

Young Lives Round 7 Fieldwork Report

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Alan Sánchez, Tanimá Tanimá, Sophie von Russdorf, Amanda Woodman Deza
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About Young Lives

Young Lives is an international study of poverty and inequality, following the lives of 12,000 children in four countries (Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam) since 2001. www.younglives.org.uk

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Summary

For more than 20 years, Young Lives has followed two cohorts, born seven years apart, from infancy to early adulthood in Ethiopia, India (the states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana), Peru and Vietnam. In 2023 and 2024, Young Lives conducted its seventh (quantitative) survey round. Round 7 marked the return to face-to-face interviews after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. All Young Lives participants are now adults – with the Younger Cohort 22 years old and the Older Cohort 29 years old. On this occasion, data were not collected in Vietnam.

This report provides a comprehensive overview of the fieldwork and data collection processes in Round 7. It describes the main phases of the data collection process, how the fieldwork teams were organised in each country, and provides a statistical analysis of the survey administration time. It also highlights both successes and challenges from the fieldworkers' perspectives, emphasising transparency, accountability and Young Lives' commitment to collecting and publicly archiving high-quality data.

Across the three countries, the Young Lives team was generally well-received, with most participants happy to see the fieldworkers again. The fieldworkers were highly experienced, with nearly half having previously participated in at least one Young Lives round. Round 7 fieldwork took on average 6.5 months, and the average survey duration of a complete Round 7 interview ranged from 2.5 to 3.8 hours across the three country samples. Interviews with the Younger Cohort tended to take about 18 minutes longer than those with the Older Cohort, as the Younger Cohort had more survey sections to complete.

Two significant challenges were encountered during fieldwork: first, an increase in participants' migration (both domestic and international), which has been a common pattern across countries; and second, the ongoing armed conflict in Ethiopia impeded in-person visits to participants in two sites in Amhara. For these participants, a shortened version of the questionnaire was administered over the phone, which took 52 minutes on average.

As in previous rounds, the feedback received from the fieldwork teams will be a valuable resource for strengthening and improving the next survey rounds.

1. Introduction

Young Lives is a longitudinal study of poverty and inequality that has been following the lives of 12,000 children in Ethiopia, India (the states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana), Peru and Vietnam since 2001. For over 20 years, Young Lives has been tracking two cohorts born seven years apart: the Older Cohort, who were 8 years old in 2002, and the Younger Cohort, who were one year old in the same year. Between 2023 and 2024, Young Lives completed the seventh survey round (Round 7) in Ethiopia, India and Peru, with participants from both the Younger Cohort (now aged 22) and the Older Cohort (now aged 29). Round 7 represents the return to in-person interviews after Round 6 (also known as the ‘Listening to Young Lives at Work: COVID-19 Phone Survey’) which was conducted via phone surveys due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Round 7 was not conducted in Vietnam due to a change in governmental procedures around the international transfer of personal data.

Round 7 focuses on how participants are faring in young adulthood. As in previous rounds, survey modules included questions about household socio-economic status, migration, education, work, physical health, mental health and family formation, among others. In addition, new survey modules were administered on several topics – migration expectations, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on employment and education trajectories, willingness to pay for job attributes – and an audio-based self-administered questionnaire was added for India and Ethiopia. The survey was administered using SurveyCTO, a data collection platform previously used in Round 6.¹

This report provides a comprehensive overview, from planning to execution, of the fieldwork operations and data collection processes. It includes an overview of the fieldwork operation, a statistical analysis of the survey administration time, and an account of the successes and challenges of Round 7 from the fieldworkers’ perspective. In sharing this information, Young Lives reaffirms its commitment to transparency and accountability in the production of its data.

The report is structured as follows. Section 2 discusses the contextual situation in Ethiopia, India and Peru during the data collection period (2023–24). Section 3 describes the target sample and structure of the survey questionnaire, highlighting the similarities and differences in content by cohort and across the study countries. Section 4 presents an overview of the key phases of Round 7, describes how the fieldwork teams were organised by country, and provides a profile of the fieldworkers deployed. Section 5 provides more details on the data collection process – the start and end times and duration of the interviews, alongside other relevant metrics. Section 6 delves into fieldworkers’ experiences and perceptions of the Round 7 data collection process, from the initial organisation and training to its final stages. Section 7 concludes.

¹ SurveyCTO is a mobile data collection platform which allows for both online and offline data collection. Young Lives first used it for the fourth phone call in Round 6 (2021).

2. Context

This section explores the contextual factors during the data collection period in each of the three study countries. While the conflict in Ethiopia posed the most significant challenge to the overall fieldwork process, other challenges specific to India and Peru are also discussed.

The three study countries are very different from each other in terms of their economic development, population and level of urbanisation. According to the World Bank classification (World Bank Group 2024a), Ethiopia is a low-income country, India is a lower-middle-income country, and Peru is an upper-middle-income country. India has the largest population, with around 1.45 billion people, followed by 132 million in Ethiopia and 34.2 million in Peru (United Nations 2024). In terms of surface area, India is about 2.6 times bigger than Peru and nearly three times bigger than Ethiopia (FAO 2024). Urbanisation levels vary significantly: Peru has a high share of urban population at 79%, while India (36%) and Ethiopia (23%) remain predominantly rural (World Bank Group 2024b).

2.1 Ethiopia

The period between 2023 and 2024 presented substantial challenges for Ethiopia, having a profound impact on the lives of the children and families involved in the Young Lives study. These challenges were compounded by the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, severe droughts, high inflation, a locust outbreak and escalating armed conflicts, with the pandemic and conflicts standing out as particularly significant (Harris et al. 2021).

The most devastating event in recent Ethiopian history is the ongoing armed conflict that began on 4 November 2020 in the Tigray region, when hostilities erupted between the federal government, supported by Eritrean and Amhara regional forces, and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) (Gesese et al. 2021). This led to a prolonged conflict, with its first phase culminating in the occupation of Tigray by the Ethiopian National Defence Force (ENDF) and allied forces. In 2021, a second phase saw the conflict widen to the Amhara region, as well as Zones 1 and 2 of the Afar region, following the federal government's strategic withdrawal from Tigray in late June. A third phase of hostilities ensued in 2022 but was brought to a halt with the successful negotiation of a Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA) mediated by the African Union on 2 November 2022 in Pretoria (Gebresenbet and Tariku 2023).

Despite the CoHA, a new conflict emerged in the Amhara region in 2023, involving local rebel factions, commonly referred to as the Fano Militia, and national government forces. In August 2023, the conflict intensified as the Amhara rebels seized control of key towns and facilitated the escape of detainees. This escalation led the federal government to institute a six-month state of emergency on 4 August 2023, which saw the deployment of the ENDF to the region, prompting the retreat of rebel groups into rural territories. The persistence of hostilities necessitated a four-month extension of the state of emergency by the federal government in February 2024 (Xinhua 2024). The conflict is ongoing, leading to widespread disruption of government operations and service provision, particularly in rural areas.

Despite these challenges, fieldwork activities in Ethiopia were not fundamentally affected by the conflict, with the exception of two sites in Amhara which could not be visited in person.² Participants residing in these two sites at the time of the fieldwork were reached by phone, and a simplified version of the Round 7 survey was administered.³

Before these challenges, Ethiopia's economy experienced rapid growth. According to the World Economic Outlook released by the International Monetary Fund in April 2024, Ethiopia's real gross domestic product (GDP) grew at an average annual rate of 10.6% from 2006 to 2015. Growth slowed to 9% in 2019 and further declined in subsequent years, recording rates of 6.1% in 2020, 6.3% in 2021 and 6.4% in 2022. However, a rebound to 7.2% was registered in 2023, reflecting resilience amid the adverse effects of the pandemic, severe droughts and armed conflicts (IMF 2024).

Notably, economic growth has not translated into widespread poverty alleviation. In 2015, 65% of the population lived below the lower-middle-income poverty line and 27% lived in extreme poverty (World Bank 2025a).⁴ Multidimensional poverty statistics provide additional context: as of 2019, 68.7% of the population were classified as multidimensionally poor (OPHI and UNDP 2024).

Inflation has further strained household incomes, with consumer prices steadily increasing since fiscal year (FY) 2015/16. The annual inflation rate peaked at 33.9% in FY 2021/22, reflecting the combined effects of conflict, economic disruption and global price pressures (IMF 2024). Infrastructure damage to schools, hospitals and transportation systems caused by conflict has compounded these challenges, making it increasingly difficult for affected populations to access essential services.

The humanitarian situation is dire. In 2024, the government projected that 15.8 million people, including four million internally displaced people (IDPs), would require food assistance; of these, 51% resided in the conflict-stricken Amhara and Tigray regions (World Food Programme 2024). At the time, 7.2 million people were in need of emergency relief due to high levels of acute food insecurity, including 2.3 million in Amhara, 2.1 million in Tigray and 2.9 million in the rest of the country. Conflict and displacement remain critical challenges, with 4.5 million IDPs recorded in 2024 (OCHA 2024).

2.2 India

India faced a series of devastating environmental disasters in 2023, resulting in significant loss of life and widespread destruction. Extreme weather events, including floods, cyclones, landslides and storms, presented major challenges. In particular, the states of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh were severely affected by floods caused by heavy rains resulting from severe cyclonic storm Michaung, which made landfall in early December 2023. Nonetheless, this event did not have a significant impact on the fieldwork activities.

² The Young Lives sample is distributed across 20 cluster sites in each study country. Tables A2, A3 and A4 in the Appendix provide a full list of the original cluster IDs and their corresponding regions or districts.

³ See Box A1 in the Appendix for more details.

⁴ With the 2017 purchasing power parities (PPPs), the lower-middle-income poverty line is denoted as US\$3.65 per day and the extreme poverty line is denoted as US\$2.15 per day.

Despite ongoing challenges, including the economic disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, India remains one of the fastest-growing economies globally, with an annual GDP growth of 8.2% in FY 2023/24 (World Bank Group 2024c). Even so, significant economic gains have not fully alleviated poverty: based on the most recent estimates from 2021, 44% of the population still lived below the lower-middle-income poverty line, and 12.9% below the extreme poverty line (World Bank 2025b).

2.3 Peru

In Peru, the first quarter of 2023 was marked by widespread political protests against the government of President Dina Boluarte, following the removal of Pedro Castillo in December 2022. These protests led to states of emergency in several regions, including Apurímac, Callao, Cusco, Lima, Madre de Dios, Moquegua and Puno, and were met with increased state repression, including the use of firearms. As the first quarter of 2023 ended, Cyclone Yaku struck, primarily affecting the Tumbes, Piura and Lambayeque regions. The political and social unrest, combined with the impact of Cyclone Yaku, was followed in the second quarter by weather anomalies associated with the coastal El Niño, resulting in unusually high temperatures in Peru's coastal regions from late 2023 onwards. However, the fieldwork was not negatively affected by any of these external challenges.

Annual GDP growth declined from 2.7% in FY 2022/23 to -0.6% in FY 2023/24 (IMF 2024). The lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to affect the country, with 11.5% of the population living below the lower-middle-income poverty line in 2023, a rise from 9.5% in 2022. Extreme poverty followed a similar trend, reaching 5.7% in 2023, its highest level since 2012 (World Bank Group 2024d; World Bank 2025c).

3. Round 7 survey and target sample

This section gives an overview of the content of the Round 7 survey and defines the target sample for each country – the sample of Young Lives participants that the fieldworkers aimed to visit and interview in Round 7.

3.1 Round 7 survey content

The survey questionnaire administered in Round 7 was a blended version of the household and child questionnaires from earlier rounds. Before the survey starts, all participants completed an informed consent form that provided them with information about the objectives of the Young Lives study, the type of questions included in the survey, expected survey duration, reciprocity, and management of personal data.

The main survey includes questions relating to household socio-economic status, participants' migration, education, work, time use, health and well-being, and nutrition, among others. Beyond this, Round 7 included five additional survey components:

1. A reading comprehension test, which is a revised version of the one administered in previous survey rounds (administered in Round 7 to the Younger Cohort only).

2. RACER (rapid assessment of cognitive and emotional regulation), a tablet-based set of computerised cognitive tasks (that were administered only in Ethiopia and Peru, and only to the Younger Cohort in those countries).
3. A self-administered questionnaire (SAQ) containing questions on sensitive topics (e.g. the experience of violence), administered via tablet in Peru and using the audio computer-assisted self-interview (ACASI) method in Ethiopia and India.
4. Anthropometric measurements, specifically height (Younger Cohort only), weight and waist circumference.
5. Hair sample collections to measure levels of cortisol.

Table 1 provides an overview of the content covered in a standard *in-person* survey in each country.

Table 1. *Round 7 survey components by country and cohort*

■ Asked of both Younger Cohort and Older Cohort ■ Asked of Younger Cohort only

Survey components	Ethiopia	India	Peru
Main survey	■	■	■
Reading comprehension	■	■	■
RACER	■	■	■
ACASI/ SAQ ¹	■	■	■
Anthropometrics	*		*
Hair sample collections (cortisol)	■	■	■

Note: * For the Older Cohort, only weight and waist circumference measurements were taken.

¹ The information collected through ACASI and SAQ is similar, though the administration method differs: questions were asked via a SAQ in Peru and through ACASI in Ethiopia and India.

Additional questions were added to the survey instrument in Ethiopia to assess the impact of the ongoing conflict on young people's lives. Two Young Lives sites in the Amhara region could not be visited due to the conflict, and so for these participants the main survey was adapted and substantially shortened to be administered over the phone. The survey components requiring in-person administration (such as the reading comprehension test, RACER, anthropometrics and hair sample collections) were excluded. In addition, modules deemed too complex to explain over the phone were omitted and some survey sections dropped to keep administration times manageable.⁵

3.2 Target sample

The Round 7 target sample included all Young Lives participants who had been interviewed either during Round 5 in 2016 (the last in-person survey) or in any of the five phone survey calls conducted as part of Round 6 (Table 2). Participants who had withdrawn from the study or migrated abroad (or outside the state boundaries of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana in the case of India) were excluded from the target sample. Detailed records of deceased participants are kept, ensuring that their families are not contacted again in subsequent survey rounds.

⁵ Table A4 in the Appendix gives a detailed overview of the modules that were revised and retained for the phone survey in Ethiopia.

Table 2. *Round 7 target sample by country and cohort*

	Country	Younger Cohort	Older Cohort	Total
Target sample	Ethiopia	1,832	871	2,703*
	India	1,911	927	2,838
	Peru	1,952	650	2,602
	Total	5,695	2,448	8,143

Note: * This figure includes the 205 participants targeted for the phone survey in Ethiopia.

4. Key phases of Round 7 fieldwork

This section outlines the three key phases of the Round 7 fieldwork: tracking, training and piloting, and fieldwork. The fieldwork phase is discussed in greater detail, covering the timeline of main fieldwork activities, the fieldwork teams' structure and characteristics, and the in-round tracking processes followed in each study country.

In Ethiopia, India and Peru, data collection was executed by Young Lives' long-term partners: Policy Studies Institute (PSI) in Ethiopia, the Centre for Economic and Social Sciences (CESS) in India, and Grupo de Analisis para el Desarrollo (GRADE) and Instituto de Investigacion Nutricional (IIN) in Peru.

4.1 Tracking (2022)

The first phase of fieldwork consists of a tracking round, conducted approximately six to nine months before the start of the data collection. Tracking for Round 7 was primarily conducted over the phone, with some in-person visits. The tracking's main objective is to verify and collect up-to-date location information for all participants included in the target sample. The aim is to minimise attrition and to reduce the amount of time spent looking for people while the survey is being carried out. The tracking collects and updates participants' contact information, including their current address, phone numbers, email addresses and social media handles. It also gathers basic information on household composition and confirms the status of participants (e.g. whether they have migrated or are deceased).

The Round 7 tracking rounds took place between 28 October 2022 and 23 December 2022, with country-specific tracking conducted within this period. In accordance with study protocols, tracking was limited to participants located within the national borders (or state borders for India) of each study country. Overall, the tracking survey took a maximum of 15 minutes to complete.

4.2 Training and piloting (2023)

The second phase involved the training of all the fieldworkers. The training included sessions on how to use SurveyCTO as well as theoretical and practical sessions related to each survey module – following closely the instructions provided in the fieldworker manual. Fieldworkers were also trained (or refreshed) on the Young Lives fieldwork and safeguarding protocols. This phase provided fieldworkers with hands-on experience, preparing them for potential

challenges they may face in the field. It also allowed the Young Lives teams in each country to assess how field supervisors organise and manage their teams.

Training coincided with the piloting of the full Round 7 survey, which took place right before the start of fieldwork. In addition to providing fieldworkers with an opportunity to administer the full survey in real-life circumstances, the pilot enabled Young Lives teams to evaluate how the Round 7 survey worked as a whole, allowing any necessary final adjustments to be made. This process also helped identify potential programming errors in the questionnaire, while ensuring that fieldworkers were well-acquainted with study protocols, instruments and manuals before fieldwork began.

4.3 Fieldwork (2023–24)

The third phase, and the focus of this report, was the primary data collection period (fieldwork), during which participants were interviewed using the full survey instrument.

As in previous rounds, fieldwork teams began by visiting the 20 original cluster sites and other locations where participants had migrated to, based on the most recent tracking data. Once a participant was located, fieldworkers administered the full Round 7 survey. At the end of each interview, in line with study protocols and safeguarding measures, participants received a reciprocity payment as compensation for their time, along with a consultation guide. This payment was 300 birr (£4.50) in Ethiopia, 1,250 rupees (£10) in India and 50 soles (£12) in Peru. The consultation guide provided tailored information on publicly available support services, including:

- physical and mental health resources.
- contact details for local public services, helplines and referral services.
- information on local NGOs and community-based workers, particularly where public services were not available.

The consultation guide aims to support participants' well-being and ensure that they can access available resources both during and beyond the survey.

4.3.1 Timeline of fieldwork

Fieldwork across Ethiopia, India and Peru took place over 11 months, from June 2023 to April 2024. It is worth noting that with each survey round, the number of locations that the fieldwork teams must visit has increased considerably, mainly due to an increase in internal migration, significantly prolonging the time needed in the field. Table 3 provides the fieldwork start and end dates for each study country.⁶

⁶ See Box A1 in the Appendix for details on the fieldwork timeline and organisation of the phone survey in Ethiopia.

Table 3. *Round 7 fieldwork start and end dates by country*

	Ethiopia*	India	Peru
Fieldwork started	13 October 2023 ¹	2 August 2023	20 June 2023
Fieldwork ended	30 April 2024	22 January 2024	31 January 2024

Notes: * The phone survey administered in Ethiopia started on 2 April 2024 and ended on 30 April 2024. ¹ Fieldwork started on 13 October 2023 in Addis Ababa, Tigray, Oromia and SNNP. The Amhara fieldwork started on 30 October 2023.

4.3.2 Organisation and profile of fieldwork teams

Organisation

In Ethiopia, 50 fieldworkers (ten supervisors and 40 enumerators) were recruited for the in-person survey. Fieldworkers were organised into ten teams, each consisting of one supervisor and four enumerators, with each team assigned to work in two of the 20 original cluster sites. The survey in Ethiopia was administered in three languages – Amharic, Oromo and Tigrigna; consequently, the allocation of teams to sites was determined by fieldworkers' language proficiency and prior experience in the respective area(s). To accommodate the inclusion of gender-sensitive questions in the main survey instrument, efforts were made to ensure gender balance within each team, wherever possible.

In India, 46 fieldworkers (seven supervisors and 39 enumerators) were recruited for Round 7. Fieldworkers were organised into seven teams, each consisting of one supervisor and six enumerators, except for one team in the Hyderabad site which had one supervisor and three enumerators due to a smaller sample size. As in Ethiopia, efforts were made to ensure gender balance within each team. On average, each team was assigned to work in three of the 20 original cluster sites and spent approximately 45 to 50 days in each site.

In Peru, the fieldwork was organised into three groups – North, Centre and South – as in previous survey rounds. Each group comprised two supervisors and ten enumerators. All the teams began fieldwork by searching for participants in Lima, where three of the 20 original clusters are located, after which all the teams moved outside of Lima:

- The *North team*, covering six clusters, spent approximately 20 days per cluster, starting in Tumbes and finishing in San Martin.
- The *Centre team*, also covering six clusters, spent approximately 23 days per cluster, starting in Cajamarca and ending in Junin.
- The *South team*, responsible for five clusters, spent 23 days per cluster, starting in Puno and finishing in Ayacucho.

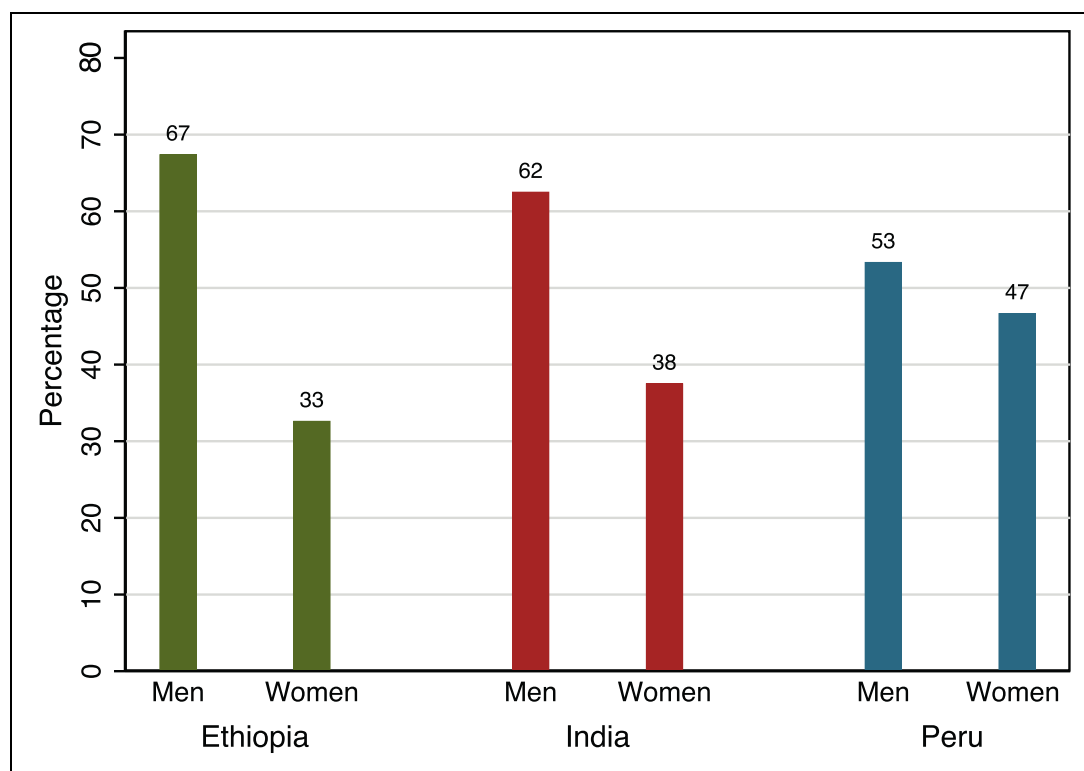
In each team the fieldwork operations were led by the supervisors under the guidance of the field coordinator. In urban areas, enumerators worked alone, starting with participants closest to their accommodation and gradually moving outward. In rural or dispersed areas, enumerators typically worked in groups of two or three, although occasionally whole teams were split into two smaller groups, each consisting of one supervisor and five enumerators. In the most dispersed or dangerous areas, supervisors prioritised forming teams of experienced male interviewers familiar with the area.

Profile

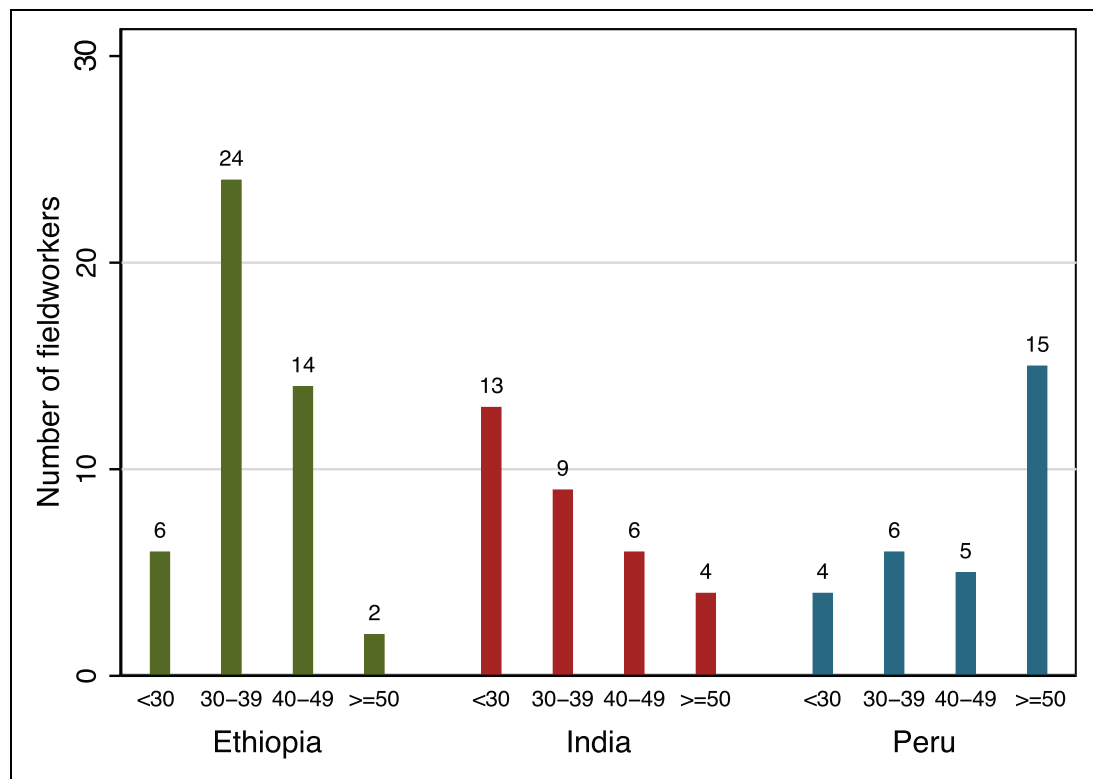
The following information comes from the fieldworker survey, a voluntary exercise administered at the end of fieldwork operations to all fieldworkers involved in the Round 7 survey in Ethiopia, India and Peru. The survey was completed by 82% of fieldwork staff (including both supervisors and enumerators), including 46 respondents in Ethiopia, 32 in India and 30 in Peru. In Ethiopia, this survey was administered before the beginning of the phone survey, so the results here reflect only the main survey. To ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of the fieldworkers, these data will not be publicly archived.

Overall, the proportion of women varied across study countries. In Ethiopia, 33% of fieldworkers were women, compared to 38% in India and 47% in Peru (Figure 1).

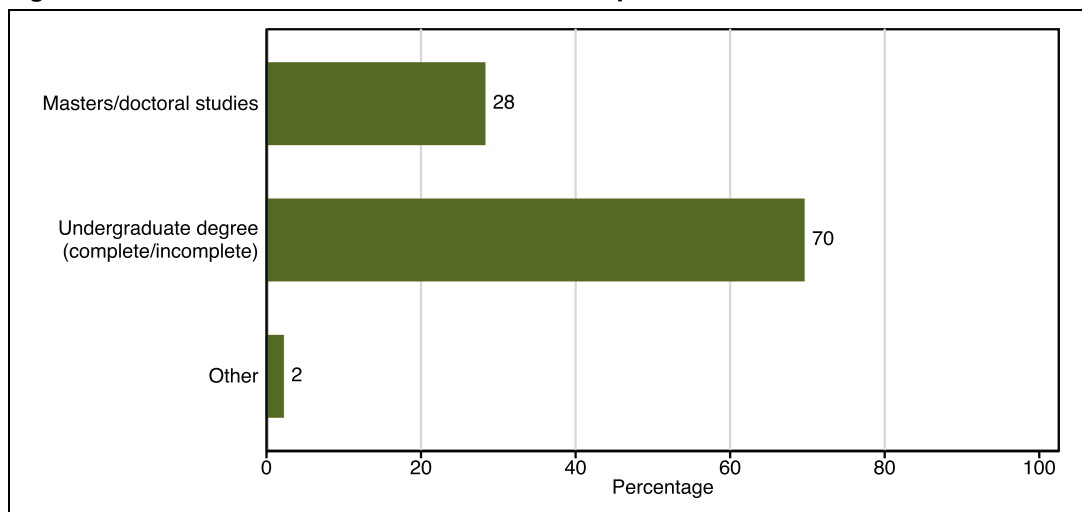
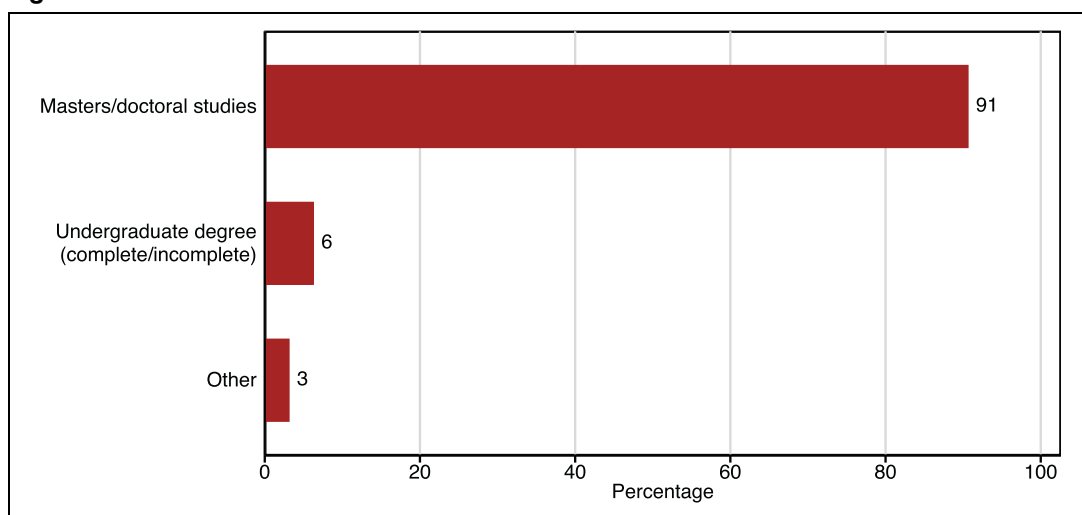
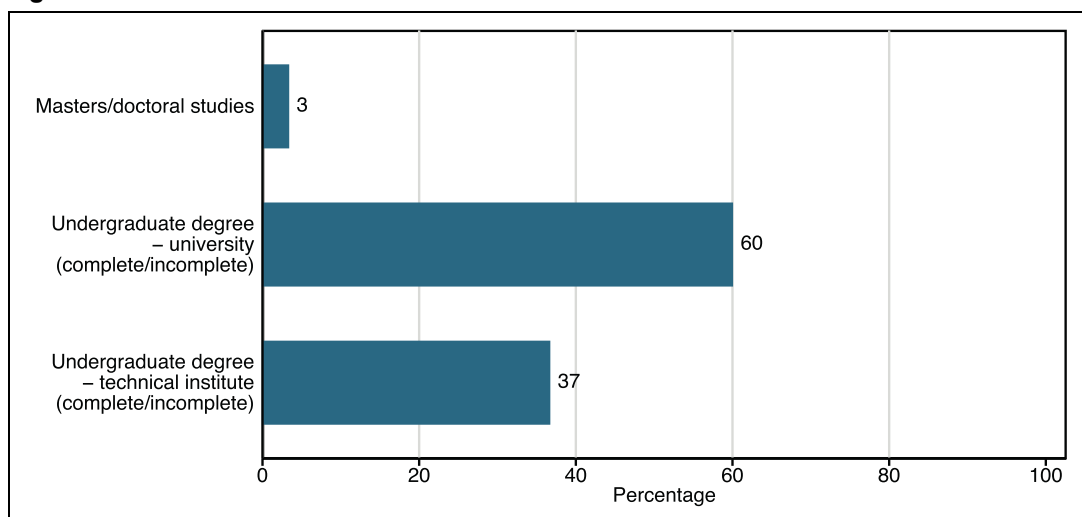
Figure 1. *Gender distribution of fieldworkers in Ethiopia, India and Peru*



The age distribution of fieldworkers also showed some variation across study countries (Figure 2). In Ethiopia, fieldworkers ranged from 24 to 53 years old, with a high concentration between the ages of 30 and 39. In India, fieldworkers ranged from 21 to 54 years old, with a slightly higher concentration under the age of 30. In Peru, fieldworkers ranged from 24 to 63 years old, with a notable concentration over the age of 50.

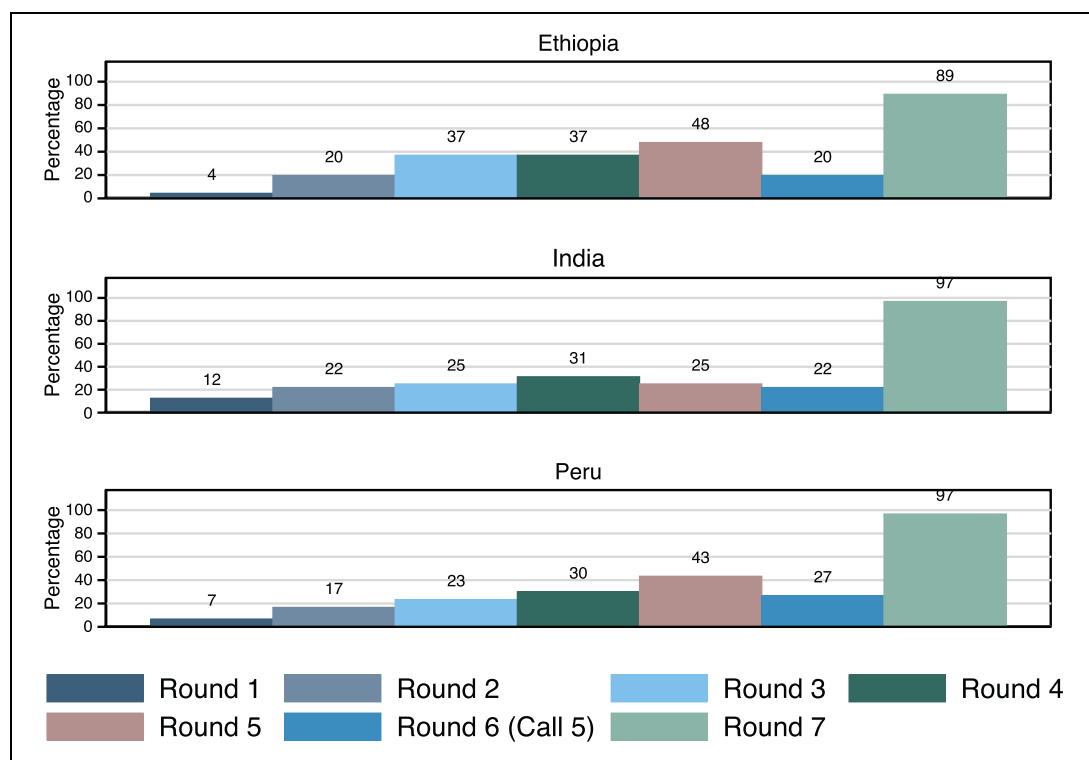
Figure 2. *Age distribution of fieldworkers in Ethiopia, India and Peru*

Fieldworkers' education level varied by country (Figure 3). In Ethiopia, 70% were enrolled in an undergraduate programme, 28% had completed postgraduate education and 2% had completed other forms of education. In India, most fieldworkers (91%) had completed postgraduate education, while the remaining 9% were enrolled in an undergraduate programme or had completed some other form of education. In Peru, 60% were enrolled in an undergraduate programme at a university, 37% in an undergraduate programme at a technical institution and 3% had completed postgraduate education.

Figure 3. *Education level of fieldworkers in Ethiopia, India and Peru***Figure 3a. Education level of fieldworkers in Ethiopia****Figure 3b. Education level of fieldworkers in India****Figure 3c. Education level of fieldworkers in Peru**

Enumerators were first selected for Round 7 based on their previous experience with earlier Young Lives survey rounds, and additional experienced fieldworkers were recruited as needed. In terms of work experience, in Ethiopia 53% of fieldworkers had been in a similar role (with Young Lives or any other institution/study) for more than ten years and 68% had previously participated in at least one Young Lives round. In India, 85% of fieldworkers had prior experience in a similar role before working with Young Lives, and of these 37% had more than ten years of experience. Specific to Young Lives, 35% had previously participated in at least one Young Lives round. In Peru, 50% of enumerators had more than ten years of experience in a similar role and 47% had participated in at least one earlier Young Lives round. Among the fieldworkers who worked with Young Lives in Round 7, some have been with the team since the very first rounds (Figure 4).

Figure 4. *Proportion of Round 7 fieldworkers who participated in previous Young Lives survey rounds in Ethiopia, India and Peru*



Note: The proportions indicate the percentage of Round 7 fieldworkers who were involved in that round.

4.3.3 In-round tracking

Once each fieldwork team arrived at one of the 20 original cluster sites, they began tracking the study participants still living there. This process is called ‘in-round tracking’. Across Ethiopia, India and Peru, in-round tracking followed similar processes, with some country-specific adjustments.

In Ethiopia, fieldwork teams were dispatched to all Young Lives sites, where enumerators first contacted the field guides (key informants living in the community and familiar with the study and the location of Young Lives participants), while supervisors gathered necessary

community-level information. In doing so, participants who had remained in the sites and those who had migrated elsewhere or abroad were identified. For participants who had moved, phone calls were made to confirm their availability and willingness to participate. Once confirmed, enumerators were assigned to conduct the interviews. Locating participants was more challenging in this survey round than in previous rounds, largely due to the increase in internal migration, particularly among the Older Cohort, often driven by the conflict (for example, many participants from Tigray had relocated to the regional capital, Mekelle). To track participants who had migrated within 30–40km of the Young Lives sites, supervisors assigned one or more enumerators to visit them. For participants who had migrated beyond this distance, the project coordinator and field coordinator in Addis Ababa organised the migrants into groups, based on their location, and assigned the enumerators nearest to them to conduct the interviews. Efforts to locate some migrant participants from the in-person sample continued up until the start of the phone survey in April 2024.

In India, supervisors first contacted participants by phone to schedule appointments, after which they allocated them to enumerators. The country team had sufficient contact information, including phone numbers for participants and their family members. However, challenges remained in reaching certain participants, particularly those residing in tribal areas and those who had set up separate households against the wishes of their elders. In such cases, support from peers living in the same village proved instrumental in locating these participants. For participants who had moved far from their original residence, some were willing to return to be interviewed, with fieldwork teams reimbursing their travel expenses. In tribal regions, fieldworkers often walked long distances through hilly terrain to reach participants. Depending on appointment schedules and workloads, supervisors occasionally instructed enumerators to visit neighbouring villages or additional cluster sites. For participants who had moved out of their site or district, the fieldwork team closest to the new location was informed and tasked with incorporating these participants into their schedules.

In Peru, enumerators first visited participants at their last known addresses, obtained through the most recent tracking. In most cases, participants were located and interviewed at their dwellings. However, participants were often not at home at the time of the first visit due to work, study, travel or relocation. In these circumstances, participants were called at different times of the day and invited to be interviewed at the time most convenient for them. This approach helped reduce the need for multiple visits, saving time and resources. If a participant did not own a phone and there were no other alternatives, while the team remained in the locality, enumerators would return to the participant's dwelling at times of day that they would be home, according to information provided by their family. Importantly, when each fieldworker had finished visiting all participants within their assigned clusters, they would return to Lima to interview participants whom they were unable to reach during their first search there, as well as participants who had recently migrated to Lima, according to their relatives.

5. Statistical analysis of Round 7 administration times

This section presents the statistical analysis of Round 7 administration times. It provides an overview of the completed interviews, survey administration time (measured by both nominal survey duration and active screen time) and preferred interview start and end times. Box 1 details the statistical results for the Ethiopia phone survey.

5.1 Completed interviews

Table 4 shows the number of interviews completed by country and cohort. The Round 7 attrition report (Molina et al. 2025) provides more information on the attrition rates, main sources of attrition and discrepancies between target sample and the actual number of completed interviews.

Table 4. *Total number of interviews completed by country and cohort*

	Country	Younger Cohort	Older Cohort	Total
Number of interviews completed	Ethiopia	1,535	696	2,231*
	India	1,826	847	2,673
	Peru	1,702	517	2,219
	Total	5,063	2,060	7,123

Note: * This figure includes the 193 participants interviewed by phone during Round 7 due to the ongoing conflict in two Young Lives sites in Amhara (129 from the Younger Cohort and 64 from the Older Cohort).

5.2 Survey duration

Survey duration provides insights into the total time required in the field for data collection, as well as the time required from participants in the survey. It also enables the identification of interviews that deviate significantly from what is expected – either too short or too long – which could suggest either incomplete or inaccurate responses, or that something unexpected occurred during the interview.

Survey duration is defined in two ways:

1. **Nominal survey duration:** This considers the elapsed time from the start to the end of the interview, as entered by the enumerator, excluding observations with implausible values, defined as those below 60 minutes and above 300 minutes, negative values, or interviews not completed on the same day.⁷ It is called the nominal survey duration because it approximates the survey administration time and potentially differs from the real survey duration as it does not account for every pause made during the interview.

⁷ Reasons for implausible values include negative durations (indicating an error), interviews lasting less than 60 minutes (which may occur for participants with cognitive disabilities, since their caregivers have fewer survey sections to complete), interviews exceeding 300 minutes and interviews not completed on the same day (which may occur if the interview was completed in parts across one day or across multiple days).

2. **Active screen time:** This considers the active screen time of the interview, excluding observations above 600 minutes and interviews not completed on the same day. This definition includes preparation time and time spent on corrections after the interview has been completed. It excludes pauses made during the interview, as well as the time dedicated to administering sections which were completed without the tablet, such as anthropometrics or RACER, or in a different interview form, such as ACASI in the case of Ethiopia.⁸

Although neither definition provides an exact account of the survey duration, both provide a good approximation. The mean and median nominal survey duration and active screen time by country and cohort are reported in Table 5, alongside other statistics.

Table 5. *Survey duration by country and cohort*

Country	Cohort	Nominal survey duration ¹ (minutes)				Active screen time ² (minutes)			
		N	Mean	Median	(percentile 5 to 95)	N	Mean	Median	(percentile 5 to 95)
Ethiopia*	Younger Cohort	1,212	152	147	(95; 229)	1,261	147	136	(78; 263)
	Older Cohort	539	136	128	(79; 220)	572	127	114	(64; 252)
India	Younger Cohort	1,228	230	234	(168; 284)	1,440	227	215	(120; 378)
	Older Cohort	604	215	215	(152; 277)	687	206	189	(103; 364)
Peru	Younger Cohort	1,542	159	157	(114; 212)	1,572	245	230	(151; 390)
	Older Cohort	484	131	129	(91; 179)	491	221	206	(130; 365)

Notes: * Information from the in-person sample only is used to calculate statistics for Ethiopia. ¹ Nominal survey duration corresponds to the difference between start and end times of survey interviews as entered by the enumerator, excluding negative values, interviews not completed on the same day and interviews with a duration below 60 minutes or above 300 minutes. ² Active screen time corresponds to SurveyCTO's estimation of the amount of time that the main survey form was actively open, excluding interviews with duration above 600 minutes and interviews not completed on the same day.

The average nominal survey duration of a complete Round 7 interview ranged from 152 minutes (2.5 hours) to 230 minutes (3.8 hours) across the three country samples. Across countries, the Younger Cohort consistently required *more* time to complete the survey than the Older Cohort, regardless of definition used (16 and 20 more minutes in Ethiopia, 15 and 21 more minutes in India, and 28 and 24 more minutes in Peru – all differences are statistically significant at the 1%). This is consistent with the fact that the Younger Cohort had more survey sections to complete.

In Ethiopia and India, the nominal survey duration is higher than the active screen time when looking at the mean and median duration times. This is consistent with the nature of the two definitions, since nominal survey duration covers the full survey process, including the time taken by enumerators to complete the main survey section as well as other sections of the

⁸ In Ethiopia, ACASI was administered using a separate interview form because the module was administered in the three major languages, making it too programme heavy to be included in the main interview form.

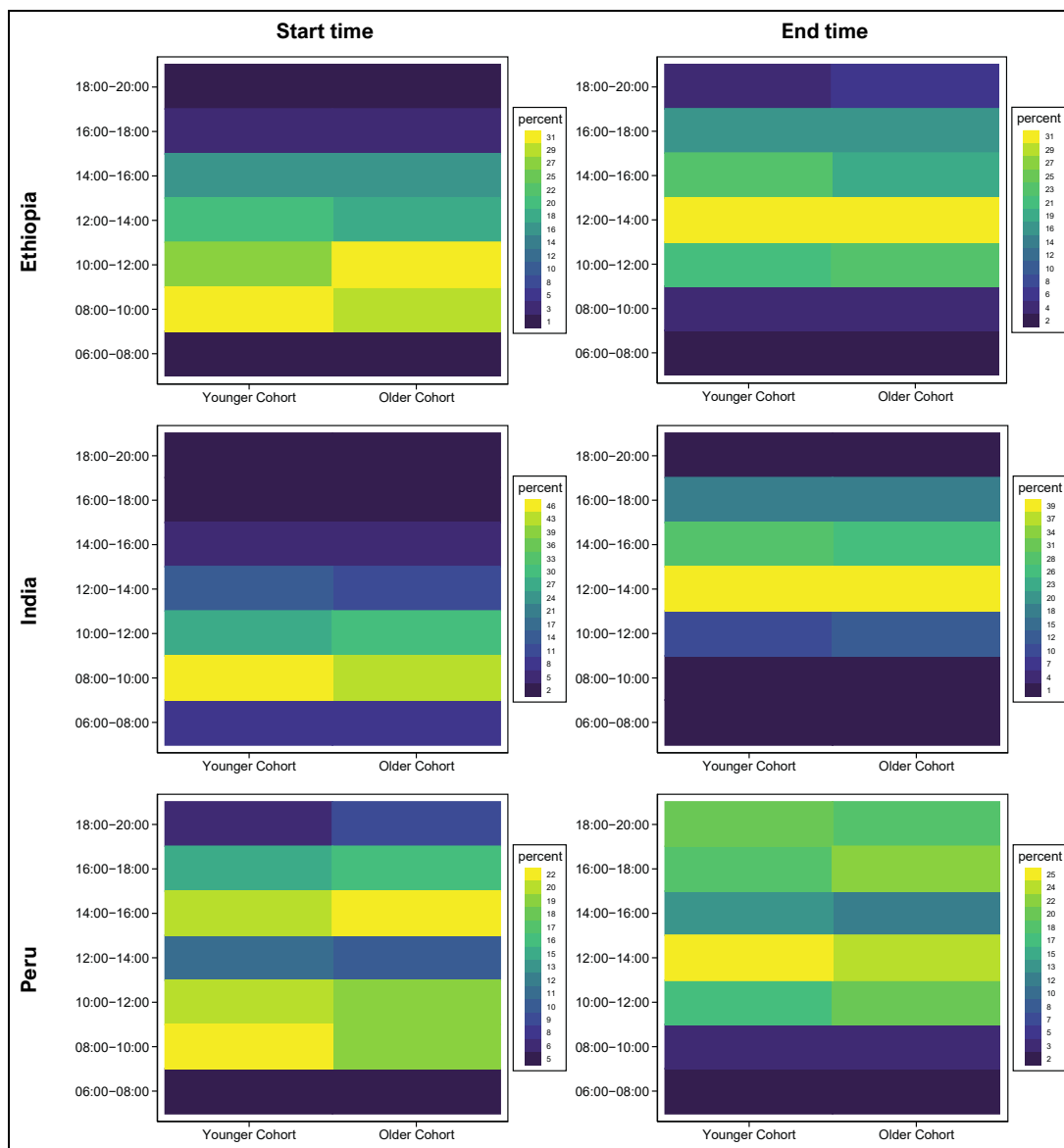
questionnaire not conducted via tablet (such as anthropometrics and RACER); while active screen time captures tablet usage time, which excludes time taken to complete these other sections that do not require the use of the tablet.

In contrast, in Peru, the nominal survey duration is lower than the active screen time when looking at the mean and median duration times. Specific instructions given to supervisors in Peru to conduct thorough quality checks likely led enumerators to spend more time on the tablet ensuring that surveys were complete before uploading them. Since active screen time accounts for tablet usage time on survey sections as well as revisions, this likely explains the difference in trend seen between Peru and the other countries.

Since there is no 300-minute time limit for active screen time, as is the case with nominal survey duration, the data show a noticeable number of interviews exceeding this threshold for both the Younger and Older Cohorts. Figure A1 in the Appendix provides a visual representation of nominal survey duration and active screen time.

The trends for both survey duration definitions are similar. However, nominal survey duration provides a more accurate estimate of the time required to complete a Round 7 questionnaire, as it accounts for time spent both on and off the tablet and, in the case of Ethiopia, time spent on ACASI. Therefore, the following discussion focuses on this measure. In Ethiopia and India, survey durations were longer for participants residing in rural areas compared to participants residing in urban areas, with the largest gap observed in India where rural respondents took, on average, 14 minutes longer in the Younger Cohort and 13 minutes longer in the Older Cohort, both significant at the 1% level (see Table A5 in the Appendix). One possible explanation for this difference is that urban participants are more likely to have migrated from elsewhere, leading them to answer more questions in certain modules, such as migration history, whereas rural participants, who are less likely to have moved, have fewer questions to complete. In Ethiopia, survey durations were five minutes longer for rural Younger Cohort participants (significant at the 5% level), though no significant differences were found for the Older Cohort. In contrast, Peru showed no significant differences in survey duration by urban–rural residence, though women generally took six to eight minutes longer than men across both cohorts (significant at the 1% level).

Figure 5. *Heat maps of survey start and end times in Ethiopia (in-person sample), India and Peru*



Notes: The lighter or warmer the colour of a box, the higher the proportion of interviews that started or ended in that specific time interval, by cohort. For instance, in Ethiopia most interviews started between 8 and 10 a.m. and finished between 12 and 2 p.m. Some interviews were recorded at unusually early or late hours due to incorrect time settings on enumerators' tablets, meaning these time stamps do not reflect actual interview times. As a result, observations with start or end times outside the range of 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. were excluded: Ethiopia (54 start-time observations, 3%; 60 end-time observations, 3%), India (0 start time; 24 end time, 1%) and Peru (53 start time, 2%; 268 end time, 12%). Notably, 205 of Peru's excluded end-time observations occurred within the designated 8 to 10 p.m. period.

Figure 5 illustrates how, across countries, fieldwork teams typically began their interviews between 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. Interestingly in Peru, interviews took place at two distinct starting periods: between 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. and between 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. Within each country, the start and end times of interviews were generally consistent across cohorts, although interviews conducted with the Older Cohort generally finished slightly earlier than interviews with the Younger Cohort. This difference likely reflects the Younger Cohort's strict school schedules, while the Older Cohort perhaps have more flexible work arrangements, work night shifts, or may not be employed at all. Additionally, a larger proportion of participants in the

Older Cohort have school-aged children than in the Younger Cohort, which may result in less time available in the afternoon after their children return from school. Overall, these observations are encouraging, as they suggest that interviews were scheduled at times that accommodated participants' availability during the day.

5.3 Survey duration by fieldworker

The distribution of the survey duration times by fieldworker, organised by cohort and survey duration definition, are presented for each country (see Figures A2, A3 and A4 in the Appendix). This task determines whether differences in duration times, based on the definition used, are consistent across fieldworkers. However, it is important to note that it is not possible to evaluate the performance of fieldworkers based on this metric, as differences in duration might be driven by the profile of the participants that they were assigned.

The differences between the distributions for the nominal survey duration and active screen time are consistent with their differing specifications. Active screen time reflects more variability, which can be attributed to the individual behaviours of fieldworkers and the circumstances of each interview, since this definition is partly influenced by how long fieldworkers decide to dedicate to revisions, depending on the specifics of each survey.

In Ethiopia, the average nominal survey duration per fieldworker ranged from 101 to 240 minutes for the Younger Cohort and from 69 to 229 minutes for the Older Cohort.⁹ For active screen time, the average survey duration per fieldworker ranged from 90 to 252 minutes for the Younger Cohort and from 68 to 252 minutes for the Older Cohort.

In India, the average nominal survey duration per fieldworker ranged from 144 to 267 minutes for the Younger Cohort and from 110 to 270 minutes for the Older Cohort, with most of the fieldworkers completing their interviews in 200 to 250 minutes. For active screen time, the average survey duration per fieldworker ranged from 83 to 368 minutes for the Younger Cohort and from 72 to 364 minutes for the Older Cohort.

In Peru, the average nominal survey duration per fieldworker ranged from 129 to 196 minutes for the Younger Cohort and from 90 to 157 minutes for the Older Cohort. For active screen time, the average survey duration per fieldworker ranged from 172 to 396 minutes for the Younger Cohort and from 134 to 344 minutes for the Older Cohort. Regarding active screen time, greater variation and multiple extreme values were recorded, with the highest reaching 600 minutes (the cut-off).

⁹ These statistics refer exclusively to the in-person interviews conducted in Ethiopia. See Box 1 for statistics relating to the phone survey interviews.

Box 1. *Ethiopia: phone survey duration*

Table 6 presents summary statistics for phone survey duration, using both definitions of duration. Considering the nominal survey duration, the mean and median survey duration times for the Younger Cohort were 51 and 44 minutes, respectively. Most interviews lasted between 24 and 94 minutes (percentile 5 to 95). For the Older Cohort, the mean and median survey duration times were 53 and 43 minutes, respectively. Most interviews lasted between 26 and 119 minutes (percentile 5 to 95).¹⁰ As expected, the phone survey was substantially shorter than the in-person survey since it included only selected modules and questions.

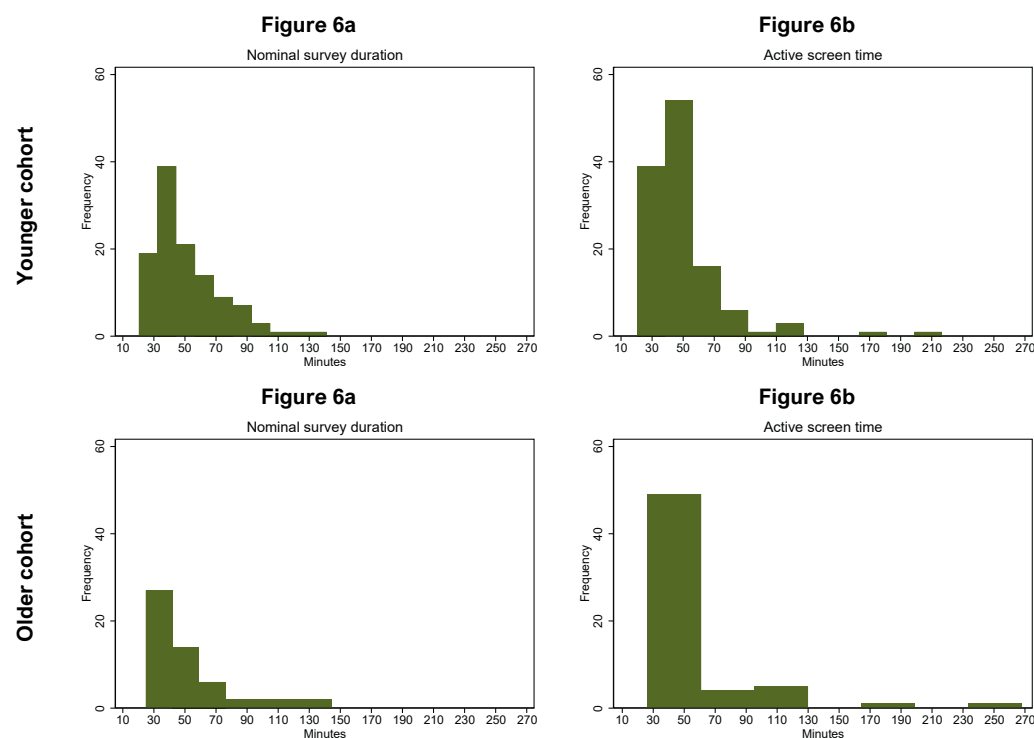
The mean and median active screen times for the Younger Cohort were 50 and 43 minutes, respectively, while most interviews lasted from 27 to 89 minutes (percentile 5 to 95). For the Older Cohort, the mean and median active screen times were 57 and 47 minutes, respectively, and most interviews lasted between 28 and 125 minutes (percentile 5 to 95).¹¹ Active screen time is not truncated. Since the phone survey did not contain sections such as ACASI, RACER and anthropometrics, the average durations by survey definition and cohort are very similar. Figure 6 shows the distributions of survey duration by cohort and definition used.

Table 6. Phone survey duration by cohort

Cohort	Nominal survey duration (minutes) ¹			Active screen time (minutes) ²		
	N	Mean	Median	N	Mean	Median
Younger Cohort	115	51	44	121	50	43
Older Cohort	55	53	43	60	57	47

Notes: 1. Nominal survey duration corresponds to the difference between the start and end times of interviews as entered by the enumerators, excluding implausible values with duration times below 20 and above 150 minutes, and interviews not completed on the same day. 2. Active screen time corresponds to SurveyCTO's estimation of the amount of time that the main survey form was actively open, excluding interviews not completed on the same day.

Figure 6. Distributions of phone survey duration by cohort and definition used (histogram)



10 When computing the nominal survey duration, 23 interviews were excluded: two with durations below 20 minutes, nine with durations above 150 minutes and 12 that were not completed on the same day. These exclusions represent 1%, 5% and 6% of the completed interviews, respectively.

11 When computing active screen time, 12 interviews were excluded, all of which were not completed on the same day. These represent 6% of the completed interviews.

Box 1. *Ethiopia: phone survey duration (continued)*

Figures 7a and 7b depict heat maps for the start and end times, respectively, of the interviews for the Younger Cohort and the Older Cohort. For the Younger Cohort, most interviews started around 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., whereas Older Cohort interviews started slightly earlier, at around 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. For both cohorts, interviews generally ended within the same time frame.

Figure 7. Heat maps of phone survey start and end times in Ethiopia

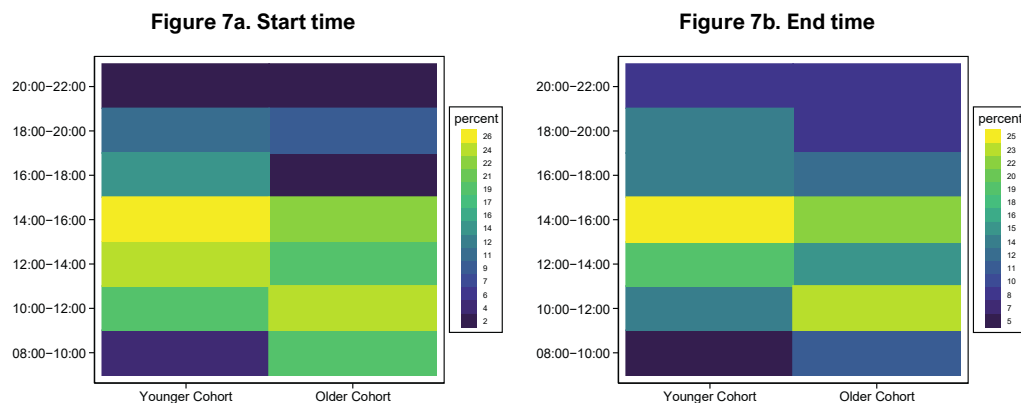


Figure 8 shows survey duration by fieldworker. When looking at the nominal survey duration, with a few exceptions, most fieldworkers conducted at least one particularly long interview. When looking at active screen time, there were fewer extreme outliers and differences between fieldworkers are less marked. However, active screen time has particularly large outliers for one fieldworker, reaching 268 minutes. With respect to active screen time, the differences between fieldworkers depict the differences in behaviour of each enumerator and the circumstances of each survey, because this definition partially depends on how long an enumerator dedicates to revision for each interview.

Figure 8. Distributions of phone survey duration by fieldworker and definition used (boxplot)

Figure 8a. Nominal survey duration by fieldworker

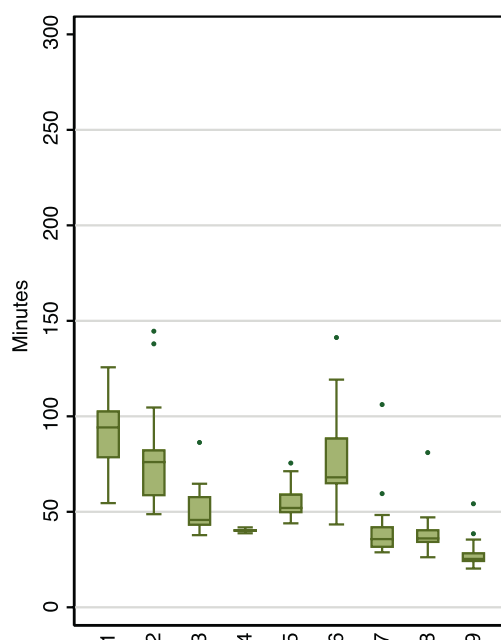
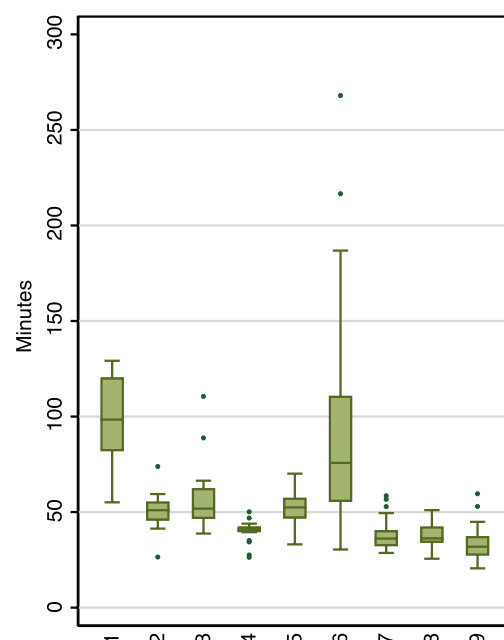


Figure 8b. Active screen time by fieldworker



6. Post-data collection feedback sessions

At the end of the fieldwork, Young Lives teams in Ethiopia, India and Peru conducted feedback sessions with fieldwork staff to reflect on the successes, challenges and lessons learnt from the process. This section highlights key practices that worked well and areas requiring improvement, drawing directly from the insights and first-hand experiences of fieldworkers during Round 7 data collection.

6.1 Reception of Young Lives families

Round 7 marked a significant shift, as all participants were now legal adults, making their participation in the survey entirely their decision rather than that of their parents (although in some cases, especially in India, this decision was sometimes influenced by external factors such as the approval of husbands or in-laws, with whom the participants now lived).¹²

In India and Peru, the reception to the survey was generally positive, with most participants happy to see the fieldworkers again. This warm reception can be largely attributed to the friendly and trustful relationship built with participants and their families over time, with many of the fieldworkers returning to the same families survey after survey.¹³

In some cases, fieldworkers noted that participants' enthusiasm to take part had diminished compared to previous rounds. This decline, observed consistently across cohorts, can be attributed to the fact that participants, now 22 and 29 years old, are increasingly busy with their own lives and activities.

Overall, acceptance of the survey varied by cohort and area of residence (urban/rural). Younger Cohort participants and those residing in rural areas were generally more receptive than Older Cohort participants and those residing in urban areas.

6.2 Fieldworkers' perceptions of the reasons for attrition

As with any longitudinal study, a major challenge is minimising the attrition rate – the percentage of participants who are not interviewed even though they are part of the target sample – and preserving the original sample as much as possible over time. After 20 years of data collection, the attrition rate is relatively low in Round 7. Ethiopia recorded the highest rate at 25.6%, followed by Peru at 19.8% and India at 11.5%. Common sources of attrition are participants not being found,¹⁴ migration abroad, refusal and death (Molina et al. 2025). To complement these quantitative findings, this sub-section reports fieldworkers' perceptions of the main sources of survey attrition and the challenges faced during data collection.

12 Participants' decision to take part may be influenced by the approval of their in-laws, and household members are sometimes present during face-to-face interviews. To minimise potential impacts on data quality, alternative interview formats (such as written or audio formats) are employed for sensitive questions, ensuring privacy and reducing social influence.

13 Young Lives aims to use, as far as possible, the same fieldworkers across survey rounds.

14 This covers participants who have either moved, not answered, could not be traced, were unreachable, were in the army or could not be interviewed due to security reasons.

According to fieldworkers, the most significant source of attrition was the inability to locate participants, a perception that was consistent across countries. Despite extensive efforts, some participants could not be located, likely due to migration but often this could not be confirmed. In some instances, participants had moved from their last known address and could not be contacted due to changes in their network connectivity or lack of updated contact information. Occasionally, some participants had relocated to extremely remote rural areas associated with significant security risks (e.g. related to terrorism or drug trafficking), making face-to-face contact unfeasible.

Migration, both domestic and abroad, was another key reason cited by fieldworkers. It is beyond Young Lives' scope to track participants outside of country borders (or states in the case of India), while domestic migration often made it difficult to track participants, resulting in their unintentional exclusion from the survey (participant not found). Those migrating domestically often moved to provincial or national capitals in search of better opportunities. In some cases, fieldwork teams had general information on participants' whereabouts but lacked specific addresses, making it impossible to locate them. For cases of confirmed migration, many participants had moved for education, employment or to join their spouses. Although migration was a challenge, the fact that fieldworkers search for participants within national borders (states in India) before fieldwork begins minimises its impact on attrition. To make the search for participants who have migrated more efficient, the fieldwork teams contact them beforehand and, where they are living outside the sites, attempt to group participants together to interview them in one go. Furthermore, the final weeks of fieldwork are dedicated to reaching those who were not found at the addresses provided during the tracking round or who could not be visited before for other reasons. For example, the Young Lives team in India takes advantage of public holidays, when they expect participants to travel back to their hometowns, to meet and interview them in the original sites where their families are still living.

Refusals were another notable source of attrition reported by the fieldworkers. Some participants cited personal reasons, such as marriage or employment, as well as unwillingness to spend time on the survey. Others simply no longer wanted to participate. Nevertheless, after fieldworkers explained the study's aims in more detail, emphasising the importance of the information that participants provide, survey take-up increased.

Lastly, death of the participant was another notable source of attrition reported by fieldworkers. Causes of death included heart conditions, high fever, jaundice, road accidents, malnutrition, and occasionally mental health conditions. Attrition due to participant deaths was highest in Ethiopia, likely because of the ongoing conflict and its associated effects, such as famine.

6.3 Main challenges faced by fieldworkers during data collection

The main challenges expressed by fieldworkers are outlined below.

1. Locating the place of residence and participants' dwelling

The main challenge in all clusters, whether urban or rural, was to locate the dwellings of participants who had been contacted for the tracking by phone. Many participants gave imprecise directions and references, and in some cases the wrong name of their localities, which occasionally resulted in unnecessary trips on foot or by car that wasted time and caused exhaustion and discomfort for the enumerators.

In some cases, multiple enumerators were required to collect data from participants, either due to safety concerns or because it was too difficult for one enumerator to carry the anthropometric and cortisol-related instruments by themselves. This lengthened the time needed to complete interviews with all target sample participants.

2. Finding the participant and scheduling the interview

Young Lives participants, especially those residing in urban areas, were often not at home when fieldworkers came to visit – busy with activities that occupy most of their time (e.g. school, study, extra-curricular activities, etc.) – which made it difficult to schedule interviews. Participant absence was particularly common during weekdays. Fieldworkers recommended scheduling interviews over the weekend as a possible solution, but even this may not be enough. In rural areas, making appointments during peak agricultural seasons is challenging and so enumerators planned their interviews accordingly.

3. Locating and reaching (internal) migrants

Data collection was particularly challenging due to increased internal migration in Ethiopia and Peru. However, having the contact numbers of participants' family members, neighbours and peers helped address this difficulty, since it enabled fieldworkers to reach participants through multiple channels and with the help of others.

4. Reciprocity payments and length of survey

Although the overall reception of Young Lives families was positive, two perceived challenges were the length of the survey, which some participants considered too time-consuming, and the reciprocity payments, which some participants perceived as insufficient given their age and increased needs.

5. Shocks

In Ethiopia, the main challenge for the Round 7 fieldwork was the ongoing conflict in the country. In Peru, the North team experienced torrential rains, strong winds, lightning and thunder when entering two cluster sites in the jungle, which caused some delays.

6. Supervisors' training

The Round 7 fieldwork highlighted the importance of training overall and the need for extra training for the fieldwork supervisors, specifically on how to handle the fieldworkers and organise their work. This includes supervisors' ability to communicate, manage interpersonal relationships, make on-the-spot decisions and allocate workloads fairly across their team.

6.4 Fieldworkers' evaluations of Round 7 components (qualitative)

This sub-section describes fieldworkers' experiences with certain Round 7 survey components from a qualitative perspective. It discusses their insights gathered through open-ended responses, comments and opinions on components such as pre-fieldwork activities, reciprocity payments, administration of the full survey and guidelines and processes in place for dealing with special cases and keeping fieldworkers and Young Lives families safe in the field.

6.4.1 Pre-fieldwork activities

In general, fieldworkers and supervisors valued the pre-fieldwork activities and materials provided, particularly the pre-pilot/pilot rounds, fieldworker training and fieldwork manual.

- **Pre-pilot/pilot rounds:** The pilot rounds were instrumental in identifying and fixing any outstanding issues with the SurveyCTO programme, resolving translation problems with survey questions, and providing guidance on which sensitive questions related to the conflict in Ethiopia should be excluded or modified, before the fieldworkers departed for the main survey. Fieldworkers also found it beneficial that they were able to master the survey questions during the piloting rounds, before the main data collection began.
- **Fieldworker training sessions and materials:** These were well received by fieldworkers. They found it very helpful to be guided through the survey and response options, while having the opportunity to ask questions as they progressed. As an improvement, fieldworkers suggested adding more practice sessions to further reinforce their learning and apply taught concepts in a hands-on manner.
- **Fieldwork manual:** The fieldwork manual was indispensable in guiding the team through the fieldwork process. Whenever there was disagreement between the Young Lives staff who provided the training and the fieldworkers, both groups would refer to the manual to reach an agreement. Fieldwork manuals were used as a first point of call, hence enumerators requested physical copies before training sessions to familiarise themselves with the material in advance.

6.4.2 Round 7 survey content

Overall, fieldworkers noted that the effectiveness of survey administration and whether it runs smoothly depends largely on the participant's educational level, since some sections require participants to read a text and answer questions in a limited amount of time.

- **Consent form:** Overall, fieldworkers and supervisors positively valued the consent form, although they recommended keeping it as close to one page as possible.
- **Content and length of the main survey:** No issues were reported regarding the flow, translation or structure of the survey. However, across the study countries, many fieldworkers expressed concerns regarding the survey's length, reflecting shared challenges in this area.

6.4.3 Duty of care and reciprocity

Fieldwork teams received comprehensive training on ethics, safeguarding, the Young Lives code of conduct, and their overall duty of care, supported by the involvement of psychologists as well as learning materials.

With respect to the learning materials, fieldwork teams found the safeguarding guidelines very helpful and the consultation guidelines invaluable, with fieldworkers recommending that the guide be expanded to cover more topics. The involvement of psychologists in the training sessions and during fieldwork was also valued highly. The psychologists played a key role in helping respondents who needed emotional support and helping fieldworkers with difficult cases.

With regards to the reciprocity payment, fieldworkers believed that it is a strong incentive for survey participation. Reciprocity payments were made directly to participants by fieldworkers immediately after completion of the questionnaire, ensuring transparency and direct accountability. Fieldworkers noted that participants who were self-employed or salaried workers were more likely to not be fully satisfied by the amount received, viewing it as not enough to appropriately compensate for the time taken away from their work. Conversely, those employed as wage labourers or engaged in household chores were generally satisfied.

6.4.4 Special cases (cognitive disabilities and hearing impairments)

Interviews with participants with cognitive disabilities were always made in consultation with their caregivers or family members. Young Lives will continue to collect information on these participants from their parents or main caregivers until new methods have been established for such circumstances. Therefore, existing protocols for these cases were helpful to fieldworkers and will continue to be used. Since the main caretaker responds on behalf of the participant, many sections of the survey were not answered. The role of the field coordinator was particularly important here, since they were the most knowledgeable regarding these participants, which allowed them to have engaging conversations with their caregiver and gather detailed information on the current challenges the participant faced. For participants with hearing impairments the process is very similar, except for those that have hearing aids, who can complete the survey as normal.

6.4.5 Fieldwork teams and communication with the Oxford team

Compared to previous rounds, greater effort was made to ensure gender-balanced teams of fieldworkers, to account for the increasing number of gender-sensitive questions and anthropometrics being asked of respondents. Finding female fieldworkers proved more challenging, and not all had participated in previous rounds of Young Lives. Additional time was needed to familiarise these fieldworkers with the questionnaire.

Communication with the Oxford team was open and efficient. During the programming of the questionnaire, training and survey pilot stage, communication with the Oxford team was instrumental in resolving doubts and allowing for real-time modifications to be made to the survey instrument in SurveyCTO. In addition, fluid communication between the data managers in Ethiopia, India, Peru and Oxford was extremely important in ensuring changes in the programme could be centralised, reducing potential problems associated with simultaneous version changes.

6.4.6 Electronic devices, platforms and equipment

The fieldworkers found the SurveyCTO platform easy to use. They are familiar with it because Young Lives has been using the platform since 2021, and some of them also use it for other projects. Some suggestions for improvements included the addition of backup alternatives to minimise the risk of information loss, as well as automated processes which reflect changes made to participant data (e.g. participant name) in the rest of the form. With regards to the equipment and materials used, the tablets for the main survey worked well.

6.4.7 Translation process (Ethiopia)

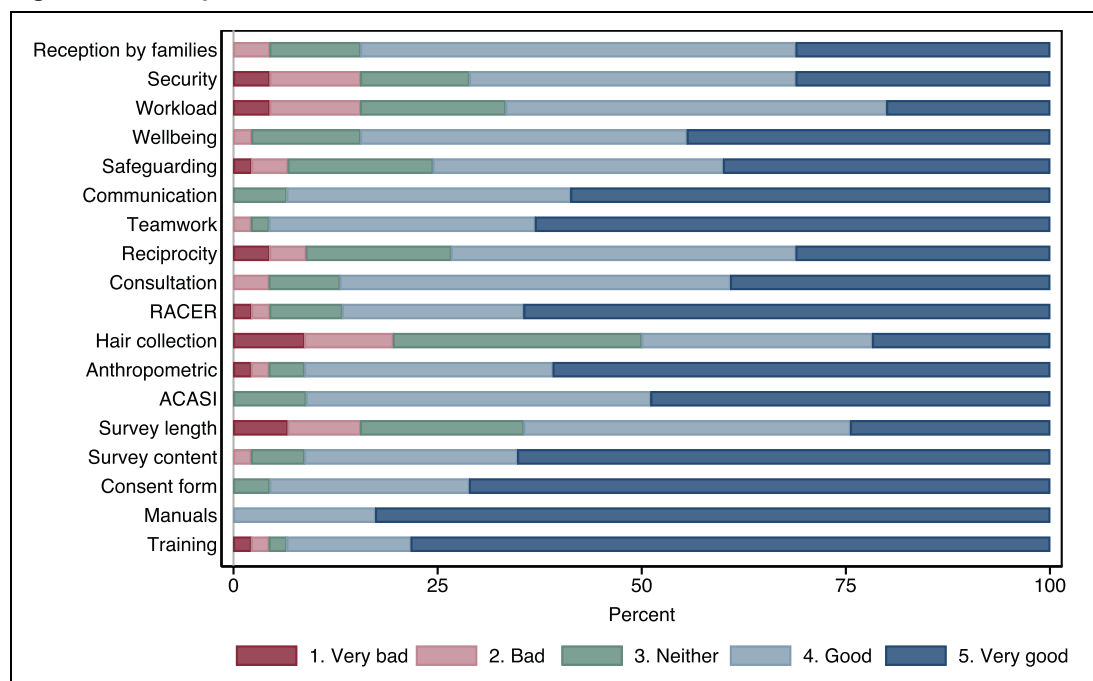
Translating the survey into the three major languages – Amharic, Oromo and Tigrigna – proved highly beneficial in helping participants fully understand the questions. This was especially important for perception-based questions that used Likert scales.¹⁵ Continuing this practice in future rounds was strongly recommended.

6.5 Fieldworkers' evaluations of Round 7 components (quantitative)

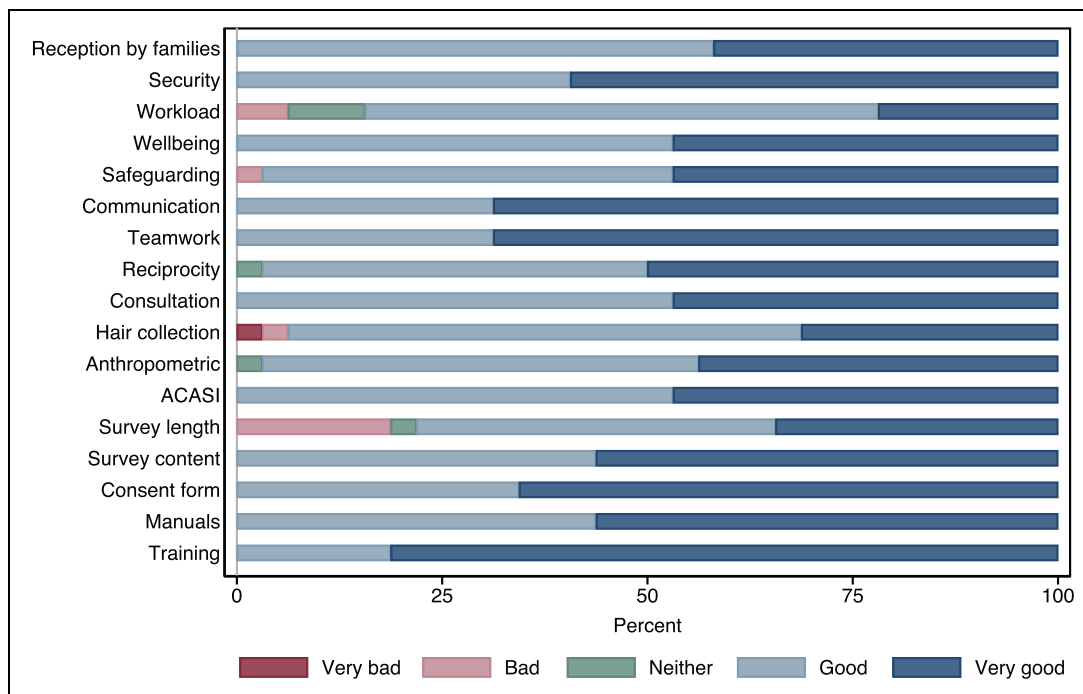
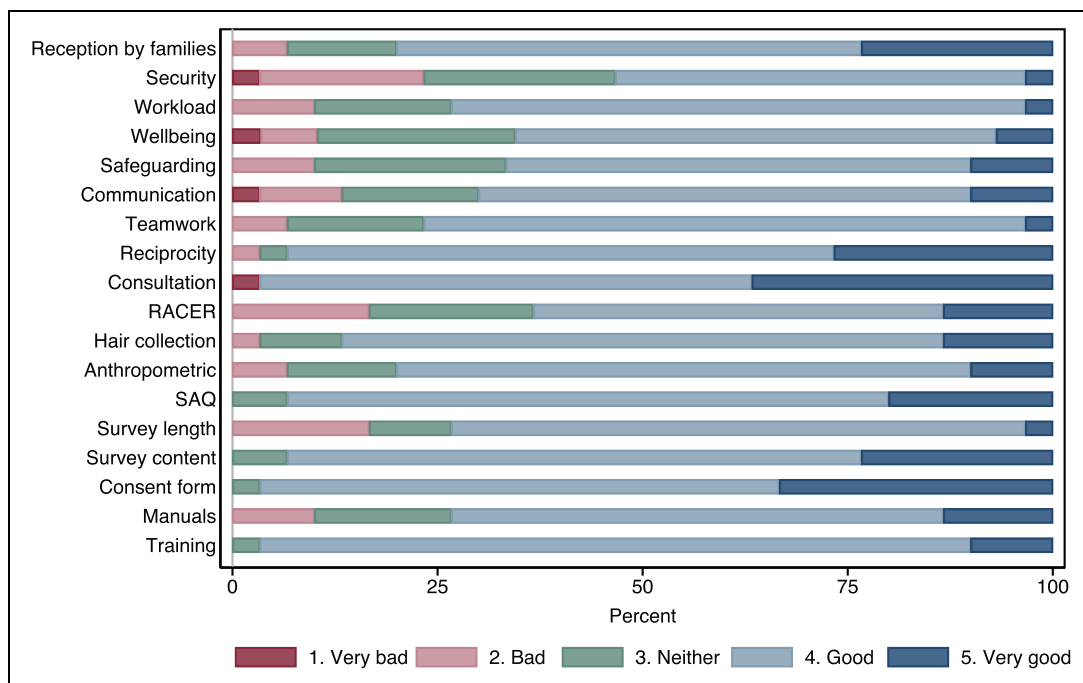
Young Lives also asked fieldworkers for their opinions on how well different aspects of the data collection process worked (Figure 9). Fieldworkers rated components on a scale of 1 ('very bad') to 5 ('very good').

Figure 9. *Fieldworkers' evaluations of Round 7 components*

Figure 9a. Ethiopia



¹⁵ A Likert scale is a commonly used rating system, typically ranging from one to five, designed to measure opinions, attitudes or behaviours.

Figure 9. *Fieldworkers' evaluations of Round 7 components (continued)***Figure 9b. India****Figure 9c. Peru**

Fieldworkers in Ethiopia and India expressed strong appreciation for the training sessions, fieldwork manual and consent forms, alongside soft skills such as teamwork (while in the field) and communication with the research team in Oxford. In Peru, enumerators similarly valued the consent forms, although the fieldwork manual and in-field teamwork did not

receive as much emphasis. In the case of Peru, the team valued highly the consultation guide, reciprocity payments and the main survey content.

Analysis by gender reveals that in Ethiopia, women rated the well-being support (4.6 vs 4.1) and reception by Young Lives families (4.5 vs 3.9) more positively than men. No other gender-based differences were statistically significant. In India, men rated the main survey content higher than women (4.7 vs 4.3), while gender-based differences for the other components were not significant. In Peru, no statistically significant differences were observed for any of the components assessed.

Overall, the fieldworker training, consultation guide, fieldwork manual and teamwork (while in the field) were generally the most positively rated components across all three countries, while logistical factors – particularly survey length and workload – were the most negatively rated.

Conclusion

This report outlines the fieldwork processes and data collection efforts undertaken in Round 7, emphasising accountability and the pursuit of high-quality data. It forms part of a broader package that includes the attrition report (Molina et al. 2025) and nine factsheets summarising key findings from Ethiopia, India and Peru across the thematic areas of health, nutrition and well-being, education and skills formation, and employment and family lives. By incorporating fieldworker insights, the report bridges fieldwork practices and challenges with the resulting statistical outcomes, offering a transparent and reflective account of the fieldwork process.

Appendix

Young Lives clusters and regions

To uphold its ethical commitments, Young Lives ensures the anonymity and confidentiality of study sites and participants. Therefore, geographical information is only shared at the regional level in Ethiopia, the district level in India and the provincial level in Peru, with no finer location details disclosed.

Tables A1 to A3 present the cluster sites along with their corresponding locations. To ensure confidentiality, the cluster sites have been anonymised.

Table A1. *Site numbers and corresponding regions in Ethiopia*

Cluster ID	Region
01	Addis Ababa
02	Addis Ababa
03	Addis Ababa
04	Amhara
05	Amhara
06	Amhara
07	Amhara
08	Oromia
09	Oromia
10	Oromia
11	Oromia
12	SNNP
13	SNNP
14	SNNP
15	SNNP
16	SNNP
17	Tigray
18	Tigray
19	Tigray
20	Tigray

Table A2. *Site numbers and corresponding districts in India (the states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana)*

Cluster ID	District
01	West Godavari
02	West Godavari
03	Srikakulam
04	Srikakulam
05	Srikakulam
06	Srikakulam
07	Srikakulam
08	Kadapa
09	Kadapa
10	Anantapur
11	Anantapur
12	Anantapur
13	Anantapur
14	Karimnagar
15	Jayashankar
16	Nagarkurnool
17	Mahabubnagar
18	Mahabubnagar
19	Jogulamba
20	Hyderabad

Table A3. *Site numbers and corresponding regions and provinces in Peru*

Cluster ID	Region	Province
01	Tumbes	Tumbes
02	Piura	Sullana
03	Piura	Morropón
04	Amazonas	Chachapoyas
05	San Martín	Rioja
06	San Martín	San Martín
07	Cajamarca	Cajamarca
08	La Libertad	Trujillo
09	Ancash	Huaylas
10	Ancash	Huaraz
11	Huánuco	Dos de Mayo
12	Lima	Lima
13	Lima	Lima
14	Lima	Lima
15	Junín	Satipo
16	Ayacucho	Huamanga
17	Ayacucho	Lucanas
18	Apurímac	Andahuaylas
19	Arequipa	Camaná
20	Puno	San Roman

Table A4. *Changes made for the phone survey questionnaire in Ethiopia*

Section	Phone survey (changes made in comparison to in-person survey)
1 Household roster	Minimally reduced
2.1 Socio-economic status	Minimally adapted
2.2 Shocks	Minimally reduced
3 Food security	None
5.1 Movement history	Significantly reduced
6.2 Current education	Extended
8.2 Perceptions of security	Simplified
9.1 Labour force participation	Simplified
9.2 Main activity 7	Significantly reduced
11.1 Marriage and cohabitation	Significantly reduced
11.2 Fertility	Significantly reduced
12 Public programmes	Minimally reduced
15 Feelings and attitudes	Significantly reduced
16.1 Social preferences	Simplified
17.1 Conflict experiences	None
18 Mental health	Significantly reduced
21 Locating Information	None

Box A1. *Ethiopia's phone survey: timeline of events*

The pre-pilot phase of the survey, spanning May to June 2023, proceeded without any security concerns. This period of calm was due to the cessation of the Tigray conflict, following the CoHA signed on 2 November 2022, and before the start of the Amhara conflict. Although numerous security checkpoints were encountered on the way to the study sites in Tigray, they did not pose any significant issues. The Amhara region was entirely under government control, ensuring a secure environment for the pre-pilot survey. The Young Lives sites in the Oromia and Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples (SNNP) regions were situated in the more stable and safer parts of the country, allowing the surveys to be carried out without any security-related disruptions.

Following the pre-pilot survey, the security situation in Amhara gradually worsened, culminating in an escalated conflict in August 2023. Despite the region being under a state of emergency, the Young Lives team in Ethiopia successfully conducted training sessions in Addis Ababa for supervisors from 21 August to 1 September 2023, and for enumerators from 14 to 30 September 2023. All the recruited supervisors and enumerators from Amhara participated in this training, amid uncertainties regarding the region's security.

The Round 7 survey commenced seamlessly in Tigray, Oromia and SNNP at the start of October 2023. The Young Lives sites in Amhara were deemed too perilous due to severe conflict, and fieldwork was postponed. The research team monitored the situation daily and, after a period, it was deemed feasible to conduct face-to-face interviews at the government-controlled urban sites (Site 04 and Site 06). These interviews proceeded without incident until an unexpected rebel incursion at Site 04 disrupted the process, meaning a few respondents could not be interviewed. The research team promptly directed the fieldworkers to evacuate to ensure their safety.

During the survey period, the two rural sites in Amhara (Site 05 and Site 07) were under the control of Amhara rebel groups, creating an unsafe environment for face-to-face interviews. With the help of local guides, the Young Lives team identified respondents who had relocated from these sites and were able to conduct face-to-face interviews with consenting individuals who now resided in safer areas. Following discussions with the Oxford team and other country teams, the Ethiopia team opted for phone surveys for those still residing in the two high-risk sites. The survey instrument was condensed and the team carried out phone interviews with a total of 193 respondents. The phone survey began on 2 April 2024 and ended on 30 April 2024.

The phone survey primarily focused on two Amhara sites (Sites 05 and 07); however, a small number of phone interviews were also conducted with participants from the other two Amhara sites (Sites 04 and 06) where face-to-face interviews were not feasible due to the conflict.

Table A5. *Survey duration by country and cohort*

	Cohort	Nominal survey duration (minutes) ¹						Active screen time		
		Original distribution			Adjusted distribution			(minutes) ²		
		N	Mean	Median	N	Mean	Median	N	Mean	Median
Ethiopia	Younger Cohort	1,254	159	148	1,212	152	147	1,261	147	136
	Urban	679	158	147	649	150	145	683	144	133
	Rural	574	159	150	562	155	149	577	150	140
	Men	627	160	149	605	153	148	630	148	137
	Women	627	158	147	607	151	146	631	146	134
	Older Cohort	570	147	130	539	136	128	572	127	114
	Urban	388	150	129	360	137	127	388	126	111
	Rural	182	141	130	179	134	130	184	131	122
	Men	295	154	131	276	135	129	296	129	114
	Women	275	140	127	263	137	127	276	126	114
India	Younger Cohort	1,441	250	242	1,228	230	234	1,440	227	215
	Urban	432	231	227	398	221	222	431	203	192
	Rural	1,009	258	247	830	235	240	1,009	237	224
	Men	764	251	246	653	232	239	763	226	214
	Women	677	248	237	575	229	231	677	227	216
	Older Cohort	686	236	222	604	215	215	687	206	189
	Urban	222	218	208	203	206	205	222	185	166
	Rural	464	244	228	401	219	221	465	216	201
	Men	331	240	222	283	214	213	332	203	193
	Women	355	232	222	321	216	216	355	210	186
Peru	Younger Cohort	1,571	162	158	1,542	159	157	1,572	245	230
	Urban	1,348	163	158	1,324	159	158	1,349	245	230
	Rural	221	161	155	216	157	155	221	245	225
	Men	768	158	154	757	155	154	768	242	226
	Women	803	167	161	785	162	160	804	248	234
	Older Cohort	491	134	129	484	131	129	491	221	206
	Urban	412	135	129	405	131	128	412	224	206
	Rural	79	129	130	79	129	130	79	207	192
	Men	253	132	128	250	127	127	254	222	201
	Women	238	136	130	234	135	130	237	221	207

Notes: ¹ Nominal survey duration corresponds to the difference between enumerators' start and end times of survey interviews as entered by the enumerator, excluding negative values and interviews not completed on the same day. In the adjusted distribution, observations with a duration below 60 minutes or above 300 minutes are also excluded. ² Active screen time corresponds to SurveyCTO's estimation of the amount of time that the main survey form was actively open, excluding interviews with a duration above 600 minutes and interviews not completed on the same day. ³ Area of residence (urban/rural) refers to the participant's location in Round 7. ⁴ Gender of participant (man/woman) refers to participant's sex in Round 1 (corrected version).

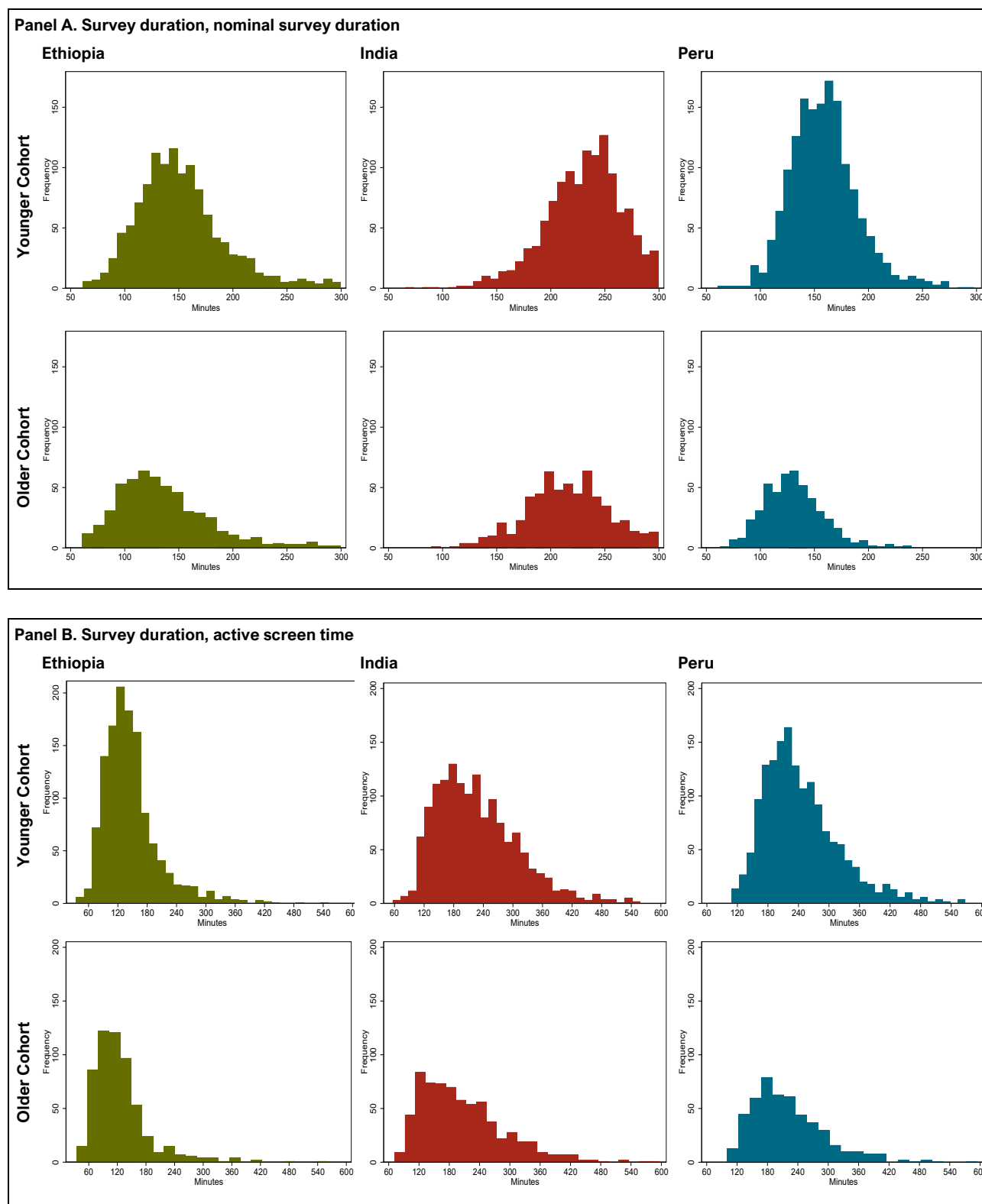
Figure A1. *Distributions of the survey duration, by country and cohort*

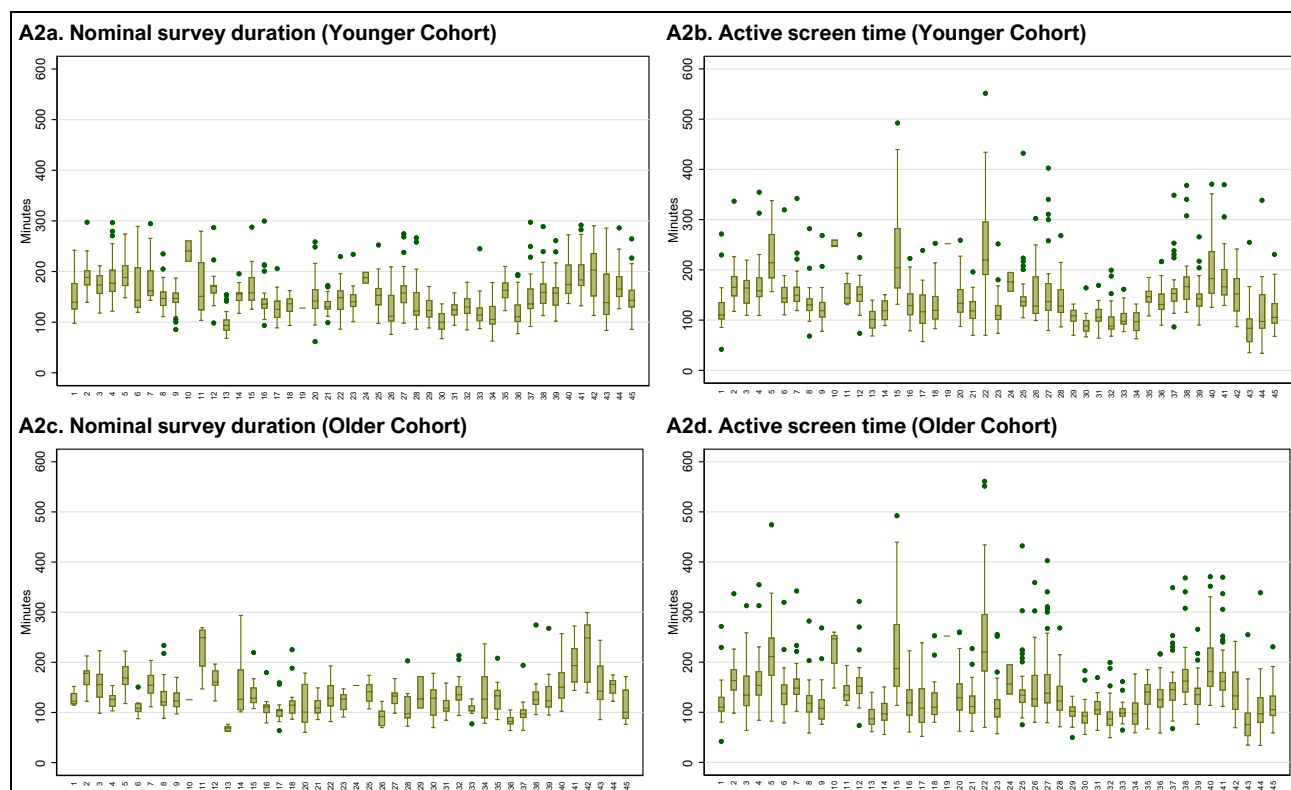
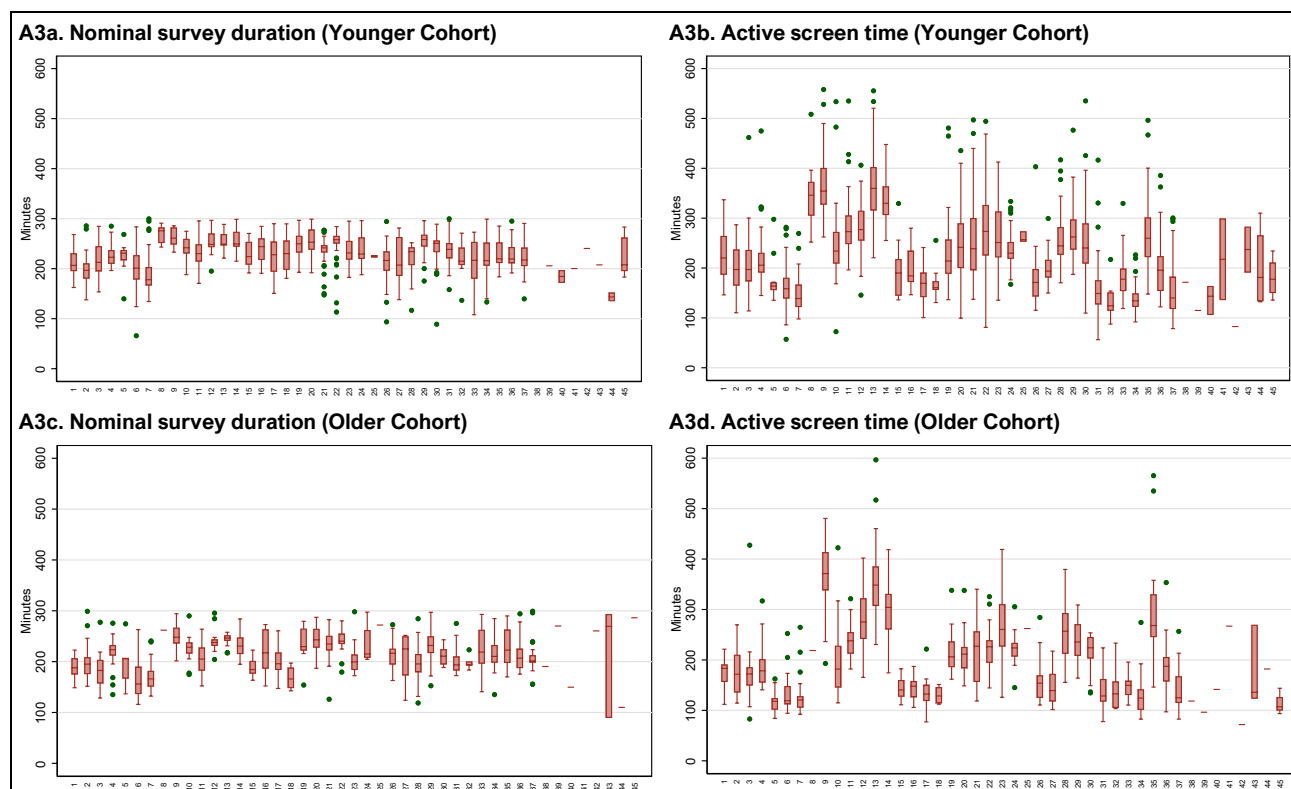
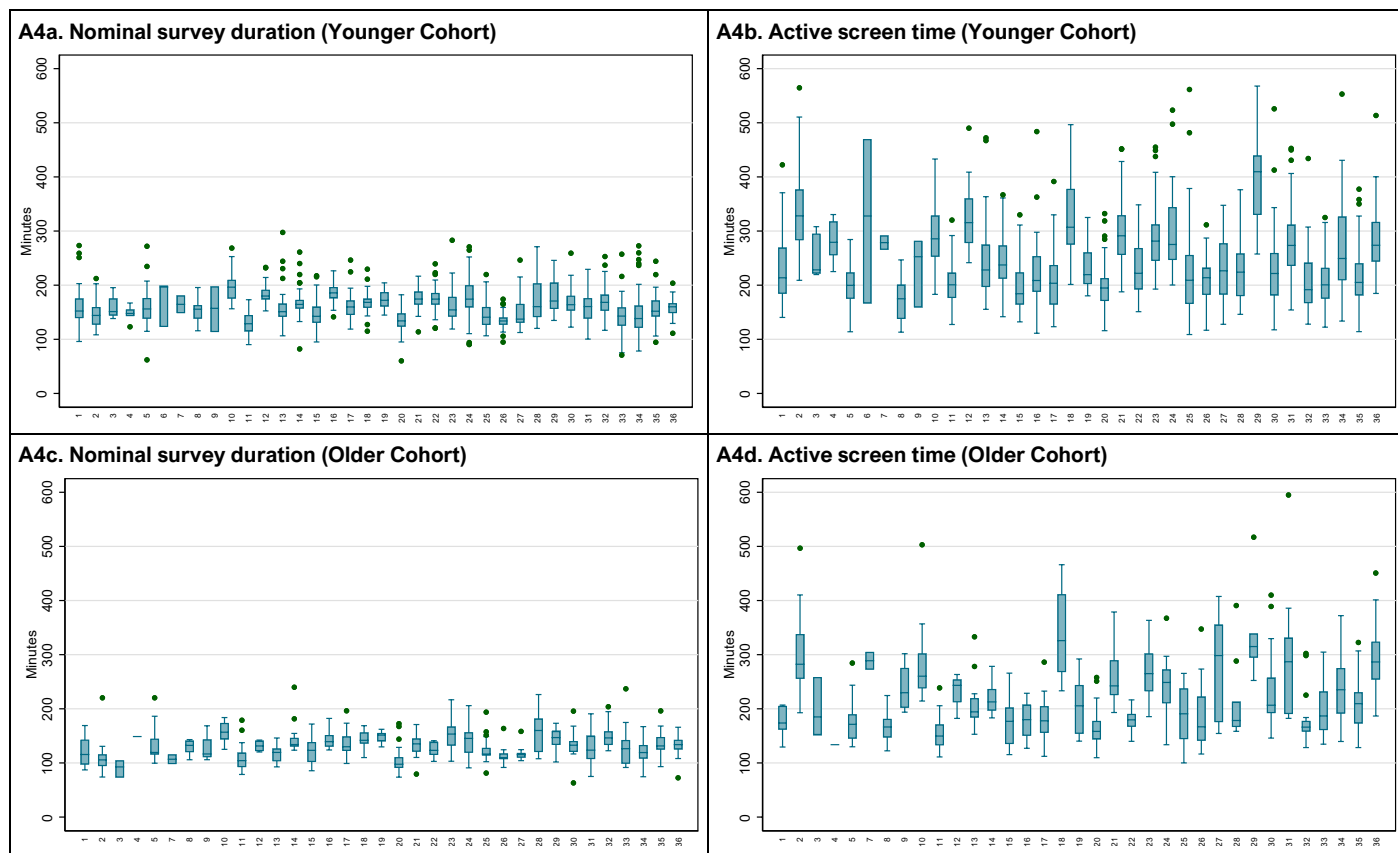
Figure A2. Survey duration by fieldworker, cohort and definition used (Ethiopia)**Figure A3.** Survey duration by fieldworker, cohort and definition used (India)

Figure A4. *Survey duration by fieldworker, cohort and definition used (Peru)*



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A Longitudinal Study of Poverty & Inequality

About Young Lives

Young Lives is an international study of poverty and inequality, following the lives of 12,000 children in four countries (Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam). Young Lives is a collaborative research programme led by a team in the Department of International Development at the University of Oxford in association with research and policy partners in the four study countries.

Through researching different aspects of children's lives across time, we seek to improve policies and programmes for children and young people.

Young Lives Research and Policy Partners

Ethiopia

- *Policy Studies Institute*
- *Pankhurst Development Research and Consulting plc*

India (Andhra Pradesh and Telangana)

- *Centre for Economic and Social Studies, Hyderabad (CESS)*

Peru

- *Grupo de Análisis para el Desarrollo (GRADE)*
- *Instituto de Investigación Nutricional (IIN)*

Vietnam

- *Centre for Analysis and Forecast, Viet Nam Academy of Social Sciences (CAF-VASS)*
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