



Hadush's story

A profile from
Young Lives in Ethiopia

"I am happy with my job. On festivals and holidays, I buy drink and meat for my family."

Hadush's story

Hadush is now 16 and his life has improved a lot in the past few years. Due to a good harvest, his family circumstances are much better and they have been able to pay off their debts. And although he is worried about not having gone to school and learned to read and write, Hadush enjoys his work and has many ideas about his future.

Hadush has changed a lot in the last few years and is now bigger than his peers. Last time we interviewed them, the family were worried about the harvest but since then there have been good rains and good harvests and his family has prospered. They have been able to pay off their debts, and buy oxen, a new bed, a radio and jewellery for Hadush's stepmother. Hadush's own mother died when he was very small. His parents had ten children, two of whom died young. All but Hadush have now left home and some of his older sisters have children of their own.

His stepmother has been married to his father for nine years now. She says that she was married to her first husband at the age of 15 and that Hadush's father is her fifth husband. She was divorced each time because she could not have children. She is now 44 and Hadush's father is 68. She has problems with her eyesight.

The family have a toilet but no electricity or running water. They get their water from communal water points. Their house has a new corrugated iron roof that Hadush is very happy about. He sleeps in the kitchen with a torch and radio next to his bed.

Hadush dropped out of school when he was 7 or 8 because the school was a long way away and, he says, there was no-one to help at home. Hadush's father says none of his boys went to school, though two of his daughters did.

"All the boys have refused to go to school and none of them is educated."

Whose path did Hadush follow?

It was his own decision."

But he also says that Hadush regrets not going to school. He gives an example of a time when Hadush was invited to take part in a group discussion with his peers. But he refused to participate because he was shy and feared that he might be asked to write something. Hadush went to a religious school for a while, and both he and his father talk about him going back one day so that he can learn to read and write.

Otherwise, Hadush says he is healthy and enjoys his work. At the moment he is digging soil and sand and loading it onto trucks, which is hard physical work but

Hadush was 13 when we last saw him. He lived in a rural area with his father, stepmother and three older siblings. His mother had died when he was small and his father had married again when Hadush was 7 years old. Hadush spent most of his time looking after cattle and was proud of his work.

keeps him healthy. Last year he was allowed to plough by himself, which he enjoys. He also likes being able to contribute to the family. "I am happy with my job. On festivals and holidays, I buy drink and meat for my family."

Hadush says that his family's main activities are construction work, selling cobblestones, farming and selling vegetables in the regional capital and the next village. They also take part in the Government's Public Work programme, which he likes "because it is done with many people. And because I get to rest in the afternoon. When I do other work there is no time for rest."

Officially children are not allowed to take part in the programme until they are 18, so we ask him:

"Is there a difference in the type of work that is given to children and for adults in the Public Work Programme?"

There is no difference; it is the same type of work for adults and for children. We all dig holes and only if you finish your work do you get to rest. There are also school students who miss their classes to take part. I know five students like this. Sometimes they ask permission from their teachers and sometimes they don't.

How many days a week do you take part in this work?

Sometimes we go every day and sometimes we miss some days. We work in the morning until midday.

Do you know how much you are paid?

No, I don't. But I think my parents receive ten kilogrammes of grain a month. I don't know because it is my parents that receive the money or the grain. If my parents are unable to work, I cover for them. But if we all are unable to do work, we are marked as absent.

How do you think the Safety Net programme can be improved?

Children should not work as much as adults. Many people prefer to be paid in grain rather than in cash. I would also like to suggest that when people are absent because they have very serious problems, they should not be considered absent.

Looking at your family's living conditions, do you think that you are poor, medium or rich?

Medium.

What does poverty mean to you?

When you do not have any animals. A medium family may have a cow with its calf, a pair of oxen. Rich people have camels, mules and horses, sheep and oxen.

Why do you think that people are poor?

Because God didn't bless them.

What problems do poor people face?

They suffer from debts, they are unable to pay back their loans, the interest is accumulated and they become more and more poor.

What will you be doing when we come here again in three years?

You will find me leading a good life. Ploughing, building houses and owning a shop.

Will you stay here or go somewhere else to work?

It all depends on God's will."

Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme

The Government's Productive Safety Net Programme (PNSP) is the biggest social assistance programme in Ethiopia.¹ It was launched by the Government in 2005 and backed by international donors. It consists of two components: Public Work and Direct Support. Public Work, which is what Hadush's family are part of, is by far the larger programme, and pays daily wages for unskilled labour (either in cash or in kind) to people who do not have enough to eat, mainly in rural areas. Direct Support provides free food for people who are not able to work, such as disabled or elderly people, pregnant women and women who are breastfeeding.

Young Lives has found that about 41 per cent of rural households and 7 per cent of urban households in our study participate in the Public Work programme, while 13.5 per cent of rural and 4.6 per cent of urban households benefit from Direct Support. Overall, the programme seems to be having some success in benefiting more vulnerable groups. More poorer and female-headed households take part than better-off and male-headed households.

Sources: Tassew Woldehanna (2009) *Productive Safety Net Programme and Children's Time Use between Work and Schooling in Ethiopia*, Young Lives Working Paper 40; Tassew Woldehanna et al. (2011) *Understanding Changes in the Lives of Poor Children: Initial Findings from Ethiopia*, Young Lives Round 3 Survey Report.

¹ There are also a number of other social protection programmes, including programmes for agricultural extension, credit and savings, HIV-related education, family planning, and health extension.

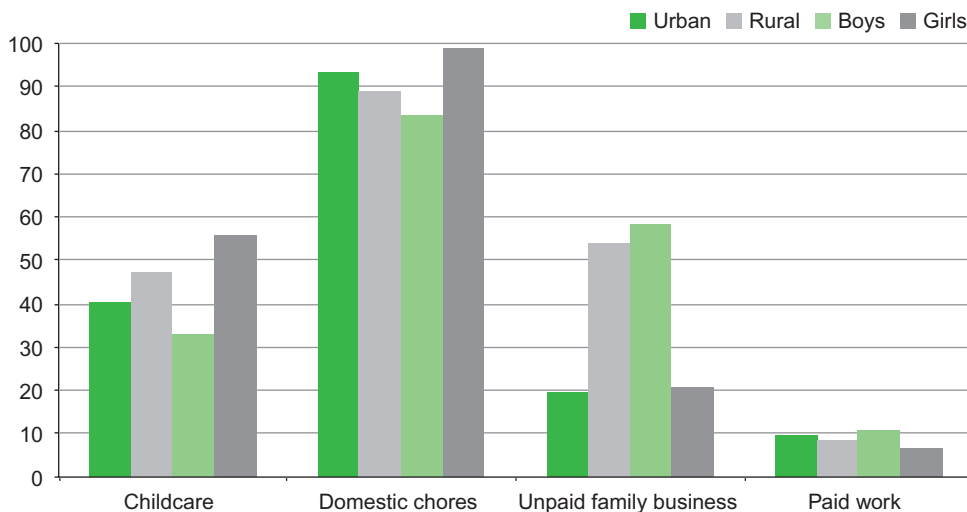
*“[In three years’ time] you will find me leading a good life.
Ploughing, building houses, and owning a shop.”*

Child work, paid and unpaid

We have studied children's time use and found that more than 90 per cent of the younger children and 98 per cent of the older children in Ethiopia are involved in some kind of paid or unpaid work (most of which is unpaid, including in family businesses or chores). A slightly higher number of older children are involved in paid work than younger ones (8.6 per cent compared with 8 per cent) and more boys than girls (11 per cent and 6 per cent).

We found that most children say they spend the majority of their days in school and spend around two hours a day studying. The number of hours spent on childcare and household chores is higher for girls than boys, and higher in rural areas than urban ones. The number of hours spent on paid work is slightly higher for girls than boys and in urban than in rural areas. Children in rural areas and boys are more likely to be doing unpaid work for the family business than girls and children in urban areas.

Participation of older children in different activities (%)



We have also found that children's involvement in this kind of work is lower when their caregivers are more educated (households with more educated caregivers also tend to have higher wealth levels, both factors could affect children's work). Only 15 per cent of children whose caregivers were educated beyond 8th grade do unpaid work for the family business, compared with 45 per cent of those whose caregivers had no education.

Source: Tassew Woldehanna et al. (2011) *Understanding Changes in the Lives of Poor Children: Initial Findings from Ethiopia*, Young Lives Round 3 Survey Report.



Country context: Ethiopia

Ethiopia, a country in the Horn of Africa, has a population of 80.7 million. It is Africa's oldest independent country but remains one of the world's poorest, although progress has been made in recent years. Child mortality has fallen, access to healthcare has improved and advances have been made in primary education, in part due to the commitment to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. The Government has also introduced a number of Poverty Reduction Strategy Programmes.

For the last seven years, Ethiopia has had double-digit economic growth rate – around 11 per cent on average each year. More than 60 per cent of government spending now goes to what the Government calls pro-poor sectors, namely education, health, roads, water and agriculture.

But in 2011, the United Nations still ranked Ethiopia 174 out of 187 countries in terms of human development. Almost 40 per cent of the population survives on less than 1.25 dollars a day. The country also suffers regularly from drought, which affects up to 13 million people. Many families are unable to buy or grow enough food to feed themselves, and so need food aid each year to survive. The effects on children are devastating.

- One in every 13 children dies before reaching their first birthday, while one in every eight does not survive until they are 5 years old.
- Nearly one in two children under 5 are stunted (short for their age), 11 per cent are wasted (thin for their height), and 38 per cent are underweight.

Despite significant investment to increase enrolment in primary schools, they are often poorly staffed and equipped. There are large differences in children's attendance between urban and rural locations, between boys and girls, and between and within regions. Overall literacy is low, at 31 per cent for rural and 74 per cent for urban residents.

Sources: Tassew Woldehanna et al. (2011) *Understanding Changes in the Lives of Poor Children: Initial Findings from Ethiopia*, Young Lives Round 3 Survey Report; UNDP (2011) *Human Development Report 2011*; UNICEF (2012) *State of the World's Children 2012*.

Young Lives is a unique international study investigating the changing nature of childhood poverty in Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam. By following the lives of 12,000 children and young people over 15 years, we aim to improve understanding of the causes and consequences of childhood poverty and provide evidence to support effective policies for children.

The profile presented here is one of 24 taken from the interviews we did with the children individually and in groups. Each one is accompanied by a theme of some kind that emerged from the material and which illustrates the issues that children are having to contend with, but also gives a sense of the wider context of their lives. These range from education and schooling, to inequality, health and illness, violence in school and at home, early marriage, the effects of migration, families' experiences of crises, government schemes to help poor people, and children's views and experiences of what it is to be rich or poor.

The children and their families who are participating in the Young Lives study willingly share with us a great deal of detailed personal information about their daily lives, and we have a responsibility to protect their confidentiality and ensure their identities remain protected. For this reason, the children's names have been changed here. The accompanying photos are of children in similar situations to the children within our study sample.

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Young Lives 
An International Study of Childhood Poverty