to contribute towards the goals of the *Growth and Transformation Plan* through their economic and social contributions. The strategy specifically targets as priorities FGM, child marriage and abduction as the main forms of HTPs. At the London Girls’ Summit in 2014, Ethiopia pledged to work towards eliminating both FGM and child, early and forced Marriage by 2025. In particular the Government pledged to incorporate relevant indicators in national planning data collection mechanisms, including the 2016 Demographic and Health Survey, to enhance the coordination and effectiveness of the Alliance to End Child Marriage and the National Network to End FGM; to implement strong, accountable mechanisms for effective law enforcement; and to increase financial resources to address these issues from the existing budget by ten per cent, with the aim of eliminating the practices by 2025. The implementation strategies of the *Growth and Transformation Plan II* seek to increase community awareness and participation to protect children from HTPs.²²³ The *National Children’s Policy* also raises the need to eradicate practices that affect children’s physical, mental, psychological and social development under the section on children and health, as well as in a section on child abuse, trafficking, labour and HTPs.²²⁴

National data from the EDHS show that the **average age of first marriage** for women has been steadily increasing, in 2016 reaching 17.1 for women aged between 15 and 49. Looking at the age group data gives a sense of the long-term trends: while more than three out of ten women born in the seventies had married before the age of 15, this has fallen to one in ten for those born in the nineties. There are clear urban/rural differences, with the urban average above the legal age, and stark education-related differences, with the median age for first marriage at 16.4 for

216 Vogelstein (2013).

217 UNICEF (2013).

218 Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (2000).

219 Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (2005).

220 Ministry of Women Affairs (2005).

221 Ministry of Health (2007).

222 Ministry of Women Children and Youth Affairs (2014).

223 National Planning Commission (2016).

224 Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (2017).

women with no education but above 20 for those with secondary and higher education. However, in spite of the progress made over the years, in 2016 on average girls still married almost one year earlier than the legally permitted age.

The prevalence of **FGM** has been steadily declining from 80 per cent in 2000 but the practice still affected 65 per cent of women aged 15-49 in 2016. Almost eight out of ten women and nine out of ten men in 2016 said that they believe the practice should be discontinued. However, there seems to be a gap between discourse and actual behaviour since almost one out of two girls aged 15-19 was still circumcised in 2016.

6.7.4. Young Lives research

Several Young Lives papers and briefs have been produced on the topic of FGM/C and child and early marriage and how these relate to the rest of adolescents' lives.²²⁵ Both female child marriage and FGM/C are still widespread, despite international and national efforts to eradicate them, and reflect deep-rooted patriarchal values regulating women's reproduction and transactions between kin groups at marriage.²²⁶ The practices have strong cultural roots and are based on two logics. First, families and kin groups have a strong vested interest in the productive and reproductive capacity of women, articulated through the regulation by older generations of their sexuality and sexual conduct. Second, child marriage and circumcision are believed to ensure girls' social integration and thereby their protection and their moral and social development. Thus, many respondents see both practices not as a threat to young females but as essential to their well-being. This customary child protection rationale is in stark contrast to that employed by national and international policy stakeholders.²²⁷ The social power of this logic is such that there is resistance to reform even in areas where government and non-government advocates have been very active with campaigns and law enforcement. Socio-cultural and economic factors help to explain how children may not have access to formal schooling and thus assume adult responsibilities, including family formation and productive roles within their families, from an early age.

Early marriage is often considered within communities to be protective for girls to prevent the risks from undesired effects of premarital sexual activity, abduction, rape and pregnancy. In spite of the existing legal minimum age for marriage, the cultural definitions of acceptability may have much more force in the resulting outcomes than those imposed by the law.²²⁸ While parents were found to have had high aspirations for their daughters' education, economic problems and cultural norms were found to be influential in parental decision-making. In many cases, parents wanted to preserve family honour by having their daughters marry early, and therefore encouraged them to leave school. Early marriage was also sometimes considered as a means of economic survival. If girls were married early, then the family had one less mouth to feed and it was hoped that the girl herself would have a better chance of an improved livelihood with her husband. Early marriage was also heavily mediated by work.²²⁹ In other words, girls who had married did so after they had already left school, and they often left school to work. Therefore,

²²⁵ Boyden *et al.* (2012); (2013) http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP93_Boyden.pdf, Pankhurst, Tiumelissan and Chuta (2016) <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP162-Pankhurst.pdf>.

²²⁶ Boyden *et al.* (2012); (2013). These papers review national data and draw on interviews with children and caregivers from five communities.

²²⁷ See also Bevan (2017); Pankhurst (2017).

²²⁸ Chuta and Morrow (2015). This paper draws on longitudinal qualitative data gathered in two Young Lives communities in Oromia and Tigray in 2007, 2008 and 2011. [²²⁹ Tafere and Chuta \(2016\). This paper includes data from the fourth round of qualitative research in 2014 in addition to the three earlier rounds in 2007, 2008 and 2011. <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP155-Gendered-Trajectories-in-Ethiopia.pdf>.](http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP135>Youth%20Trajectories%20in%20Ethiopia.pdf.</p></div><div data-bbox=)

one of the main underlying reasons for marriage was poverty, which puts significant pressure on young girls to assume income-generating activities instead of going to school. However, there were also variations, in differing cultural contexts. In Oromia, there was a strong cultural practice obliging girls to marry through the intervention of family and clans, involving significant amounts of bride payments from the groom's family. In contrast in Tigray marriage payments involved dowry payments provided by the bride's family to the newly-wed couple.

Although girls do have some agency, this needs to be understood within the constraints related to poverty, their cultural milieu and family issues, which play a large part in their pathways. Children from vulnerable and poor backgrounds are more at risk as the following case reported by a *kebele* Women's Association leader in Hawassa, who protected a friend's daughter who was in Grade 10 and was told she was to be married off.

Box 22: A girl supported to resist early marriage

'When I asked her why she was forced to marry against her will, she told me that her mother was dead and her aunts had asked her to marry a rich man. They told her that he would relieve their poverty and hers. I was very angry. I told her that I would take her to the *kebele* and to the legal desk if they persisted ... she is not a means of poverty relief. She listened to my advice and is still attending school ... I told her that I can take her to the police and file her case. But the girl was afraid because they [her relatives] pay her school fees and support her in her education.'

Boyden *et al.* (2013)

Some young people opted for marriage only well after they had finished their schooling. For example, about one-third of the children interviewed by Young Lives at the age of 19 left school after finishing Grade 10 if they had not passed the national exam. Gender influences the options available to young people after they have failed their exams, such that boys may decide to pursue work opportunities, whereas marriage became a major alternative for girls. However, early marriage of girls was not necessarily deemed a negative outcome, and there was considerable variation in what marriage meant for young women's wellbeing. In some circumstances it was seen as a protective factor against extramarital sex, which could result in risks such as sexually transmitted diseases, early pregnancy, abandonment by a partner, and exclusion from family or clan networks. Moreover, where other options are limited, girls may see marriage as a means to a viable livelihood and an opportunity for improved social status.

Although female child marriage and FGM/C are declining, there are marked urban/rural, regional and social status variations. There was evidence that attempts to impose the ban on FGM/C have led to its being practised in hiding or even at night, increasing potential health risks.

Box 23: An attempt to practice female circumcision in hiding

Since the government ban in Hawassa, people have been using boys' circumcision ceremonies as a cover to circumcise their daughters. 'On the first day they circumcise the boy [which is legal] and the people are invited on this day, but on the next day they conduct the circumcision of girl(s).'

Boyden *et al.* (2013)

In some cases girls claimed they had carried out circumcisions themselves, had persuaded their parents to carry out the ceremony or were subject to peer pressure, as the following cases from a site in Oromia suggest.²³⁰

Box 24: Peer pressure on girls to become circumcised

In July 2008, I also organised the circumcision of my other daughter, who is 14 years old. It was done at her request. After she witnessed a girl insulting another who was not circumcised, my daughter came home and asked me to organise her circumcision. She told me she does not want to be insulted in the same way. I told her I cannot do that because I could not afford to provide her good food like meat so she would heal. I suspected her father would not be willing to provide it. But she pushed and told me she did not care about this and what she wanted was to be circumcised.... We did the circumcision in the evening for the fear of the local officials who could punish us. ... Despite being prohibited by the local officials, everybody circumcises their daughter.

Boyden *et al.* 2013

A further Young Lives study suggests that child marriage can best be explained by a combination of factors interacting at three different levels: community, household and individual.²³¹ The data resonate with other studies suggesting that child marriage is primarily a female, rural phenomenon, but with regional and local differences related to cultural norms, especially for marriage under the age of 15 which is more common in Northern Ethiopia. The gender imbalance is stark, with 15 per cent of Older Cohort teenage girls married by the age of 18 compared to less than three per cent of Older Cohort boys. Early marriages were much less common in urban areas and most of these were in small towns. However, household characteristics were also found to be important. Parental education, especially that of the father, reduces the likelihood of child marriage, whereas the death or absence of parents, especially fathers, was an important contributing factor. Moreover, household wealth was particularly significant, with less than ten per cent of early marriages among the top tercile. Family circumstances such as ill-health and drought were also important compounding factors. Girls continuing with schooling were less likely to get married, but most left school first due to family poverty and problems and then got married. Paid work at 15 was found to be statistically significant as a predictor of early marriage, while case material suggests that some girls chose marriage over work involving hard labour. Once married, return to schooling was constrained by social norms and childcare.

The data suggests that the longer the girl knew her partner the more likely she was to have made the decision on her own whereas parents made the choice in all the cases where the woman met her husband on their wedding day.

Table 16: Choice of marriage partner by how long known (Older Cohort at age 19)

	on wedding day	<1 month	< 1 year	> 1 year	since childhood	Total
Choice by parent/relatives	9	8	7	8	0	32
Parent with child	0	1	0	1	0	2
Child alone	0	2	4	7	1	14
Total	9	11	11	16	1	48

Source: Pankhurst, Tiumelissan and Chuta (2016)

230 See also Emerie and Ewnetu (2016).

231 Pankhurst, Tiumelissan and Chuta (2016). This paper makes use of both the quantitative and qualitative data from four rounds of surveys and four rounds of qualitative research. <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP162-Pankhurst.pdf>.

Parental imposition of marriage was stronger and girls' agency more limited among younger teenage girls, whereas older teenagers were more likely to have a say in their own marital choices than is often assumed, as this exchange between the fieldworker and a teenage orphan girl living with her aunt in an Oromia site reveals:

Box 25: Changes in girls' agency in decision-making over partner choice

Beletech, aged 17, suggested that she wanted to marry someone her family accepted, but added: 'Actually, he first talks to me and then goes to see my parents. That is how marriage is now.' When the fieldworker pursued the matter: 'Okay, I see but; what if your parents refuse to accept him even after he has spoken to you and you have agreed?' she answered: 'I will marry him'. The fieldworker countered: 'But earlier when we talked about this issue, you told me that you will follow all your parents' wishes.' and she replied 'No, I wanted to say; if my parents ask me to marry a good person I will, otherwise I won't marry'.

Pankhurst et al. (2016)

Moreover, the differences in girls' agency compared to that of their mothers is quite clear, as the following statement by a mother in Tigray shows:

Box 26: Generational change in girls' ability to resist child marriage

'In our day, we were forced to marry. But my granddaughter is 14-years-old now and if I tell her that she is going to marry, she will reply 'Marry yourself'. In our day, we were unable to decide on our life, but today children have the right to decide. If parents attempt to marry them without their permission, they will sue their parents. ... Children today are very wise. ... Her life will definitely be good because she will be educated and may even marry someone who is educated. So both will live a good life. ... But in our day even if the husband is employed, he will beat his wife and she will say nothing.'

Boyden et al. (2013)

Despite continuing parental impositions there is also evidence of change with more consultation of girls and in some cases girls making their own marriage decisions, sometimes without their parents' consent. Voluntary marriage, sometimes as a way of avoiding the traditional obligations of bride payments, was even becoming a new norm.²³²

6.8. Violence affecting children and youth

6.8.1. Key findings

- Risks of violence against children are widespread in both rural and urban settings and the use of corporal punishment and/or emotional abuse, notably insults, is common in both home and school settings, while fighting between boys and their harassment of girls is frequent in community contexts.
- There are important gender and age differences, with corporal punishment less common among younger children and older boys, while older girls are at greater risk of gender-based violence.

²³² Camfield and Tafere (2011); Pankhurst, Tiumelissan and Chuta(2016)
<http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP162-Pankhurst.pdf>.

- Violence is often related to and exacerbated by poverty, and gender-based violence by social norms. Changing contexts and global influences particularly in urban areas – notably unemployment, substance abuse and exposure to violence in the media – are viewed by community members as new risks facing the youth which are assumed to worsen violence.
- Certain categories of children, notably child migrants, domestic workers, children living on the streets, sometimes those living with relatives, and those from very poor households are often more at risk of abuse. Girls involved in domestic work may face risks of rape by employers, and even by family members such as stepfathers.
- Most cases remain unreported or are dealt with through family, friends, community support, informal mechanisms and religious institutions. However, the context is changing and formal institutions are beginning to address violence. Nonetheless, there are constraints on reporting, especially by vulnerable categories and particularly of rape cases.

6.8.2. Policy messages

- There is a need for greater inter-sectoral coordination on violence, following on from the work of the interministerial committee on violence affecting women and children, to create awareness and implement national policies and plans, and foster greater collaboration within government, and with other stakeholders through alliances and networks.
- Initiatives to prevent and address violence affecting children must reach down from the federal level to the regions, *woredas*, and especially the *kebele* and community levels where the violence occurs. Health Extension Workers and Social Workers as well as schools and school clubs can play key roles in countering and addressing violence.
- Greater societal awareness is needed of the consequences of violence throughout childhood. Inclusive programmes should be developed for children at differing ages and stages of education, and gender social norms and norms relating to corporal punishment and use of insults need to be challenged.
- Policies and programmes should be sensitive to poverty and structural factors that often underpin violence towards children. Greater attention to protection of vulnerable and very poor households is needed, with better programmes to support families affected by economic shocks, notably by linking social protection to child protection and emphasising these issues in training and deployment of social workers.
- Clearer guidelines for addressing violence are needed and alternative punishment in both schools and community and home settings. Better understanding among teachers of the relationship between poverty and violence and the everyday realities of children's lives, especially in relation to children's roles and responsibilities and sense of duty towards caregivers, can enhance awareness of how these factors may influence children's ability to attend school.

6.8.3. Policy context

Globally, increasing efforts in policy, programming and advocacy are focused on eliminating all forms of violence against children.²³³ The 1995 Ethiopian Constitution includes an article that explicitly addresses violence affecting children. Regarding child work and corporal punishment, the Constitution offers protection for children from exploitative practices, work that is harmful to a child's education, health or wellbeing, and corporal punishment or cruel or inhumane treatment in

²³³ Pells and Morrow (2017).

schools and other institutions. There are also articles in the Constitution about juvenile offenders being kept separately from adults, the rights of children born out of wedlock, and special protection for orphans.²³⁴

Ethiopia is also a signatory of the Convention of the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, which protects children from all forms of torture, inhumane or degrading treatment and especially physical or mental injury or abuse, neglect or maltreatment, including sexual abuse while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child, and from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.²³⁵

The revised *Family Code* contains provisions that address marriage concluded by force, which has been discussed in the earlier section on child marriage.²³⁶ The revised *Criminal Code* criminalises various forms of violence perpetrated against children and women. On maltreatment of children the Code states that an individual responsible for a minor who ill-treats, neglects, over-tasks or beats him or her will be punishable with up to three months' imprisonment, and stipulates a punishment of not less than a year if the crime causes grave injury to the health, well-being, education or physical or psychological development of the minor. On abduction, the Code specifies that whoever abducts a child or woman by force, or obtains her consent by threat, intimidation or deceit will be punished, and that the punishment will be severe if the abduction is accompanied by rape. The Code recognises and criminalises rape out of wedlock and stipulates a range of punishments.²³⁷

The Ministry of Education's overall guidelines for school management state that 'corporal punishment is not among permitted disciplinary measures'.²³⁸ In its *Strategy for Gender Equality in the Education and Training Sector*, the ministry highlights that harassment and violence are serious problems for students, especially female students. In collaboration with UNICEF, the ministry developed an anti-harassment code of conduct for educational institutions.²³⁹ The *National Strategy on HTPs against Women and Children*, as noted earlier, has a strong focus on abduction and other forms of violence against women.²⁴⁰ MoLSA developed a National Action Plan on the Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labour, as discussed in the section on child work and labour.²⁴¹

The *National Children's Policy* raises the need to protect children from any form of sexual, physical or psychological abuse, exploitation of labour and trafficking. The roles and responsibilities of families and relevant organisations in protecting children from any physical and psychological abuse and providing the necessary rehabilitation are highlighted. Under the section on children in difficult circumstances, the Policy specifies the need to protect and support children who are victims of disasters, refugees, separated, internally displaced or returnees, as well as preventing and controlling involvement of children in activities harmful to their physical and psychological development. Furthermore, the Policy states the need to expand and strengthen environments conducive for child victims of sexual, physical and psychological violence, appropriate integrated legal and rehabilitation services, and expanding and

234 Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (1995): Article 36.

235 Organisation of African Unity (1999): Articles 16.1 and 27.1.

236 Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (2000): Article 6.

237 Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (2005).

238 Ministry of Education (2002).

239 Ministry of Education (2013).

240 Ministry of Women Children and Youth Affairs (2014).

241 Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (2014).

strengthening child-friendly tribunals and courts.²⁴² An interministerial committee to address violence affecting women and children was set up by the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs to devise strategic and operational plans to address the issues. Young Lives made a presentation of its research findings to this committee.

In terms of national data the *Ethiopian Demographic and Health Survey 2016* was the first in which questions were asked on '**other forms of violence against women**'. The data show that, aside from FGM, in 2016 almost one in four (23%) women aged 15 to 49 had experienced physical violence since they were 15, and one in ten had experienced sexual violence. Women with no education are twice as likely to have experienced physical violence as those with more than secondary education (28% versus 13%). The difference is proportionally even larger for sexual violence (13% versus 5%). Spousal violence is high too, with one in three ever-married women aged 15 to 49 having experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence by their current or most recent husband or partner. Drinking is highly correlated with spousal violence. Fewer than one in four of the women in this age group who experienced any type of physical or sexual violence sought help; two-thirds of them never sought help and never told anyone. Education and wealth make a difference, although only starting with secondary education and for the wealthiest quintile. Among those who sought help, only two to three per cent sought help from service providers such as lawyers, medical personnel or social workers.

6.8.4. Young Lives research

Young Lives collaborated with the UNICEF Innocenti Centre on issues relating to violence affecting children in the four Young Lives countries.²⁴³ A review of the Young Lives evidence from Ethiopia found that violence affecting children – mostly physical punishment and emotional abuse – is widespread, accepted, and normalised.²⁴⁴

The Young Lives survey data shows that the proportion of children who said they had ever experienced physical hurt from a family member was highest, followed by those who had ever experienced physical hurt by teachers. The proportion of boys who had experienced violence was considerably higher for most categories and almost double for violence within the family; the exception is violence by a boyfriend or girlfriend, where they were equal, although very small numbers of children reporting (as might be expected at the age of 15).

Table 17: Violence experienced at age 15 by type of relation and gender

Have you ever been beaten up or physically hurt by?	Male		Female		n=973	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Someone from your family	74	14.9	36	7.6	110	11.3
A teacher	61	12.3	14	2.9	75	7.7
Friend	39	7.8	9	1.9	48	4.9
A stranger	29	5.8	2	0.4	31	3.2
Boyfriend/girlfriend	4	0.8	4	0.8	8	0.8

Source: Pankhurst, Negussie and Mulugeta (2016)

Violence in the home is in some cases clearly linked to wider structural factors related to poverty and inequality. Differing economic activities affect family dynamics, and the likelihood of children

242 Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (2017).

243 Pells and Portela (2015).

244 Pankhurst, Negussie and Mulugeta (2016) https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/IWP_2016_25.pdf.

experiencing violence is often linked to the challenges of poverty and the expectation that children will contribute to the household economy. Girls and boys may experience different forms of violence related to the gendered household work expectations, as the following cases illustrated:

Box 27: Gendered work expectations and punishments

Girls and domestic work

Debasit, a 14-year-old girl from rural Tigray said she was beaten for breaking ‘any material in the house’. Beletch, another 14-year-old girl from rural Oromia, said her mother beat her when she came back home late after being sent out on errands. She added: ‘If she [my mother] sends me somewhere and I stay watching games or fighting children, she scolds or beats me.’... Yenealem, also aged 14 from the same site said: ‘My mother asked me to stay away from class and go with her to the mill. I said ‘No’ and she punished me.’

Boys and farmwork

Kebegna, a seven-year-old boy from rural Oromia, said: ‘My father tried to hit me when the oxen tried to escape into someone’s yard. That made me feel bad.’ Desta, an 11-year-old boy from rural Tigray, had a similar experience of being beaten by his father when he lost the livestock. He said: ‘...one time they had beaten me because I refused to go out with the herd and also when I lost animals in the bush.’ Tufa, a 14-year-old boy from Oromia, said, ‘They [my parents] asked me to take a heavy load of corn somewhere one day and I refused saying that it was too heavy. She [my mother] beat me for that.’

Pankhurst, Crivello and Tiumelissan (2016)

The context of poverty, rather than operating as a remote factor, thus has a direct bearing on violence affecting children, often exacerbating risks of violence. There were instances reported of caregivers beating children for not working properly and even cases of preventing them from going to school notably in rural areas, and others who beat children for not studying properly or for spending time playing instead of studying, especially in the urban sites.

According to analysis of the survey data, by the age of eight about 38 per cent of children had experienced corporal punishment in schools, with higher proportions of boys and in urban areas. By 15 the proportions having experienced beating or physical hurt were seemingly much lower, although reporting by boys was still much higher than by girls. In contrast, the qualitative data suggest that the great majority of children, about 90 per cent, had experienced some form of violence at some stage of their childhood. Moreover, there was slightly more reporting by girls than boys, especially among younger children and as much reporting in rural areas as in urban areas. Most of the reports were from schools, followed by the home environment, with fewer cases of violence in the community.²⁴⁵ In schools, corporal punishment was quite common, for disrupting the class, incorrect answers, not doing homework, arriving late, etc. Children also had internalised this as a legitimate part of the socialisation process.

245 In contrast a study by the African Child Policy Forum found a greater extent of violence in the community (2014).

Box 28: Corporal punishment of young children in school

Kudus, an eight-year-old boy from Hawassa, said: 'When we disrupt the class, teachers beat students'.... Teje, a girl from Hawassa, recalled at the age of eight: 'One day the teacher asked me to tell her my name, or talk in English, in the classroom. But I forgot how to say it. I was beaten.' Incomplete homework was another reason as mentioned by Selamawit, an 11-year-old girl from Addis Ababa: 'The teacher punished me. It also happened another day because I did not do my homework. I forgot, then she told me to do it [and] check it with her.' Arriving late or missing classes were other reasons for children being beaten. Desta, an 11-year-old boy from the Tigray site, said: 'I was punished and ordered to kneel down because I was late to class.' Habib, an 11-year-old boy from Addis Ababa, said: 'I feel that it [beating] is good for me.' Tufa, a 14-year-old boy in Hawassa, said: "I did not feel sorry about being beaten because I knew it was my fault.'

Pankhurst, Negussie and Mulugeta (2016).

However, children expressed a strong sense of resentment at what they perceived to be unfair, unjust or excessive corporal punishment.

Box 29: Children's resentment of unfair punishment

Maregey, a boy from rural Tigray, recalled how he was beaten on the legs with a stick after being wrongly accused of stealing a pen. 'A student accused me of taking her pen while the pen was mine. When she cried, the teacher beat me. Although I claimed that the pen was mine, he still beat me.' Emnet, a 14-year-old girl from Hawassa, said: 'I did not disrupt the class, but my classmate I sat next to disrupted the class and I was punished. The teacher beat me mistakenly.' Likewise, Teje an 11-year-old from the same site, said: 'There are three pupils who disrupt the classroom and one of them sits next to me. I tell them not to disrupt the class but they do not listen to me. I was beaten once although I hadn't been disruptive."

Pankhurst, Negussie and Mulugeta (2016)

Gender-related violence operates in children's lives in several ways, changing over time and often intersecting with issues of poverty and child work, as discussed in the section on children's work. The heavy burden of domestic work and the difficulty of combining this with school, often resulting in under-performance and grade repetition, sometimes also leads to physical beatings for not upholding the ideal student status, both in the home and at school.

Young Lives carried out a study of violence affecting youth in three communities in different regions, in two urban sites and one rural site.²⁴⁶ The study found that violence affecting children was fairly widespread, although there were differences between the urban sites and the rural one regarding how violence was understood, which was reflected in the connotations of the terms commonly used. In the urban sites violence was understood more in terms of gender abuse and secondarily as corporal punishment, whereas in the rural site violence was seen as largely related to poverty, with lack of basic needs and access to services rendering children vulnerable to violence, with youth unemployment, substance abuse and addiction as contributory factors also leading to harassment of girls. Customary patriarchal practices of abduction and early marriage were primarily a rural phenomenon, while the risk of bullying, harassment and even rape of girls was a more serious threat in the urban sites, although with exceptional cases of boys being raped. Underlying factors leading to violence in the rural sites included poverty, which

²⁴⁶ This was a qualitative study involving interviews with boys and girls, parents and key community informants as well as Focus Group Discussions. Chuta *et al.* (forthcoming).

was seen as a driver of early marriage as parents sought bride payments and girls hoped to find better-off husbands. The culture of polygynous marriages and widow inheritance compounded the problem. Especially in the urban sites exposure to influences from satellite TV and other media was also said to be affecting youth behaviour, allegedly promoting violence.

While most forms of violence were considered wrong and unacceptable by officials, service providers, caregivers and children, opinions were divided on corporal punishment as a means of discipline in child upbringing. Many caregivers and some children believed that pinching as a form of discipline and in some cases mild beating may be not just acceptable but beneficial. However, many respondents suggested that excessive punishment could be very harmful, sometimes leading to children fleeing home or even committing suicide. There were also differences expressed relating to gender and age. Younger children, especially under the age of ten, should not be beaten. Older adolescents, especially boys, would react so that parents do not attempt to punish them physically. Disciplining girls was seen as more important since they were perceived to face greater risks especially relating to sexual behaviour. In the urban sites there were cases mentioned of parents withholding food and expelling teenage boys for stealing and girls for becoming pregnant.

Certain vulnerable categories of children, notably child migrants, domestic workers, and in some cases children living with relatives, in very poor households or living on the streets are more at risk of abuse, including overwork, denial of schooling, and – especially for girls involved in domestic work – rape by employers, and even by stepfathers. Such vulnerable children also face more difficulties in reporting violence or accessing services.²⁴⁷

In schools, children often face corporal punishment for arriving late, not having done homework, disturbing the classroom and not following the rules. However, many participants suggested that corporal punishment in schools was declining, although girls encounter more bullying from boys,²⁴⁸ and there was also mention of cases of girls facing sexual advances from male teachers.

Consequences of violence included health risks from overwork and child marriage, and unemployment and substance abuse leading to fighting, crime and even possibly suicide. Overworked children tended to come to school late and were punished or suspended, often leading them to drop out. Girls married off early usually would not continue going to school and victims of rape faced ostracism and experienced lack of confidence.

Most cases of violence were not reported and were dealt with through informal channels. In the home children relied for emotional support on parents, siblings and other relatives who sought to resolve problems through discussion. Neighbours would often intervene to cool down conflict between parents and teenagers, children would turn to friends, especially if they were expelled from the house, and girls facing problems with boys would seek help from girlfriends. Local elders and religious leaders would often be called upon to resolve conflicts between spouses and sometimes between parents and children, and some children sought sanctuary in churches or mosques, which would also help orphans or migrant children. Likewise, some *iddir* funeral associations assist orphans, including helping them with the costs of schooling.

Reporting violence to formal institutions was less common. At the community level, children can obtain support from the *kebele* Women's and Children's Affairs representative and the community police, for instance in cases of abuse from employers, and from Health Extension Workers and social workers in the urban sites. In the school setting, headteachers and Parent-

247 See also Erulkar and Mekbib (2007) on domestic workers.

248 Girls spoke about their fear of using school toilets and being harassed or bullied by boys during menstruation. Feeny and Crivello (2015) http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-PolicyBrief-22_Gender%20and%20adolescence.pdf.

Teacher Associations can play a role regarding violence by teachers, and school clubs are important in creating awareness , about preventing child marriage etc. through drama. Student parliaments and student police in the urban sites can also address fights, and serious cases can be reported to the *woreda* education or justice bureaux. The *woreda* Women and Children Affairs bureaux also play a role in reuniting children who have been victims of trafficking, who are at risk of early marriage or who have been abducted. There were examples of successful interventions in the case of a broker who withheld salaries from migrant children being reported to the *kebele* social court, a boy who reported to the police that his father with whom he was not living had refused to pay his school fees, and eight cases of rape and early marriage which were dealt with by the *woreda* Justice Office, in one case leading to a 25-year sentence for the rape of a ten-year-old girl.

However, in practice, there are serious constraints on reporting to the formal system. This is especially so in cases of rape, due to stigma and discrimination, family reputation, requirements by police and courts to produce witnesses, lack of information regarding how, when and to whom to report, lack of follow-up when cases are reported, and even allegations of bribery of informal and formal institutions. Often, therefore, cases are not reported, and are instead resolved through customary mechanisms that are dominated by patriarchal values, with limited concern for children's rights.

There is a clear sense that the worst forms of violence related to physical punishment have decreased over time. The practice of spraying children who have misbehaved with pepper in one urban site, and the burning of hands for stealing in a rural site are now very uncommon. Moreover, corporal punishment in the home and in school is much rarer, and girls are more able to resist imposed child marriages. These changes are attributed in part to greater awareness of children's rights and promotion of gender equality through schools, clubs, and mass media. Institutions that can protect children, such as MoWCA *woreda* offices and *kebele* representatives, *woreda* courts, community and *woreda* police, and schools and *woreda* education bureaux, provide deterrents and do address some cases, despite constraints on reporting and worries about the potential negative consequences of doing so.

Despite this positive picture of change, bullying and harassment of girls by boys is said to have increased, in part as a result of greater interactions between teenagers and involvement in drinking, smoking cigarettes and drugs, chewing *chat*, and teenage sex with the risk of pregnancy. This is said to be compounded by limited employment opportunities for young people, and lack of adequate protection procedures and serious measures to deal with offences. Moreover, caregivers and service providers allude to a crisis in upbringing, with children and youth less willing to accept parental discipline, and increasingly affected by foreign and global influences, notably through satellite TV.

In conclusion the study reveals considerable variation in forms and consequences of violence in terms of urban/rural difference, gender and age, and home, school and community settings, with particular groups being more at risk. Moreover, the context of violence has been changing with global influences, urbanisation, and changing contexts facing young people. Alongside wider links with poverty and persistent structural factors, new risks especially of gender-based violence, youth unemployment, addiction, involvement in crime and exposure to violence in films and through the internet were perceived as posing threats to child upbringing and socialisation leading to intergenerational tensions and presumed to aggravate violence.

6.9. Urban development and relocation

6.9.1. Key findings

- Families in poor urban environments live in crowded housing conditions, generally without a kitchen, sharing communal pit latrines. Though access to water and solid waste management has improved, access to washing facilities and disposal of liquid waste remain serious problems.
- Although parents and children dislike their material living conditions and aspire for improvements, they appreciate the cohesive family and social relations within the communities.
- Children and their families are optimistic that relocation could provide them with cleaner and safer living conditions.
- Both adults and children appreciate condominiums as a modern improved way of living, notably with regard to sanitation and privacy.
- However, many people feared they will not be able to afford the costs of the condominium down-payments and monthly payments.
- There were also worries about not being able to work from home, limited employment options nearby, and transport costs to where they used to work.
- Some mentioned distance from schools, lack of playgrounds, and risks associated with multi-storey buildings for children, the elderly, sick and pregnant women.

6.9.2. Policy messages

- Reserving some land for housing for the poor in the city centre would maintain the current mixed settlement pattern and reduce the risk of creating marginalised areas on the outskirts.
- Given the importance of social relations, where relocation is inevitable as far as possible people should be moved together and assistance given to help recreate supportive social relations.
- Residents need realistic information about the timeframe, sequencing and options for resettlement, so that the move can happen smoothly and to avoid families being separated or possessions lost or damaged.
- The concerns of families that are to be relocated could be allayed through better phasing of redevelopment and consultation and involvement of communities.
- As well as housing, more emphasis should be given to establishing basic infrastructure, health facilities, day-care centres, pre-schools, playgrounds, youth and communal centres, which should be in place before people are moved. The condominium design should pay more attention to safety features for children and prioritising ground floor access for the elderly, sick and less mobile.
- Improved transport links, as well as income generation schemes, employment opportunities and credit programmes could help people make better transitions to newly developed areas.
- To enable the urban poor to benefit from condominium housing may require a range of options, including more flexible, longer-term, inter-generational or group loans, formation of housing cooperatives possibly linked to *iddir* funeral associations, sponsorship or partial payment from NGOs, donor subsidies and mobilisation of support from the private sector and the Ethiopian diaspora.

- Alternative housing options may be required for the very poor. These might include other models of low-cost housing in the city centre and on the outskirts, linked to skills development and/or employment opportunities.

6.9.3. Policy context

In 2007, for the first time in history, the global urban population exceeded the global rural population, and within Africa 40 per cent live in urban areas.²⁴⁹ Although the urban population in Ethiopia is still relatively small at under one fifth of the total population, urban development and growth has been proceeding rapidly especially over the past decade, and urbanisation is likely to become a key issue in the country's development. The rate of urbanisation is estimated at 5.4 per cent a year, which would mean a tripling of the urban population by 2034, with 30 per cent of the country's people in urban areas by 2028.²⁵⁰

In the larger cities, and especially the capital Addis Ababa, there has been rapid transformation with, on the one hand, the promotion of high-rise buildings and real estate largely through private investment, and on the other, the construction of 'condominium' buildings in dense complexes to address the housing shortage and enable the urban poor to obtain flats in blocks built largely in the outskirts of the cities. This approach, which was formalised through the 2005 *Urban Development Policy*,²⁵¹ has led to whole areas of Addis Ababa being cleared and re-developed. Over 150,000 housing units have been allocated in Addis Ababa alone. While some of the condominiums have been built in the city centre, most inhabitants living in poor neighbourhoods have been displaced, with large numbers relocated in new neighbourhoods in the suburbs, leading to further displacement of peasant communities on the outskirts of the city.²⁵² The large-scale housing projects have somewhat eased the housing shortage and have enabled some of the poor to own flats. However, given the costs of condominiums, many poorer city dwellers were unable to pay the down-payments or monthly instalments and others have rented out or sold their properties, so that condominiums are largely inhabited by the middle classes, while many of the poorest have had to seek alternative livelihoods outside the city centres.²⁵³ As in many contexts worldwide, displacement has led to social disarticulation, joblessness, marginalisation, homelessness and food insecurity.²⁵⁴

6.9.4. Young Lives research

Young Lives carried out a study of the views of children and caregivers living in poor areas in the capital city and a regional capital about their living conditions and their hopes and concerns about potential relocation and moving to live in condominiums.²⁵⁵ A first paper considered the views of children and adults about their home and neighbourhood environment in a context of urban poverty.²⁵⁶ The families live in crowded and insalubrious conditions. Most households do not own their houses, and lack separate latrines and kitchens. Although access to clean water

²⁴⁹ United Nations (2014).

²⁵⁰ World Bank (2015).

²⁵¹ Ayenew (2009).

²⁵² Yitbarek (2008); Tadele (2009); Shiferaw (2009); Duroyaume (2015).

²⁵³ Duroyaume (2015).

²⁵⁴ Cernea (2000); Getachew (2014).

²⁵⁵ The study was conducted in 2012 in three sites in Addis Ababa and one in Hawassa and involved a survey of 466 caregivers and 451 children, and in-depth interviews with 79 children and their caregivers.

²⁵⁶ Pankhurst and Tiumentisan (2013a) http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP105_Pankhurst_Redevelopment-urban-slums.pdf; Pankhurst and Tiumentisan (2013b) <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-Ethiopia-UrbanResettlement-Brief-1.pdf>.

seems to have improved, lack of washing facilities remains a problem. Moreover, although solid waste disposal has improved, liquid waste disposal is limited. Features of their neighbourhoods that children disliked included smelly and dirty streets, lack of areas for recreation, pollution and poor safety at night. More than half the caregivers thought that their neighbourhoods were 'bad places to bring up children', and raised concerns about security, including danger from theft, drunken behaviour and street fighting.

However, despite these conditions of material deprivation and environmental problems, children and caregivers valued their cohesive social relations. Most children liked their home environment because of the quality of relations with their families and friends, and many belonged to school clubs and religious groups. They appreciated living close to schools, markets, cafés and religious institutions. The caregivers valued the presence of neighbours, friends and family and the proximity to shops and services, notably schools and social institutions, especially funeral associations.

Regarding sources of support, within the family children said they first turn to mothers for help, and teachers and friends are also helpful. In practice only a small proportion of children said they received support from relatives, friends or neighbours, and a few from NGOs and funeral associations. Some caregivers likewise mentioned support from NGOs and funeral, religious and credit associations, and a few from family, notably remittances from emigrants, while some obtained help from neighbours and friends. Very few were in a position to provide assistance to others beyond helping neighbours and friends living close by, although some do assist relatives or orphans, or give alms to beggars.

A second paper reviewed attitudes towards planned relocation, which most children and caregivers had heard about from various sources, and many knew people who had already been moved.²⁵⁷ A significant proportion of caregivers mentioned promises made to them, mainly regarding improvements in housing and services, notably water and electricity. However, they did not have any clear idea about the likely timing of the relocation, which suggests there had been limited consultation. Nonetheless, most children and caregivers were hopeful that they would experience improvements in housing and sanitation.

Table 18: Children's views of major opportunities from relocation

What do you think will be the main opportunity	Site			Total
	Bertukan	Menderin	Leku	
Improved housing	82.4%	92.3%	62.5%	78.3% (n=72)
Improved sanitation	11.8%	0.0%	12.5%	8.7% (n=8)
Safer environment, less crime	0.0%	0.0%	12.5%	4.3% (n=4)
Improved access to water	0.0%	0.0%	9.4%	3.3% (n=3)
Less pollution	5.9%	3.8%	0.0%	3.3% (n=3)
Better education facilities	0.0%	0.0%	3.1%	1.1% (n=1)
Better environment to live in	0.0%	3.8%	0.0%	1.1% (n=1)

Source: Pankhurst and Tiumelissan (2014)

Some care-givers felt that the new relocation areas would be better for bringing up children, as the following quote by the asthmatic mother of a Younger Cohort child suggests:

²⁵⁷ Pankhurst and Tiumelissan (2013c) <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-Ethiopia-UrbanResettlement-Brief-2.pdf>; Tiumelissan and pankhurst (2013) <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP106-Pankhurst-Moving-to-Condominiums.pdf>.

Box 30: Positive views about relocation

'Although I do not think there will be better work opportunities than in Bertukan, I will be happy even if I move out of Addis Ababa. There will definitely be clean air, better health and education.' She added: 'I will be able to raise my children in a better way, in a way I always wanted to, in a place free from addiction. And for me, I will be able to breathe clean air and live longer.'

Pankhurst and Tiumelissan (2014a)

However, both children and adults also expressed major misgivings. They feared losing their sources of livelihood in informal activities in the city centre and worried about finding a place to live. Some mentioned concerns that services, notably health care and education, would be unavailable, distant, of poor quality or unaffordable. Others feared the loss of existing close-knit relations with neighbours, friends and relatives.

Table 19: Main problems anticipated by children after relocation

What do you anticipate will be the main problem?	Site			Total
	Bertukan	Menderin	Leku	
Adapting to the new area	54.5%	76.7%	61.1%	63.6% (n=63)
Establishing good relations with neighbours	18.2%	16.7%	13.9%	16.2% (n=16)
Finding friends and helpers	12.1%	0.0%	8.3%	7.1% (n=7)
Access to education	3.0%	3.3%	5.6%	4.0% (n=4)
Finding work nearby	9.1%	0.0%	2.8%	4.0% (n=4)
Access to water	0.0%	0.0%	8.3%	3.0% (n=3)
Transport availability	3.0%	3.3%	0.0%	2.0% (n=2)

Source: Pankhurst and Tiumelissan (2014)

A few, particularly elderly caregivers, strongly opposed relocation, as expressed by an elderly grandmother.

Box 31: Views of an elderly woman against relocation

'Here, if we do not have *injera*, we borrow from our neighbours and we do not sleep on an empty stomach. But if we are moved to a place we do not know with new people, it worries me a lot. For me to be relocated to another area, out of Bertukan, is like losing my life, dying. People who have been living together should be given the honour to bury each other when they pass away.'

Pankhurst and Tiumelissan (2014a)

However others, particularly among the children, and most caregivers were optimistic, suggesting that whatever happens they will be better off living elsewhere. One young boy concluded as follows:

Box 32: A young boy's positive view of relocation

'The positive change cannot be over-stated and will result in improvement even in the way we think.'

Pankhurst and Tiumelissan (2014a)

A third paper considered the views of children and parents about moving to condominium housing.²⁵⁸ Both adults and children expressed a strong interest in living in condominiums, which they perceived as representing a modern way of living and which they appreciated as being clean, with separate kitchens and proper toilets, something that was emphasised by girls.

However, respondents expressed a number of concerns, most notably that they would be unable to afford it. There was limited knowledge about the actual amounts of down-payments and monthly payments, the duration and payment options, and most did not think they could cover the costs, get bank loans or raise money from relatives. Moreover, people who had been working from home, notably women preparing and selling food and beverages, worried that they would not be able to do this from condominium housing. Furthermore, many expressed doubts about whether they would be able to find work in the informal sector close to the new areas, unlike in the city centre, and they were afraid that transportation costs to where they used to work would be prohibitive. There were also worries that schooling may be further away so that families would incur transport expenses, and that the cost of living in the new condominium areas would be higher than in their previous locations.

Some respondents were not registered or do not want to live in the condominiums due to fears about the durability or strength of the buildings, and others mentioned that the external staircases and balconies represented risks for children, that multi-storey buildings are more difficult for the elderly, the sick and pregnant women, and that there were often no play areas nearby. Other respondents also felt that condominiums were not suitable for the ‘cultural way of life’, where coffee is ground and holidays celebrated by slaughtering animals in the compound. However, a recurring predominant concern was the break-up of social relations, notably *iddir* funeral associations, and the need to re-establish such institutions as expressed in the following quotes:

Box 33: Risks of social disruption and the importance of reconstituting social relations

Tidenek’s caregiver said: ‘If we are moved to condominiums our social life will be negatively affected. This is because many people in condominiums are renters. Since these people are not permanent residents, no-one can start a lasting relationship with them.’ Hunegnaw’s mother ... is not optimistic about the change: ‘It feels like moving to the jungle because there is no-one I know in the new place I might be going to.’ Tadios’s father considered social adaptation as the most worrying aspect of relocation. He said: ‘People need to re-establish their social relations after the move and that is the most difficult part. The mother of Samrawit ... said: ‘*Iddir* is something that is given much more value even than having children. When someone dies people do not ask if that person has children but if that person has an *iddir*.’

Pankhurst and Tiumelissan (2014a)

258 Pankhurst and Tiumelissan (2014a) http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP126_Beyond%20Urban%20Relocation.pdf; Pankhurst and Tiumelissan (2014b) <http://younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-Ethiopia-UrbanResettlement-Brief-3.pdf>.

6.10. Conclusion

This chapter has addressed six areas concerning child wellbeing and protection: child-sensitive social protection, orphans and vulnerable children, child work and labour, harmful traditional practices, violence affecting children and youth, and urban development and relocation. This conclusion draws out the major points from each of the sections and raises four cross-cutting issues: 1) targeting differences in age and gender, with a strong focus on early childhood and categories at risk; 2) promoting child-sensitive social protection to address poverty and shocks, 3) supporting a child-, household- and community-centred approach, and 4) addressing implementation challenges.

Section conclusions and policy implications

The section on child-sensitive social protection produced evidence that the productive safety net scheme which has provided important support to address food insecurity can have additional benefits for children. The PSNP direct support was found to be correlated with less time spent by children on work and better school attendance by girls. However, there was also some evidence of children working on public works in spite of regulations against it, as well as carrying out substitute work for adults involved in the public works. Since then the guidelines have been revised, increasing the minimum age from 16 to 18. Strengthening child care provision could also ensure girls are not involved in substitute labour. A recent analysis of Young Lives data emphasised reduction in work by children and positive nutritional benefits for children. The findings suggest the need for policy and programmes to be more attentive to consequences for children; to consider the differential implications for girls, notably in terms of child care; to provide special support for vulnerable children, and those in families facing shocks, in particular illnesses; and strengthening support for families with small children. For the future, implementation of the Social Protection Policy and Strategy can benefit from the valuable experience of the PNSP, notably in designing cash transfer programmes with other additional components that address children's issues, such as child care, school feeding, and health insurance exemptions.

The section on orphans and vulnerable children found that there were differences between orphans losing a mother, whose schooling was affected, and those losing a father, whose sense of optimism about the future was affected. However, differences between orphans and other children were generally less important than rural as opposed to urban residence, the extent of household poverty and shocks such as family illness. Most orphans were cared for by family members and played an important role in supporting the families in which they live. Rather than an exclusive focus on orphans the study advocates tackling poverty more broadly through integrating social services and enhancing social protection to protect vulnerable families and children from shocks.

The section on children's work and labour showed that children start work at a young age, and that gender differences increase with age, with girls facing a greater burden of domestic and care work which affects their schooling, although more boys tend to drop out of school due to work. Children face competing pressures on their time from school and work and those from poorer households may drop out. Excessive work can be detrimental to children's wellbeing and schooling, though children take pride in contributing to their households and some cover school costs from the income they earn. In addition to eliminating the worst forms of child labour, efforts to address children's work need to consider the broader social and economic context in which children's school and work are part of their lives. Child-sensitive social protection should therefore target the age- and gender-specific risks and support vulnerable households and working children from poor backgrounds to continue schooling through flexibility such as shift schooling, and remedial, evening or weekend classes.

The section on harmful traditional practices addressed the key issues of child marriage and FGM/C. Young Lives evidence confirms that both practices are declining, with significant rural/urban, regional and community differences, suggesting the need for interventions to focus on 'hotspot' areas. Both practices are related to persistent patriarchal social norms, that need to be addressed by involving girls, in particular protecting younger girls and empowering older girls to stand up to imposed marriages. It is also important to involve parents, boys and community and religious leaders as well as working with schools, clubs and youth and women's groups. Such an approach of 'winning hearts and minds' is likely to be more effective than merely strictly enforcing the law. This can result in the practices going underground, with unintended adverse consequences. Since child marriage is linked to contexts of poverty and vulnerability with limited alternative opportunities for girls through education, training and work, addressing the problem will require going beyond an exclusive focus on the practices to promoting girls' economic opportunities and social empowerment, as well as multi-stakeholder involvement in social protection and broader poverty reduction measures.

The section on violence found that risks of corporal punishment, emotional abuse and gender-based violence are common, with important gender and age differences, requiring greater societal awareness of the risks and consequences throughout childhood. Violence is often related to and exacerbated by poverty, and gender-based violence is underpinned by social norms which need to be challenged. Certain categories of children, notably child migrants, domestic workers, children living on the streets and those living in very poor households and with relatives are more at risk of abuse, and girls involved in domestic work are at risk of rape. New risks facing adolescents, of unemployment, substance abuse and exposure to media are perceived as potentially aggravating violence. To address these problems there is a need to promote the work of the intersectoral committee on violence against women and children to improve implementation of policies, plans and programmes down to the community level, notably through schools, and health and social workers.

The section on urban relocation found that despite crowded conditions with poor sanitation, parents and children appreciate the friendly social relations in their neighbourhoods. However, they aspire to living in better conditions in condominiums, although they worry about safety and not being able to afford the costs. Moreover, they are concerned that relocation in areas out of the city centre will affect their work opportunities, involve transport costs and distance to schools, and that facilities such as playgrounds might be lacking. The findings suggest the need for better planning, consultation and involvement of communities, improving the safety of condominiums, prioritising access for more vulnerable residents, and provision of appropriate infrastructure and child-friendly services before moving people, where possible in groups, and promoting re-establishment of social relations.

Addressing cross-cutting and implementation challenges

The topics raised in this chapter relate to key challenges faced by children as they grow up in Ethiopia, notably the context of food insecurity and rapid urbanisation that disproportionately affect poorer households. Bringing about social change also requires addressing persistent social norms as noted in the sections on harmful traditional practices, child work and labour, and violence affecting children. The longitudinal perspective on children's development provided by Young Lives raises four issues that deserve greater consideration in policy development, implementation and programming.

Promoting child-sensitive social protection to address poverty and shocks

In addition to particular risks that are linked to children's gender and stage of development and the special needs of specific categories of vulnerable children, the broader context of poverty

affects the life chances and opportunities open to the poorest. The study on orphans found that over time children from poor households often fared worse than orphans. Children living in poverty tend to be more at risk of child labour, dropping out of school and facing violence in different contexts. Moreover, poverty is often related to, or compounded by, adverse events affecting the household such as illness or death of care-givers, and food insecurity resulting from drought in rural areas or inflation in urban areas.

Ethiopia has an inclusive *Social Protection Policy and Strategy* with a strong emphasis on addressing poverty and vulnerability which needs to be more child-centred, as noted in the *National Children's Policy and Strategy*, so that social and child protection become more closely interlinked. The evidence from Young Lives suggests that lessons can be learnt to ensure that the implementation of the Strategy takes account of children's wellbeing and protection in devising appropriate programmes and measures, while building on the positive experience of the PSNP. Options could include, in addition to cash transfers, nutrition interventions such as those recently included within the PSNP design, child care at the workplace, school feeding, measures to improve school quality and access for the most disadvantaged, and health insurance with exemptions for the poorest, as envisaged in the Community Based Health Insurance programme.

By looking across different sectors from food security, through nutrition, health and education, to child and social protection, as presented in this report, Young Lives research highlights the need to draw the linkages and work on the implementation of integrated approaches that involve the collaboration of different stakeholders including government, non-governmental and community institutions with the coordination of the MoWCA as outlined in the *National Children's Policy*.

Addressing differences in age, gender and the needs of categories at risk

There are considerable differences between the roles expected of boys and girls, their life opportunities and the risks they face at different stages as they grow up. The evidence that girls work longer hours and bear the brunt of domestic work affecting their schooling, whereas boys are more at risk of dropping out in primary school in order to work, has important implications. The increasing risks that girls face as they reach adolescence from gender-based violence, child marriage and early childbearing affecting their work and education opportunities also require targeting interventions to their needs.

The Young Lives findings also highlight that in addition to differences based on wealth, gender and education, certain groups of children face additional problems. For instance domestic workers, child migrants, children living on the streets or with relatives may be more at risk of violence. In line with the *National Children's Policy* and recent Strategy, a focus on children in difficult circumstances and addressing their specific needs is vital in programming assistance.

Supporting a child-, household- and community-centred approach

The Young Lives study has shown that children's lives are rooted within family relationships and livelihoods of households that in turn are embedded within the community settings. To bring about change it will be important to address children's issues at individual, household and community levels and to appreciate the linkages between these levels.

By focusing on children and listening to their views and aspirations, Young Lives has been able to voice the hopes and concerns of boys and girls of different ages, whether in relation to being engaged in public work, supporting their households to survive, making their own decisions on education, work and marriage, or expressing their hopes from urban relocation. Policy and programming need to be reminded of the priorities of boys and girls in different circumstances and constantly seek to involve them in decision-making about their lives.

Children's lives are intertwined with their families' livelihoods, and Young Lives evidence has explored how differences in household circumstances matter, whether it is wealth or poverty, caregivers' levels of education or the kinds of problems that households face, such as death or illness of a family member, loss of a job or livestock or crops due to drought or disease.

Households also need to make choices about labour allocations that are often governed by social norms. Policies and programmes need to be tailored to often very different needs and capacities that may depend on wealth or household composition.

While policies and programmes are designed at federal level and implemented through regions and *woredas*, they affect the lives of children and their families at a local level in very diverse communities. Young Lives has provided evidence of how differences based on urban or rural location, sites within different regions and community values shape children's opportunities. A strong focus on involving communities and their leaders in bringing about change, especially in relation to long-standing social norms, is crucial to avoid the documented risks of harmful practices going underground, and to ensure that development goals are accepted, owned and implemented at a local level.

Addressing Implementation challenges

As discussed in the policy chapter there has been considerable progress in the development of policies regarding children and youth with important sectoral policies, culminating in the *National Children Policy* and the *Ethiopian Youth Development and Change Strategy*. Rather than further policy development, in many respects the major challenges ahead may therefore require better delivery, more attention to improving quality, and strengthening monitoring and evaluation mechanisms involving community stakeholders.

Taking child poverty as a key concern, in order to achieve the aims of equitable growth, reducing poverty and inequality, realising the targets of the second Growth and Transformation Plan, and meeting the Sustainable Development Goal targets, there is a need to prioritise allocation of resources. The Young Lives evidence suggests that, despite improvements in sanitation, there is a long way to go, and improvements in sanitation can have an important impact on nutrition. An integrated approach to nutrition should also be a key priority, since despite significant progress, under-nutrition remains a major concern. Young Lives evidence has also shown that the early years are crucial, and investments in improving the quality of early learning and pre-school delivery will be important foundations for improvements in the education system and in promoting learning and skills that are required for transitions to the job market. Finally, in a period of growth, to ensure that the poorest and most marginalised do not get left behind, social protection initiatives need to be closely linked to child protection.

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7. Conclusion: From ‘Millennium Children’ towards youth during the Sustainable Development Goals period

7.1. Progress, challenges and lessons from longitudinal research

Young Lives research provides a picture of how the lives of children have changed over the period of the Millennium Development Goals and the study itself has grown up with its participants. By the fifth round survey in 2016 the Younger Cohort at the age of 16 were adolescents and the Older Cohort aged 22 were young adults so that the study, which started off with a focus on childhood, is increasingly addressing youth concerns and transitions to adulthood.

By following children and their households over 15 years and comparing two cohorts with a seven year gap, we have been able to document broad trends of change and how these have affected children differentially according to their age and sex, where they live, the education level of their parents, the wealth of their household and the problems they faced. The research design, involving quantitative surveys with qualitative sub-samples, has enabled us to draw out salient statistical patterns and link these to the views of children and their caregivers. By carrying out additional thematic studies on policy-relevant topics we have been able to explore crucial issues relating to children’s wellbeing and protection. The additional three rounds of school surveys provided a better understanding of how the Young Lives children were performing at critical phases in their education, confirming the concerns with low achievement, while the design with two waves at the beginning and end of the school year revealed persisting inequalities.

This report has summarised evidence, main findings and key messages on interrelated areas of poverty dynamics, nutrition, health and cognitive development, education and learning, and child wellbeing and protection. This final chapter starts by drawing out the main conclusions and policy implications from each of the preceding chapters, then addresses broader conclusions on positive trends of change, remaining challenges, and persisting inequalities by wealth, gender, urban/rural location, and parental education. Finally it presents lessons and policy implications from the longitudinal research over three successive stages, from early childhood, through middle childhood to early adulthood, and lessons for further longitudinal research.

7.2. Chapter conclusions and policy considerations

The **poverty dynamics** chapter demonstrated the importance of going beyond measuring poverty in terms of income and adopting a complementary multidimensional approach. Over the five rounds the wealth index increased. Moreover, there were notable improvements in different dimensions of wellbeing, the biggest gains being in health, education, water and sanitation. There were also encouraging signs of comparatively greater improvements among the poor and in rural areas. However, poverty remained pervasive and urban/rural inequalities stark, suggesting the need to continue prioritising pro-poor policies and programmes. Moreover, larger households, those with less educated members and those facing shocks were clearly more vulnerable, requiring further emphasis on family planning, social services, health insurance and social protection. There were also important gender and age dimensions, with young women and girls

more at risk, especially in urban areas, and young people facing unemployment, confirming the need for further gender-sensitive programming, and promotion of training, credit and job creation.

The **nutrition, health and cognitive development** chapter highlighted the crucial new finding that undernourished children can recover even beyond the first thousand days, suggesting the need to promote later interventions alongside securing the early foundation. Decreases in stunting, both as children grew up and between the cohorts at the same ages of 12 and 15 are encouraging, as is evidence that children in poor households make greater improvements.

Considerable improvements in access to safe water and sanitation, most notably among the poorest and in rural sites, can be expected to have contributed to overall improved nutrition, suggesting that the current promotion of linkages between nutrition and service provision should be strengthened. However, there was also evidence of faltering of children whose nutritional status had previously been adequate, and adolescent stunting levels of over a quarter of 15-year-olds remain far too high. Stunting was found to be associated with lower language and maths scores, later school enrolment and slower progression. However, children who recovered had better scores than those who faltered or were persistently stunted, suggesting a need to consider ways of promoting recovery and forestalling faltering. Furthermore, thinness as evidence of short term undernutrition had increased comparing the cohorts at age 12, no doubt owing to drought and food inflation in 2013, although there were improvements by age 15.

Persistent high levels of stunting and thinness therefore require continued investment in nutrition interventions particularly at times of crisis. Moreover, the evidence of greater levels of undernutrition among the poor, rural and less educated households suggests the need to strengthen coverage for the most vulnerable.

As with the evidence on undernutrition, food security remains a serious concern. Despite improvements from 2009 through to 2016, a quarter of households remained food-insecure, with proportions higher among the poor, in rural areas, and among less educated households, highlighting the need for targeting of interventions. Moreover, between 2013 and 2016 some food-secure households faced problems due to drought and inflation, suggesting the need for continued risk mitigation measures. Diet diversity increased slightly comparing between the cohorts at age 12. The proportions consuming fruit and vegetables and food cooked in fat increased, although the percentage of children accessing animal products declined, drawing attention to potential protein deficiencies, particularly among the poorest.

The **education and learning** chapter presented Young Lives evidence confirming a remarkable expansion of access and opportunity. The longitudinal data suggested a strong link between pre-primary education and later outcomes. However, substantial challenges remain in establishing a programme of sufficient quality that responds to the needs of families at a national scale. Further promotion of pre-schooling with an emphasis on quality through improving teacher preparation, support and deployment, and resource allocation with community involvement, could ensure that the considerable potential gains from early learning materialise. Education quality is a clear policy priority. However, early gains were slowing and progress through grades was intermittent. The combination of Young Lives household and school survey data revealed that children are learning over time, but that performance levels were substantially lower than the curriculum would expect, affecting prospects for middle-level skills development. Slower learning achievements than expected were particularly evident among children from the most disadvantaged groups, and gender gains had stagnated and had not yet been carried forward into post-primary education. Overall therefore, progress to universal learning by 2030 may require major reforms including financial policies that increase allocations for the pre-primary and primary years and promote girls' education at pre- and post-primary levels, as well as additional targeted and contextualised support to the poorest and most disadvantaged groups from rural, remote and pastoralist areas.

The chapter on **wellbeing and protection of children and youth** addressed six areas concerning child wellbeing and protection. The section on social protection suggested important gains through the PSNP despite the risk of child labour. The chapter suggests that social protection and child protection can work better together, with the PSNP paying more attention to the implications for children in terms of their work and providing useful lessons for the design of integrated child-sensitive social protection policies and programmes under the *Social Protection Policy* and recent Strategy. Options could include, in addition to cash transfers, nutrition interventions as recently included within the PSNP design, child care at the workplace, school feeding and measures to improve school quality and access for the poorest, and health insurance with exemptions for the poorest, in line with the Community Based Health Insurance initiatives.

The section on orphans noted that most orphans are cared for by family members and play an important role in supporting their households. However, differences between orphans and other children were not as important as urban/rural differences and poverty. Supporting all children, including orphans, requires addressing chronic poverty and associated risks. Rather than policies based purely on targeting, increasing the coverage of basic services and social protection schemes, as proposed in the *National Children's Policy* and the *Social Protection Policy*, would ensure the poorest and most marginalised children are reached.

The section on child work found that common causes of children working include poverty, shocks and adverse events such as illness or death of caregivers and sometimes require children to leave school and prioritise paid work. Children often face competing pressures on their time from work and school. Promoting children's well-being and development requires an integrated approach which addresses the broader social and economic context in which school and work are seen as part of children's lives. Child-sensitive social protection should target the age- and gender-specific risks and provide insurance against vulnerabilities and support for children in affected households.

The section on HTPs noted that remarkable progress has been achieved in reducing both child marriage and FGM/C in Ethiopia, although significant rural/urban, regional and community differences persist. Intervention focusing exclusively on delaying marriage or stopping FGM/C may not ensure that girls will have a better adult life. Interventions should address all important life trajectories – schooling, work and marriage – so that girls can achieve successful transitions from childhood into adulthood. Winning hearts and minds by involving girls, parents, boyfriends, prospective husbands, community and religious leaders, as well as schools, clubs, and youth and women's groups is likely to be more effective than simply strict legal enforcement and punishments of offenders.

Violence affecting children was found to be related to and exacerbated by poverty, and gender-based violence by social norms. Certain categories of children, notably child migrants, domestic workers, children living on the streets and those from very poor households are often more at risk of abuse. Most cases remain unreported or are dealt with through informal mechanisms, although formal institutions are increasingly addressing violence, despite constraints on reporting especially by vulnerable categories. There is a need for greater intersectoral coordination on violence, following on from the work of the interministerial committee on violence affecting women and children, to create awareness and implement national policies and plans, and foster greater collaboration within government, and with other stakeholders. At a community level, Health Extension Workers and Social Workers as well as schools and school clubs can play key roles in countering and addressing violence.

The section on urban relocation found that children in poor neighbourhoods perceive relocation as offering hope of cleaner and safer living conditions, and condominiums as improving sanitation and privacy. However, many poor households feared they will not be able to afford the

costs of the condominiums and transport, and worried about limited employment options nearby. Some mentioned distance from schools, lack of playgrounds, and risks associated with multi-storey buildings for children, the elderly, the sick and pregnant women. As well as housing, more emphasis should be given to basic infrastructure, health facilities, and child- and youth-friendly spaces and services. The condominium design should also pay more attention to safety features for children and prioritising ground floor access for the elderly, sick and less mobile. Improved transport links, as well as income generation schemes, employment opportunities and credit programmes could facilitate the transition to newly developed areas.

The chapter concluded with cross-cutting and implementation challenges to promoting child-sensitive protection, which require addressing poverty and shocks, differences in age, gender and the needs of categories at risk. The chapter advocated the need to promote a child-, household- and community-centred approach and a focus on better delivery with more attention to improving quality. It also advocated strengthening monitoring and evaluation mechanisms involving community stakeholders, and prioritising allocation of resources with social protection initiatives closely linked to child protection.

7.3. Overall conclusions

The findings of the sectoral chapters build up to a consistent narrative that fits with the macro picture of growth in Ethiopia, revealing important changes and overall improvements across different domains in the lives of children, both as they grow up and in comparing the two cohorts with a seven year gap at ages eight, 12 and 15. However, despite the clear evidence of progress provided by Young Lives, challenges remain and certain inequalities have largely persisted.

7.3.1. Consistent progress across different domains

In terms of poverty dynamics, overall the household wealth index increased significantly over the five rounds, and there were corresponding improvements in different dimensions of wellbeing, the main driver being ownership of consumer durables which more than doubled over that period.²⁵⁹ Moreover, the analysis of deprivations also confirmed that the Younger Cohort faced fewer deprivations than the Older Cohort at ages eight and 12. Similarly, the categorisation of households into three poverty groupings found that the Younger Cohort had greater proportions in the non-poor category, while more Older Cohort children were in the severely poor category at the same age. In terms of food security, diet diversity and nutrition there were, likewise, significant improvements as the children grew up and between the cohorts.²⁶⁰ In terms of service provision, the improvements are also clear and consistent. Access to safe water, improved sanitation and electricity increased considerably over the rounds for the Younger Cohort households from 2002 to 2016. Similarly, in terms of education Younger Cohort children who began school in 2008 have benefitted, at all ages, from better access to schools, higher enrolment levels²⁶¹ and better grade progression than their Older Cohort peers starting in 2001.

²⁵⁹ Poverty and Intergenerational Change: Preliminary Findings from the 2016 Young Lives Survey (Round 5): Ethiopia.

²⁶⁰ The proportion of severely food-insecure households decreased from 2009 to 2016. Food diversity for the Younger Cohort increased slightly in 2013 compared to the Older Cohort in 2006. Stunting and thinness levels declined among 15-year-olds comparing the Older Cohort in 2009 with the Younger Cohort in 2016.

²⁶¹ Over time, enrolment increased by three percentage points for 15-year-olds, comparing the Older Cohort in 2009 with the Younger Cohort in 2016.

7.3.2. Remaining challenges: protection against shocks, promoting learning and addressing inequalities

Despite considerable and impressive progress over the years, Young Lives evidence points to some major challenges and issues relating to marked differentials and inequalities. In terms of poverty dynamics, despite a decreasing trend, environmental and economic shocks remained a key concern, with rural households more vulnerable to environmental shocks, notably drought, and urban households somewhat more vulnerable to economic shocks, especially inflation. In 2009 almost all households were exposed to at least one economic shock, probably due to persistent monthly food price rises. This points to the importance of continued disaster risk prevention and mitigation measures in line with the current *National Policy and Strategy on Disaster Risk Management*, and the need to avert the risks of excessive inflation. Moreover, in addition to shocks affecting the entire community, adverse events affecting vulnerable households, particularly loss of employment, illness or death of household members, and loss of livestock were associated with multidimensional poverty. This confirms the importance of implementation of the *Social Protection Policy and Strategy* and the recent expansion of Community-Based Health Insurance, as well as other forms of insurance.

Regarding nutrition, despite a reduction in stunting among 15-year-olds, over a quarter of the Younger Cohort remained stunted in 2016. Likewise, despite some improvements in the level of thinness for 15-year-olds, in 2016 over a third of the Younger Cohort were affected. For those affected by both stunting and thinness, the reduction was from just under a quarter to one in seven.²⁶² Continued targeted nutrition interventions, in line with current policies and the *National Nutrition Programme*, are therefore vital.

In education, enrolment increased rapidly, but fell slightly for the Younger Cohort between the ages of 12 and 15, possibly relating to work. Moreover, Younger Cohort children were lagging behind the expected grade by two or three grades, suggesting that appropriate progression through school is a major problem requiring further emphasis. Furthermore, learning levels had not increased as expected, as evidenced by vocabulary and maths test scores, comparing the two cohorts at the age of 15.²⁶³ Large proportions remained in education at 19 and 22 years of age, but a significant proportion of these had not progressed to tertiary education.²⁶⁴ Moreover, the proportion with certificates and degrees was lower than might be expected.²⁶⁵

7.3.3. Persisting inequalities

Despite considerable progress, and some catch up of rural and poor households, Young Lives evidence also reveals significant remaining inequalities across sectors, notably in nutrition and food security and access to services, particularly in relation to household wealth, rural/urban location,²⁶⁶ and parental education, with the situation regarding gender differences and inequalities more complex.

262 Growth and Nutrition: Preliminary Findings from the 2016 Young Lives Survey (Round 5): Ethiopia.

263 Education and Learning: Preliminary Findings from the 2016 Young Lives Survey (Round 5): Ethiopia.

264 At 19 years, most of the Older Cohort children were still in education and at 22 a fifth were in full time education. However, a third of those in education were still in secondary or even primary school.

265 By 22 over half the Older Cohort who left education did not have a General Secondary Education certificate and only two per cent left university with a degree, suggesting that large numbers who left school early did so without adequate qualifications.

266 Young Lives evidence also reveals differences between the twenty sites distributed in five region. However, since these sites were not randomly selected they cannot be considered representative of national or regional trends and the findings presented in the fact sheets can only be considered as indicative.

Household wealth and poverty is a major way in which children's lives and opportunities differ, and this is often highly correlated with urban as opposed to rural residence and levels of parental education. In terms of poverty dynamics, despite evidence of greater improvements in the wealth index from a lower base among poorer households and in rural areas, the gaps remain large and persistent for the poorest, with over one in ten households remaining in the poorest tercile over the five rounds.

In terms of food insecurity, the wealth differences were stark, with under a quarter of those in the top tercile affected, compared to over a third of those in the bottom tercile. Regarding diet diversity, children from poorer households were half as likely as children from better-off families to regularly eat meat or eggs and there was also a clear relationship between household wealth and whether children had regular access to fruit and vegetables and foods cooked in fat. In nutrition dynamics, although food insecurity decreased from 2009 to 2016, the decrease was highest among better-off households. Concerning stunting and thinness and recovery too, there were clear wealth differences. Despite an overall improvement, households in the bottom tercile were more than twice as likely to be stunted as those in the top tercile, and differences were also significant regarding thinness. Moreover, recovery from stunting among the wealthiest tercile was much greater than among the poorest tercile.

In education, enrolment was considerably lower at 15 years of age for the poorest tercile than for the least poor, with some reduction in the difference between the Older Cohort in 2009 and the Younger Cohort in 2016. Grade progression was much better among children from wealthier households with higher grades completed and access to private schools largely restricted to them. There were also significant differences in literacy and maths test scores related to wealth. Educational aspirations²⁶⁷ and achievement²⁶⁸ were also related to wealth. Access to training²⁶⁹ and use of technology, notably mobile phones,²⁷⁰ were likewise affected by poverty.

Urban/rural differences have largely persisted despite significant improvements in rural areas, starting from a much lower base. The severely poor are largely concentrated in rural areas and the non-poor in urban areas. Over the rounds, the growth rate of the household wealth index was more than eight times higher for rural areas than for urban areas, suggesting some potential reduction in inequalities, although the gap continues to be very wide. However, a much lower proportion of urban households moved into poverty and a higher proportion escaped poverty, suggesting greater upward mobility in urban sites. Moreover, there was evidence that the majority of poorest households in rural areas often remained poor over successive rounds.

In terms of nutrition, the proportions facing food insecurity in rural areas were ten percentage points higher than in urban areas. Stunting was highly associated with rural residence, although growth recovery among rural children was slightly higher than among urban children. Regarding access to basic services, rural areas have shown a greater improvement from a much lower base, with greater improvements in access to safe water, and especially sanitation and electricity. Nonetheless, the differences remain substantial. In particular, access to electricity in rural sites lags considerably behind.

In education, although improved access has benefitted rural areas, and the recent expansion of pre-school O-class has been predominantly in rural areas, there were wide disparities between

²⁶⁷ While in better-off households girls and boys have similar educational aspirations, girls in the poorest households are 12 percentage points less likely to aspire to go to university than boys.

²⁶⁸ By 22 over three-quarters of those in education from the richest households were in vocational education or at university, whereas most in education from the poorer households were still in Grade 12 or below.

²⁶⁹ Access to training was more than three times greater in better-off households than in poor households.

²⁷⁰ There was a five-fold difference between poor and rich youth in use of mobile phones with internet access.

students in urban and rural areas in reading and maths competencies. Children from urban areas were much more likely to be in the correct age for grade, have higher average grades,²⁷¹ and progress beyond secondary school.²⁷² Children in rural areas were much more likely not to have been to school²⁷³ or to have reached lower levels of education,²⁷⁴ and were less likely to have a school certificate.²⁷⁵

At 22 years of age, a large majority of those who were studying full time came from urban sites, while the majority of those who were working full time came from rural sites. Youth from rural sites were much more likely to combine work and school than those from urban sites. Regarding post-secondary education, the proportion in urban sites was far higher, suggesting a possible widening of educational inequalities. Moreover, the likelihood of having received training in urban sites was three times greater than in rural sites. In terms of the young people's access to technology there was a huge digital divide, with proportions of urban youth using mobile phones with internet three times higher than usage by rural youth.

Parental level of education was also found to be strongly associated with poverty, and parents with limited education were more likely to have stunted children.²⁷⁶ Moreover, the average education of household members was found to have a statistically significant decreasing effect on children's experience of deprivations. In terms of nutrition, food security and diet diversity increased consistently with greater levels of parental education.²⁷⁷ Stunting was also strongly associated with less education so that children of parents with Grade 8 education were half as likely to be persistently stunted, more likely to have never been stunted and less likely to falter, although there was not much difference in terms of recovery. There was also some evidence that parental stunting at age eight was predictive of a subsequent generation of children's stunting at age one, suggesting a correlation between parental and child health which could reinforce inter-generational inequalities. Regarding the effects of parental education on their children's education, Young Lives found very high aspirations of parents for their children that seemed to be reflected in children's achievements.²⁷⁸ Caregivers' education level also seemed to be associated with young people's involvement in combining work and education.

In **gender terms** the picture is much more mixed and complex. Overall, Young Lives findings suggest considerable improvements in education for girls in middle childhood. However, important gender issues emerge in adolescence, notably regarding marriage and employment. Regarding poverty dynamics, children in female-headed households and girls in urban areas were found to be more likely to be in households facing chronic poverty. In terms of nutrition, at the age of 15 boys were more affected by stunting than girls, which may be a function of differential timing of pubertal growth spurts. However, comparing nutritional dynamics over time the pattern is more complex. Boys were more likely to be stunted, but much more likely to recover; in contrast, a greater proportion of girls were never stunted and fewer persistently stunted, yet faltering rates were much higher among girls and recovery much lower.

271 Average grades of children in urban areas were 1.9 grades higher.

272 Almost half urban sample had access to post-secondary education compared to one in seven in rural areas.

273 The proportions with no education were three times lower in urban areas.

274 At 22, the majority enrolled in rural areas were still in Grade 12 or below, compared to a fifth in urban areas.

275 Half of the rural children who left school did not have a certificate, compared to under a quarter in urban areas.

276 Over three-quarters of the households who were persistently in the bottom wealth tercile had caregivers with no education.

277 The proportion facing food insecurity was three times higher for children whose caregivers had no formal education.

278 Students whose caregiver had more than eight years of schooling completed on average 1.6 grades more than children whose caregivers had no formal education.

Regarding education the Young Lives evidence presents a fairly positive gender picture in middle childhood. However, in the recent drive for expanding pre-school, parents seem less keen on sending girls to pre-school,²⁷⁹ which is a cause for concern given Young Lives evidence of the importance of early learning for later achievement. Despite evidence of gender bias in favour of boys in the aspirations of parents and children, at primary school the disadvantages in access were reversed, with girls in the Young Lives sites having better access than boys at ages 12 in 2013 and 15 in 2016. Girls were also slightly more likely to be in the correct grade for age. In terms of competencies in Grades 7 and 8, gender differences were minor, with girls scoring slightly higher in literacy and slightly lower in maths, although the differences were largely related to urban versus rural residence. However, by the age of 22 there was a distinct shift in favour of young men. Nonetheless, of those still in education, more young women were enrolled at higher levels with the slightly higher enrolment among young men being reinforced by the group that were still to complete primary or secondary education. Although the average grade achieved by girls at the age of 22 was only slightly higher than that of boys, the much higher rate of boys without education, suggests that drop-out of boys deserves attention.

Gender inequalities become crucial in adolescence and in the transition to adulthood with regard to marriage, fertility and transitions to the labour market, with marked differences between young women and young men. About a third of young women were married or cohabiting by the age of 22, and about half of these had already been married by the age of 18. Moreover, over a quarter had a child by the age of 22, and one in ten had already had a child by the age of 18. The huge difference compared to young men, with fewer than one in fourteen married by 22 and fewer than two percent with children, highlights gender inequalities. In addition, a large majority of young men were working compared with just over half of the young women, only a very small proportion of whom continued to study after marriage. Also, young men were more likely to combine paid and family work and school than young women, and those who were married or cohabiting were also much less likely to be in school. Furthermore, young men were almost twice as likely as young women to have received training. There were also significant differences between young men and women regarding the use of technology, with well over a third of young men, but only a quarter of young women, frequently using mobile phones with internet.

7.4. Lessons from longitudinal research on childhood life stages

As a longitudinal study over 15 years covering childhood from birth to age 22 through two cohorts, Young Lives has provided important insights throughout the cycle of children's development from early infancy to early adulthood. These can be considered in terms of early, middle and late childhood, or adolescence.

7.4.1. Benefitting from investment in early childhood

The findings on longer-term impacts of early childhood conditions highlight the crucial importance of early investment, which has been shown to have greater returns. For nutrition, the evidence of recovery from undernutrition after the period of infancy, but also the risks of faltering and of thinness during periods of stress, raise important questions about the timing, spacing and targeting of interventions. The international evidence on the importance of investment in the first thousand days from conception is incontrovertible and should be reaffirmed. However, Young Lives evidence also shows not only that children can and some do recover from undernutrition, but that they can also fall back from being well nourished to facing undernutrition, and can be affected by both longer-term stunting and short-term thinness in periods of food insecurity.

²⁷⁹ The national Gender Parity Index was 0.95 across pre-primary, getting slightly worse over time.

This new evidence raises questions about what can be done to avoid undernutrition beyond infancy. Given the growing recognition of the importance of investments in early childhood including in nutrition, early stimulation, child care and pre-schools, greater attention should be given to integrating health and education sector interventions in early childhood in line with the *Early Childhood Care and Education Framework*. While supplementary feeding is currently focused largely in health centres, the importance of introducing appropriate feeding in day care centres, pre-schools and primary schools should be given further priority. Currently, school feeding in Ethiopia is being addressed largely in terms of emergency provisions in the context of the recent period of drought. Young Lives evidence of risks from thinness during food crises confirms that special measures and targeting are vital in times of stress. However, there is also a need to institutionalise appropriate forms of school feeding more widely since levels of undernutrition throughout childhood remain generally far too high. Furthermore, Young Lives findings reveal that boys in middle childhood face a greater risk of stunting but have a greater chance of recovery, while girls are less likely to recover and are more at risk of faltering. This suggests that nutrition targeting should be more sensitive to age and gender dynamics in nutritional status. A focus on social protection for households with young children to promote child care can also bring about important improvements.

The Young Lives evidence that early investment in pre-school has a beneficial impact on children's later development and that children who have had access to pre-school achieve better results, confirms the importance of the government's current promotion of pre-school, notably through the O-class. However, the question of the extent and especially the quality of pre-school required are critical issues, as the work of Young Lives with experts of the Ministry of Education on reviewing the pre-school environment shows. Further attention should be given to developing linkages with communities where there is evidence of demand for good quality pre-school, as well as improving the system through reviewing the curricula, training and deployment of teachers. Furthermore, there is a need to improve linkages between pre-school and modalities for early learning and stimulation beyond infancy and strengthening cross-sectoral integration in implementing the *Early Childhood Care and Education Framework*. The linkages with nutrition, as noted above, are also crucial, and addressing gender norms to encourage parents to send girls to pre-school deserves attention.

7.4.2. Improving learning and supporting vulnerable households and children in middle childhood

Young Lives found that in middle childhood and through primary education, despite notable improvements in access, grade progression and learning fell short of expectations. This may require greater attention to reforms that promote improvements in the school and learning environments, linkages to children's livelihoods and wellbeing, and increasing the focus on disadvantaged areas and categories of children. Addressing the issue of children dropping out of school due to work and enabling them to continue learning requires not just protecting children from abusive and excessive work but also a more understanding and compassionate approach to helping children who have to work to support their families to continue with their schooling. This could involve strengthening remedial classes and flexible learning arrangements.

Addressing the question of corporal punishment, which was found to be quite common, and promoting alternative disciplining would be an important aspect of improving the school environment. Within communities, social protection and insurance measures should address the needs of vulnerable children in households facing extreme poverty or livelihood and health shocks, as well as categories of children at risk to ensure that they are able to continue with schooling, for instance through cash transfers and other forms of support such as with school materials.

In gender terms, the greater extent of boys' drop-out, especially in poor households, deserves special attention to address constraints on their attendance and encourage their continued education and learning. However, it is also noteworthy that the proportions of young women having left education without completing Grade 8 was significantly higher than those of young men. The current focus on ensuring that girls proceed through school should continue to promote measures such as separate toilets and menstrual hygiene provisions in primary schools, and awareness raising and measures to counter school-related gender-based violence. Support for girls to continue with secondary school and appropriate vocational training is also crucial, especially given the evidence that once girls drop out they often are unable to go back to school or find work and tend to marry early.

7.4.3. Improving transitions to adulthood: from education to work, marriage and parenting

Young Lives evidence suggests that in late childhood the crucial issues beyond progression through the education system involve training and transitions to the labour market, and marriage, household formation and parenting.

The low proportions able to study while working, and limited youth access to training, suggest the need for more emphasis on skills formation and adult education to promote more effective transitions to the labour market. Most importantly, promotion of employment, job creation and entrepreneurship in line with the *Youth Development and Change Strategy* are crucial, especially since, at age 22, one in ten youth were neither working nor studying. Lower rates of employment and training and combining education with work among young women and urban youth suggest the need for job creation, training and adult education to focus on urban areas and on female employment and skills promotion.

In the transitions to adulthood, marriage and family formation result in the greatest gender divergences and ensuing inequalities. The huge disparities in the proportion of young men and women marrying and having children raise important questions about girls' and women's decision-making, empowerment and livelihood opportunities, as discussed in the chapter on children's wellbeing and protection. The small proportion of women working for pay and able to continue to study after marriage suggests the need to overcome constraints on married women's work and education, including addressing enduring gender norms and promoting young mothers' access to child care, adult education, training and employment.

7.5. **Lessons for further longitudinal research**

The Young Lives research provides important experience and lessons about how longitudinal research can be carried out in terms of keeping track of the cohort over time, the value of a mixed-methods approach and additional policy-relevant studies, the contribution to the development of social science research, the need to institutionalise research capacities and the potential for continuing the study from childhood to adulthood.

7.5.1. The importance of cohort studies over time

The ability of a longitudinal study to continue to carry out the research over many years is crucial. This involves establishing systems for undertaking effective research, training high-quality research teams, ensuring ethical procedures are adhered to, establishing rapport with communities, households and children, maintaining contact with the respondents, and storing, protecting and publicly archiving the data, so that other researchers can carry out further analysis.

The two-cohorts approach adopted by Young Lives has provided a means to understand the causes and consequences of childhood poverty over the course of lives. The insights spanning the ages from birth to 22 provide evidence of changes over time by comparing the cohorts at ages eight, 12 and 15. The evidence can contribute to informing decisions needed for national planning and programme implementation. A further round would enable a comparison at age 19 and a better understanding of the transitions from childhood to adulthood, and in particular from education to the labour market and household formation.

The very low attrition rate of 5.3% for the Younger Cohort is remarkable for such a long-term research project. The attrition rate was considerably higher for the Older Cohort (17.7%), which was accounted for largely by international migration and household mobility that was difficult to track. Working with the same field supervisors since Round 1, which has enabled the study team to build stable relationships with the families and children, has been crucial to keeping the 15-year attrition rate relatively low. With increasing access to communications technology future research could consider tracking migrating youth through phone interviews and social media.

7.5.2. The value of mixed methods approaches

The mixed-methods approach provided the opportunity for enriching the survey data with perspectives from children and caregivers, providing insights into their aspirations and concerns, and illustrations of the trends that were detected in the surveys, as well as cases that buck these trends. This has been particularly important in making the data more accessible, and the stories behind the numbers are often more easily understood by policymakers and the public at large. The qualitative approach has also enabled the study to bring the voices of children and caregivers to the fore and address policy issues from their point of view. It has also made it possible to highlight differences in perspectives between various kinds of children based on age, gender, wealth, education and other social statuses.

7.5.3. The value of further policy-relevant studies

The inclusion of additional thematic studies that were policy-focussed enabled Young Lives to address key topical issues relating to safety nets, child labour, early learning, child marriage, violence and urban relocation. These studies also raised the profile of Young Lives research and increased the engagement with the government and other stakeholders, through consultations, dissemination meetings and joint outputs such as the brief on child work and labour produced with the African Child Policy Forum and Save the Children. For the pre-school study the involvement of Ministry of Education and Education Strategy Centre experts from the outset and throughout fostered collaboration, joint learning and capacity building.

7.5.4. Contributing to the body of social science and policy research on Ethiopia

The Young Lives Study is a public good which provides an important contribution to social science research on Ethiopia. The surveys have been publicly archived so that other researchers can continue to make use of the data. This offers the possibility of further independent analysis by other researchers within Ethiopia and abroad on a wide range of topics and sectors including nutrition, food security, health, water and sanitation, access to services, social and child protection etc. The longitudinal data has enabled the tracking of children's lives which can complement data from cross-sectional surveys, administrative data and short term studies such as Random Control Trials.

7.5.5. Institutionalising longitudinal research on children and youth

Young Lives played an important role in the establishment of the Child Research and Practice Forum which has organised monthly seminars at the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs for seven years, with support from UNICEF. The Forum offers the opportunity to bring together various stakeholders and for researchers to present findings to government policy makers, United Nations and international non-governmental organisations and members of civil society organisations. The Forum provides a space to discuss policy issues and stimulate debate on implementation and programmatic approaches.

Furthermore, to ensure that the legacy of Young Lives carries on, through discussions with various stakeholders and with initial support from UNICEF a new centre named the Ethiopian Centre for Child Research was established in 2017 within the Ethiopian Development Research Institute. This can provide the basis for further research on children and youth, and for research gaps and policy issues of concern to be identified by government and other stakeholders so that policy and implementation can benefit from research evidence. The Centre can also provide an institutional set-up for a continuation of the Young Lives study.

7.5.6. From millennial young lives to sustainable youth lives

By following the ‘millennium children’ as they grow up, Young Lives has produced a considerable body of research outputs and addressed important policy issues on a wide range of sectoral and cross-cutting issues affecting children and youth. Given the substantial evidence base that has been collected throughout childhood from infancy to early adulthood, the continuation of the study – if funding for further rounds can be secured – has the potential to contribute to knowledge on the major concerns of the SDGs by tracking the consequences of childhood poverty and inequality into young adulthood.

Further rounds of research following the cohorts are under discussion as this is written, and would yield rich data that could answer key questions of the 2030 agenda. The SDGs have drawn attention to tackling poverty, to social and economic inclusion and to overcoming gender and other inequalities, and Young Lives is uniquely placed to address these issues.

With a sixth survey round in 2020 we could follow the Younger Cohort from childhood into adulthood as they reach 19 years; we could then compare outcomes in their lives, notably on educational and skill development, training and transitions to the labour market, household formation, and pathways to and from marriage and parenthood. With the older Cohort aged 25 we would gain a better sense of their involvement in the labour market enabling us to assess returns on investment in education, their establishment of families, gender relations between spouses, and fertility and parenting behaviour. Drawing also on survey Rounds 1-5, these rich new datasets would significantly strengthen the evidence on the long-term dynamic processes underpinning human development and human capital formation, along with the life-style, conjugal, fertility and vocational choices made by young people in different social and economic groups. In this way it would illuminate the diverse challenges, opportunities and outcomes experienced by youth in different contexts, explaining what it takes for young people to transition to poverty-free adulthood and in turn providing a platform for effective youth policies.

A seventh round of household surveys in 2024 when the cohorts will be 22 and 29 years old would enable Young Lives to address inter-generational issues. By tracking the offspring of the two cohorts, we would be able to examine the pathways into and out of poverty and related policies across three Young Lives generations – the caregivers, the two Young Lives cohorts, and their offspring – such information being vital for designing interventions to interrupt inter-generational cycles of poverty and inequality.



About Young Lives

Young Lives is an international study of childhood poverty, involving 12,000 children in 4 countries over 15 years. It is led by a team in the Department of International Development at the University of Oxford in association with research and policy partners in the 4 study countries: Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam.

Through researching different aspects of children's lives, we seek to improve policies and programmes for children.

Young Lives Partners

Young Lives is coordinated by a small team based at the University of Oxford, led by Professor Jo Boyden.

- *Ethiopian Development Research Institute, Ethiopia*
 - *Pankhurst Development Research and Consulting plc, Ethiopia*
 - *Centre for Economic and Social Studies, Hyderabad, India*
 - *Save the Children India*
 - *Sri Padmavathi Mahila Visvavidyalayam (Women's University), Andhra Pradesh, India*
 - *Grupo de Análisis para el Desarrollo (GRADE), Peru*
 - *Instituto de Investigación Nutricional, Peru*
 - *Centre for Analysis and Forecasting, Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences, Vietnam*
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