



“Nothing is impossible for me”

Stories from
Young Lives children



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Available from:

Young Lives
Department of International Development
University of Oxford
3 Mansfield Road
Oxford OX1 3TB, UK

Tel: +44 (0)1865 281751

E-mail: younglives@younglives.org.uk

Website: www.younglives.org.uk

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Introduction

“Nothing is impossible for me” Stories from Young Lives children

Young Lives is a unique long-term international research project investigating the changing nature of child poverty. By following a group of children over a period of 15 years, our aim is to improve understanding of the causes and consequences of childhood poverty, and provide evidence to support the development of effective policies. Since 2002 we have been working with 12,000 children in four countries - Ethiopia, India, Peru, and Vietnam. One group of children was born in 2001/2 and the other in 1994/5, so these interviews took place when the younger children were aged 6 to 7 and the older group was aged 12 to 13 years old.

The four countries were chosen because they represent diverse socio-cultural, political and economic conditions and confront many of the challenges that other developing countries experience in the fight against poverty. Poor households are intentionally over-represented. Boys and girls are included in roughly equal numbers, and we cover both rural and urban populations as well as a variety of ethnic and religious groups.

We now know quite a lot about these children, their family situations, their problems, their hopes and fears and the contexts in which they live. By 2015, the year when the United Nations Millennium Development Goals are supposed to have been achieved, we will know even more. We are gathering material that can tell us, for example, about why some children leave school and others stay, why families migrate, why some families manage to pull themselves out of poverty and others do not. We are also able to look at how children in different circumstances experience poverty, what factors either increase or reduce poverty, and its effects. Although most of the children come from poor families, our research shows how adaptable and resilient they are, but also how a failed crop or the illness and death of a family member can change a child's future at a stroke.

As we pass the mid-point of the project we thought it would be good to share some of these stories with a wider audience. We chose four or five children from each of the four countries and a range of girls and boys and children from

the younger and older groups. We also chose children from different ethnic and religious backgrounds, different family situations, and a mixture of children who live in urban or rural areas.

For these stories we used the interviews that our researchers did with the children, individually and in groups, but also with their parents or other caregivers. In some instances we have been able to use the children's drawings from group exercises. None of the children appear in the photographs, however, which were separately commissioned. For the same reason, we have also used pseudonyms rather than their real names. This is because we are working with the children and their families over a long period of time and want to protect them from outside interest or interference, or indeed, prevent one child from being singled out over another.

Each child's story has a theme of some kind that emerged from the material and which illustrates the issues that the children themselves are having to contend with, but also gives a sense of the wider picture in relation to children's lives, health, or schooling, or work and family. This ranges from child work and education, to migration, health, domestic violence, inequality, gender, and individual circumstances such as being an orphan or being disabled.

So, for example, Afework, aged 12, from Ethiopia, lost both his parents, and is living with his brother Bekele and his cousin Addisu, who supports them all through his work as a daily labourer. Afework talks about what it is like to be an orphan and Addisu explains the effect on Afework when his mother died. He expresses his worries about the younger boys and tells of his struggles to keep the family together. He is clearly proud of his young cousin. Afework's story also contains more general information about the situation of orphans in Ethiopia. For example, Young Lives' research showed that losing a mother between the ages of 7 and 12 had a significant negative impact on school enrolment and other educational outcomes such as reading and writing.

In Peru, Lupe is 6 and a shy girl. Her family are relatively well off compared to other Young Lives children. She and her sister are looked after by their grandmother during the week because her parents are both working. Lupe has just started primary school and misses kindergarten and the toys and jigsaw puzzles. She was lucky to have attended kindergarten. Pre-school education is relatively new in Peru; in 1985 only 26.6% of children between three and five years old were enrolled at school; today the figure has risen to 66.6%, while 93% attend primary school. In Latin America, this is seen as particularly important as repetition rates in first grade are high: at the beginning of the 1990s, 42% of

children enrolled at first grade repeated the year, while 29% of children repeated at least one year during their time in primary school.

In India, Ravi is 13 years old and keen to look smart when the Young Lives researcher arrives. He lives in a village with his parents, brothers and a younger nephew. He has dropped out of school and now works on a farm, picking peanuts and doing other seasonal work like cutting grass. He had to leave school in order to repay a family debt and to allow his older brother to go to school. Ravi hopes to go to school again himself one day. His father beats his mother sometimes and this makes him unhappy. He says if he gets married, he will never beat his wife. This story contains some information on the effects of domestic violence.

In Vietnam, H'Mai is 13 years old and comes from an ethnic minority group. The family is poor and H'Mai dropped out of school in sixth grade because her parents didn't have enough money to pay her school fees. Now she works on the family farm. A number of the children in the stories have had to drop out of school, but H'Mai's case also illustrates the big divide between children from ethnic groups and those from the majority community. In Vietnam, where government efforts have improved poverty levels, inequalities continue to be stark, with ethnic minorities accounting for 39.3% of all poor people, despite representing only 12.6% of the total population.

The importance of education is one of the main themes emerging from Young Lives research. Not just whether children go to school and how long they stay, but the quality of their education, and what they and their parents expect from it. For example, many of the children in the stories have parents who have had little or no schooling. So these children are the first generation to benefit from education (and often from other services as well). This bodes well for the future – our research clearly shows that households with better educated parents are more likely to escape poverty. But the stories show that even (and perhaps especially) those parents who were not educated themselves are keen for their children to go to school and prepared to make sacrifices to support them in doing so. Both parents and children in our stories have high hopes - perhaps too high – for the future. Educational access is no guarantee of school quality, however, and there is evidence that quality is low – in Ethiopia, 39% of Young Lives older group of children can't read a simple sentence. As the research progresses, we should be able to see whether these hopes are likely to be fulfilled - and what the consequences might be if they are not.

Another theme is how **poverty is handed on from generation to generation**. We have noticed that if a child is so undernourished that he or she becomes stunted in early childhood, this has both short and long-term effects on their educational and cognitive achievements. Within our 12-year-old group of children we found that almost a third are stunted in all our study countries. This varies from 28.7% in Peru to 32.3% in India. Less money in the household can lead to chronic malnutrition in children. Our research shows that this may also result in lower self-esteem, reduced ability to be responsible for their own actions, increased feelings of exclusion and lowered aspirations. This is then likely to be passed on to their own children as missed opportunities in childhood mean they may become caught in the poverty trap as adults. However, we have also seen that even at local level among families that are already poor, certain decisions can have a big impact on children's lives. Parents themselves recognise this. For example, even quite poor families in India are paying for their children – usually their sons – to go to private school where they learn in English. They know that this could transform their job opportunities in future.

Although our sample is too small to be able to say anything about inequality on a national basis, we can say that within our group of 12,000 children and their families there are **growing signs of inequality**. Those from lower castes or classes, ethnic minorities and from rural areas are much more likely to be poor, and remain poor, than other children. About 20% of urban children but over a third of children in rural areas (and up to a half in Peru) suffer from chronic malnutrition in the form of stunting.¹ In Ethiopia, 85% of both older and younger children in rural areas live below the nationally defined poverty line, while in urban areas the figures are 44% for the younger group and 51% of the older group. These children and their families are increasingly left behind, as we saw in the case of H'Mai in Vietnam. Vietnam has managed to improve the situation of many of its poorer people, but the real crunch comes with the bottom 20% who will continue to struggle to find a way out of poverty for themselves and their children.

Interestingly, we are finding that **gender is not as big an issue as we anticipated it would be** at the relatively young ages of both age groups. Gender discrimination is nuanced and complex. One study we did in India showed that as children go to secondary school, more boys stay on at school and more money is therefore spent on boys, not just because there are more boys in school but also because once enrolled expenditure on boys is higher than on girls. However, once a family has

1 Stefan Dercon (2008) *Children and the Food Price Crisis*, Young Lives Policy Brief 5.

decided to educate a child beyond Grade 8, there is no gender-based expenditure bias and an equal proportion of boys and girls are sent to private schools.²

We have also found some interesting results in terms of the effects of what are known as **'shocks' on individual households and children**. In poor families, the number of these is often high – in Ethiopia for example, between 2002 and 2006 around 87% of households of the older children experienced at least one 'shock'. The effect of a failed harvest, a lost job, or the illness and death of a parent can have both short term and long term effects on children's development. In rural areas of Ethiopia, caregivers felt that household economic shocks such crop failure or the death of livestock had the most impact on the family, while children were far more concerned about situations affecting individual family members, family relations, and the household. They saw family illness in particular as having a major effect.³

But our research also shows that **children are hugely resilient and determinedly hopeful**. There are numerous examples of children overcoming adversity and developing new skills despite financial or other family difficulties. In Ethiopia for instance, where poor families often face particular adversity, children often play an active part in helping their parents to adjust and cope with the new circumstances. If their contributions are seen to be valued this makes a real difference to the child, however difficult their lives may be. As 12-year-old Hadush from Ethiopia said in his interview: "Nothing is impossible for me."

2 Rozana Himaz (2009) *Is There a Boy Bias in Household Education Expenditure? The Case of Andhra Pradesh in India Based on Young Lives Data*, Young Lives Working Paper 46.

3 Jo Boyden (2009, forthcoming) 'Children's Experiences of Poverty and Adversity in Ethiopia', *Children, Youth and Environments* (summer 2009).

Country context: Ethiopia

Ethiopia remains one of the world's poorest countries, although progress has been made in recent years. Child mortality has fallen, access to health improved and advances have been made in primary education. The population of Ethiopia is 73.9 million.

Ethiopia ranks 169 out of 177 countries in the UN's Human Poverty Index.

- Life expectancy is only 51.8 years.
- 77.8% of all Ethiopians live on less than \$2 a day and 23% live on less than \$1. There are large discrepancies between rural and urban people.
- Most of Ethiopia's children remain very poor and continue to live with 'not enough' in terms of household assets, food and goods, basic services and opportunities.
- 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.
- Ethiopian children have high levels of malnutrition. Nearly one in two (47%) children under five are stunted (short for their age), 11% wasted (thin for their height), and 38% underweight.
- Literacy is low, at 31% for rural and 74% for urban residents.

Sources: 2007/2008 UN Human Development Report; Ethiopia Census 2007 (population); Young Lives Round 2 Report for Ethiopia 2008 (household assets); Ethiopia Demographic and Health Survey 2005 (infant and child mortality); 2004 Welfare Monitoring Survey (literacy).



Afework's story

Afework is 12 years old. His mother died when he was 7 and his father when he was 10. Because Afework is an orphan, he doesn't have to pay school fees. Afework likes school and says he wants to be a doctor and a football player when he grows up.

Afework is in Grade 4 at school. He lives with his older brother, Bekele, and his cousin Addisu, who is 26. Addisu, who is the main breadwinner, looks after the others well. But his income as a daily labourer is not secure and he worries that they have little to fall back on if he can't find work. Afework's older sister used to live with them but she now works in the Middle East. They all speak Amharic. Afework says he is an Orthodox Christian. He was baptised two years ago. Before that he described himself as someone 'without a religion'.

Like many other people in urban Ethiopia, the family live in a compound with 12 houses built around a courtyard. The houses belong to the local council (*kebele*) and are made of mud and wood. The families share three kitchens and six latrines. Afework's house has one big room and the walls are white. The room is dark but there is electric light and a TV and video. There is one door and one window. There is a big wooden bed and the floor is covered in linoleum. The room is divided into two by a curtain. Behind the curtain, there are cupboards and kitchen materials and two boxes for clothes and bedding.

As an orphan, Afework's school fees are waived and the family also gets some support from a non-governmental organisation. In his interview with Young Lives researchers, Afework says he misses his parents and sister and feels strongly that life is hard for orphans. He says that a child needs both parents to have a good life. He is acutely aware of being an orphan, but he also recognises that there are people in the community who are worse off than him. "They might have a mother but she does not take care of them. She makes the older children miss school to take care of the younger ones."

Afework was asked about times that made him happy or sad.

“What else makes you happy other than going to school?”

Playing football.

Can you tell me about the times you were angry or sad in your life?

When my mother passed away.

What else?

When people insult me.

Why?

When I play football they ask me to give the ball to them and when I run away they insult my mother.¹

Are you happy now?

Yes

Why?

I learn, I play football and everything has been fulfilled for me.”

Addisu says Afework’s education was disrupted for a number of years after their mother died. The boys had to move around a lot and didn’t have enough to eat. Afework was ill and missed school and is now behind where he should be, despite being clever. However, things are better now. Afework goes to a private school which does not charge him fees because he is an orphan.

Afework says he likes going to school. The classrooms are clean and they have wooden floors. The desks are comfortable and large enough for three pupils. The teachers communicate well with the students. If a hardworking student tells them he doesn’t understand something, the teacher will lend him his own book to study at home. During the break the teachers play with the students. As in government schools, there are many clubs: a health club, a child-rights club, and sports club. Afework is a member of the child-rights club which gives pupils a booklet about child rights to read to the other children twice a week. Afework says he is good at school work and at playing football. He has a friend who is top of the class. They help each other when there is something they don’t understand.

1 This is a form of abuse, in Ethiopia and elsewhere, and not necessarily related to his being an orphan.

Afework says he spends most of his time at home with Bekele. Addisu is a daily labourer in a government organisation. He unloads trucks when they come with sugar. When Addisu is working he earns 20 birr (US\$2) a day. Their sister sends money sometimes, but not often, says Afework.

Afework says his responsibilities at home include making the beds and washing the dishes. His sister taught him how to do these things. Addisu and Bekele also show him. He says:

“I enjoy making the beds. I like washing the dishes least because I don’t know how to do it perfectly. On Sundays I go to church. I like playing football with my friends and watching TV.”

As part of a group activity, Afework and other boys were asked to describe a child who is “doing well”. Afework says that such a child: “has a house with many rooms, a CD, and TV. He has a good variety of food that his parents prepare for him. He goes out with his parents. He goes to a school that has a field and play equipment including a slide (*shertete*), a swing (*jiwajiwe*), and a roundabout. The school is near his home. It has nice classrooms and clean toilets for boys and girls. It also has a library.” Afework then describes a boy whom he thinks is not doing well. “This boy is an orphan and lives alone in a house with holes in the roof that leaks during the rainy season. He gets sad and cries. He doesn’t go to school and doesn’t have any food to eat because his parents are dead.”

As the oldest person in the household, Addisu feels very responsible for the younger boys. He is concerned that the area they live in is poor and there is a lot of drug taking. In the vegetable market children can earn a little money doing errands for the stallholders but they also steal the vegetables and sell them to get money. “These children spend more time in prison than in school”, he says. He is worried that many children drop out of school because they are poor and they don’t see the value of education. He doesn’t want this to happen to Afework. He says he will make sure Afework has everything he needs to finish school: “He loves education. He is eager to learn and know new things... Considering the growing number of AIDS patients, he wants to be a doctor and support his people. Or he would like to be a football player because he loves football and he knows that I do too. So I support him.”

Afework says: “I will be a doctor. Then after two or three years I will become a football player.”

Orphans in Ethiopia: what Young Lives data shows

Around 10% of children (4.6 million) in Ethiopia are orphans.² In the Young Lives sample, a little over 10% of children lost at least one parent between the 2002 and 2006 rounds of the survey, while a little over 10% had already lost a parent when the survey started in 2002. Thus, by the time the children were 12 years old, one in five had lost one or both parents.

Young Lives analysis has shown that children orphaned before the age of 7 were less badly affected than those orphaned at a later age. The Young Lives research showed that losing a mother in particular between the ages of 7 and 12 had a significant negative impact on school enrolment and other educational outcomes such as reading and writing. For those children whose mother died between rounds (a small number):

- School enrolment was reduced by around 21%.
- The percentage of children who could not read or write at all increased by around 20%.
- Those who could not read at all, or read only letters rather than words or sentences, increased by around 30%.

These effects were not seen when the father died. However, the death of the father seemed to reduce the sense of optimism children felt about their lives.

Young Lives can track whether these outcomes persist when further rounds of Young Lives data become available. Future rounds of data will also show whether parental death puts children at a higher risk of poverty in adulthood and whether it has lasting impacts on education and health.

Source: Rozana Himaz (2009) *The Impact of Parental Death on Schooling and Subjective Well-being: Evidence from Ethiopia Using Longitudinal Data*, Young Lives Working Paper 44.

“I enjoy making the beds. I like washing the dishes least because I don’t know how to do it perfectly.”



Hadush’s story

Hadush is 13. He is from a rural area and lives with his father, stepmother and three older siblings. His mother died when he was small and his father married again six years ago. He looks after cattle and is proud of his work. His family is poor but Hadush is positive about his life.

Hadush is a thin, shy boy. His clothes are a bit ragged. He doesn’t attend school, although his sisters do. He attends a traditional religious school from time to time.

The family lives in a rural area of Tigray in the northern part of Ethiopia. Their home is in a compound. Inside there are three houses – the *hidmo*, *seqela* and the *adarash*. The *hidmo* (which means ‘home’) is a small room made of stone. The floor is made of earth, and its walls are rough. The *seqela* is a cattle pen. The *adarash* is a sleeping room with a traditional mattress on a bed made of mud. The family have a radio but no tables or chairs.

Hadush is interviewed in the fields, where he is looking after cattle with two friends, aged 10 and 12. This is his work and he is proud of it. He works around 10 hours a day. “I work to support my family. I like my work. I go to a traditional school sometimes at the house of our teacher who is a priest. We learn about such things as saying in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. I like the school.”

Hadush’s father talks about the different ages that children are expected to help in the household:

“When a child reaches 6 or 7 years old what can they do in the house?

At 7 they can start school. They can also fetch water for the household and look after cattle like Hadush.

What about 12-year-olds?

A 12- or 13-year-old child can do everything - studying, cutting grass, herding cattle, weeding and cutting straw. By 12 he should be skilled at everything except ploughing, which he will learn when he is 16.”

Hadush says he is happy at the moment because his older brother has returned from the army. "My brother arrived from the battlefield alive. He was not affected by the war. I was happy. He brought me all the things I asked him to, like a pair of shoes, a suit, sandals and slippers. People who live well have all these things – clothing, shoes, trousers, jackets, food, sheep, chicken, meat etc."

"What do you like?

I like bananas, oranges, clothing and carrots.

What are the things which you consider to be challenging or difficult for you?

No, I do not have any difficulty. I am alright so far.

What activities are you good at?

I am good at everything, nothing is impossible for me."

Despite his poverty, Hadush is positive about his life. This is also true of other Young Lives children in Ethiopia. Although their households are poorer than average, they mostly have enough to eat. Many are enrolled in school although this doesn't mean that they attend regularly or even that they can read a simple sentence. Their welfare in terms of nutrition and enrolment in school is relatively good. Perhaps as a result, most Young Lives children are optimistic about their future well-being. This improvement may be linked to pro-poor government policies which have led to better education and health services and a general improvement in household income and children's nutrition.

Hadush's father thinks Hadush belongs to a lucky generation because children are freer to do what they want than previous generations. But other more pressing factors worry him. He is concerned about the harvest this year because he is still in debt from a bad year in 1995. If it is not a good harvest that debt will increase.

The role of religious schools in rural Ethiopia

Ethiopia’s *kes timirt* – literally ‘priest schools’ – aim to prepare pupils, mainly boys, who are ready to continue their religious education and become priests in the future. Education was a function associated with the church in Ethiopia from its earliest days. According to one *kes timirt* teacher, children learn the alphabet and numbers but also receive religious education. Girls can, in principle, attend church schools to acquire basic literacy and numerical skills and get basic religious education, but rarely seem to. The schools do not follow a systematic approach to teaching.

A teacher in one of these traditional church schools said that classes are taught by a single teacher who hosts children in his own home, because there is no specific school building established for this purpose. Sometimes the teacher holds class outside in the open field. The teachers have no permanent salaries, so spend much of their time working on their own farms and allocate only limited time to the teaching. Various community representatives interviewed (such as elders, service providers and *kebele* officials) in one village also agreed that the traditional church education was not beneficial for the children of the community, especially in supporting their transition to primary school.

Source: Martin Woodhead, Patricia Ames, Uma Vennam, Workneh Abebe and Natalia Streuli (2009, forthcoming) *Access, Equity and Quality in Early Education and Transitions to Primary School: Evidence from Young Lives Research in Ethiopia, India and Peru*, Bernard van Leer Foundation Working Paper.

*“I am good at everything,
nothing is impossible for me.”*

A day in the life of Hadush

Time range	Activities (details of what you did yesterday)	How did you feel about this?
6.00am	I woke up alone, at home	
Between waking up and breakfast	I went to my sister's house and took the cattle out	
7.30am	I ate my breakfast at my sister's house	I like eating, I don't know why
8.00am–6.00pm	I went to the field to herd cattle with my friends and stayed there	I enjoy herding
1.00pm	I ate my lunch alone in the field	
2.30–5.00pm	Cutting grass in the field	I hate cutting grass because it is back-breaking work
6.00pm	I came back home and was with friends	
8.00–8.30pm	I rested with my brother at home	
8.30pm	I ate my dinner with my brother at home	
9.00pm–11.00pm	Played 'looking games' around home with my brother [the moon was bright]	I enjoyed the game, it was nice
11.00pm	I went to bed	



Louam's story

Louam is 6 years old. She is an active child who smiles a lot. She is the youngest of seven children. Her parents farm and breed cattle and are relatively well off. There was a time when even they had to live on bread and tea because bad weather destroyed their crops. Now she is waiting eagerly until she is 7 and can go to school.

Louam's family lives in a district of Amhara State in the north-west of Ethiopia. A mid-sized road leads to their house which is large and has a corrugated iron roof and a window which lets in light, although there is no electricity. There is a bedroom, a living room, a store room and a kitchen in the back yard. The walls of the main room are painted and covered with colourful magazines and traditional art known as *sefet*, made of dried grasses. There are three wooden chairs and a table covered with animal skin where Louam studies. The family's two donkeys live in a room attached to the house.

Louam is not officially due to go to school until next year but she says that many of her friends were going this year so she went too, together with her older siblings. However, the school administration refused to officially register her, saying that she was under age. She needed to be 7 to be formally registered in school. She was sad about this. She said:

"I am left behind when all of my friends go ... The school has turned me out of the class many times just because I am not a formal member of the class... The monitor in the class beats me when I talk with my friends; I have been beaten twice so far. He beat me with a stick and kicked me out of the class, and the teacher supported the monitor's decision."

However, she is still keen to go to school, where she hopes to learn to read and write and study Amharic, her own language, and English. Her mother, who attends adult literacy classes, also wants her youngest daughter to be educated.

In the interview, Louam was clear about her likes and dislikes when it came to food. She expressed concern about physical violence both at home and in school. She says she prefers her father because her mother hits her when she fights with her older brother. She also talked a lot about how teachers hit children in school

and how she doesn't like this. The interviewer asked her what advice she would give to friends who want to start going to school. She described what they would learn – drawing, Amharic, English – and then said that she would tell her friends “not to talk in class while the monitor is present.” She then describes a student who was talking in class. The teacher hit her on the head and she sat on the floor “because she couldn't keep silent.”

Asked about helping her mother in the house, she said:

“What about working?

Sometimes, I like fetching water.

Why do you like it?

But, I don't do it alone.

Why?

Because I am afraid.

What are you afraid of?

I am afraid of the sun in the afternoon.

What else?

Wild animals.

What kind of wild animal?

A jumping animal. One was found at the gate.”

Louam's mother thinks she is around 32 years old. She says Louam is a healthy child, although she has had eczema. She is due to go to hospital again but they are waiting until the potatoes are harvested so that they can afford to pay the fees.

There was a period when Louam was little when the family did not have enough to eat because bad weather – wind and snow – led to decreased agricultural production. For a time the whole family, including Louam, lived on tea and bread. They earned food by planting eucalyptus trees. Louam's mother says: “She lost weight and became thin but now she improves, with the help of God. She eats a variety of food and a balanced diet.” However, Louam's mother is worried that this year there will be a similar problem; the harvest will be poor and they will have to sell their possessions to buy food from the market.

Louam's mother thinks her daughter now has enough to eat, and she wears better clothes and shoes than many other children. "She also changes her clothes everyday. If she wears trousers today she will wear a skirt tomorrow."

The interviewer asked her if she has any concerns about her daughter:

"I am concerned that when she joins school she might be beaten by other children and might have an accident on the road."

What do you advise her about car accidents?

I advise her to take care while she walks at the side of the road. I tell her that a car can kill her. So I tell her to walk at the side of the road when a car passes in the middle. If the car passes on the right side you must walk on the left. But she tells me not to worry and that attending school will help her to learn how to solve these problems.

What do you advise her about how not to quarrel with other children?

I tell her not to fight with them, not to do bad things but to do good things for them. I also advise her not to say anything to them in order to not to be beaten.

What would you like your daughter to be in the future?

I want her to become a government worker. This will help her and she will be able to support me."

Louam is due to go to hospital but the family are waiting until the potatoes are harvested so they can pay the fees.

Pre-school education in Ethiopia

Since kindergartens are rarely available in rural areas, virtually all the households that reported enrolling their children in pre-school in the Young Lives cohort are from urban areas. About 58% of the 5-year-old children in urban areas have been enrolled in pre-school compared with less than 4% in rural areas.

As one study notes: ‘The main options for the vast majority of young children in rural areas are: (i) waiting until they reach the normal age (7 years old) to be admitted into formal primary school without any previous schooling experience; (ii) attending a religious school from an early age which may not be suitable for everyone – especially for girls; or (iii) being sent (informally) to school with their older siblings and making the most of the experience by learning something about school discipline, alphabets and numbers’, like Louam, which as we have seen, has its own problems. The study notes that according to a primary school teacher in Louam’s district:

The government has not given emphasis to pre-school education in the rural areas. Though the expectation of the government was that private and non-governmental organisations would be involved in the expansion of kindergarten both in the urban and rural areas, this has not worked in the rural areas.

In urban areas, an analysis of the factors that influence pre-school enrolment shows that education levels of both mothers and fathers make a big difference to pre-school enrolment. Children with long-term health problems are also more likely to be enrolled (perhaps because the parents feel this extra support will be helpful to their child). Young Lives did not find any significant differences between boys and girls.

Sources

Tassew Woldehanna et al. (2008) *Young Lives: Ethiopia Round 2 Survey Report*.

Martin Woodhead, Patricia Ames, Uma Vennam, Workneh Abebe and Natalia Streuli (2009, forthcoming) *Access, Equity and Quality in Early Education and Transitions to Primary School: Evidence from Young Lives Research in Ethiopia, India and Peru*, Bernard van Leer Foundation Working Paper.

Nutrition and malnutrition for younger children in Ethiopia

Poor harvests and food shortages over many years have affected the nutritional status of children around the country. According to the 2005 Ethiopia Demographic and Health Survey, nearly one in two (47%) children under 5 are stunted (short for their age), 11% wasted (thin for their height), and 38% underweight. Thus it was not a surprise that Young Lives research also found high levels of both stunting (a measure of chronic malnutrition) and underweight among the Young Lives children. Within the younger cohort, which includes Louam, 31% were stunted and 8% of the children severely stunted.

On a more positive note, however, things improved between 2002 and 2007, when the two rounds of the Young Lives survey took place. Stunting decreasing from 35% to 31% and the proportion of underweight children from 33% to 24%. This impressive change in a short period can be attributed to improvements in household wealth and increased access to health services and sanitation, although we should also note that the percentage of children who were stunted or wasted was artificially high in Round 1 as this was a year of drought in many areas.

Young Lives analysis also showed that girls are less malnourished than boys (a finding that has been replicated in other studies in Ethiopia), while children in urban areas tend to be relatively better-off compared to rural children in terms of both level of and changes in malnutrition. Household wealth has a positive impact on children's nutrition, as does parental education.

Source: Tassew Woldehanna et al. (2008) *Young Lives: Ethiopia Round 2 Survey Report*.

“She lost weight and became thin but now she improves, with the help of God. She eats a variety of food and a balanced diet.”

Louam's mother



Tufa's story

Tufa is 13 and lives with his parents and five siblings. The family are poor and all live in one room. Tufa used to go to school but dropped out two years ago when his home burned down. Now he looks after cattle. He is sad about this and wants to go back to school one day.

Tufa lives in a rural area of Oromiya State. There are seven people in Tufa's family – his father, mother, two brothers (one older and one younger), and three younger sisters. He had another sister but she died of malaria. Tufa has also had malaria. The family are poor and his clothes are worn. They all live in one small corrugated iron room which is sub-divided in two and is used as a living room, bedroom, kitchen and to keep livestock. There is no toilet.

Tufa tells of his first visit to a town. It was exciting, partly because he hadn't been to a town before. He said: "It was the first time that I saw the school in a town. I saw that the school in the town was beautiful. I had never seen a car before." The first thing he did was to go to a barber and have his head shaved.

Tufa says he did well at school:

"I ranked third in Grade 1.

Out of how many children?

61 or 63 students.

At that time did you feel happy?

Yes

Why?

Because most of the children are bigger than me but I did better than them."

However, he had to drop out to look after cattle and he is sad about this: "Some years ago, my parents stopped me from joining school and said that I must herd cattle; the other children were allowed to learn but I was not allowed to. There were no other children who could keep cattle except me at home; the rest of my brothers and sisters were allowed to start education. I asked my parents to allow me to be registered but they refused to send me to school."

Tufa said that his older brothers go to school: "It is not usual for older brothers to

“Nothing is impossible for me” Stories from Young Lives children

keep cattle while there are younger ones to do it. If an older brother volunteers to keep cattle, he can do so; if not, it is his right to stop herding and to join school.” Tufa’s younger sister also misses school as she helps at home – because “she wouldn’t know how to keep cattle.” His family, he says, has told him they will register him in school again in the future. But Tufa said: “I am not happy when I don’t learn. I want to learn and become a teacher after I finish my education.”

Asked when he was happy, Tufa described an occasion when his father bought him some new clothes:

“My father bought me clothes and he always buys clothes for me when he can get the money. He bought me clothes and surprised me; he did not consult me earlier but he bought and gave me shoes; so I was highly delighted.

When was this?

About two months ago.

What type of shoes did he buy for you?

They were shera [made from rubber and denim].”

The family are Orthodox Christian: when the Young Lives interviewer came, Tufa and his mother and sister were getting the compound ready for the local St George ceremony, to be celebrated the next day. St George is the patron saint of Ethiopia and his feast day is observed on the 23rd day of each month.

Tufa’s mother was educated up to Grade 5. She is 25 years old. She says that Tufa helps her with household tasks: “He fetches water for me from the river and I use him as a messenger to bring different things from the neighbours. He also keeps goats and stops cattle eating our crops.” He spends a lot of time fishing, though he doesn’t necessarily enjoy it; it is needed to feed the family. Tufa points out one difference between poor boys and rich ones: “Poor children have to fish; rich boys buy their fish from poor families instead of fishing.”

Demand for fish increases during the Orthodox Christian Easter when devout Christians don’t eat dairy or meat and consequently many boys stop going to school for the 60-day fast to make the most of the opportunity to earn extra money.

Tufa’s mother also tells the interviewer how two years ago their house was burned down and this was another reason he had to drop out of school:

“You have told me that your house was burnt, but were there any problems that happened to your children in connection with that accident?

The fire didn’t cause any human injury. But all our food was burnt by the fire.

What was the cause of the fire?

As it was a thatched house, a bottle lamp was the cause of the accident. The fire suddenly jumped from the lamp to the roof which was made from grass.

You have told me that your child's education was interrupted by the fire but was there any other damage caused by the fire?

Yes, all his exercise-books were burnt and his clothes too. As a result, he discontinued his education."

This kind of unexpected event is sometimes known as a 'shock', an external event that has adversely affected a child's chances in life and its family's fortunes. Young Lives research showed that such shocks are common in Ethiopia, where many families do not have the resources to withstand this kind of difficulty. Young Lives research also showed that in the face of shocks, children and adults often have different concerns; that shocks often have an indirect impact on children's lives through their effects on community and family; that strong and supportive family dynamics can mitigate against adverse impacts, and even that adversity can enhance a child's competence. In the Young Lives study in Ethiopia, although only 1% of children lost their house through a fire, the more common shocks of family illness and death affected more than half the households.

Tufa's mother says he complains when he is asked to look after the younger children. "He says, 'Is it only me who should care for the baby? Do you think that I am a girl?' He says, 'You should recognise that I am a boy. Let the girls carry the children!'"

But she has high hopes for her son: "When I compare him with our neighbours' children, he is an obedient child. He does whatever I tell him to do. Other children are not like him. I usually tell him not to join them as they may spoil his behaviour." She says: "He is determined and committed to continue his education. He knew a neighbour's child who completed his education and now lives abroad. He wants to follow in his footsteps. We encourage him to follow that boy's example. If he completes his education, he may go far and live in another area. Who knows, he may become a great person."

"I and his father will together do our best to help him. We pray that God too will help us to help him. I shall gather firewood, sell it and pay for his education. If he learns, he can move from the darkness [illiteracy] and come to light [get knowledge]."

Child work in Ethiopia

Tufa is one of many children in Ethiopia who have had to drop out of school to work. According to the Central Statistical Agency (2002) half of all 5- to 14-year-olds, more than 7.5 million children in Ethiopia, were engaged in economic activity. The incidence of children working for pay in the Young Lives sample rises sharply with age, but 40% of even the youngest (5- to 9-year-old) children are involved in some form of economic activity. Rural children and boys are most likely to work. Among rural children aged 5 to 14, more than half are involved in economic activity compared with only 15% of their urban counterparts.

The economic activity rate of boys exceeds that of girls by 20%. However, this does not take into account household chores such as fetching water and collecting wood for fuel which are typically undertaken by girls. Girls were mainly engaged in domestic activities (such as collecting firewood and water, food preparation, washing clothes) while boys were involved in non-domestic activities like cattle herding, weeding, harvesting, ploughing, petty trading and other waged work. The participation rate in non-domestic activities was 62% for boys and 42% for girls. For domestic activities, this figure was 22% for boys and 44% for girls. In rural areas, children were more frequently engaged in non-domestic activities than in domestic activities, whereas in urban areas the opposite was true.

Source: Tassew Woldehanna et al. (2008) *Young Lives: Ethiopia Round 2 Survey Report*.

A day in the life of Tufa

This was not typical because he normally goes to bed at 8.30pm but his neighbour had just bought a new TV and all the children went to watch it.

Time	Activities
7.30–1.00am	Collected firewood with three friends from a forest far away from the village
11.00–11.15am	Ate breakfast with my family at home
11.15am–12.00pm	Fished with two friends
12.00–1.00pm	Rested at home with my family
1.00–4.00pm	At farm land with five friends. As it is the harvest season we needed to keep the crops from being eaten by animals.
4.00–4.30pm	Fetches water from the communal pipe with my mother

Time	Activities
4.30–6.00pm	Played with five friends in the village
6.00–10.00pm	Watched TV in my neighbours' house as they had a new TV
10.00–10.15pm	Ate dinner
10.15pm night	Went to bed and slept

Children's experiences of poverty and adversity in Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, Young Lives has found some interesting results in terms of the effects of what are known as 'shocks' on individual households and children. These include, for example, family illness or death, a failed harvest, loss of land or cattle, home or belongings. In poor families, the number of these is often high – in Ethiopia for example, between 2002 and 2006 around 87% of households of the older children experienced at least one 'shock'. Over 30% of the whole sample were affected by events such as drought and increases in input prices; more than a quarter experienced death of livestock; a fifth reported crop failure, illness of either the child's mother or another member of the household; and over 15% experienced illness of the father.

One interesting trend is perceptions of illness in rural areas which, even though it was acknowledged as a frequent occurrence, was not generally regarded as significant for household well-being. So, although 30% of rural families reported that the mother had been ill in the last four years, under half of this number considered this to be one of the three most important events affecting the household. Similarly, a quarter of rural households reported illness of the father, but only 11% indicated this as a significant event.

The effect of this can have both short-term and long-term effects on children's development. Interestingly, in rural areas of Ethiopia, caregivers felt that household economic shocks such crop failure or the death of livestock had the most impact on the family, while children were far more concerned about situations affecting individual family members, family relations and the household. They saw family illness in particular as having a major effect.

Source: Jo Boyden (2009, forthcoming) 'Children's Experiences of Poverty and Adversity in Ethiopia', *Children, Youth and Environments* (summer 2009).



Seble's story

Seble thinks she is about 12 years old, though she is not quite sure. She has eight siblings. The family is poor. She has had to miss school because of family problems and is now behind her classmates. But Seble's mother thinks education is very important for girls and will encourage her to continue.

Seble has seven brothers (five older and two younger) and one older sister. Three of the brothers are already married and live away from home. She lives in a rural area of Oromiya State. The family has a small house with a large yard where they often gather with friends and neighbours to drink coffee. Her family is poor. Seble does not say anything about it, but her mother explains that her father is often drunk and abusive.

Seble said she had some basic education at a health centre at the age of 6 and started formal school at 8. Nonetheless, Seble still needed the interviewer to write things down for her. This was because she dropped out in first grade, partly because she was ill but also because her parents could not afford to buy her exercise books. However, she joined again a year later and was promoted to Grade 2 after coming second in the class. Then her mother became ill and she and her sister had to look after her. Now she is disappointed because her friends are in Grade 3 and she has remained in Grade 2. If she manages to go to secondary school, she will have to go and live with her grandmother in the nearest town. Her older sister has already done this.

Seble helps her mother a lot in the house, making coffee, bread and *injera*, the Ethiopian staple which is a bit like flat bread. She also fetches water and firewood. At the age of 11, she started to earn some money as a daily labourer. This would help her family and enable her to buy exercise books. She works two or three days a week after school, depending on when work is available. She earns 6 birr (US\$0.6) a day. Her mother describes the work: "Some days she participates in daily work such as the planting of vegetables. The girls work in a group and they are paid in a group; the payment will be made by counting the number of lines they pick. They can work up to eight hours a day. After work they chat with each other. Daily work is available mainly during the winter season because pests can affect the plants in summer. Most of the time, children aged 12 or 13 only plant seedlings; they do not do weeding which is the work of adult women."

Seble also helps on the family farm, grinding corn for bread, and weeding *teff*, the Ethiopian crop from which the staple *injera* is made. But this can be hazardous; there is a weed called *anterfa* which produces a poisonous milk-like fluid that leads to abrasions and scarring.

Seble’s health has not been good. She has had malaria twice and she had TB when she was 6 and is still not cured. She has a scarred face and abrasions on her leg which she says is the result of a day when she and her brother were weeding *teff*. But she has only been to the health centre once as her parents could not afford to take her the other times she was ill. She says she is sick at least twice a year. The interviewer asks her about this:

“Did you go to the health centre when you were ill the first time?”

I didn’t. They said that it would be cured but still I have a wound and I suffer with the illness. At that time there was also a wound on my head and my parents had the belief that if the wounds on the head would be cured, the TB on my neck would be cured, but the result was different and still affecting me.

Is there anything your parents could buy to help you?

There isn’t. They could not get the medicine for the TB.

Do you think this disease affects your life? You stopped your school when you were in Grade 1. What about in the future?

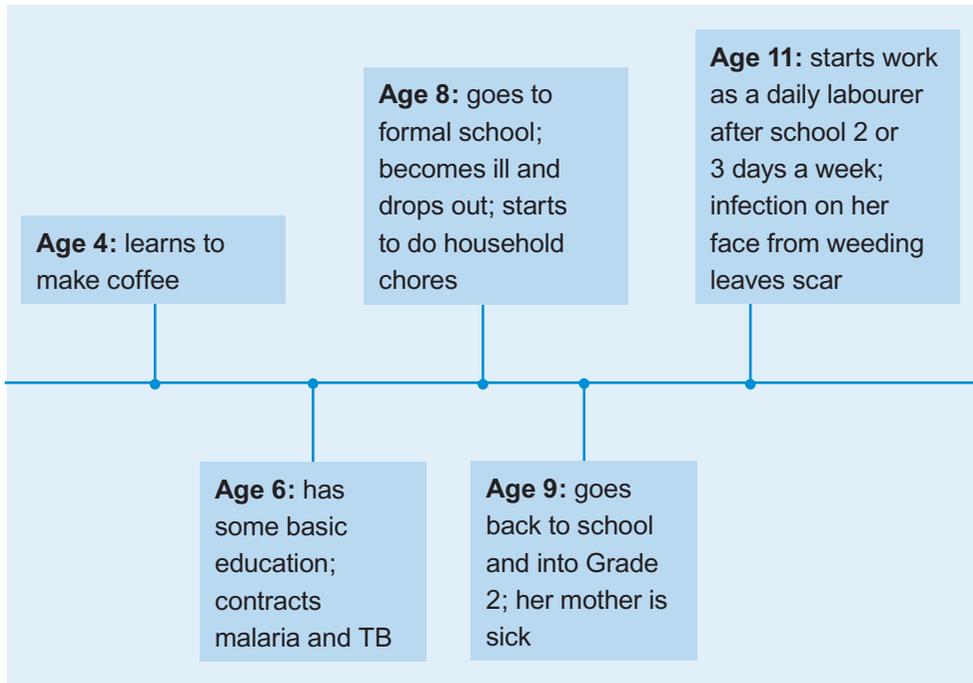
My parents tell me to stay at home until I am better. My teacher also says that if you rest you will improve. Sometimes, I am very ill and I miss school on those days. This disappoints me. I have a strong fear that the illness may get worse and this will affect my education and other aspects of my life.”

Seble’s mother, who is around 45, says that Seble is the most special of all her children. “I had had many children by the time I had Seble. But for my previous children my husband had refused to slaughter a sheep to celebrate the birth. For Seble he did slaughter a sheep and I was happy. She is the best of all my children. She is very active, her behaviour is very good. She is unique in the family. I hope she always stays like this.”

Seble's mother says that she does not like her daughters to play with boys. "We do not allow the girls to play with the boys because it is not good for them. If they play with boys, the people in the community will call them unnecessary names and their brothers will be angry when they see their sisters playing with boys. So she plays with her female friends."

Seble says she does not want to get married young but believes that her parents may insist. Her mother, however, is clear that she does not want Seble to marry young either, and will try to prevent this. Seble would like to wait until she is 19 and would like to be a teacher when she grows up. Her mother says she should wait until she is 25: "My wish is that she will complete her education. I also wish that she will get good job after completing her education. I wish her to marry with an educated man after she has completed her education. I wish her to refrain from sexual intercourse until she marries, and to protect herself from HIV/AIDS."

Seble's timeline



Seble’s mother’s story

Seble’s mother speaks of her own childhood, of her violent husband and her hopes and fears for her daughter.

“I did not have a happy childhood which is why I want to take care of female children, even those of my neighbours. My own mother died when I was young. My stepmother was very cruel and I suffered a lot at her hands. I was married when still a girl; my stepmother forced me to grind flour every day and bake bread; I was only given my lunch only after I finished work. I could not eat my food without permission from my stepmother. I did not like cooking coffee; my elder daughter is the same; she does not like people gathering around to drink coffee. I did not like washing clothes; even today I don’t like washing clothes.”

Seble’s mother says she has sacrificed a lot for her children, especially the girls, so that they can have what she did not: “I sacrificed a lot of things to bring up my children in a good way. It took me a long time and great sacrifice to bring them up; my husband can farm in the fields but he has not helped me at home; it was my responsibility to cook and care for my children. I went to the market carrying my children on my back. I remember that when my first son joined the national army, I was shocked at his decision and I was seriously ill.”

“My husband and I quarrel most of the time because he drinks too much and then fights with me. After he drinks, he cannot control himself and this makes me angry. The arguments started when my first son married a girl he loved, refusing the one his father wanted him to marry. My son’s refusal to accept his father’s wishes aggravated the conflict between me and my husband. My second child also married a woman of his own choice. As a result my husband hated me and we always quarrel even about minor things.”

“Sometimes I decide to flee to my relative’s house or to town and then immediately change my mind because of the children. In my absence my children could face severe problems; they could easily become poor or subject to abuse. I know that in my absence their father can do anything; he could sell all the cattle and sheep. I have relatives all over Ethiopia and I could go to live with my relatives but how can I leave my children?”

Seble’s mother is clear about the importance of girls’ education: “Education is the most important thing for a girl to change her life. Being able to write her name is very important. Seble learns many things from me; she will learn other things at school. [...]. She will have chances that I never had because I was forced to marry young.”

Country context: India and Andhra Pradesh

India has a population of over a billion people. It is a country of huge inequalities, with the second largest number of billionaires in the world but is also home to 25 per cent of the world's poor. The poverty debate in India has been rarely extended to child poverty, which makes Young Lives of particular interest.

- One in every three illiterate people in the world lives in India.
- At least 35 million children aged 6 to 14 do not attend school.
- The country accounts for more than 20 per cent of global maternal and child deaths.
- India ranks 128 out of 177 countries in 2007/8 United Nations Human Development Report.

Andhra Pradesh, in southern India, is its fifth-largest state. It has been the role model for several new government initiatives during the 1990s to eliminate poverty and has achieved considerable progress on child development indicators since the mid-1990s. But despite this growth, significant disparities remain, based on class, caste, gender and geography. Poverty estimates for rural Andhra Pradesh are low (11.2% compared to the national average of 28%), although per capita expenditure in rural areas is only about 5% more than the national average. Only 27% of the population lives in urban areas, although the state capital, Hyderabad, is one of the leading centres of the IT revolution. Consequently, the state is witnessing a shift away from agriculture (which remains important at 30% of state domestic produce) towards the service sector, which is expanding rapidly.

Sources: *The Times of India* (2004) 'India has a Third of World's Illiterates', <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/916814.cms> (accessed September 2008); 'Children in India', www.smilefoundationindia.org/ourchildren.htm (accessed September 2008); 2007/2008 UN Human Development Report.



Deepak's story

Deepak is about 6 years old, though no one is sure of his exact age. He belongs to one of India's indigenous tribal groups, and lives in a remote rural community with father, his two younger siblings, and an older half-brother. Deepak's mother died in childbirth. Deepak's father works long days as a casual farm labourer so Deepak looks after the younger children a lot. He goes to school but does not attend regularly.

Deepak's tribe is called the Jathapa. The tribal groups or *Adivasis* are India's indigenous people. They are known as 'Scheduled Tribes' by the government.

Deepak's father has had three wives but they all died, two in childbirth. He works as a casual farm labourer, leaving the house at 6am, and does not come back until 8pm, by which time all the children are in bed so they see little of him.

Deepak helps to look after the younger children and can often be seen carrying his younger sister, who is 18 months old, on his back, even in school. He says he likes her better than his brother and that he takes good care of her. He helps to fetch water from the bore well with a small plastic pot in the morning and in the evening. He and his siblings and friends wash themselves in a nearby stream.

His elder stepbrother, aged 12, does most of the household work including cleaning, washing and cooking. His grandmother, who lives just a few houses away, also helps when she can. Deepak's father says his mother died 18 months ago giving birth to Deepak's little sister "during the mango season", while Deepak says it was "when he was small". Deepak's father's second wife also died in childbirth.

Deepak says: "I have my granny. She is like my mother. All other children have a mother; but my grandmother is good. I like my elder brother too. He does all the work in the home. If I am naughty he will beat sometimes; but he is good. I like my little sister a lot too."

Deepak is a bright child but his family is very poor. He says that the family had to sell their tape recorder and he is sad about this as he liked to listen to songs while working.

Deepak’s father is employed under the Government’s National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, which provides 100 days’ employment a year on demand, as a right, for poor rural households whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.¹ He receives 80 rupees a day (about US\$1.55) for this work, which leaves him little money to provide for the children. He also receives oil and lentils as part of a Government Public Distribution System (PDS) and says that it is thanks to this scheme that he can feed his children.

His father says that Deepak often has a fever: “I don’t know why – maybe due to mosquitoes or due to food. We don’t know what the problem is.”

There is no health clinic in the village so once a week a nurse comes to bring medicines and give injections. The nearest public hospital is three kilometres away. The nearest private hospital is 15 kilometres away, which is a long journey as there are few roads and little transport. Deepak has been taken to the hospital twice, as his father explains:

“We took him to the hospital because he had a fever. It was too hard to manage ourselves. We took him there as he had a high fever. He suffers with fever regularly. The doctors just gave him medicines and did not say anything. It was cured. First we went once and had to go again.”

Deepak’s grandmother thinks he is less healthy than other children and Deepak says he is bullied at school because he is so thin. His grandmother says this is because they don’t have a mother to look after them and there is only so much she can do to help. “They have no mother and so no proper care. I am old. I cannot take care of small children at my age. He is not what he should be at his age. But what can I do?” She says that the children have to bath themselves and wash their own clothes and hair and that they are too young to do this for themselves. “All this would be done by their mother if she was alive. I think that compared to other children they are not clean, there is no one to comb their hair, they are shabby. I try and do it for all of them but it is too much for me.”

Deepak says he has just started going the local school but often does not go. Free lunch seemed to be the main incentive, particularly on Wednesdays when the children are given an egg. His brother left in second grade, and this would reflect statistics which show a high drop-out rate for children from Scheduled Tribes. Neither his father nor his grandmother had any education, so he is the first

¹ Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, ‘National Rural Employment Guarantee Act’, www.nrega.nic.in/

generation in his family to be educated. His grandmother says: "We don't have much knowledge as we did not go to school. We don't have knowledge but the children are active now compared to us. They are learning."

Deepak's school is in the village and is known as *Maa Badi* school, or 'our school'. All the children from the village go there until Grade 2. The school is paid for as part of a programme to promote education among tribal children. The community requested the school two years ago. Prior to this, there was no school building and lessons were conducted on the verandah of Deepak's house. When the building needed repairs, Deepak's father says, the whole village came to help. But the current school still has no desks or chairs and the children sit on the mud floor.

Once the children learn the basics at the community school, they are admitted to the government primary school in another village about five kilometres away. But Deepak's grandmother says this is difficult because there is no transport: "The road is a long way around. There is a track over the hill and through the forest, but the children are scared to go there."

Some children board at another school further away, paid for by the government, but Deepak's father says Deepak went there and did not like it: "I took two days off work on the farm to take him, but after one week there he came back. When I asked him what happened, he just said: 'I won't go. The food is not good. It has insects in it.' I was angry with him and beat him. Since then we have tried to convince him but he does not want to go."

Deepak's grandmother adds that she would like him to go: "We want to send him when he is older. It is good if he goes there. He will be more responsible there because he has to wash his own clothes! We also want to educate him there. He will do well. I don't think he will cry next time and I will be there to ask about him."

Deepak wants to study so that he can get a job and buy things for his sister and brother. He says he wants to stay in his home village when he is older as he has a lot of friends and neighbours. He says he doesn't know what he wants to do in the future.

"I have my granny. She is like my mother. All other children have a mother; but my grandmother is good."

Tribal children

Along with *Dalits*, or ‘Scheduled Castes’, as the Government calls them, who are outside the caste system, *Adivasis* or Scheduled Tribes are the communities that fare least well in Indian society. They are often poorer than other households. Scheduled Tribes have expenditure levels 1.5 times lower than non-tribal households. Children from Scheduled Tribes are severely disadvantaged: 29.2% of the younger children and 18% of the older children from these groups live in absolute poverty. Young Lives also found that poor nutrition and stunting (an indicator of long-term malnutrition) were highest amongst the Scheduled Tribes. Most live in rural areas which are also found to be poorer than urban areas.

Prevalence of stunting in the Young Lives sample (by cohort, location and caste)

		Round 1		Round 2	
		Older cohort (%)	Younger cohort (%)	Older cohort (%)	Younger cohort (%)
Overall		33	31	34	36
By location	Urban	21	21	26	21
	Rural	37	35	37	40
By caste	Scheduled castes	35	37	35	39
	Scheduled tribes	34	46	39	40
	Other castes	25	19	26	24

In Andhra Pradesh, Young Lives found that drop-out rates from school are also higher for Scheduled Tribes than for other children, possibly because, like Deepak, they live in rural areas some distance from the nearest school. Child labour too is highest among the Scheduled Tribes, at 30.84%.

Source: S. Galab et al. (2008) *Young Lives Round 2 Survey Report: Initial Findings – Andhra Pradesh, India*.



Salman’s story

Salman is a 12-year-old boy from a Muslim community in an urban area. He lives with two younger and two older siblings and his mother. His father died of a heart attack when Salman was 6. Salman is no longer in school and works as a sales assistant in a shoe shop. His mother is a domestic worker.

Salman dropped out of school in first grade and at first got into bad company. His mother then found him a job in the shop and he has now been there for a year. His mother thinks he has changed a lot for the better in that time: “Before, he was too mischievous and never used to sit in one place. He was always fighting and used to bring in children from outside and fight with them. Now he has changed a lot, thank God. He has become clever, my son. If he is placed at work, he can build his destiny.” She says that she cannot afford to educate her children and that life is very hard without her husband.

Salman is very attached to his maternal grandfather, who used to be a rickshaw puller but fractured his leg and now works in a furniture shop. His older brother is a welder. His older sister is still at school. Both his mother and grandmother work as domestic servants. His mother and father married when she was 14, just the age her oldest daughter is now, his mother points out. She says she doesn’t want her son to marry before he is 20. She believes he is a good and obedient boy: “He has a habit of cleanliness, takes a bath regularly and wears neat clothes. Even if a single button is broken he won’t wear it”, she says.

During the interview Salman smiled a lot and readily ate the tea and biscuits provided. He seemed to be happy sitting on a classroom bench in school again. He carefully held the pack of coloured pens he was given as a gift for participating in the interview. At the end, he asked for a few sheets of white paper saying that he likes to draw.

Salman’s community is close to the town centre. He says he likes where he lives. He also feels that the local residents are nice people and can be trusted. He thinks that the nearby school and the health centre are providing good services for the children. He feels safe when he goes out and also says that local people are active and are able to affect the policies and programmes of the government that influence their lives.

Salman says he spends 10 hours a day sleeping, works for eight hours and spends six hours playing. He makes a joke out of the fact that the children play in the mud:

“We used to play in the mud. We used to eat mud! Some children put mud on their heads! We also used to play marbles. But now I can only play when I come home from work. I also watch TV. I like comedy programmes. I like Mr Bean.”

He earns 30 rupees a day, most of which he gives to his mother, who gives him a packed lunch for work every day. He keeps five rupees for his own spending money. Sometimes customers give him tips because he is poor which he gives to the shop owner. He says that there are three boys working in the shop and the younger one works in the afternoons and studies in the morning. When Salman was very small, he says, he used to go with his father in the rickshaw. He used to sell juice to other children in the playground and go to school in the evenings. He says his friends work too, one as a vendor and one in a clothes shop.

“You said that customers gave tips to you as you were poor, do you think that poor children should work or go to school?

They should work.

Why?

To earn money.

What do they do with those earnings?

They pay the rent.”

Salman also feels that he has to work hard to earn money and have good health. He thinks that he has no choice but to continue to work and he has not decided anything specific about his future; perhaps one day he will start his own shop, and maybe he will go back to school at some point. He is not embarrassed about his work, but does not feel proud of his mother's work as a domestic.

*“I also watch TV.
I like comedy programmes.
I like Mr Bean.”*

Salman thinks that all the children in his area should be well educated. He also feels that formal schooling is useful for one’s future and his mother feels the same. He says he respects his mother and obeys her and she listens patiently to all his ideas and views. He likes the shopowner because he looks after the boys and has a good sense of humour. He misses his father and keeps a photo of him.

Education and child work

Although education until the age of 14 is free and compulsory in India, at least 35 million children between 6 and 14 do not attend school. In the Young Lives survey, 99% of 12-year-olds reported having enrolled in school, but only 88.3% were still in school in 2006, with about 10% having dropped out. Drop-out rates are higher in rural areas (10%) than in urban areas (3%), among the poorest quartile (16%), among Scheduled Tribes children (possibly because of distance to school), and among girls (11%).

Children participating in paid labour (older cohort)

	Round 1 (%)	Round 2 (%)
All	6.1	20.4
Rural	1.0	25.8
Urban	0	3.7

An interesting finding was that over 86% of the younger children are reported to have attended a pre-school and 44% also claim to be already enrolled in primary school, despite being under the official starting age. Almost 50% of children from the poorest households are already in school, while 40% of children are sent well below the formal starting age. It is likely that the free midday meal provided by the state explains this.

In the older cohort, paid child work emerges as an important issue, despite legislation banning child work. Over a fifth of the children in our sample reportedly engage in paid work; most of these children are in rural areas where the incidence of child labour (25.8%) is much higher than in urban areas (3.7%). Child labour is highest among the Scheduled Tribes (30.8%) and lowest among the ‘Other Castes’, at 9.3%. Children from households which had been affected by drought are much more likely to work.

Source: S. Galab et al. (2008) *Young Lives Round 2 Survey Report: Initial Findings – Andhra Pradesh, India.*



Sarada’s story

Sarada is 12 years old. She lives in a village with her mother, sister and stepbrother. Sarada has been disabled since birth, and though she can walk short distances she has problems standing for any length of time. The family belongs to a low caste community that traditionally washes clothes for a living. Sarada wants to be a judge or a businesswoman when she grows up.

Sarada is a confident and outspoken girl who is in the last year of upper primary school. She does well at school and thinks education is very important. She participates in a number of extra-curricular activities and even wins prizes. She says Hindi is her favourite subject.

Her mother, who is not educated herself, thinks it is really important that her children go to school. She is aware that because she is not literate or numerate she depends on her children to help her. For example, she says: “My son will always ask about the cost of soap or coconut oil. I will be paying two or three hundred rupees without knowing the denominations. And he asks whether five rupees is more or ten rupees. We don’t know. We don’t know the letters and zeros in those papers. All this is because I am not educated.”

Sarada’s mother says that education is more important to her than making her children earn money: “Even if they pay a thousand [rupees] per head I will not send my children to work. We work in the forest in very bad conditions, night and day. But I am ready to do anything to educate them. I want to educate them.” She thinks education is particularly important for Sarada because of her disability: “Education is important for her because she has to get a job and live on her own. I do not know whether she will be married or not. She will need a job.”

Sarada says she is happy and loves her mother and her brother and sister, although she argues with her brother. She says she has learned many things from her mother, such as how to cook rice. The first time she tried, she remembers that she burned her fingers but now she knows how to cook.

Sarada says she also loves her father, who has remarried and lives with her stepmother and other stepbrothers and stepsisters in Mumbai. She has visited him once: “When I went there, he took care of me. He talked nicely to me and gave

me 10 rupees every day.” She says she does not want to go to Mumbai again to visit because her stepsister beat her while she was there and they could not understand her because she did not speak Hindi. Her father and his other family come to visit once a year. Sarada says she would prefer it if they all lived together in the village: “It would be better if we all lived together, children, adults, all talking to each other, playing, laughing and living happily.”

She says she doesn't have many friends in school. Her best friend was an older girl called Sabeena. She was a Muslim and was married at the age of 15 so Sarada does not see much of her now and misses her.

Sarada feels strongly that young women should not get married too early. She sees many examples of girls in the village who are married at 14 or 15 and thinks that 20 should be the age people get married. Her stepsister in Mumbai was married at the age of 12 and now has three children. Sarada's mother says that she feels her stepdaughter's life is spoiled: “She looks very pale now and it would be better if she lived with us. My husband's second wife's daughter grew up here in my hands and now she is facing problems. She and her children don't have happiness in their lives. She has to listen to her mother-in-law and father-in-law. They ask to do this and that and she has to work in the hot sun.”

Sarada says she would like to become a judge so that she can improve society and people who are doing wrong things and harm to others. She says that she was inspired by a woman judge in a television serial. She expects to get help and assistance from her teachers, from the government and from her parents to achieve her goal.

*“Even if they pay a thousand [rupees] per head
I will not send my children to work. I am ready
to do anything to educate them.”*

Sarada's mother

A day in the life of Sarada

She says: “This is my daily routine; the same as many other girls in the village; nothing very special or different. I don’t mind doing this work.”

Time	Activities
6.00am	Wakes up and has tea and breakfast
6.30–9.00am	Cleans the utensils and sweeps the floor both inside and outside the house. Takes a bath and her mother plaits her hair.
9.00am	Goes to school and studies Telugu, Hindi, English, maths and social studies.
12.00 midday	Comes home for lunch and then goes back to school
4.00pm	Comes back from school
5.00–6.00pm	Sweeps the floor and cooks dinner
6.00pm	Eats dinner
7.00–8.00pm	Watches television at a neighbour’s house
8.00–9.30pm	Does homework
9.30pm	Goes to bed

Sarada says she used to play outside but now her mother will not let her and she has to stay in and do chores in the house. “I felt sad that I couldn’t play anymore, but then I agreed for the sake of my mother. It is the same in everybody’s home.” Traditionally, once girls reach puberty, they are no longer allowed to play outside.

In the future, says Sarada, she would like to study and go to high school. But there is a problem because the school is eight kilometres away and you have to go by bus. Travelling on the bus, she says, makes her feel dizzy and sick. In fact, many girls in the village drop out at this stage because their parents do not want them to travel on public transport on their own.

Sarada’s mother is worried about her daughter’s future as a disabled woman: “Until now she is a little girl so it is OK. But I am worried about whether she will get married or not. Sometimes she carries two pots of water but is scared about getting pain in her legs. We are worried about that. Maybe someone will marry her and take her away and give her whatever she wants. She gets pain in her legs if she walks too far to the village. I am worried how she will manage by herself.”

Sarada says that after leaving school she would like to start a small tailoring centre and install a pay phone: "so that people who come for tailoring needs also use the coin box through which I can earn money." She also has the idea of opening a shop to sell the goods that she sews. She would like to own her own house and maybe get married.

Early marriage

Early marriage affects up to 100 million girls worldwide.

- In southern Asia, 48% (nearly 10 million) of young women were married before the age of 18.
- In Africa, 42% were married before turning 18.
- In Latin America and the Caribbean, 29% of young women were married by the age of 18.

In 2006, India enacted the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act which prohibits marriage below 18 for girls and 21 for boys. As a result, according to the National Family Health Survey, the percentage of women aged 20 to 24 who are married before the age of 18 has declined from 54.2% in 1992-93 to 44.5% in 2005-06. But many girls live in remote villages where such legislation has little effect and custom and the beliefs of the community are the most important influence on their lives.

The consequences of child marriage for girls can be severe. Girls between 15 and 19 are twice as likely to die for pregnancy-related reasons as girls between 20 and 24. They are more likely to drop out of school, have less mobility than unmarried girls or older married women, have less economic power, limited social networks and be at greater risk of domestic violence.

Sources: UNICEF (no date) 'Early Marriage: A Childhood Interrupted' (available at: http://www.unicef.org/india/child_protection_1536.htm); Plan (2007) State of the World's Girls; UNFPA (2005) Child Marriage Fact Sheet (available at: http://67.205.103.77/swp/2005/presskit/factsheets/facts_child_marriage.htm).



Ravi's story

Ravi is 13 years old. He lives in a village with his parents, brothers and younger nephew, his older sister's son. He has dropped out of school to pay a family debt and now works on a farm. He hopes to go to school again one day. His father beats his mother sometimes and this makes him unhappy. He says if he gets married, he will never beat his wife.

Ravi is keen to look smart and when Young Lives researchers came to interview him he asked for 15 minutes to change his clothes and comb his hair. He dropped out of school three years ago when his parents moved to another area in search of work, leaving the children in the care of their grandmother. She did not care much about their education, and as a result Ravi started missing school often and ultimately dropped out altogether.

He is now working as a full-time farm help. He picks groundnuts and does other seasonal work like cutting grass. He says this is in order to repay a debt of 20,000 rupees (US\$388) that his family incurred, and to help his older brother have an education as his family cannot afford for all the children to go to school. However, he talks positively about his own time at school:

"I remember very well when I was 10. Then I used to go to school. I used to play with children; I used to draw pictures on the wall.

Do you draw?

Yes madam, others used to say that you have drawn well. People came and said: "Who has drawn this picture? They have drawn very well". They asked me to draw a picture and looked at it.

What drawing did they ask you to draw?

A house. That time I also won a prize.

What prize?

A big box with pens and all in it.

Is it there still?

Yes, I kept it safely.

Will you show it to me tomorrow?

Yes madam.”

Ravi says that in three years the debt should be paid off and he hopes to go to school again. But these ideas remain vague and his mother does not seem to think he will return to his studies.

His mother was interviewed in the groundnut field where she was working. She did not go to school and cannot read and write. She says that her parents took her to work in the fields from a very young age:

“In those days we were six in my family and it was difficult. Because my brother is not mentally mature my parents used to take me along with them, so right from an early age I had to work. We used to do a lot of work, building roads, sand roads and cement roads.

Did you like to work?

If we didn't work there was no food; if we said we didn't like to work then we had no food to eat. If we worked hard then we had something to eat.”

Ravi gets up at 5am and cleans out the cattle shed, sweeps the floor and fetches water. For the water he has to walk for about 30 minutes to fetch about six pots of water. Then he washes his face and has some tea. He leaves for work at 9am and comes back around 3pm when he has rice and *dhal* (lentils) for lunch. In the evenings he may help with chores such as collecting firewood or going to the shop to buy food for dinner. Otherwise he watches TV and enjoys playing marbles with his friends. On Sundays he says he spends the day relaxing at home.

Ravi also likes looking after his nephew and his sister's other children. He and his older brother help with their nephew in the mornings and evenings, giving him a bath, dressing him and taking him to school while his parents are at work. His mother says: “He takes good care of the children. If any kids are crying, they give him the responsibility saying that they will stay nicely with you as you play with them. You take good care of the kids. They say like this and leave the kids with him. Both of them [Ravi and his older brother] like their sister's children.”

Ravi is close to his mother and is very upset when his father is drunk and beats her. He is pleased when his mother tries to hit back. His mother talks about the drink but not about the beating. “At home, my husband used to drink and neglected his family responsibilities. The children said to him: ‘By having food you can fill your stomach but by drinking you can never do it. It's not the right way to be.’ He nods his head at that moment but continues doing the same thing every evening.”

Ravi says: "When my mum and dad fight I feel very bad. When my dad beats my mum we go and try to stop him. Me and my brother go."

Ravi talks about getting married and says he would like to have a boy and a girl. He will not beat his wife like his father beats his mother: "I won't beat her. If I beat my wife, she will also beat me. If I am perfect why would she beat me?"

"If we don't work there is no food; if we work hard then we have something to eat."

Ravi's mother

Domestic violence and its effect on children

Domestic violence is prevalent in every country in the world. One in every three women has experienced sexual, physical, emotional or other abuse in her lifetime, according to the Family Violence Protection Fund. In India, according to the National Crime Records Bureau, a crime against women is committed every three minutes, and every six hours a young married woman is burned, beaten to death or driven to commit suicide. Domestic violence has also been shown to have an effect on children who witness it, even if they are not hurt themselves.

Part of the reason for this is that wife beating is often seen as culturally acceptable; the phrase 'a rule of thumb' comes from a law in England in the 1400s which allowed a man to beat his wife as long as the stick he used was no thicker than his thumb. A survey by the International Institute for Population Studies showed 56% of Indian women believed wife beating to be justified in certain circumstances, from cooking a bad meal to going out without your husband's permission.

The Domestic Violence Act came into force in India 2006. It aims to protect women from such violence, with fines or jail sentences as punishment.

Source: BBC News (24 October 2006) India Tackles Domestic Violence (available at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/6086334.stm).



Harika's story

Harika is 13 years old. She is the only girl in her family and has an older and a younger brother. She has to work hard to help her mother at home. She enjoys school and worries about missing it when she works in the fields during the peak agricultural season. Working with the cotton has also affected her health. She is proud of the fact that she has won a national scholarship.

Harika's older brother has been informally adopted by an aunt who has no children and lives nearby. He comes home regularly and helps with the family farm but in effect Harika is now the oldest child in the household. As such, and also being a girl, she has many responsibilities at home. Being the only daughter she has to share the housework with her mother. Harika says her brother does not have to do any of the household chores so he can sleep in but he does go with her to the cotton fields. She says that when she was his age she was already doing work in the house but that he doesn't have to because he is a boy. Harika's work has increased over the past few months as her father is immobile since he injured his leg in a road accident and her mother shoulders responsibility for all the work that her father used to do.

Her parents say that Harika is a well-behaved and quiet girl who works hard and does a thorough job whatever she is doing. She says her mother scolds her a lot and they do not talk very much. She is closer to her grandmother. Her mother says:

"She likes her grandmother a lot. She looks like her grandmother. So her grandmother also likes her a lot. She goes to her grandmother during her free time."

Harika remembered the Young Lives researchers coming to visit when she was younger and was keen to be interviewed again. She says she is keen on her studies and works hard at school. She likes her school and her teachers.

She believes that education is important: "If we are not educated, we don't know anything. So, if we go to school, we can learn about all the things."

Harika’s day

Time	When attending school	When working in the cotton fields
4.00am		Sometimes gets up to study
6.00am	Gets up	Gets up and takes a bath
	Brushes teeth and drinks tea. Takes a bath	Brushes teeth and drinks tea
7.00am	Fetches water from the hand bore, cleans the utensils and sweeps the floor.	Goes to the cotton fields to pollinate the buds
9.30am	After breakfast she goes to school	Her mother brings breakfast to the fields
4.00pm	Finishes school and plays games with her friends	Separating the cotton buds
4.30pm	Comes home and has tea	
	Sweeps the floor and fetches more water	Spins the cotton
5.30pm	Cooks food for dinner and takes care of her father and younger brother	Comes home from the fields and studies
	Sometimes watches TV at a neighbour’s house	Separates the seeds from the cotton while watching TV
9.00pm	Eats dinner	Eats dinner
10.00pm	Goes to bed	Goes to bed

Harika worries about missing school during the months she works in the fields and her mother says that she often gets up at 4.00am during this time to study before going to work. Harika thinks her friend Salma is lucky because she doesn’t have to work in the fields or at home and she wears nice dresses.

Most of the children in the village work in the fields during the peak season and miss school. In fact, Harika’s parents say there are not enough children to do this work and so they have to bring some from a neighbouring village to help. The cotton has to be pollinated and the families and the whole community need the money it brings. They acknowledge that the work is hard, hot and sometimes

dangerous. It is the adults who spray pesticides but sometimes they affect the child workers and they get sick and vomit. It also affects girls' adolescent development. Harika's mother says: "She is tiny for her age and has not yet attained puberty although all her friends have." There is also a danger from snakes and Harika was once bitten on her foot.

Despite having to work in the fields, Harika was the only student in her class selected for a national scholarship based on a competitive examination. She is grateful to her teacher who coached her after school hours. She is proud of her achievement. Harika would like to be a teacher like her uncle but she can only study up to tenth grade in the village school and her parents are not keen for her to continue beyond as it would mean going to school in another village and people generally do not send girls because they fear for their safety.

"If we are not educated, we don't know anything."

Work in the cotton fields and health

In some areas of rural Andhra Pradesh, it is common for children over 10 to work in the cotton fields for two or three months of the year. In the Young Lives survey 20% of the older cohort reported working for pay. Ninety per cent of these workers are girls under 14. Once they attain puberty, girls tend to stop the pollination work and do other jobs in the fields.

Young Lives interviewed a health worker about the risks faced by these girls. She said: “They spray pesticides in the cotton fields... we ourselves cannot bear the smell. It is intolerable and very pungent. Even adults cannot bear this smell, let alone the children. Some people vomit and have a burning sensation in their eyes...”

The health worker said the cottonseed work affects children’s health very directly:

“If they do such work, the children become weak and turn anaemic. They have small cracks on the gums and teeth... Even if we give them some tablets, they will not accept or take. ... In those girls who are in the age group 12 to 14, their breast growth is slow, particularly among those who work in the cotton fields ... so many times we observed that quite a few of them have flat chests in this community.”

It is ironic that pesticide use apparently delays girls’ periods, while at the same time, local beliefs favour pre-pubescent girls for pollination work. The health worker said:

“They are more anaemic than the adults, particularly the adolescent girls. They have less blood, they will not grow much. Because of the smell, they also do not feel hungry. So they don’t eat much, and therefore do not grow... We get the children of the same age group and compare them, so we can find the difference in these children. Even though they have good complexions, if they go to the cotton fields, their skin turns dark and gets tanned. Even their nails are also spoilt as they pluck the cotton flowers. Their feet get cracks and bleed. Some wear shoes, some will not. They get their periods late.”

This confirms the comments made by Harika’s mother about her delayed physical development.

Source: Virginia Morrow and Uma Vennam (2008) ‘Children Combining Work and Education in Cottonseed Production in Andhra Pradesh: Implications for Discourses of Children’s Rights in India’, paper presented at Childhoods and Children’s Rights Conference, New Delhi, 10-11 November.

Country context: Peru

Peru is regarded as a 'medium human development' country, according to the United Nations criteria, and currently ranks 87 out of 177 countries in the UN Human Development Index. It boasts the fastest-growing economy in Latin America. However, the country's strong economic performance has not been matched in terms of poverty reduction, and there are widening gaps between different sectors of the population.

- In recent years, Peru has experienced continued economic growth, at over 6% per year between 2002 and 2006.
- Inflation has continued below 2%, while exports have grown over 25% per year.
- The overall national poverty rate fell between 2004 and 2006, but this reduction is almost entirely urban.
- The country has one of the highest levels of income inequality in South America.
- Levels of poverty, infant mortality, maternal mortality and malnourishment among indigenous groups are twice as high as national averages.
- The widening gap between rich and poor and town and countryside has led to increased migration to the cities, especially the capital, Lima, which is now home to approximately 28% of Peru's population.

Sources: J. Escobar et al. (2008) *Young Lives Peru Round 2 Survey Report: Initial Findings*; World Bank (2007) *Social Protection in Peru*, Lima: World Bank; 2007/2008 UN Human Development Index.



Elmer's story

Elmer is 12 years old and lives with his older sister, Eva, in Lima. He came to the city from his village so he could start secondary school. He helps Eva by looking after her children while she is at work and in exchange she pays for all his school-related expenses. This is not the first time Elmer has moved – he moved once before when his parents were looking for work on a farm. He misses his family but knows he will be going home soon.

Elmer lives with Eva, who is 25, and her two small children. Her husband is a carpenter. They need someone to look after the children while she works in the afternoons in a restaurant. Last year, his older brother came to Lima and this year, it is Elmer's turn. When Elmer goes home, his brother will come back. Before moving to Lima, Elmer and Eva did not know each other very well, as Eva left home when she was just 13 and Elmer was a baby. Their mother thinks spending some time together will be good for their relationship.

Eva and her family live next to a busy road in a densely populated district. The apartment is on the second floor above a car repair shop, close to Eva's work and Elmer's school. It is modest, but the living room and kitchen are spacious and have electrical appliances: a TV, DVD player, stereo, a fridge and a cooker.

Elmer is shy, but happy to answer the Young Lives researcher's questions, although his answers are short. He says that he looks after his nephews, aged 3 and 6, every afternoon and also on Saturdays. He says they are sometimes naughty, don't do what they are told, and play with the stereo.

He acknowledges that coming to Lima has meant a big change in his life. Elmer was in sixth grade at a primary school in the village and now studies at a large secondary school. At home he helped his parents on the smallholding, taking care of the animals, working the land and picking coffee, for which he sometimes got a small payment. He spent a lot of time playing with his little sister and taking care of his youngest brother. The family had moved from one village to another in order to find work on the smallholding and so he had already changed schools once. His grandparents live in another city and he has visited them. Elmer has lots of friends in the village and he misses them. He says that he misses his family too, but knows that he will be going home soon.

“Why was it important to come to Lima?”

To know more things.

OK, to know more things. Do you like the city?

Yes, I do.

Yes, and what is it that you like the most about living here?

Going out and playing in the park.

What is it that you like least about living here?

There are many cars and a lot of noise.

In comparison with your village, is this a better or a worse place to live?

My village is nicer because there are more trees.”

Elmer says that the transfer from primary to secondary school was better than he expected. He soon made a friend and that helped. What he likes the most in this school is the playground, though he would like it to be cleaner. He thinks secondary school is more difficult than primary school, because there is more homework, and there are more teachers.

Elmer believes education is important. When he drew a child who was not doing well, he drew a boy crying because he got bad marks. In the case of a child who was doing well, he drew a boy smiling because he got presents and clothes from his mother for having got good marks. Elmer’s own mother, who brought him to Lima, said that she wanted him to study, particularly as she had only had two years of schooling: “I don’t want him to be like me, with no education... we, his parents, will not be here forever, we may die, both of us, but with his education he can find a job.” She believes education is the most important thing for all her children and the family has already invested a lot in their education.

Elmer says he wants to complete secondary school, go to university and become a doctor. He thinks that his parents will be pleased with his plans and will support him. He would like to have a wife and children, but not until he is at least 25 years old. In the future he would like to travel, to visit other places, perhaps Lima too, which he has liked very much apart from the crowds.

“My village is nicer because there are more trees.”

Migration

Elmer's family has a history of mobility and migration, with his mother having moved from her birthplace to the place where she grew up, and then moving again with her family to find work on a smallholding. Her children have also moved around, with her eldest daughter settling in Lima and her two eldest sons spending long periods of time there.

The family's history of migration is not unusual for rural families in Peru, which has high levels of migration, especially from rural areas to cities. A third of the country's population now live in Lima.

In addition, around 10% of Peruvians live abroad. Between the two Young Lives surveys in 2002 and 2006, a third of children from the older cohort and over half of their mothers were migrants in their communities; in other words, they had been born elsewhere.

Migration does not occur just because children are seeking education, or indeed because of poverty. In the 1980s and early 1990s many thousands of people fled their homes due to internal armed conflict between the army and guerrilla groups in some areas.

But for many living in the rural areas, the city also means a better life: as one mother said: "I dream, always dream that the city isn't like it is here, here it's always suffering... well, as I see it, there can't be that much suffering [in the city], because they don't get wet, they don't get sunburned, they have their secure jobs, they have their daily schedule, and in contrast, here it's backbreaking."

Source: Gina Crivello et al. (2009) *'Becoming Somebody': Youth Transitions through Education and Migration. Evidence from Young Lives in Peru*, Young Lives Working Paper 43.

"I don't want him to be like me, with no education... we, his parents, will not be here forever... but with his education he can find a job."

Elmer's mother



Lupe's story

Lupe is 6 years old and quite shy. She lives in Lima with her mother, her father, her sister, and her aunt. Lupe's grandmother looks after the girls while their mother is at work. Lupe has just started school which she says is harder than kindergarten. She misses the toys and puzzles they had in pre-school and clearly remembers the first day in primary school after the summer holidays.

Lupe's family is relatively well-off and lives in a large house in the capital city, Lima. There is a spacious living-dining room with a TV. On one of the walls there are two small shelves with textbooks, storybooks and jigsaw puzzles that belong to the girls. The family has two dogs and a cat. The house has all the basic services. The garage has been converted to a small grocery shop, run by Lupe's grandmother.

Lupe spends most of the time at home with her sister. During the week they are looked after by their grandmother and at weekends they spend time with their mother. They see less of their father because he is always working. Lupe says she is responsible for tidying up her bedroom and her parents', as well as organising what she will wear to school the next morning.

Lupe is at primary school, which she says is harder than kindergarten. She misses the toys and jigsaw puzzles that they had in kindergarten and was deeply disappointed when she arrived at primary school on the first day and found they were not there. Lupe loves doing jigsaw puzzles. She also misses having two breaks in the day; in primary school they only have one. Although Lupe's primary school is in the same building as the pre-school she still feels the differences.

Lupe's classroom has 24 small desks and 24 chairs. There is a blackboard and a whiteboard and a first aid kit. The walls are covered with children's' drawings. At the back of the classroom there is a small puppet theatre.

Lupe clearly remembers the first day in primary school after the end of the summer holiday, when her mother bought all the things she needed for school and a new backpack, bigger than the one she had in kindergarten. She says she has several friends at school, but during those first days she had problems with two girls who teased her. The teacher intervened to end the quarrel and one of her

classmates supported her. Lupe didn't talk to her mother about the problem, just to her sister, who advised her to not allow anyone to bother her and to fight back.

Lupe thinks it is important to learn how to read and write, as well as learning to draw and to add and subtract in the first grade at primary school. She expects the second grade to be harder and thinks she will need to make an effort to get through it. She says that one of the most difficult tasks is writing down all the sentences on the blackboard without getting behind, and taking dictation. She believes that all children, both boys and girls, should go to school to learn everything that she is learning now. Her teacher is a good person, she says, although she gets cross when students don't do their homework. She mentioned one occasion when her teacher smacked her.

Asked about the best moments during the present year, Lupe talked about the times when she played with her sister and rode her bicycle down a hill near her home. She made a clear distinction between the time when she was *chiquita* (a little girl) and now. When she was little, she said, she couldn't ride a bicycle or race her friend who lives nearby. Lupe also identified a happy moment when her puppy and kitten went to sleep together. Asked what she doesn't like doing, Lupe said she didn't like staying in, especially on Sunday evenings. At these times, she plays indoors with her dolls.

Lupe has had a skin allergy since she was a few months old. Despite much to-ing and fro-ing between different specialists and health services, her parents feel she did not receive adequate attention.

Lupe says that one of the most difficult tasks [in school] is writing down all the sentences on the blackboard without getting behind.

Pre- and primary school

Lupe is lucky to have attended pre-school kindergarten. Pre-school education is relatively new in Peru: in 1985 only 26.6% of children between three and five years old were enrolled at school; today the figure has risen to 66.6%, while 93% attend primary school. These changes are partly the result of the recognition that early education has a range of beneficial effects. It provides a foundation for success in subsequent school years and improves the transition to primary school. In Latin America, this is seen as particularly important as repetition rates in first grade are high: at the beginning of the 1990s, 42% of children enrolled at first grade repeated the year, while the average in primary was 29%.

Peru now has a raft of legislation on school and pre-school education, including a 2003 General Law of Education which includes pre-school as part of basic education, making it free and compulsory.

A Young Lives study of four areas found that caregivers were generally positive about pre-school, believing that it helped smooth the transition between home and school. As one rural mother said: "When they go to pre-school, they learn the alphabet, they go [to primary school] with their hand more adapted to write, and they don't suffer so much at school, at least they can already write their name... they are also less shy, they become used to their teacher and their classmates."

Within the schools, however, Young Lives research found that: 'looking at the organisational arrangements in place and the actual practices of teachers, it can be said that transition from pre-school to first grade is not understood and structured as a process within and between educational institutions.' Other Young Lives research also shows that pre-school enrolment seems to be biased in favour of children with more educated and wealthier mothers, towards the oldest child in a family, and those whose father is present in the household. Rural girls show the lowest enrolment levels of all groups, which is important to note because it increases their chances of dropping out later on.

Sources: J. Escobal et al. (2008) *Young Lives Peru Round 2 Survey Report: Initial Findings*; Patricia Ames (forthcoming 2009) *Starting School: Who is Prepared? Young Lives' Research on Children's Transition to First Grade in Peru*, Young Lives Working Paper 47.



Manuel's story

Manuel is 12 years old. His family are Quechua, the main indigenous group in Peru. He lives in a rural area with his two sisters, three brothers, his parents and his grandmother, but he also has many cousins and says that his extended family is very important to him. He gets on well with his siblings. Manuel also helps his parents. He helps in the house and he knows how to work on the farm – his says his aunt taught him because his father was away.

Manuel likes being outside and both the interviews with him took place outside, one in the back yard of the guesthouse where the Young Lives research team used to eat and one in the back yard of Manuel's house, where his siblings and friends were climbing trees and playing games. A girl was chasing her brother who had a catapult and trying to take it away from him, while he was running and laughing.

Manuel's community lives in a rural area in the Andean highlands. His family lives down a narrow path off the main road. They live in a two-storey adobe house (a traditional material made from sand and clay) with a separate kitchen made of corrugated cardboard. They have hens, sheep, a pig and a cow as well as a dog and a cat – and, adds Manuel, a turkey.

Manuel was interviewed in Spanish. His mother was interviewed in Quechua while she was doing the laundry. Manuel says his parents work hard. His mother works from early in the morning until late in the evening; she cooks at a farm and does household chores. Manuel says he thinks it is good that she works because the children learn things from her. He says his father has a number of jobs: he works on the farm sowing maize, and in the building industry as a construction worker. He also works in the rainforest picking coca leaves.

Manuel is proud of the fact that he helps his parents. He knows how to peel potatoes and cook. And he also knows how to work on a farm – his says his aunt taught him because his father was away. As well as helping his family, he works for wages on other people's land. He says he works every day, in the afternoons after school: looking after pigs, gathering firewood, and harvesting maize, wheat and *quinoa*, a kind of cereal.

“Do you like this work?”

Yes.

When you work for other people, how much do you get paid? How many hours do you work?

Between two and six hours.

And how much, more or less, do you get paid?

About 10 soles (US\$3.50).

Do you work at other times?

Yes. I also work at other times of the day. From eight to five.

For those times, how much do you get paid?

Twelve soles (US\$3.80).

Twelve soles. And what’s your opinion about children of your age who work?

I think they want to work too. Because they like to work.”

He says he likes working. It makes him feel self-sufficient. He thinks that it is OK for children to work. He gives the money that he gets for working to his mother, and that makes him feel good. He also likes going to church. In his spare time he plays football, volleyball and basketball. He has recently learned to ride a bicycle.

Manuel has been going to school since he was 5, although he is still in Grade 4 of primary school while most children his age are in Grade 6 or the first year of secondary school. He says that during the previous year he missed a lot of classes because he was working and so had to repeat the year.

Manuel says that he goes to school with his friends. He likes the classroom and all the posters and other materials on the walls. He says he also likes his teacher because she encourages them to learn. He wants to go to secondary school. He thinks he will adapt to secondary school easily because his cousins studied there and they will help him get used to it. He would then like to become a professional – either an engineer or a teacher. He would also like to travel when he is older.

Manuel says that in his community there are many plants, a highway, birds, trees, animals and hills. It is a beautiful place. What he likes most are the plants and flowers, and what he likes least are the surrounding hills, because they block the view of the lagoon.

Over-age children

Manuel is one of Peru's many 'over-age' children; that is, children who are older than the norm for the grade they are in. Manuel has already repeated a year, and evidence shows that in Peru repetition and temporary drop-out are common, leading to a high percentage of children who are 'over-age'. In the Young Lives sample 60% of the older cohort is over-age. This rises to 71% in the poorest fifth of the population but is only 44% in the richest fifth. Boys are 1% more likely to be over-age than girls, and children living in rural areas are 3% more likely to be over-age than those in urban areas.

Over-age students generally come from relatively poor households with less-educated mothers. They have poorer nutrition and are more likely to drop out of school than students who are the right age for their grade. Children like Manuel, who have indigenous mothers, are also statistically more likely to be over-age.

Although school drop-out is strongly related to being over-age, it has other causes too. As children grow older, they are required to become more involved in paid work and domestic activities, so are more likely to drop out of school. It will be interesting to see whether Manuel fulfils his ambition of staying in school.

Sources: J. Escobal et al. (2008) *Young Lives Peru Round 2 Survey Report: Initial Findings*; UNICEF http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/peru_statistics.html.

Manuel says he likes working. He gives the money that he gets for working to his mother and that makes him feel good.



Luz's story

Luz is 14 years old. She lives with her family in a quiet neighbourhood where her parents run a small tailoring business. They work hard and Luz helps out too. She is not paid for this but thinks it is right that children work to help their parents, because they buy food and clothes for their children and support them through school. However, she does not believe that children should work outside the home where they may be exposed to other dangers and risks.

Luz lives with her parents, younger sister, an uncle and aunt, and a male cousin. She describes her neighbourhood as a quiet and peaceful community, and says she likes living there. She also thinks it is a good place to live because the neighbours are calm and do not fight with each other.

The Young Lives interview took place in the back yard of their home where the delivery tricycle for their business is stored. They use this to take the T-shirts and trousers that are produced by the family to be sold in local markets.

Luz's parents work hard. Her mother's job is to sell everything that is made at sewing workshop. On Mondays and Thursdays when she goes to the market, she is out from 6am to 8pm. Luz's father works at the sewing workshop from 6am to 8pm from Monday to Saturday, and on Sundays from 6am to 10am.

Luz helps out too. When she turned 9, she learned to wash her clothes and sew shirt sleeves using a sewing machine at school. At 14, she learned to sew using the sewing machines at the school. Now, she helps her parents after she has finished her homework. Her father taught her how to use the family's sewing machines and supervises her. When her parents are not at home, her aunt takes care of her. Luz says she doesn't like this very much. She says her little sister does not work in the workshop because she does not know how to control the machines.

Luz is not paid for working in the workshop, and thinks that after receiving support for her education, food and clothing, it is fine to help her parents. She believes that children should not work outside the family business, because otherwise they are then exposed to dangers and risks:

“Do you think that children like you should be working?”

Yes, if they are working at home, but not in the street or outside the home

So you think it is a good thing to work in a family business?

Yes.

But why not in the street?

Not in the street. They might meet people who deceive them, take them to other places, or abuse them, especially girls. It is better to work in the home where your father and mother and uncles and aunts live.”

Luz is currently in the second grade of secondary school. She wakes up early in the morning to go to school on the local bus which only takes five minutes. She says she never misses school, except when she is ill and stays at home with her parents' permission.

She says that what she likes most about school are her friends and some teachers who explain the lessons well. She has two best friends but is sometimes suspicious of friendships.

“Would you say that girlfriends and boyfriends are important in your life?”

More or less.

Why?

Sometimes I do not have much confidence in friends.

Why not?

They can do bad things; take bad decisions.

Boys more than girls?

Girls too when you tell them your secrets and they are angry and tell them to others.”

What Luz like least about school is the poor state of the buildings, for example the broken windows, graffiti on walls and battered lockers. She believes that all children her age should go to school so that they can go to university and become professionals.

Luz says that she does not remember much about her early childhood, although one of her aunts told her that when she was about 2 she ate a chilli pepper, and though she cried at first because it was spicy and hot, she continued eating as if

she had started to like it. She also knows that when she started walking, she used to be carried to the fields by her grandmother.

When she was 5, she went to kindergarten and says it was confusing for her to be called by her real name rather than by her childhood nickname, Milagros, which means 'miracles'. She said that in the beginning, her mum stayed in kindergarten with her, so she would not feel afraid when she was left alone. By the time she was 7 she had made some friends in primary school. When she was 11, she finished primary school and remembers fondly the school's graduation trip to Machu Picchu. When she was 12, she started secondary school. She remembers how nervous she was and how she was afraid that she would not pass the entrance exam. However, when she saw some of her old classmates from primary school, she felt more confident and passed the exam without any problems. Her parents say that they sent her to a private school to prepare for the examination. Young Lives researchers found that this was quite common in the city where Luz lives. Public schools here are more prestigious than private ones, so some private academies prepare children over the summer before they take the entrance exam to secondary school. In cities like Lima this is much less common.

Luz's parents feel that it was at that point that she grew up and they started giving her more responsibilities and tasks in the household. She also started to get better marks in school, to be more organised and clean and tidy. They said that she even asked them to look smart if they went out for a walk with her!

Luz says that one of her happiest memories was when her entire family (including uncles, aunts and cousins) came to her house to celebrate New Year's Eve. People forgot the problems they had had with each other and everyone had a good time.

Her family are very important to her, she says. Her father, because he looks after her and protects her; her mother, because she gives her a lot of affection; her sister, because she keeps her company; her aunt, because she advises her when she has problems about school, and speaks to her mother about what is happening to her; and her cousin because he makes her laugh even when she is sad.

She would like her family to celebrate her fifteenth birthday and she believes they are planning to organise a party, because she had heard her aunt and father talking about buying a video about fifteenth birthday parties so that they would know how to organise this sort of event. In Peru, the fifteenth birthday is considered very special. At the age of 20, she expects to be studying at university,

and the only thing she thinks could stop her would be falling in with ‘bad friends’ who could drag her down the wrong path (of parties, drugs, etc.). But she says she has a role model in one of her aunts who at the age of 27 is professional and single: “My mother tells me: ‘You do not need to look for a husband now, you can be a professional; your aunt who is single is perfectly happy; she has no-one to tell her what to do.’ So I want to be happy like my aunt, enjoy myself, and not get married yet.”

Luz’s parents also said they were worried that she might fall in with ‘bad friends’, but said that the only thing they could do was to talk to her about it. They agree that she should only get married after she has completed her studies, maybe around the age of 25. They would not have a problem if she had a boyfriend earlier than this, say at 18 or 19. They didn’t think she would always live with them but would find a job in another city. They hope their daughter will be able to complete a university degree and become a doctor or a business manager. Luz’s father said that he thought the government should support young people with training schemes in areas such as business and management. He also mentioned that he felt there were too many students in areas such as law or education, because he said the labour market for those activities was saturated.

*“I want to be happy like my aunt,
enjoy myself, and not get married yet.”*

Child work

The number of children in Peru who work is high. One Young Lives study notes that: 'According to official statistics, around two million Peruvian children – 28.6% of those between the age of 6 and 17 – work for a wage or non-monetary compensation. Of these, 54% are boys and 46% girls. Ninety per cent work in the informal sector for more than 45 hours per week and 90% receive less than the minimum wage.' The study also noted that far more children in rural areas worked (992,541) than in urban areas (226,932). It also pointed out that these figures are likely to be an under-estimate as it is illegal for children under 14 to work.

In addition: 'These figures conceal another important dimension of child work – unpaid activities carried out to support the household, either on family fields, in small businesses or in domestic work and care for siblings.' Luz's work in her family business would come into this category, which accounts for 11% of child work.

Percentage of children aged 6–13 who work according to main occupation (2001)

	Total	Urban	Rural
Helped in agriculture activities or animal husbandry	81.0	32.7	92.1
Helped in the household business	11.0	43.1	3.6
Helped other households	3.7	10.0	2.2
Helped producing goods for self-consumption	2.0	5.9	1.1
Street vending	1.9	6.8	0.8
Bulk carriers, brickmakers and other occupations	0.4	1.6	0.1

In the older cohort of Young Lives children, research showed that the percentage of children involved in paid activities is high compared to official statistics. Boys are more likely to be involved in paid activities and girls more likely to work in the home.

Source: Young Lives Policy Brief 3: *Trade Liberalisation and Child Well-being: Potential Impacts of the Peru-US Free Trade Agreement*. Table: Source: INEI (2002), quoted by Escobal and Ponce (2005: 10).



Fabricio's story

Fabricio is 5 years old. He comes from an indigenous Quechua family and was interviewed in Quechua and Spanish. His mother was interviewed in Quechua. He recently started primary school and he loves his teacher. His mother originally thought he was too young to move from pre-school into primary, but she appreciates the efforts the teacher makes to keep her informed of his progress. Fabricio spends a lot of time playing on his own because his siblings are at school in another town. Sometimes he helps his mother by collecting firewood and feeding the guinea pigs.

Fabricio is the youngest of six siblings. He lives in an adobe house (traditionally made of sand and clay) with two floors. The floor is made of earth and the roof is of corrugated iron. The walls are covered in old calendar pictures. Chickens wander in and out. His mother says that while he is shy with strangers, he is extrovert at home. He was a bit nervous and asked to be interviewed in his primary school. During the interview, several children called out to him and knocked on the windows of the classroom. At one point he was scared because of the noises that came from outside, caused by the strong wind that was blowing that day.

He says that when he gets up, he lights the wood stove and then goes to school. In the afternoons, he goes to the field to fetch firewood, and then he plays football with his sister. He says that he already knows how to make noodle soup because his sister taught him. His mother says he spends a lot of time playing on his own because his siblings are at school in another town. Sometimes he helps her by collecting firewood and feeding the guinea pigs. In the evenings, he watches TV. On Saturdays and Sundays, he helps his older sisters with the cows.

Fabricio is now in primary school. He says he liked kindergarten, which was very nice because it had a lot of trees and plants. His classroom was very clean. His mother says that she felt he was not ready to start primary school because in the kindergarten he was only taught how to draw and colour pictures, and she had been unable to teach him other things because she can't read. She thinks her son is too young to be going to primary school, but she sent him because the teacher and her older children told her that he was old enough. She had tried to register him in kindergarten again, but he refused and stayed in primary school.

Fabricio’s mother is impressed with the school now. The teacher meets the parents every week to tell them how their child is doing. She says that most decisions about a child’s education are made between the teacher and the parents.

When he started primary school, Fabricio says he liked it because all his classmates from kindergarten were there. He learned to do his assignments and copy from the blackboard. He said that the teacher only punishes them when they misbehave. His teacher is one of the most important people to him, because she taught him to read. His father is also important because he doesn’t punish him and he loves him a lot.

Fabricio thinks that children should go to school so that they can study. His mother thinks that education is the most important thing for him. She would like him to become a professional but says she does not know if the family will be able to keep him in school.

He was asked what had made him happy; perhaps something he had been given. His reply:

“A cow

Someone gave you a cow?

Yes. My grandmother.

Where is this cow?

In my house, miss.

And what does the cow eat?

Grass, miss.

Who helps you with the cow?

My sister.

What is the cow called?

Francisca, miss. My cow is called Francisca.”

He was also pleased that he learned to ride a horse this year. His favourite activity is drawing, and what he likes least is peeling potatoes because he gets very tired. His mother says he enjoys going to the local town with her because she often buys him a toy. She also says that he enjoys working with his father on the smallholding, and is learning how to work the land by copying his father.

Fabricio spoke about an accident he had had when he was gored by a ram. He had to go to hospital. He also added that he had a stomach-ache and that his mum prepared a remedy with orange peel. His mother says that when Fabricio was 1 year old he had severe diarrhoea and had to go to hospital in Lima and was seriously ill. His mother is also worried that he might have a car accident like his older brother who died. She thinks he will go and live in the city when he is older.

Fabricio says his teacher is one of the most important people to him, because she taught him to read. His father is also important because he doesn't punish him and he loves him a lot.

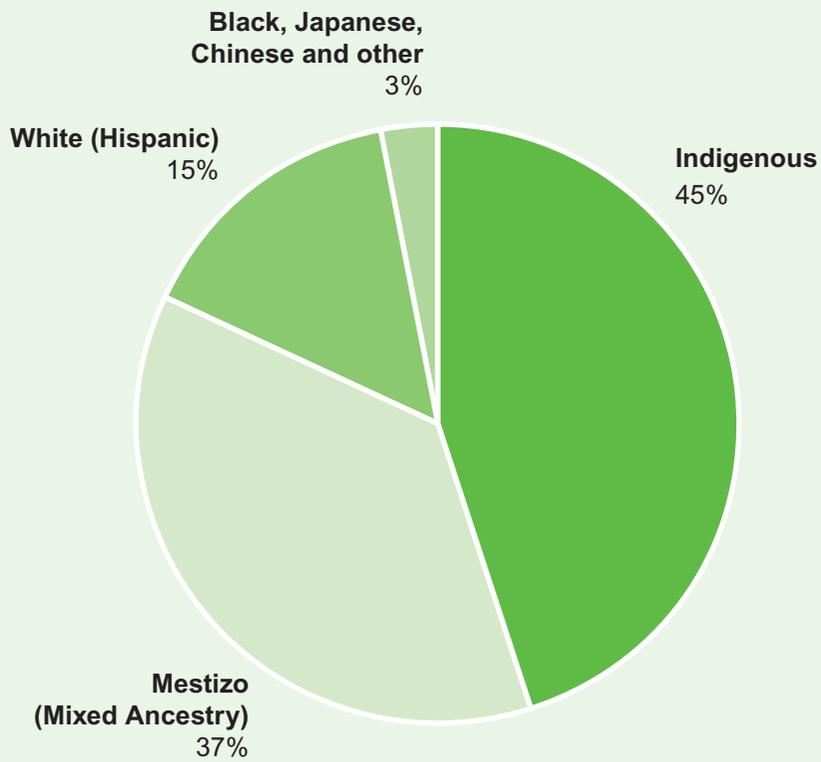
Indigenous people in Peru and bilingual education

There are 42 indigenous groups in Peru. The largest groups are the Quechua and Aymara. Despite the fact that together they form the largest sector of the population, the indigenous peoples of Peru often have the highest levels of poverty, illiteracy and mortality in the country.

By law, intercultural bilingual education should be available in primary school in Peru, although there is no provision for bilingual education at pre-primary level. In Fabricio's school, however, there is no bilingual education, and so many children like Fabricio struggle in Spanish, which they have not yet learned to speak, especially if their parents only speak an indigenous language. Their parents, however, may well be keen for them to learn Spanish, which is the official language in Peru, so that their children can have better lives than they did. Indicators from Young Lives research would show their concerns are well-founded: along with parental education and urban-rural variables, the most important predictor of inequality gaps in outcomes is speaking a minority language. This is true not only in Peru, but in Ethiopia and Vietnam as well.

Source: S. Cueto (2008) *Confronting Inequalities: The Cognitive Skills Achievement Gap for Children in Four Countries*, Presentation to the Department for International Development, London, 1 October 2008.

Peru's indigenous peoples



Source: http://www.geographyiq.com/countries/pe/Peru_people.htm

Country context: Vietnam

The population of Vietnam in 2007 was an estimated 85 million, divided almost equally between men and women. The population is about 75 per cent rural. However, this picture is changing, as rates of migration towards the cities are high. Rural areas have substantially higher rates of poverty and poorer access to services than urban areas.

- Vietnam ranks 105 out of 177 countries in the 2007/8 United Nations Human Development Report.
- Economic growth averaged 7.5% between 1990 and 2004 and poverty fell rapidly.
- More than half the population is under the age of 25.
- Enrolment rates at primary school are 97%.
- Ethnic minorities account for 39.3% of all poor people, despite representing only 12.6% of the total population.

Vietnam is a low-income country, but the conditions for children have been improving and are generally much better than when their parents young. After a period of slow growth with rampant inflation in the mid-1980s, the Government launched the *Doi Moi* or 'renovation' programme of comprehensive socio-economic reforms in 1986. The reforms emphasised a shift from a centrally-planned economy based on government ownership to a multi-sector economy based on market principles. They also promoted the opening up of the economy to foreign investment and trade.

In addition to policies aimed at promoting economic growth and trade, the Government of Vietnam has applied a number of targeted programmes addressing poverty and social deprivation. The country has also benefited from significant foreign aid inflows, many of which have been targeted at poverty reduction. Despite this impressive progress, however, gaps in poverty rates by rural-urban residence, by region and by ethnic groups have widened over time.

Source: Le Thuc Duc et al. (2008) *Young Lives Round 2 Survey: Vietnam Initial Findings; 2007/2008 UN Human Development Report.*



Lien's story

Lien is 13 years old. She lives with her parents, and her brother and sisters in an economic development zone just 45 minutes from Hanoi. Lien's parents both have to work long hours and a long way from home. So Lien does all the cooking, washing and gardening and takes her younger brother and sister to school every morning.

Lien and her family live in a small house with a vegetable garden. There are two rooms in the house; the front room is the living room with a television and a sewing machine and also two beds. The back room is where the parents sleep. The kitchen and toilet are on the left hand side of the house. The area where Lien and her family live is an economic development zone just 45 minutes from Hanoi. It is well connected in terms of roads and transport.

The current economic situation means that the family struggles to make ends meet. As a result, Lien's parents both have to work a long way from home. Her father is a bricklayer, her mother works in a pottery factory in the local town. Both of them have to leave early for work and come home late. Her mother leaves for work at 5.30 am and her father goes to work at 6am, and 5.30am in the winter. So Lien does all the cooking, washing and gardening and takes her younger brother and sister to school every morning. Because there is not much space in the house she sleeps next door at her uncle's, where there is also a table where she can study.

Lien describes her typical day: "I wake up in the morning, wash my face, brush my teeth, go to school, I come home at noon, have lunch, wash the dishes, go to school, hang around, pick vegetables, cook rice, go to bed."

Her mother knows that Lien has a lot of responsibilities in the house and that it is difficult for her to support her daughter with her homework because she is so tired when she comes home from work. But she doesn't worry about her; she feels she can look after herself and that she gets on well at school. Lien's mother says she has been to the school several times and that they send home the children's marks each month. She says that her daughter talks to her father more than to her. He is the one who makes the decisions about her education.

“Is there any thing makes you worry about her when she is in school?”

No, she has gained her teacher's confidence, and she also helps her teacher in doing things for her class.

What do you think makes a child want to leave school?

If they can't keep up with the class, are too lazy to study at home, or are scolded a lot by their parents.

What would you do if your daughter wanted to give up studying?

Encourage her. Scolding is of no use.”

She is more worried about her youngest son: “I go to work far away from home, so I sometimes worry about my youngest son, he's an active boy. I'm afraid that he might fall into a lake or river.”

Lien says that two people, one a boy aged 5, drowned by the bridge on the road between her home and school and that she too is afraid this might happen.

Lien thinks studying is “important for my future because it brings me knowledge.” She says her parents encourage her to study hard and pay attention to the teachers.

“Which subject do you like most?”

Drawing, English because I often get good marks in these subjects

Which subject you don't like?

Biology.

Why?

Because I can't understand biology lessons.”

The things she likes most in school is meeting her teachers, being with friends and learning new things. She also likes doing high or long jump, and marathons ... but hasn't won any prizes yet. She has a close friend with whom she can share many things. She always welcomes and helps new members in class by advising them to get along with everybody and not to speak ill of anyone.

Lien enjoys looking after the vegetable garden at home. She picks water morning glory and mustard greens with her little brother and sister and they all enjoy this. She says she likes this time “because my younger brother and sister go with me and we can talk to one another while picking.”

She likes to cook rice because this is easy; she just has to plug in the rice cooker. Her elder sister, who taught her to cook, has gone to the city to study.

Lien spends a lot of time with her grandparents. She loves her grandfather very much. He often takes care of her because her grandmother is paralysed. They sometimes give her sweets when she goes to their house.

A year earlier, her grandparents lent her parents money to buy a sewing-machine. It cost a million *dong* (US\$57). In the summer, Lien uses the machine to earn money for her family. She works from 8am to 5pm, with a break for lunch and rests when she needs them. She earns about 20,000-30,000 *dong* a day (US\$1.14–US\$1.71), which she gives to her mother. If she needs to buy clothes, her mother will give her money from these earnings.

Whenever she feels sad, Lien talks to her uncle or aunt. She used to tell her elder sister and friends about things that made her happy. But since her sister went to away to study, she talks to her uncle or aunt. When she is sad, her uncle says to her: "Silly! Just don't do that next time!" These words upset her, but she doesn't tell her parents.

Her happiest memories are when she was in Grade 8 and she stood in the pouring rain with her classmates and it was like taking a shower, and another time when she was 10 and there was a party and she and her classmates went to their teacher's house. She says she gets on well with her neighbours and helps them, for example by bringing the washing in if it rains and they are not at home.

Lien enjoys looking after the vegetable garden at home. She says she likes this time "because my younger brother and sister go with me and we can talk to one another while picking."

Economic growth in Vietnam and its effect on children’s lives

The effect of the rapid economic growth in Vietnam for Lien has meant that she has far more responsibilities and work in the home because her parents are working long hours far from home. A Young Lives policy paper that looks at the social impacts of trade liberalisation and asks how childhood poverty can be reduced found that one of the micro-level effects of economic policies on children was that children might either be withdrawn from school or, like Lien, be forced to shoulder more domestic work responsibilities (including taking care of younger siblings) to compensate for the greater engagement of their parents, especially mothers, in the paid workforce. The paper continues: ‘If trade liberalisation necessitates greater adult involvement in the paid workforce, the quantity and quality of caring time for children is also likely to suffer, especially in the absence of affordable quality childcare.’ It also notes that: ‘Changes in household consumption are likely to have an impact on resources allocated to children. In particular, the quantity and nutritional content of children’s food, and their access to medicine, schooling, educational materials and clothing may be affected. The intensity and specific patterns and effects of these changes are likely to be mediated by intra-household decision-making and resource allocation dynamics. Resource allocation will also depend on how households respond to economic shocks. For example, some households may shield the effects of reductions in overall household income or children’s consumption, at least in the short-run, by increasing the labour supply of adults, reducing food consumption among adults or selling household assets. However, this is not the case in all households and they will often discriminate against girls, allocating resources away from girls in favour of boys.’

Source: Young Lives Policy Brief 1: *The Social Impacts of Trade Liberalisation: How Can Childhood Poverty Be Reduced?*

I. CẤU TẠO VÀ HIỆT ĐỘNG CỦA ĐỘNG CƠ ĐYNAMO VÀ XE ĐẠT

ĐỘNG CƠ

HIỆN TƯỢNG CẢM ỨNG ĐIỆN TỪ



Hung’s story

Hung is 13 years old. He lives with his parents and older brother in a small house in the centre of their village. His parents have a smallholding and Hung started working on the farm when he was 10. His school is three kilometres away; sometimes he walks or he goes by bicycle. Hung says he sometimes worries about having to get up so early in the morning and how he must work hard if he wants to do well.

Hung’s house is in the centre of the village, surrounded by other houses. His house is smaller than his neighbours’, but has a big front yard and a pigsty and a shed for cows in the back yard. Hung has his own room with a quiet space for studying.

Hung goes to school in the morning and then works on the family farm in the afternoons, except on Monday and Friday when he goes to extra classes for literature, maths and English. This shift system is the norm in Vietnam. Hung started working on the farm when he was 10 years old. His school is three kilometres from home; sometimes he walks and sometimes he goes by bicycle. Hung says feels a bit tired when he does the farm work but recovers quickly once he has rested. In his spare time, Hung mainly studies or spends time with his family. He sometimes visits his friends in the area and plays marbles with them. He says he also likes cooking.

Hung’s daily timetable

Time	Activity
5.00am	Gets up, washes and goes to school
6.00am–12.00pm	In school
12.00pm	Comes back from school and has lunch
1.30pm	Helps his parents with work on the farm
5.00pm	Comes home, cleans the yard and the house
6.00pm	Has dinner with his family
7.00pm	Does his homework
9.00pm	Goes to bed.

There are few play facilities in Hung's community. At school, there are two table tennis tables between all the students. There is also a football stadium but his mother is not keen for her sons to go there: "I don't want my sons to go out a lot, they may become naughty. Children in the city are more aggressive, it is very easy for them to get into fights. For this reason, I bought my sons a badminton set so that they could play at home, in the front yard." She says that Hung is good at making things. "He makes tractors by cutting up bottles. The children here like them a lot."

Hung's brother dropped out of school in Grade 9, because he failed the examinations. His parents also finished school in Grade 9 at the age of 13. Hung's family are not wealthy, but since his brother dropped out of school, his parents are especially keen for him to continue. His mother says: "I want him to have a good career in the future. We think he will be able to get a good job as long as he studies well. We don't want him to be miserable. We tell him about his brother who had to quit school and we don't want him to do the same. We are determined to support his studies; we encourage him a lot so that he can study better. We have only two children. He has to try his best to have a better life. We keep telling him that because his brother has quit, now he has to try his best to study. Study is number one now; without study, he cannot go any where. Anyway, he has done well in the first semester."

Hung's parents take a keen interest in Hung's studies, but they know that he is already learning more than they know. His mother says: "Sometimes we tell him: 'We think that you have to study yourself because what you are learning at the moment is so different from what we learned in the past. There are more ways for you to solve problems nowadays and so on'. We tell him to try to listen to the teachers in class and study by himself at home. We cannot teach him any more due to the changes. He agrees with that and he never asks us for help. If he cannot finish his lesson tonight, he will get up early in the morning and continue doing it. He asks me to wake him up in the morning when I get up to make breakfast."

Hung’s father adds: “That’s why we sold all the oxen and invested in his schooling.” Most of the family’s income comes from the farm. They grow plants and trees, including orange trees. Oranges are a new cash crop in Vietnam and the oranges are sold in Hanoi. The family recently had to sell some land to release some capital. It is for these reasons that they keep a close eye on the cost of Hung’s schooling. His mother says: “I’ve just complained about the fees that we had to pay. In fact, in the meetings, there were a lot parents who are more educated than us but they said nothing. They just want to provoke me to make a complaint, but I don’t. They’re more educated than me, so I’d better not tell them anything. I just pay what I can afford and tell the teachers directly what I think.”

She says that she used to pay 70,000 *dong* (US\$4) a month for everything, but says costs keep increasing. Much of this is because of supplementary fees, for example a ‘Parents’ Fund’, an ‘Encouragement Fund’, a ‘Water Fee’, a ‘Class Fund’. The water fund, for example, is supposed to pay for drinking water, but Hung’s mother says: “in fact, my son doesn’t drink the water there. He said he doesn’t drink it because sometimes they don’t boil it well enough. There is only one tank for many mouths and they all share one glass. It is dangerous because there might be diseases. I told my son to take a bottle of water from home in hot weather, not to use the same glass to drink the water at school. It is just a small tank of water for a lot of students; I don’t think it is enough for all of them. So we don’t pay.”

Although cash is sometimes tight, the family are healthy. There is a private medical clinic near Hung’s home, although the main health centre is 2.5 kilometres away. About 50% of the children in Hung’s school have private medical insurance, but Hung’s family do not. His mother says that they contribute rice to the local health centre occasionally but otherwise they have to pay money for any health services.

Hung says he sometimes worries about having to get up so early in the morning and how he must work hard if he wants to do well. He thinks he leads: “a normal life which is neither poor nor rich. I know that if I can study well, I will have a better life later.”

Access to health services

Vietnam has a national public health care network. However, the availability and quality of health services depends on the characteristics of the community. Although all Young Lives communes in Vietnam have some access to health care, quality of the local health services is a concern. There are, on average, three different types of health establishment per commune (see table). Six of the communes that Young Lives is studying have only one type of health establishment, while 10 have five or six types. The most significant increase has been in the proportion of communes with private health establishments, while the proportion with family planning units and government dispensaries has declined. The increased prevalence of private health centres may indicate increased choice and quality, but it is unclear whether these centres will be accessible to children from the poorest households, even though the government has been introducing health insurance measures to try to ensure equity in health access.

Availability of health establishments in Young Lives communes

	2002 (%)	2006 (%)
Public hospital	61.3	64.7
Public health centre	100	97.1
Government dispensary	64.5	50
Private hospital/health centre/dispensary	35.5	64.7
Private maternity home	12.9	14.7
Family planning clinic	77.4	29.4
Number of communes	31	35

Source: Le Thuc Duc et al. (2008) *Young Lives: Vietnam Round 2 Survey Report. Initial Findings.*



Duy's story

Duy is 6 years old. He lives in a quiet rural area with his younger sister and his parents and grandparents. He has an older brother who lives away from home. Duy has just started primary school which he likes but he was nervous about transferring from kindergarten, and gets anxious sometimes. Duy's father left school after Grade 6 and his mother after Grade 4. They are clearly keen for their son to do well at school and give him a lot of support at home.

Duy and his family live in a small brick house with a big front yard, and a small garden. Ducks and chickens roam around the yard and there is a pigpen near the kitchen. Near the house there is a sewage drain which is close to where Duy plays and it smells bad.

Inside Duy's house, there is a wardrobe, a table and chairs and two beds made out of stacked pieces of wood. Duy shares a bed with his parents or his paternal grandparents and sometimes he goes to stay with his other grandparents.

Duy's father is 29, and his mother is 25. Both parents are farmers and cultivate orange and apple trees as well as raising chickens, ducks and pigs. His mother runs a small stall at the market in the afternoons. His parents work hard all day so Duy spends a lot of time playing with local children.

When the Young Lives researcher arrived, Duy was playing on the lane outside his house with his friends. They were putting little sticks into an old tin and burning them. They used it to warm the ground beneath the tin and then warm their hands on the ground. They seemed to be enjoying themselves playing this game and they all got on well.

Duy goes to primary school, where he is in the first grade, each morning. He comes back at midday and plays for a while before lunch. After lunch, he takes a short nap and revises his lessons in the afternoon if he has no afternoon classes. He sometimes helps his parents to sweep the floor although his mother explains to the interviewer that he is rather reluctant:

“He sometimes sweeps the floor. It is tiring to ask him to do it. He sweeps one place and skips another.

Do you ask him to do it or does he do it himself?

No, he just does it when asked, we ask him to do it when we are busy.

(Smiling) How does he feel when asked to sweep the floor?

He says: “Mother, you keep asking me to sweep the floor!”

Does he do it when he says that?

Yes, he does. He has to do it.”

Duy’s parents say he doesn’t do many other household chores as he is so young. He plays a lot and has a lot of games he likes playing. He has invented a game he calls *máy n* (generator) in which he hits some bamboo sticks together so that they sound like an electricity generator. His sister likes playing this game with him. He plays marbles with his friends and sometimes they play at fighting using sticks as guns.

In the evenings he watches television. His mother says he likes Superman and music programmes best. Sometimes his parents help him to study Vietnamese. He goes to bed around eight or nine in the evening.

When he has problems, he says, he tells his parents or grandparents.

“I often talk to my grandfather. He has to work. He is often tired so I have to massage him.

Do you like it?

Yes.”

Duy says he likes to stay at his grandparents’ house because at home he has to share a bed with his younger brother who often wets the bed.

Duy likes school but was nervous at starting primary school after kindergarten, and gets anxious sometimes. He preferred kindergarten. His mother says that going to pre-school was good for him because it has helped him to make friends with other children, which made him more confident. He also learned to read and write from his classmates. In primary school, Duy says he studies singing, natural and social sciences, ethics, Vietnamese and maths and writing. He likes singing best because it makes him happy and he doesn’t like Vietnamese because it is hard.

Duy’s father left school after Grade 6 and his mother after Grade 4 and they are clearly keen for their son to do well at school. They give him a lot of support at home, helping with the next day’s lessons – for example, says his mother:

"If unit 1 is taught today, we will ask him to learn unit 2... He says he wants us to pre-teach him so he will do his task more easily the next day. We have to help him with difficult reading. We often teach him difficult sentences in advance." Duy says that the teacher hits him if he asks questions.

"Do you ask the teacher when you have difficulties?"

Yes

What does the teacher do then?

She always hits me with her ruler.

She hits with a ruler? Have you ever been smacked by the teacher?

Yes. She hits my hands

How did you feel then?

Uhm... hurt."

The Young Lives interviewer also asked Duy and his mother about whether they thought they were rich or poor. Duy said: "We are nearly rich... as we have a new cupboard... but we haven't got a washing machine." However, when pressed he didn't really know what a washing machine looked like except that it was "like a fridge". He also wants robots! A happy child, he says, would live with their parents, grandparents and "good furniture".

Duy's mother says that her son likes machines and perhaps he would like to be a mechanic but it is too early to think about his life in this way. She thinks the family are "not rich but not poor" and that Duy's life is "acceptable compared to his classmates". She says she just wants him to be "a good student and a good son."

What is a good life for children in your opinion?

"In general, a child should live comfortably and so should their parents. Children are happy if their parents are too. Material things are merely part of it, however it is better if we have them."

Duy likes singing because it makes him happy and he doesn't like Vietnamese because it is hard.

The importance of parental education in Vietnam

Duy’s parents have both had some education themselves and are keen to help their son do well at school. Young Lives analysis reveals that parents’ levels of education significantly affect nutritional outcomes and enrolment in school. Interestingly, maternal education has a stronger impact on nutrition, while the father’s education is a more important determinant of enrolment. The education of both parents significantly affects the child’s subjective well-being. In addition, it is clear that it has an even longer-term impact as poverty is transmitted across generations. If you are born into a poor family, you are likely to transmit your poverty to your own children.

The significance of parental education as a factor in this intergenerational transmission of poverty is clearly demonstrated by the research, with deprivations experienced by parents during childhood impacting upon their children and their children’s children. Poverty is more likely to persist in families with poorly educated parents, and households with better educated parents were more likely to escape poverty.

Young Lives found that in 2006, 66% of mothers from families in the poorest expenditure quintile had received little or no schooling, compared to 47% of mothers in the remainder of the sample. Even if economic growth allows households to escape from income poverty, poor parental education will continue to have a negative impact on other child outcomes, such as nutrition. Most strikingly, even after controlling for a wide variety of other factors, learning outcomes – such as the ability to read or write a simple sentence – are strongly associated with material poverty and malnutrition in early childhood as well as parental education for both the current 5-year-olds and the 12-year-old cohort. This predicts that the effects of childhood poverty will continue to be felt over time and into adulthood.

Source: Le Thuc Duc et al. (2008) *Young Lives: Vietnam Round 2 Survey Report. Initial Findings.*



H’Mai’s story

H’Mai is 13 years old and is the second oldest of four children. Her family is from the H’Roi ethnic minority. They live in a rural area where there are high levels of poverty. H’Mai dropped out of school in Grade 6 because her parents didn’t have enough money to pay the fees. Many children in the community drop out of secondary school because their families can’t afford the fees and other expenses, or because they live too far away from the school and don’t have any transport, or because they have to work in the fields and so fall behind in their school work.

H’Mai’s family lives in a small house with two rooms, a living room and a bedroom. There is another traditional building behind the house, with a kitchen and a bedroom where the family spends most of their time. There is a well in front of their house, which is surrounded by large empty gardens and faces a road full of potholes.

The house doesn’t have a table or chairs, so H’Mai’s mother had to take the Young Lives researchers to a relative’s house for the interview. There is no electricity in the house. Although there is a supply in the village, the family can’t afford the connection. H’Mai says she dreams of having electricity at home one day.

H’Mai dropped out of school in Grade 6 because her parents didn’t have enough money to pay the school fees. While primary education is free, there are a number of additional fees. H’Mai’s mother says this embarrassed her. Many children in the community drop out of secondary school because their families are too poor to pay the school fees and other expenses, or because they live too far away from the school and don’t have any form of transport, or because they have to work in the fields so fall behind in their school work.

The local primary school is not good and has poor facilities. First to third grade children study together and there is not even a tree in the school playground to provide shade. The secondary school is six kilometres away. When H’Mai went there she used to start at 6am. Now she works on the family farm in the day and goes to night school in the evenings from 7pm to 9pm on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. She is in the ninth grade.

When she is not working or studying, H'Mai looks after her younger siblings including her youngest brother who is still a baby. She does the laundry and cooks. She also spends time with her cousin who lives next door. Her mother says: "Sometimes she goes out with her friends to herd cows or helps me do the housework."

"Apart from herding cows, does she work in the fields?"

She helps cut grass for the cows. She can't do hard manual labour in the fields.

Does your family have a lot of land?

About one hectare.

What crops do you grow?

We grow rice.

Anything else?

Beans, cassava and wheat.

Do you ask her to do the household chores or does she volunteer?

She volunteers. I also help her out. For example, I just helped her herd the cows.

Is she happy to do so?

Yes."

The family are generally healthy, which is a good thing as the nearest health clinic is five kilometres away and the hospital is nine kilometres away. The road to the clinic and the hospital isn't very good, meaning that taking people for treatment can be difficult. Children under 6 get free treatment at the clinic and H'Mai's mother says that she takes her younger children there regularly for check-ups. She says there are private doctors in the area but not many people she knows use them. She also sometimes uses traditional medicines and doctors:

"When one of my children was seriously ill, people advised me to perform a ritual. I would have taken them to the clinic otherwise.

Do you perform the rituals by yourself, or do you ask a traditional healer doctor to do it for you?

We ask a traditional healer.

How many traditional healers are there in the village?

There are two.

How much do you have to pay them for each ritual?

We don't pay anything.

Do you have to give them anything?

We give them chicken or pork.”

Her mother says H'Mai has a good relationship with her parents and family. She talks to them about her problems, for example: “When she was sick, she asked us to buy some medicine for her. When her hat didn't shield her from the sun anymore, she asked us to buy her a new one. If she wants to go somewhere, she will ask our permission.”

The Young Lives researchers asked H'Mai's mother what conditions needed to be in place for a child to be happy. She said: “If a family has good conditions, their children are happy; and if a family is poor, their children are unhappy.”

“What is an unhappy child like?

He or she looks sad and worried.

Are you satisfied with your family's conditions?

No, no.”

H'Mai talks to her parents about her problems, for example: “When she was sick, she asked us to buy some medicine for her. When her hat didn't shield her from the sun anymore, she asked us to buy her a new one. If she wants to go somewhere, she will ask our permission.”

H'Mai's mother

Ethnic minority groups in Vietnam

Inequalities between ethnic groups in Vietnam are stark. Poverty is increasingly concentrated among ethnic minority groups. While between 1993 and 2004 the poverty rate of ethnic minorities fell by 25% (from 86% to 61%), the reduction for the majority Kinh group was 40% (from 54% to 14%). Even after this reduction the ethnic minorities still hadn't reached the level that the ethnic majority had in 1993.

Ethnic minorities account for 39.3% of all poor people, despite representing only 12.6% of the total population. The biggest ethnic group in the Young Lives sample is the H'Mong whose average monthly expenditure was one third of the average across the sample.

Economic disparities are echoed by those in other poverty indicators. Ethnic minority children are more likely to be stunted (which is an indicator of long-term malnutrition) and less likely to enrol in school and pre-school, even after controlling for lower parental education, consumption expenditure and other household characteristics. Consumption expenditure of Kinh households is more than double that of the ethnic minority group. Minority households have poor access to safe water and in particular to sanitation.

Childhood poverty statistics reflect patterns in the country as a whole. Most poor children are in the rural areas: 32.6% of rural children lived in households classified as poor in 2004, in contrast to only 5.5% of urban children. Ethnic minority children are disproportionately likely to live in poor rural households. In the mid-1990s, over 90%, or nearly every ethnic minority child, lived in a poor household. Even after Vietnam's impressive overall progress over the past decade, 68% of ethnic minority children remained in poverty in 2004. Despite generally rapid development, the inequality between rural and urban sectors and between ethnic groups remains an issue of concern.

Source: Le Thuc Duc et al. (2008) *Young Lives: Vietnam Round 2 Survey Report. Initial Findings.*

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The profiles were written by Nikki van der Gaag with Caroline Knowles, based on extensive research interviews with the children.

Confidentiality

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 in these profiles. The accompanying photos are of children living in similar situations to the children within our study sample.

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www.younglives.org.uk

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“Nothing is impossible for me”

Stories from Young Lives children

These stories tell a fascinating tale of how children in four countries – Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam – see their lives. They come from a larger group of 12,000 children who are part of a long-term international research project into childhood poverty.

Young Lives is in the unique position of being able to study and work with these 12,000 children over a period of 15 years as they grow up, go to school, drop out of school, start work, cope with failed harvests, births and deaths and maybe even marriage and childbirth. One of the strong themes running throughout the stories is how parents, even those with little education, are supportive of their children and hopeful about their future. The children themselves are frank about their hopes and fears. Above all, they show remarkable resilience in helping their families cope with the difficulties that come their way. As 12-year old Hadush from Ethiopia, who does not go to school but who is proud of his work looking after cattle, said brightly in his interview: “Nothing is impossible for me.”

Young Lives 
An International Study of Childhood Poverty

www.younglives.org.uk

Young Lives

Department of International Development,
University of Oxford

3 Mansfield Road, Oxford OX1 3TB, UK

Tel: +44 (0)1865 281751

E-mail: younglives@younglives.org.uk

