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Young Lives

Jobs, Businesses and Cooperatives: Young Men and Women's Transitions to Employment and Income Generation in Ethiopia

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Contents

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Young Lives

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Summary

In Ethiopia, rapid agricultural development, industrialisation, and international and local private investment, along with government job creation initiatives, have brought about radical changes in the employment landscape for young people. This working paper contributes to understanding the work of young men and women in different contexts, both in paid employment and income generation on their own account, as they transition to adulthood amid these changes in the labour market.

The findings suggest that only a few young people found well-paid jobs related to their qualifications. While some women obtained gainful employment, others were involved in menial jobs. Younger men and women were often still in education, though some worked part time. Wage labour included work in irrigated agriculture, on flower farms, in factories and at an industrial park. However, pay was low and work conditions were hard and carried health risks, so young people did wage labour temporarily or if they did not have alternatives, and most tried to move on to better-paid employment or their own businesses.

Most young women and men were engaged in their own income-generating activities. However, only a few had successful businesses, often relying on family support and remittances from female relatives. This type of work was highly gendered, with women involved in petty trade, food and handicraft sales, and men in transport and repair work. Youth micro and small-scale enterprise (MSE) cooperatives in agriculture and cobblestone production were dominated by men. Despite some successful examples, the MSEs faced many challenges and most young people preferred to undertake their own work.

Community contexts and opportunities, family circumstances, and age, gender and education explain most of the variation and success in jobs and income generation. However, individual determination and ambition also made a difference.

1. Introduction

The international literature on children's work is mainly concerned with the dangers of child labour (Bourdillon et al. 2011), and similar debates have been reproduced in the African and Ethiopian contexts (Pankhurst, Bourdillon and Crivello 2015; Woldehanna and Gebremedhin 2015). In Ethiopia one in four children are considered to be engaged in child labour.[1] Once they are over 18, young people's major concerns are unemployment and the need for decent jobs to be created (Broussard and Tekleselassie 2012; Gashaw and Pankhurst 2020).

In the Ethiopian context, rapid agricultural development, industrialisation, and international and local private investment, along with government job creation initiatives, have brought about radical changes in the employment landscape for young people. This working paper contributes to the understanding of the work of young men and women in different contexts, both in paid employment and self-employment and other types of income generation , as they transition to adulthood amidst these changes in the labour market.

1.1. The policy context

The Ethiopia National Youth Policy was approved in 2004 to promote young people's participation in governance and economic, social and cultural activities. This was followed by a Rural and Urban Youth Package in 2006 and a Multi-Sectoral Youth Development Strategy Plan (2006–15). In 2009, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs produced the National Employment Policy and Strategy (MoLSA 2009). Specific attention to adolescents came in 2013 with the Adolescent Development and Participation Strategy, focusing on 10 to 19-year-olds.

More recently, in 2017, the National Youth Development and Change Strategy, which aims to enable young people to participate actively in the economic, social and political development of the country, was approved. In economic terms, it focuses on addressing youth employment, speeding up the transformation of Ethiopia from an agrarian economy, and ensuring youth involvement in green economic development. There have also been significant initiatives to promote employment through micro and small-scale enterprises (MSEs) organised as cooperatives and to provide loans through the Youth Revolving Fund under the Ministry of Youth and Sport.[2] Most importantly, the Federal Job Creation Commission (JCC) was established in 2018 to coordinate efforts that aim to create 3 million new jobs in 2020, 14 million by 2025 and 20 million by 2030.[3]

1 The 2015 National Labour Survey of Ethiopia indicates that 24.2 per cent of children (aged 5–17) were engaged in child labour (Ministry of Finance and UNICEF 2019).

2 The Ministry has since been brought back into the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs to create a new Ministry of Women, Children and Youth.

3 See www.jobscommission.gov.et

1.2 Objective and research questions

This paper considers the different forms of work done by young men and women in ten Young Lives sites in Ethiopia as they transition through early adulthood. We seek to explain variations by community, household and individual characteristics. We also consider young people's experiences of paid and income-generating work, and how these relate to employment opportunities in the private sector and government initiatives creating jobs and organising young people into MSE cooperatives. The paper addresses the following questions:

- What different forms of employment and income-generating work are young men and women involved in?
- How do employment, income generation and business opportunities differ on the basis of location (urban/rural, regional), household conditions (wealth, poverty and shocks), and individual circumstances (age, sex, education, abilities, entrepreneurship, etc.)?
- Which government interventions are available in the communities, and what are the experiences of young men and women working in youth MSE cooperatives?

1.3 Scope and limitations

The domain of work covers a much larger area of young people's lives than this paper addresses, and several important areas are either not included or only partially discussed. First, the paper does not address the work of young people who carry out subsistence agriculture for themselves and their families, resulting in more emphasis on work in urban areas.

Second, it does not cover domestic and care work, which are largely female domains, resulting in more focus on young men's work. Gender norms and roles influence the types of paid and income-generating work young women are involved in, and place constraints on daughters, wives and mothers working outside the home and combining domestic and care work with employment or income generation.

Third, the paper does not focus on migration for work, which is covered in another paper in this set (Birhanu and Pankhurst 2020).

Finally, although the paper considers work organised by the Government through youth cooperatives, it does not address government-sponsored public works carried out through the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP).

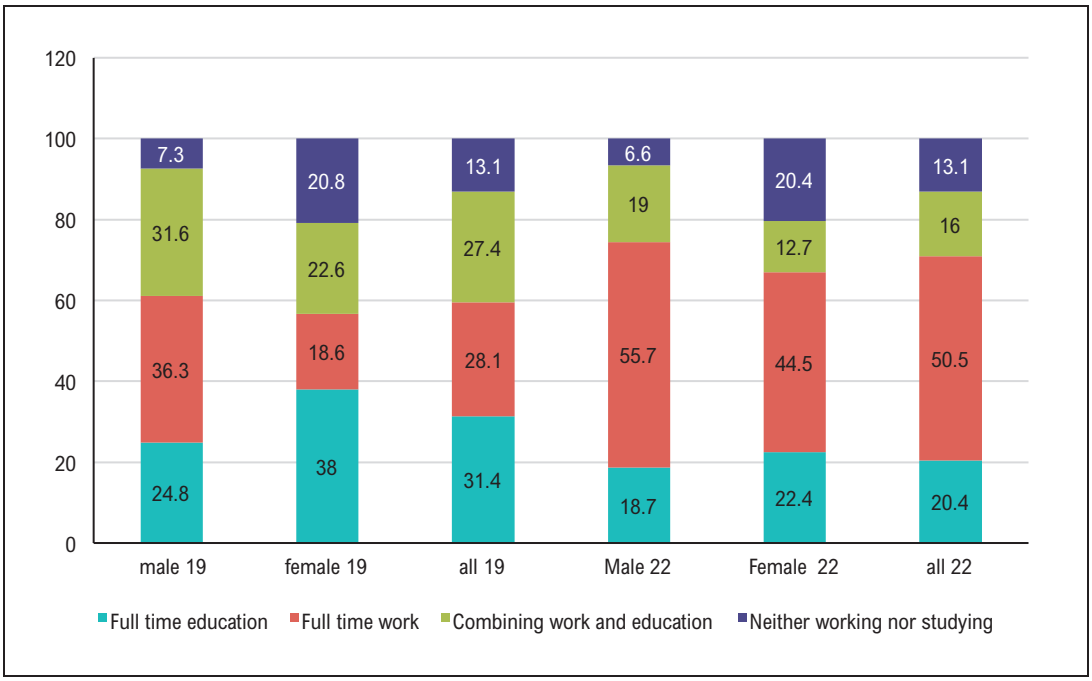
1.4 The Young Lives research and survey findings

Young Lives is a longitudinal international study of childhood poverty that has been operating in Ethiopia since 2001. It has so far collected five rounds of survey data on 3,000 young people and their households – with a Younger Cohort of 2,000 children born in 2001 and an Older Cohort of 1,000 children born in 1994, in five regions: the capital city Addis Ababa, Amhara, Oromia, Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples (SNNP) and Tigray. Between survey rounds, from 2007 to 2019, there have been five waves of qualitative interviews with a sub-set of young people and their caregivers.

The surveys provide useful overall data on the transition from school to work between the ages of 19 and 22. In 2013, when the Older Cohort were 19, just under a third (31 per cent)

were working full time, 59 per cent were still in education and 27 per cent were combining work and school (Figure 1). There were notable gender differences, with young men more likely to be working or combining work with education and young women more likely to be studying.

Figure 1. *Work and education at ages 19 and 22 (2013 and 2016)*



Source: Young Lives Round 4 and 5 surveys, Older Cohort.

By 2016, when the Older Cohort were age 22, most young people (four-fifths) were in work. This figure was quite high across all groups, irrespective of gender. The poorest young people were the most likely to be in work. Many of those who were studying full time came from better-off households and urban sites, while most of those who were working full time came from rural sites and poorer households. Moreover, young men and those from rural sites were more likely to combine work and school than young women and those from urban sites (Araya, Woldehanna and Pankhurst 2018).

A further study suggests important differences by gender and wealth and provides insights by comparing Ethiopia with the other three Young Lives countries (Favara, Chang and Sánchez 2018). Males start their transition from education to work earlier than women, and by the age of 19 a pro-male gap in labour market participation was observed. Those who only study, or who combine work and study are more likely to come from more privileged backgrounds. By age 22, those who were only working were from poorer and less-educated households, and among the poorest families the probability of only working, or combining working and studying, was significantly higher. Ethiopia is exceptional as the only Young Lives country in which the majority of the young people are self-employed, raising the question about the extent to which those currently enrolled in education will be able to eventually enter the formal labour market (Favara, Chang and Sánchez 2018).

In 2013 when they were 19 years old, 42 per cent of the Older Cohort were self-employed and working in agriculture, 23 per cent were self-employed in the non-agriculture sector, and

only 14 per cent were in paid employment – highlighting the overriding importance of the agricultural sector in rural areas and the informal sector in urban areas. Almost half were working in agriculture. Young men were slightly more likely to be self-employed and working in agriculture than in the non-agricultural sector and young women slightly more likely to be in non-agricultural employment. Most agricultural work was self-employment, while non-agricultural work was more likely to be paid employment (Young Lives 2014).

1.5 Qualitative methods

This paper is based on the fifth wave of Young Lives qualitative research, carried out in mid-2019 in ten communities in five regions of Ethiopia: Addis Ababa, Amhara, Oromia, SNNP and Tigray. Annex 1 gives a brief description of the sites.[4]

The research involved interviews with 122 young men and women from both the Older and the Younger Cohort in the ten sites, interviews with caregivers and key informants, and focus group discussions with older men and women and young women and men (Tafere and Chuta 2020a). This paper uses 59 interviews with young people, focusing on 47 main cases of young men and women (see Annex 2). Where relevant we incorporate insights from interviews with their caregivers and spouses. A few interviews with key informants are used in relation to work, notably with *kebele* (local administration) workers, *wereda* (district) job creation experts, and employers.

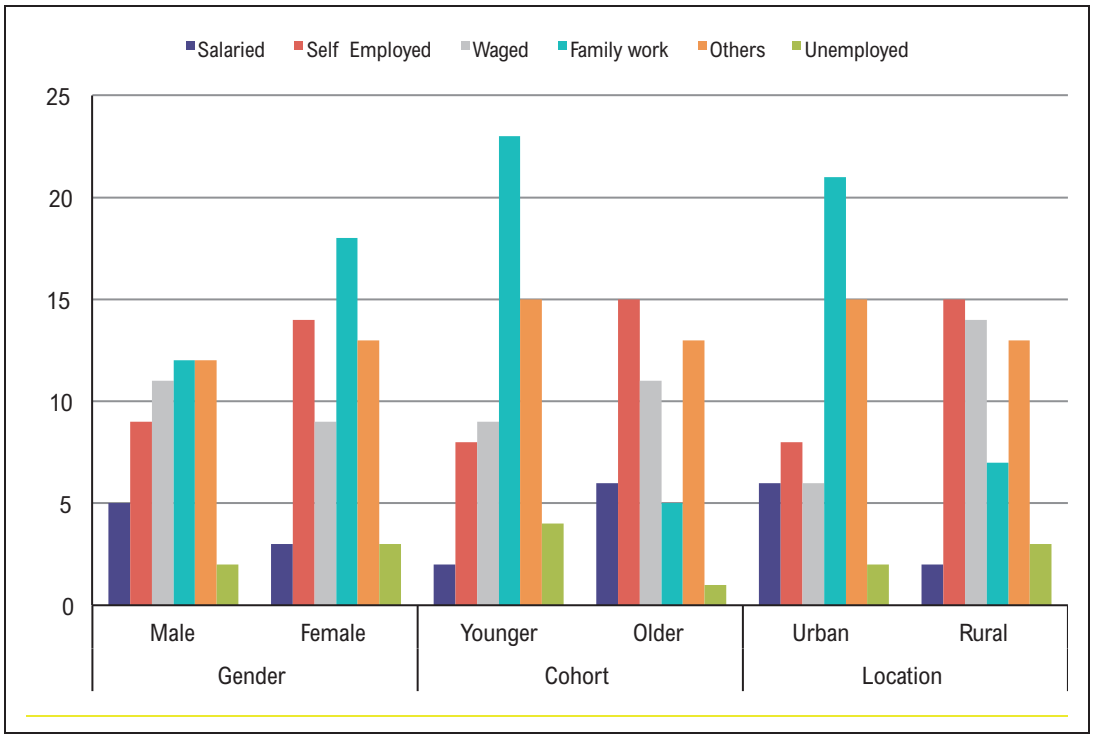
The paper is divided into two main sections. The first considers the different types of work, in four broad categories: employment, casual wage labour, own business and income generation, and government-sponsored work through youth cooperatives. The second considers variations in community, household and individual characteristics. We conclude by drawing out the main findings and providing policy suggestions for employment and job creation.

[4] Pseudonyms have been used to disguise the identity of the sites in order to protect respondents' anonymity.

2. Major work categories

The fifth qualitative wave, carried out in 2019, when the Younger Cohort were aged 18–19 and the Older Cohort 24–25, gathered data on the types of work young people were involved in. This can be disaggregated by gender, age and location (Tafere and Chuta 2020a) (Figure 3).

Figure 2. *Employment type of young people aged 18 and 24 (2019) (N=122)*



Source:Young Lives fifth wave qualitative survey.

The types of work for pay and income generation that the 47 young men and women discussed in this paper are involved in can be divided into four overall categories: employment (15 cases); agricultural and industrial wage labour (10 cases); own account income generation and businesses (17 cases); and cooperative group work in MSEs and own groups (5 cases) (Annex 2).

A few additional cases have not been considered, either because the individual was no longer doing that work or because it was part time. While each young person is included only once in Table 1, several were involved in different kinds of work, sometimes across categories, and many had been involved in different forms of work over time.

Most of the young people were in the Older Cohort (35 cases), since the Younger Cohort (12 cases) were often less involved in work for pay, with some still studying or working for their parents. There are also almost twice as many young men (30) as young women (17), given the constraints on female work outside the domestic domain. The proportion of rural cases (26) is larger than that of urban cases (21) in part because of agricultural and industrial wage labour. The reasons for these differences and their implications are discussed in the second

part of the paper, while differences by general and specific types of occupation are discussed in the next section.

2.1. Full-time employment

Among the 122 young people interviewed in the fifth wave of qualitative research, and the 47 cases discussed here, only 15 were in paid employment, nine of whom were men and 11 of whom were from urban sites, with seven of these living in Addis Ababa. Only five were from the Younger Cohort, three of whom were working part time while at school (Table 1).

Table 1. *Type of work done by respondents in paid employment, by work category, type of work, cohort, sex, location, level of education, employer and salary*

Respondent[a]	General category	Type of work	YC	OC	M	F	Urban	Rural	Education	Employer	Salary (birr)
Adesech	Professional	Bank		1		1	1		Degree	Government bank	10,000
Selamnesh		Cashier		1		1		1	Degree	Government MFI	3,909
Kifle		Footballer		1	1		1		Grade 10	Private town teams	3,000
Yerusalem		Advertising and drama	1			1	1		Grade 12	Private TV company	NA
Kebede	Technical	Site engineer		1	1		1		Degree	Private investor	3,500
Yitbarek		Auto electrician		1	1		1		TVET	Government office	3,000
Desta		Welder	1		1			1	Grade 6	Private factory	3,000
Senia		Tailor assistant		1		1	1		Grade 12	Private individual	2,500
Ayalew		Woodwork	1		1		1		Grade 11	Private individual	1,200
Nuru		Garage	1		1		1		Grade 8	Private individual	1,200
Kibrom	Manual	Sanitation worker		1	1		1		Grade 7	Government town municipality	1,530
Esu		Driver assistant		1	1			1	Grade 10	Private business	1,000
Seida	Clerical and sales	Clerk		1		1		1	Degree	Private clinic	1,200
Tagesech		Messenger		1		1	1		TVET	Government office	1,000
Abera		Spare parts shop worker	1		1		1		Grade 6	Private individual	2,000
Total			**5**	**10**	**9**	**6**	**11**	**4**		**Average**	**2,717**

[a] In order to protect respondents' anonymity, the young people's names are pseudonyms.

The jobs can be put into four categories: (1) professional work based mainly on qualifications; (2) technical work for which the employee had prior training; (3) manual work requiring labour but limited training and experience; and (4) clerical and sales work requiring neither specific skills nor hard labour.

2.1.1 Employment and salaries

The gross monthly salaries of those in full-time employment ranged from 1,000 to 10,000 birr, with an average of 2,717 birr. However, apart from one woman working in a bank, salaries were under 4,000 birr. There is some correlation between training and skills, and better paid

jobs. The two highest paid people were women. Adesech, a 24-year-old woman from Menderin, works in a bank in Addis Ababa:

> I graduated with a BA in economics from Mekele University in 2014. Since then, I have been working at the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia in Addis Ababa. At the beginning my monthly salary was 2,900 birr, but now I earn net of 10,000 birr, including rent and transport allowance … I am supporting myself, [and] even supporting family … Now I am studying for an MBA at the weekends … When I graduate I hope to find a job related to my studies.

Similarly, 25-year-old Selamnesh from Tach-Meret, the rural site in Amhara, works in a local town as a cashier for the Amhara Credit and Savings Institution. She earns 3,908 birr a month, plus a 50 birr per diem when she travels to rural areas as part of her job. She was able to support her parents, with whom she lives, and rebuild their house, and she bought them furniture and a TV.

2.1.2 Types of employers

Ten of the 15 young people worked for private businesses or individuals and four worked for local government organisations. The private businesses included a Chinese construction company, two local construction companies run by private investors, a dental clinic, an advertising company, and a town football club, for which Kifle played. Kifle comes from a poor household in Kok town in Amhara region. Since his father died, his mother has been doing day labouring. He completed Grade 10 but his results were not good enough to enable him to continue to the university preparation stage. He began playing football and is employed by the local town club on a salary of 3,000 birr. He would like to play at a national level.

Individual employers included the owners of a spare parts shop, a garage, a woodworking business, and a tailor, for whom 25-year-old Senia worked. Senia lives with her mother and siblings in Bertukan in Addis Ababa. She completed Grade 12 but could not find work. She heard of a job with a tailor through a friend and started off as a messenger, and then learnt on the job how to make cloth covers for sofas. She earns 2,500 birr a month and works six days a week for eight hours. She hopes to start a tailoring business and to learn accounting part time.

The government offices for which young people work include a bank, a regional water bureau office, and a regional government-sponsored microfinance institution. The example of Yitbarek from Leku shows a pathway from technical training to a relevant job. Yitbarek graduated from technical and vocational education and training (TVET) college with a diploma in automotive electronics and started a low-paid job in an industrial park (for 1,200 birr per month), which included night shifts. He then saw a vacancy in the water development office as an automotive electrician, sat the exam and came first. He has been employed twice on three-month contracts at 3,000 birr a month and hopes to get a permanent job. He plans to start his degree next year in electrical engineering and hopes to find better-paid work or to open his own garage focusing on electrical maintenance.

2.1.3 Education and jobs

There is some correlation between educational levels and the best-paid jobs.[5] The three highest-paid workers had completed degrees in relevant fields. The banker had obtained an economics degree from a government university and was continuing studying part-time for a masters, the cashier had a degree in accounting from a private college, and the construction engineer had a BA in engineering. The fourth highest paid, the auto-electrician, had studied this subject at a TVET college.

However, two of the three lowest-paid workers, both women, had educational achievements which should have enabled them to obtain better jobs. Seida from Timatim, a rural area in SNNP region, has a BA in biology from a government university but could not find work in her field. She eventually found a job as a dental clinic's registration clerk in a town near her village. She could not find relevant work in nearby towns and does not want to migrate. She wanted to be a teacher when she was younger but had changed her mind. Although she was happy to at least have found work, she would prefer a government job or ideally to run her own pharmacy:

> I feel good when I compare my job compare to others who have not found work … even if it is not adequate. It is better than sitting at home [but] I am not satisfied because I would like to do my own work … I do not like to be employed.

Even if young people had the right qualifications, low salaries, particularly in the government sector, were a disincentive for some, as in the case of Seifu from Leku community. Seifu had worked as a teacher in a TVET college for a year and a half but had left the job mainly because he considered the 2,800 birr salary to be too low. He was assigned only one course and no evening classes, which other instructors used to earn additional income. Moreover, he was not getting useful experience, and the college did not have adequate equipment. He returned to Hawassa and is studying for a BA in accounting and finance, and he started helping his father with his second-hand clothes shop. He is currently earning a living driving a *bajaj* mototaxi, which his father bought, but hopes to find a better job or engage in trading.

2.1.4 Cohorts and employment

Of the 15 young people with jobs, ten were from the Older Cohort. Among the five in the Younger Cohort, four of whom were boys, three doing part-time work while at school, and two had dropped out. Desta from Zeytuni dropped out of Grade 6 to start wage labouring and is now earning a good salary. As an adolescent, Desta was farming and herding for his family. He then began working with friends producing cobblestones. After that, when a Chinese company built a plastic factory, he began working there. He was a fast learner and was trained to be a welder, which is what he currently does for a monthly salary of 3,000 birr. He hopes eventually to open a welding workshop or to become a truck driver like his brother, who earns 9,000 birr a month.

> I am happy working in the company. There are so many of my friends who don't have the chance to be employed … I contribute some money to my family [and] I spend the rest for myself … I would like to improve my skill and open my own metal workshop.

5 Transitions from education to work are covered in another paper in this series (Tafere and Tiumelissan 2020).

2.1.5 Challenges of combining work and school[6]

Earlier Young Lives papers considered young people combining work and school, showing that many adolescents were involved in work alongside school, though this put a strain on their education and often led them to drop out from school temporarily and eventually permanently (Tafere and Pankhurst 2015). By 2019, at age 18, some were employed either during the school holidays or at weekends. Work opportunities differ depending on location, gender and household circumstances. In urban sites, part-time employment for boys included work in garages, woodwork, metalwork and electronics. Yerusalem is an exceptional case of a Younger Cohort girl from a wealthy family in Bertukan who goes to a private school. She found work with an advertising company sponsoring a TV drama and was involved in producing a commercial for sanitary pads, for which she was paid 10,800 birr. She was then offered work in a TV drama series. She also recently started an online business selling clothes, with two cousins posting the pictures and taking orders through the Telegram App, and has made 6,500 birr in two months:

> The channel is called New Style. We release the pictures of clothes, price and phone number. A person who wants to buy gives us a call and orders. Most of the time they are traders.

In rural areas some Younger Cohort children were involved in small-scale trade, but there were fewer opportunities for adolescent boys and girls still at school to find employment. In Zeytuni, teenage boys earn money quarrying and shaping stones from their backyards and open spaces into cobblestones and selling them to middlemen, who then sell them on to buyers supplying construction sites. Some young men work in self-initiated small groups of friends, as in the case of 18-year-old Miruts, while others have joined MSE cooperatives:

> I have work with my four friends in cobblestone production. At the beginning, we produced 2,000 stones and sold each for 50 cents. Overall, we got 1,000 birr and divided the money [between] us. Recently, we produce up to 7,000 stones per week. We have our own team without a structure, leadership or joint bank account; personally I have already saved around 5,000 birr in my bank account.

Some, like Miruts, dropped out of primary education as they were attracted by the potential earnings (Tafere and Tiumelissan 2020). He noted:

> I was really disappointed dropping out; had I stayed in school I could possibly get better job than a daily labourer. In this rural area, job opportunities are rare. I can't get work as I hope and sometimes my family suffers from food shortage.

Others, like Maregey, work on cobblestone production in their spare time after school and at weekends along with other work, in Maregey's case ploughing his parents' land. He works on cobblestones two days a week, producing 300–400 pieces a day and selling these for 50 cents to 1 birr each to a contractor, earning about 2,000 birr per month. He was trained by his brother and works with four friends. He has bought goats for breeding and fattening with his income, and now has ten goats. Maregey is proud of having sold a goat and given the money to his mother to buy supplies for his brother's wedding.

6 This topic is addressed in the paper on transitions from school to work (Tafere and Chuta 2020).

In Leku, some young boys and girls work as wage labourers in irrigated agriculture during the school holidays, and, given the shift school system, during times not at school.

2.2 Agricultural and industrial wage labour

The growth of private investment has resulted in job opportunities in several sites, especially in rural areas in agriculture and industry. Wage work is often seen as a temporary way of earning income or studying part time while looking for other better paid and less laborious work. It is a survival option for young people from poorer households without access to land or other resources, who need to earn income to support their families.

Ten young people (six men and four women) were working in agricultural or industrial wage labour. Many more had done so at some point in their work trajectories and moved on to better paid or less arduous work, or their own farming or income-generating activities (Table 2). Apart from an electrician involved in wage labour for a housing cooperative in Addis Ababa, the rest were in three rural sites in different regions: Amhara, Oromia and Tigray.

Table 2. *Type of work done by respondents doing wage labour, by sector, work type, employer, region, cohort and sex*

Respondent	Sector	Work type	Employer	Region	YC	OC	M	F
Mitiku	Agricultural	Irrigation; wage work	Private local investors	Oromia	1		1	
Gemechu						1	1	
Hassen						1	1	
Shebeshi					1		1	
Bezach	Industrial	Agro-processing; bean factory	Private local enterprise	Amhara		1		1
Yenealem						1		1
Yihune		Wheat factory; construction	Private local enterprise			1	1	
Etsegenet		Textile factory; tailor	Private local enterprise	Tigray	1			1
Fanus		Plastic factory; guard	Chinese construction company			1		1
Girma		Construction; electricity	Housing cooperatives	Addis Ababa		1	1	
Total					**3**	**7**	**6**	**4**

A few young men were able to work in wage labour to build up savings to invest in their own income-generation activities, such as livestock trading. Yihune, who lives in Tach-Meret with his family, completed Grade 10 but failed the national exam. As an adolescent he started working for his family herding cattle and at one point worked for a private investor carrying crops. He now works for his family and also as a daily labourer two days a week in construction, earning 140 birr a day. Although the income is useful the work is hard:

> It is not a good job. I do not have other better options ... I was unemployed … I do it intermittently so it does not clash with my education … Day labouring is extremely tiring. One usually toils the whole day without any break. Yet, the payment one receives at the end of the day is not worth it and it is not available all the time. Besides, it is not consistently available.

Yihune has used 500 birr he earned to buy and sell chickens. His brothers cover his tuition at a private college where he is studying accounting, and he uses his income mainly for clothing and leisure since he lives at home.

2.2.1 Agricultural wage labour on irrigated farms in Leki, Oromia

Leki is located in the Rift Valley, where the development of irrigation has led to the expansion of wage labour in which young men and women and even adolescents participate. There are large-scale investments involving international capital, including a flower farm and winery, and small-scale investments by local investors using irrigation to produce vegetables.

Large-scale foreign agricultural investment

The community had many complaints about the flower farm, including the low wages, the hard work and the fact that only low-paid labourers were employed and not graduates, who might be able to highlight the issues. It was suggested that nepotism was involved in who gets jobs there. Men's and women's focus groups also alleged that the chemicals used posed health risks to workers, that discharges into the lake were affecting the environment and killing fish, which young men depended on for their livelihood, that livestock drinking polluted water were dying, and that officials were not taking the matters seriously as they were benefiting personally. A participant in a men's focus group stated:

> The salary of 800 birr per month is too small. The risk that employees face because of the chemicals far outweighs the benefits. There is a double risk for girls. A number of defects have been observed in babies delivered by those women.

Men's and women's groups and kebele representatives compared the flower farm unfavourably to the winery, which provides better salaries (at least 2,700 birr), employs local people, including guards, as well as graduates, and has proper safety and health insurance. The winery also supports children from poor families with school materials, and provided water and food aid during times of drought.

Small-scale private investors

Most of the young people involved in agriculture, and especially adolescents working part time while at school, worked for private investors. These were mainly traders from local towns with the capital to buy pumps for irrigation, rent land and employ labourers, although in some cases better-off farmers also bought pumps and employed workers. The young people undertook weeding and harvested vegetables. Children, even some in their early teens, both boys and girls, were involved in this work, during holidays or while going to school, as the school operated a half-day shift system (Pankhurst, Crivello and Tiumelissan 2016). The work is usually contracted on a piece-rate basis, involving weeding an agreed number of rows, or harvesting boxes or quintals of produce. Mitiku, an 18-year-old in Grade 7, worked three days in the week before the interview, planting cabbages and onions, earning 140 birr. He attended school in the mornings and worked in the afternoons.

Although children could work in wage labour as well as go to school, the work system imposed challenges that sometimes affected their schooling (Orkin 2012; Tafere and Pankhurst 2015). The extent to which young people engaged in wage work depended on their family circumstances, and whether their family owned land or other resources (Pankhurst, Crivello and Tiumelissan 2016). For instance, Kabegna is now 18 and had worked for wages from age 12, when he earned 25 to 30 birr for a half day's harvesting,

though he mentioned that wages have since increased. However, he stopped a year ago when his father managed to buy a pump and started irrigation.

Girls in their teens also engage in agricultural wage labour, especially in harvesting. However, most stopped doing so when they got married, as in the case of Ayu. In contrast, in Lomi there was much less wage labour available, although a few boys and girls found some agricultural wage work, especially in the school holidays, planting onions and earning between 60 and 150 birr a day. However, as in Leki, the girls stopped when they got married.

Young men who are no longer at school could find piece-rate contracts to earn money, often working with a few friends in a group. Gemechu outlined how such groups could complete a piece of work in four hours for a payment of 300–400 birr. However, more lucrative but also more risky irrigation contract work can be found further from the community.

2.2.2 Food-processing factory in Tach-Meret, Amhara

Three young women worked in a private food-processing factory near the rural site in Amhara. The work involved picking out the dirt from haricot beans and sorting them for packing. Yenealem, aged 24, works half a day at an oil seed enterprise and studies accounting at a private college the rest of the time. She started working with her mother at the age of 12, and still works with her sister. However, she works less now as she started computer classes. She recalled:

> Now I am working occasionally as it is difficult for me to work with class. I come to work once a week. However, my sister is working full time. She is attending her education and also comes here for work in the opposite shifts ... I am paid based on the amount of work in quintals. I used to get 100–150 birr per week depending on the quality of the haricot beans. We can complete one quintal per day if there are good-quality beans, otherwise it takes two or three days; 60 birr is paid per quintal.

Bezach had been working in the bean factory since the age of 7. She dropped out of school in Grade 8 as her parents were poor, elderly and unwell, but fell ill and stopped working.

> Haricot bean picking is a bad job because it is very dangerous for our health. Last year, because of the bad working conditions, I was very sick for two months and I had a heart condition. After I recovered, I quit the job.

She was able to move from the factory in her local town to another with the same company in a large town where her sister was already working. The larger factory has better working conditions and poses fewer risks to her health, as it has a machine that cleans the beans. Now, she works for eight hours a day and earns 1,000 birr a month, although she and her sister have to pay 500 birr in rent. In her spare time she earns 300 birr a month washing clothes for a family.

The head of the factory she first worked in explained that it had almost closed as it was not very profitable, and the pay had been reduced from 80 to 60 birr per quintal. He also noted that the company was suspected of using child labour by the Regional Labour and Social Affairs Bureau, and therefore does not accept children who have dropped out of school. They employ mainly women, including divorced and older women, who bring their daughters to finish the work, which is paid on a piece rate. The payment is given to the family, with 500 families and some 1,500 workers registered. Regarding health risks, the manager suggested

that they were thinking of providing masks for employees but had not done so, on the grounds that most employees were not permanent.

The enterprise carried out a survey to see if employees' lives had improved. They found that a number of young women were able to attend college and pay the fees from their income, and three young women had saved money to go to university. One had started her own business selling roasted grain. It also carried out a survey to see how many graduates were employed, found four with BA degrees, and transferred them to their larger urban branch on monthly salaries of 4,700 birr. The manager noted that there were many more graduates in the area but no other factory or employment opportunities.

2.2.3 *Textile and plastic factories in Zeytuni, Tigray*

Young people in Zeytuni had opportunities to work in a textile factory and a plastic factory which was under construction, though it was unclear to what extent young people from the locality will be employed when the factory opens. Some households lost land but received compensation, which they used to help their older sons set up businesses or to sponsor their daughters' migration to the Gulf. From the money they received, Etsegenet's parents used 150,000 birr to build a modern house. They also bought a *bajaj* for one son with 100,000 birr, and a pool table for another son to set up a business within their house. They also cover the rent and other expenses of Etsegenet, who works in a textile factory. She completed Grade 10 but did not pass the national exam, and then trained in a textile factory. Etsegenet was employed in another factory that was closer as a tailor on a contract basis for a net monthly payment of 1,700 birr. She had started studying accounting at a private college in Mekele but stopped as it was too far away. She did this work since she had no alternative: "It is not bad. It is good until I get another alternative job."

Young men found work during the construction of the plastic factory on a daily rate, and it was here that Desta was trained on the job to become a welder. Most of the workers were men, but one young woman with health problems was given lighter work. Fanus reached Grade 10 but scored too low in the national exam to stay on at school. She worked in her parents' shop and then at the plastic factory for three years. She suffers from epilepsy and the factory allowed her to continue working, moving her from hard labour to cleaning and working as a guard. Fanus is grateful to have a job:

> There is big difference between having a job and not. If you stay at home without a job, you worry too much but if you have a job, you only think about your job and you do not worry too much about life.

2.2.4 *Short-term work in Hawassa Industrial Park*

A focus group of young men mentioned a number of problems associated with working at the industrial park, in particular the low salaries and shift system, notably night shifts. One respondent referred to it bluntly as labour abuse. It was too far away, and cost of taxis (20 birr) to get to the park, especially at night, was considered too high given the low salary. Housing costs were another serious constraint. One participant said that only young people who were living with their parents could afford to work at the park, since the salary does not allow them to live independently. One young person stated: "The monthly salary can buy only trousers and a jacket."

The work was compared with that in small wood workshops, where young men have better incomes and bonuses, as well as additional income for extra work, and no transport costs. However, work opportunities in the town centre were limited. Yitbarek explained that the workers in the industrial partk are mainly migrants and face problems covering their accommodation costs: some had to rely on family support, others on additional work.[7]

> … most of the industry workers here are not from Hawasa city. The house rent is very expensive which is totally incomparable with the salary. They are working there until they get alternative opportunity with the help of their parents. Some also do other activities part time to fill their financial gaps, for instance they carry grain around mills. I have two close friends who always make their parents send them money since their salary is not enough.

Yitbarek suggested that low pay is the main reason workers leave. Lack of rest and sick leave were further issues, and he felt that working for oneself, however menial, was better.

> … let me explain about the shed where I was working; mainly the payment rate is a reason for workers to leave soon; secondly, if you are sick you need sick leave to re-join … the supervisors don't allow workers to take a breath and sit for a minute to rest. This causes conflict … If you work as a shoe-shiner in town, you will benefit more than working in the industrial park ... it is better to do own work than such employment.

Within the Young Lives qualitative sample, one young woman and two young men from Hawassa worked for short periods in the industrial park. However, all soon left, in part since the wages were low, but also because of the working conditions – especially the night shifts – and because they could not get work related to their education or training. Yitbarek was unemployed for three years before working in the park for three months until he found a job that was relevant to his auto-electrical training.

> I graduated in 2018. Before I got my current job I worked in the industrial park for a while. I was hired by a company which produces diapers … I joined as a labourer. It was not related to my education … My salary was 1,200 birr, the work was hard with three rotating shifts. The night shift for me was really difficult. The machine runs faster, which adds more loads on us. I was working in the warehouse, which involves packing, storing, etc. The salary was low for labour work … but we accepted it as our duty even though the workload and the compensation were incomparable … It doesn't even buy your clothes, let alone cover food.

An employee in the industrial park labour office suggested that the biggest source of dissatisfaction was the low basic salary of around 1,100 birr, and that turnover was high, especially after the holiday period, since some work during this period and then leave when colleges restart. Yordi worked in the park for two months while a university student, and because of her good qualifications was paid 3,000 birr a month. However, she left the job and went back to university after the summer break, and her mother suggested that she had no intention of working there in the long term but just wanted a summer job.

The labour office employee also suggested that there was a clash of cultures between foreign companies and Ethiopian workers, who resenting being shouted at. Employers also considered the custom of taking extended leave for mourning to be unacceptable. He

7 For a discussion of the lives of migrants in the Hawassa industrial park see Dom et al. (2020).

suggested the Government should offer short intensive training in garment work and provide soft skills training about industrial work culture, factory rules and procedures, time management, motivation, teamwork, problem-solving and having a positive attitude at work. He suggested young people should be told that the jobs should be seen "as a ladder" towards better jobs, that TVET colleges should learn from each other by sharing their experiences , and that there was a need to improve the quality of education. Finally, he felt that the Government needed to diversify industrialisation, beyond the main focus on the textiles sector.

2.2.5 Temporary factory work as a stepping-stone

With the rapid industrialisation in Ethiopia, factories and industrial parks have been established which mainly employ women, who are seen to be a more dexterous and potentially more hardworking and cooperative work force. Many young women decide to work in factories because of a lack of alternatives, especially if they did not have good enough grades to go to public universities and their parents could not afford the fees for private colleges. In some cases, young women stopped working, in part because of health risks, as in the case of Bezach, who worked at the bean packing factory near Tach-Meret (see Section 2.2.2). This was also the case for Kasech from Menderin in Addis Ababa, who worked in a soap factory for a year after returning from migrating to the Middle East. Kasech received a monthly salary of only 1,000 birr and found the work unsafe. She said: "In the factory there was acid and it was hard for me to continue … I stopped after one year." She then started working in a beauty salon, which she recently left due to a disagreement with her employer, and she is currently unemployed.

Some young women had no intention of working in factories in the long term but did so either to earn money during holidays or to further other goals. For instance, Ayni worked in the plastic factory construction for a year in order to raise money to migrate to Saudi Arabia.[8]

The issue of sustainability was raised by some young people. We have seen that the bean packing factory reduced wages as it was not profitable and might be closed. Likewise, the textile factory that Etsegenet worked in was said to be about to close because of issues with electricity. The construction work on the plastic factory was coming to an end and it was unclear to what extent local young people would be employed when the factory opens.

However, some felt that poorly paid regular factory work had some advantages over hard labour and insecure daily labour, especially in construction, as Miruts suggested:

> In the factory I got 50 birr per day ... The daily wage rate in the construction sector is around 70 birr but it is for a short period of time … The factory work was not bad but the daily labour is terrible … If I have another good job opportunity, I will withdraw from the daily labour job. It is labour exploitation … Especially concrete work is energy and time consuming, as it is difficult to carry the materials up the buildings.

2.3 Own work and businesses

Own-account work was found to be more common in Ethiopia than in the other three Young Lives countries, with 63 per cent of the Older Cohort involved at the age of 19 and 52 per

8 The topic of migration for work is addressed in another paper in this set (Birhanu and Pankhurst 2020).

cent at the age of 22 (Favara, Chang and Sánchez 2018). Seventeen of the 47 young men and women featured in this paper were involved in their own work or businesses, although many more had been involved in some work for income part time or earlier in their work careers. Ten of these were in urban sites (of whom six were men), and seven in rural sites (of whom four were men).

Table 3. *Type of work done by respondents generating their own income and running businesses, by work category, work type, scale, sex and location*

Respondent	General work category	Specific work type	Scale of work	Male	Female	Urban	Rural
Nigisti	TRADE AND SALES	Clothes boutique	Small business		1	1	
Mina		Crop resale	Small-scale individual		1		1
Ayni	HANDICRAFTS	Knitted clothing	Small-scale individual		1	1	
Wubanchi		Baking pan lids	Small-scale individual		1		1
Ayu	FOOD AND BEVERAGE SERVICES	Restaurant	Small business		1		1
Birikti		Own café	Small business		1	1	
Zahara		Own café	Small business		1		1
Worku		Bakery	Entrepreneurial	1			1
Afework	LEISURE SERVICES	Pool house and game zone	Entrepreneurial	1		1	
Dembel		Music video and rental	Small business	1		1	
Seifu	TRANSPORT SERVICES	Bajaj mototaxi	Small-scale individual	1		1	
Chala		Motorbike	Small-scale individual	1			1
Tenkir		Motorbike	Small-scale individual	1			1
Bereket		Car broker and car decorating	Small-scale individual	1		1	
Assefa		Horse cart	Small-scale individual	1			1
Beyene	TECHNICAL REPAIR SERVICES	Satellite dish repair	Small-scale individual	1		1	
Gulilat		stove repair	Small-scale individual	1		1	
Total				**10**	**7**	**9**	**8**

Gender roles and stereotypes are clear in the types of work they engage in, with women involved in clothes sales, restaurants and cafés, processing food crops and producing handicrafts for sale, whereas men were mainly involved in transport-related and technical repair work. Some men were entrepreneurs with successful and lucrative businesses, whereas most of the young women were involved in more arduous petty businesses.

The own-account work can be categorised broadly into six sub-categories: trade and sales; handicraft sales; food services; leisure services; transport services; and technical repair services. However, within these work categories there are examples of very small-scale

businesses as well as more lucrative businesses. Rather than look at the type of work, it is therefore more useful to consider own work in three categories related to the scale of the business: entrepreneurs, small businesses and own-account individual work.

2.3.1 Entrepreneurs[9]

Two young men, Afework from central Addis Ababa and Worku from a rural site in Gurage, had become successful businessmen. This requires capital, family support, good ideas, savings and investment, often remittances,[10] partnerships, determination and some luck. Afework was a double orphan living with a brother and the son of a sister who migrated to Beirut. While in Grade 11 he did casual work selling mobile phones. He liked playing pool and noticed that it was a lucrative business, so he got together with five friends and together they applied to the wereda to form a youth MSE and established a pool business. However, the others lost interest and he unofficially bought them out. Now he runs the business on his own, earning 500 birr a day, which he saves in an *iqqub* savings association. Afework also started a second business after persuading a trader who travels to Dubai to be his partner. They established a game zone with money saved with and borrowed from his *iqqub* and siblings living abroad. He believes strongly that he needs to make money while he is young:

> Old people say you get money at age 20 but heart at age 40. At age 20 you are youth. So, you should work. But you think critically when you grow up and are mature at age 40. So, before getting there, we need to work and earn income. That is why I want to work.

While Afework became successful through seeing opportunities in youth leisure activities, Worku invested in his home area in Gurage, using savings from a job he took in Addis Ababa and drawing on the skills he learnt there to set up his own bakery. As an adolescent, Worku worked on his parents' farm for several years; they promised to give him money to start a business but invested in a house instead. So, he left with a brother who was going to university in Addis Ababa and started working for a baker from the same ethnic group, who was known to his father. He recalled how he moved from labour work to a management role:

The moment I arrived, I began to carry bread in a basket and my back was even scratched by the basket. I used to carry 500 loaves of bread in a big basket for eight months. Gradually, he gave me easier jobs like selling bread in the shop, and seeing my behaviour, he gave me a management role, which I performed very well, and now I am doing it for myself.

Worku worked for five years, during which his pay was held until he left; he used his earnings to buy a *bajaj*, fund his sister's migration to Saudi Arabia, and build a house in a town in the area he came from. He opened a bakery with the help of his brother, who loaned him 200,000 birr from his wife's remittances, and his sister, who sent 100,000 birr from Saudi Arabia.

> My older brother's wife is in an Arab country, and she sent him some money, then all together he gave me 200,000 birr without hesitation, by suspending his housing construction … I asked permission from my sister to use her savings with me, which were about 100,000 birr. So in total I used 300,000 birr to start up.

9 For a further discussion of resilience and entrepreneurship, see Crivello et al. (2020).

10 Remittances are discussed in the paper on migration experiences (Birhanu and Pankhurst 2020).

Worku bought a baking machine for 167,000 birr and spent most of the remaining money on renting and renovating premises. He has recently opened a third branch and employs 19 people. Five are family members, including his elder brother, who quit his government job and joined the business while working towards his master's degree, and a younger brother who completed Grade 10 but did not receive good grades. He feels his educated brother's vision helped:

> My business model was restricted, in one place, and it had only a few workers. But he advised me to employ more people, to expand with more branches and make it a bigger business.

This case shows the importance of family and home area connections for finding work and obtaining capital to invest in businesses. Key aspects of Worku's success include close family ties, sponsorship by his siblings, and involving siblings and other relatives in his business, as is very common among the entrepreneurially minded Gurage. Worku is ambitious and hopes to diversify into other businesses, including a shop for construction materials and a poultry farm.

2.3.2 Small businesses

Five of the young people, four of whom were women, owned small businesses, including a clothes boutique, two cafés and a restaurant. Two of them were in the town of Gomen, and both used capital from migration, in the first case remittances from siblings and in the second from her own migration. Nigisti, aged 24, opened a clothes shop. She had graduated with a diploma in accounting from a private college in the regional capital but could not find work. She opened her boutique with the help of her migrant siblings, her sister in Saudi Arabia and her brother in Sweden, who invested around 170,000 birr. Her revenue is about 2,000 birr a week, which, after taxes, gives about 3,000 birr profit per month. Birikti, also 24, dropped out of Grade 8 to assist her mother and then migrated to Saudi Arabia twice, but was deported both times even though the first time she travelled legally. Since she had to pay back brokers she did not save much. She came back with 10,000 birr and set up a small café, paying 700 birr a month in rent. While Nigisti feels she is successful and is optimistic, Birikti feels she is not doing well and is considering migrating again.

> This business is not profitable; I am working because it is better than being idle. From what I earn, I have to pay for house rent. I haven't had any change in my life, even after I worked for a year, so if it continues like this, I will stop it and go away … If possible, I want to work in my homeland, if not I will go to Saudi again. I don't want to waste my time working in a small café which can't change my life.

Dembel opened a store renting out videos and music in Hawassa. He comes from a poor family and his mother is a PSNP beneficiary. He completed Grade 10 but failed the national exam and then started working for a construction company.

> My situation now is improving … I started my own business. I am supporting my family and myself. Now I have created my own job. Before I opened the music and video shop, I worked in road construction with my friends, as a storeman and as a fuel station worker. I saved some money, and when the construction work phased out, they terminated my contract and I opened my shop.

Dembel chose this business as it did not require a large amount of capital and allows him time to devote to his passion of playing football. He can close the shop or ask friends or neighbours to look after it when he is training. Dembel started technical and vocational training in electrical installation but stopped as he could not combine this with his training. He faces challenges since the 1,200 birr a monthly rent is high, and he earns only 400–500 birr a week. There is also competition from other video rental shops and, increasingly, satellite TV, so his income is declining. He used to save 1,000 to 2,000 birr every six months and 50 birr a week in an *iqqub*, which he can no longer do. He would like to continue in business but dreams of becoming a professional footballer.

2.3.3 Small-scale, own-account work

Ten young people were engaged in their own small-scale income-generating work, seven of whom were men, and three women. The types of work are highly gendered.

Young women's income-generating work: petty trade and handicraft sale

Whether still living with their parents and at school or married, some women can earn income from petty trade, and, if they have the right skills, from producing and selling handicrafts. Mina, from Timatim, left school in Grade 8 to get married and has two children. She works four days a week, undertaking petty trade in crops, including potatoes, wheat and barley.

A number of adolescent girls who were still at school sold crops during the holidays. This produce included onions, sugar cane and, in Zeytuni, cactus fruit. Some women produce food and beverages for sale, often with the help of their daughters and sometimes their sons. Some, such as Dechasa's wife, process food. She roasts grain before selling it, making a profit of 200–300 birr on a quintal of grain.

Producing handicrafts to sell is usually a part-time means of generating additional income. Ayni, from Gomen, produces knitted clothes; her mother said she could complete one piece of clothing in a week, earning 25–30 birr, though Ayni said she was unemployed and helping her mother with her shop. Wubanchi, from Lomi, makes lids for baking pans to sell in local markets for 15 birr each, using the income to buy food and other household essentials.

Young men's income-generating work: transport and repair work

We saw earlier that several young men were involved in waged roles in transport, as lorry or taxi driver assistants. Five Older Cohort men were involved in their own transport-related businesses; two, in different rural sites, had motorcycles. Chala, from Lomi, bought a second-hand motorcycle last year. After the harvest seasons, when people have cash, he can earn up to 2,000 birr per day transporting people to a local town, and at other times he can make 300 to 500 birr. He would like to sell his motorcycle and buy a new one, and hopes to engage in fattening oxen in addition to his irrigation work producing vegetables.

Tenkir, from Timatim, also bought a new motorcycle, but restrictions on transporting more than one person means he mainly teaches people to ride, earning 50–300 birr a day. He has saved 5,000 birr and his dream is to be able to buy a *bajaj*.

To afford a *bajaj*, young men require family support, as the case of Seifu highlights. Seifu's father bought a second-hand *bajaj* for 105,000 birr, with 30,000 birr coming from his *iddir* funeral association. Seifu started driving this, saving 130 birr a day in an *iqqub* to start paying back his father. He faced two problems: at first, as he did not have a licence, he got into

trouble with the police, so he stopped until he got one; and with the unrest in the city, his income reduced from about 400–500 birr a day to 200 birr.

Bereket, in Bertukan in Addis Ababa, does informal work in the transport sector, sometimes getting commissions as a broker arranging car sales, but mainly being involved in car decorating work; he can sometimes make up to 500 birr in a day. He dropped out of school in Grade 9 and left his grandmother, with whom he had been living, to live with friends. Since then, he has been earning a living by himself, initially by washing cars. He also got his driving licence but could not find work as a driver.

In two rural sites, Tach-Meret in Amhara and Leki in Oromia, five adolescent Younger Cohort boys earn income driving horse or donkey carts belonging to their families, transporting people, or goods such as wood or crops, to markets. Four of these are still students in Grades 6 to 12 and earn between 150 and 400 birr a day, usually on market days. Assefa works three or four days a week during his off-shift school periods transporting construction wood and goods, earning 300 to 400 birr a day. He uses some of the income for himself, mainly to purchase clothes, but also buys items for his family, such as salt and pepper.

Two young men living in urban areas are involved in repair work. Gulilat lives with his divorced mother, who earns a living brewing and selling beer in Kok town in Amhara region. While he was in Grade 10, during the summer breaks or when he had spare time, he started to work with a friend who had a store repairing stoves. He said he earns about 100 or 150 birr repairing one item, though his mother claimed he earns 300 birr a week. With the money, he buys clothes, school uniforms and shoes. He suggested that as the work was occasional it did not affect his education. He hopes to be trained in electronics and would like to open his own sales and repair shop.

Beyene, from Menderin, repairs satellite dishes, although like Gulilat's work, this work is occasional and he too largely depends on his mother. Beyene left school at Grade 9 and lives with his mother, who is a storekeeper. He started by helping a friend who repairs satellite dishes and has the necessary equipment; he sometimes does the job if his friend cannot, and they share the income, between 150 and 700 birr for one job. However, most of the time there is limited work, and since the area he was living in was demolished and he was relocated, he has less work and there is more competition in the new neighbourhood, meaning that he may only get one job every 15 days.

Many young people would like to do their own work and use skills they have learnt working for others to establish their own businesses, but they lack the capital. As Miruts, who works in wage labour and cobblestone production, put it: "I don't have my own income-generating activities because I don't have money to start up my own business."

2.4 Group work and MSEs

The major focus of youth job creation has been on promoting MSEs formed as youth cooperatives.

2.4.1 The policy context and local implementation

At the federal level, the JCC has been promoting employment, with district and local-level arrangements varying.[11] Kebele administrations identify job-seekers, who must be residents with an ID card (and not be students or government employees), have jobs or have farmland registered in their name. The administrations must also rank the job-seekers in order of priority. For instance, in Leku, the first priority was graduates, then the 'poorest of the poor', followed by those who have meagre assets, sufficient for survival but not for improving their living conditions. A further priority is disabled people. In Zeytuni, higher education graduates were selected, although those who failed Grades 12, 10 and even 8 were considered as long as they were over 18. Kebeles also provide those who want to find work elsewhere with clearance letters and unemployment identity cards[12] so that they can be employed elsewhere, which is important for graduates who cannot find appropriate jobs locally.

Kebele authorities also establish what resources, notably land, are available locally and organise young people into groups, with training provided by wereda experts. Potential areas for youth MSE cooperatives include manufacturing/industry, construction, agriculture, services and mining. In Lomi, the MSEs are largely involved in cereal crops and irrigated vegetable production. The kebele job creation officer suggested that there were about 600 unemployed young people registered, though some were already engaged in various businesses. The kebele chairman stated that 214 youth had been organised into eight new groups of between 20 and 50 members, most of whom were men, with around five or six women in each group. Six of these groups were involved in farming, one in vegetable and fruit production, and one in trade. A men's focus group suggested that unemployment was a very serious problem and that those organised into MSEs accounted for less than a quarter of those without jobs. They mentioned as evidence that conflict arose when many young men wanted to be included in a group organised for the purpose of loading vegetables.

In Zeytuni, the MSEs were involved mainly in stone cutting and cobblestone production, though others were involved in irrigation and livestock. The job processor said they had planned to involve 950 young men and women in the current year and had gone beyond that target. Some cooperatives have been successful, with shares transferred into individual members' accounts from the cooperative's joint bank account.

The group that Mihretu is involved in has 15 members, with only two women, who do clerical and financial work. Mihretu explained that they earn about 7,000 to 8,000 birr per month and take their shares every five or six months, and that groups doing well can be promoted to managing crusher machines. In Lomi, Wubanchi's husband is part of an MSE that has been making good profits producing *tef*. Each member obtained five quintals, of which 0.5 quintal

11 At district level the Enterprise and Industry Development Office or MSE Business Enterprise Offices are responsible, and at the kebele level, local administrations form jobs creation committees, often with the youth and women's affairs representatives taking the lead.

12 The cards are produced by the kebele labour and social affairs office and approved by the wereda labour and social affairs office.

was deducted, sold, and put into the joint bank account. After demonstrating they have been saving, qualifying MSEs can then obtain loans from the wereda Youth Revolving Fund. For example, in Leku, a cooperative of five to seven young people can get a loan of between 92,000 and 170,000 birr. The groups are provided with short training courses from TVET colleges, including in entrepreneurship and financial management, notably on saving and scaling up businesses.

2.4.2 Challenges facing the MSE cooperatives

A number of challenges reduce the effectiveness of MSEs as a job creation strategy. These include the limited involvement of women and graduates, tensions over access to land, the types of activities and their profitability and viability, young people's preference for individual enterprise, and bureaucracy and corruption.

Focus on young men with limited inclusion of young women

The youth MSEs have tended to focus largely on young men. Despite a nominal commitment to involve young women, in practice there were very few women in most groups, and those that were included were usually involved in clerical or financial work. In Lomi, a kebele job creation representative said that wives were considered to be fully occupied already, and only young women above 18 living with their families are considered. However, a women and children's office representative said that wives could be organised alongside husbands. Nonetheless, the representative suggested that, given unequal gender relations, even if wives were included they tended to prefer that their husband be involved:

> There are fewer females since they are still influenced by gender relationships. It may be my husband who engages in such jobs even if I am given the opportunity. I gravitate towards inviting my husband to take the opportunity under the pretext that I will use the opportunity some other time. Once my husband begins the job, he may not give me [the chance] to engage in the job. There is such a pressure of gender relationships.

Likewise, in Zeytuni the kebele officer said that while they applied the principle that half the group should be women, in practice the women tended to drop out and, in the end, the *tabia*[13] allowed the groups to be formed with just a few women. The officer attributed this to a lack of awareness and attitudes about work among the women. The women's affairs officer also suggested that there were very few female graduates in rural areas since most remain in the towns as there is a demand for their labour in factories. The exclusion of women is also in part due to the activities prioritised, which often involve hard physical labour (irrigation in Lomi, cobblestone production in Zeytuni). Not much of the work is well suited to women.[14]

Graduates not interested in farming and manual labour

The women and children's affairs officer in Lomi suggested that graduates look down on agricultural work as they want government jobs, and only join groups to secure land, which their families then cultivate, and that once they find jobs they leave.

13 The lowest administrative unit.

14 In Lomi the only initiative mainly involving women was sponsored by an NGO for women to produce ovens, in collaboration with the Urban Industry Development and Job Creation Enterprise Office.

> Though we organise them, they are uninterested for they do not want to engage in agriculture as they are educated and degree holders. Rather, they want to be employed by the government. They perceive engagement in agriculture as an inferior job. They come to us not to engage in agriculture but to take the farmland; that is their covert intention. Even after they secure the land, they do not engage in cultivation. It is their fathers that will cultivate the land until the boys get employed by government.

Some parents also do not think it is right for their graduate children to work in agriculture. One man in a focus group said: "I feel sad when I order a boy who completed Grade 10 to farm."[15] Likewise, in Zeytuni the work processor noted that university graduates looked down on manual work:

> When we tell young people who graduated to be involved in irrigation activities, renting a piece of land, or to be involved in cobblestone work and stone mining activities, they say that they could not do so after being educated. They consider it illiterate farmers' work.

She added that were also job opportunities in the plastic factory construction and the textile factory, but young people preferred to go to towns for office jobs. Moreover, she felt that the proximity to towns and the capital was one reason young people were not interested in using the resources in the area. This view was shared to some extent by caregivers. A male focus group said that parents spent a lot of money to support their children to achieve good educational results. Young graduates also strove to do well so that they could be employed in offices or start their own businesses. However, the work processor pointed out that a few who had government jobs had worked on irrigated farms on their parents' land or were doing both, and some had given up jobs to work in irrigated farming as it was more profitable, even enabling them to buy cars and trucks.

Land access and tensions over reallocation of grazing land to youth groups

In Lomi, the kebele administration provided 102 hectares of communal grazing land to 184 unemployed young people through MSEs for cultivation or cattle fattening. The reallocation created a rift in the community, with some of those in favour suggesting that parts of the lands had been appropriated illegally, in some cases after the Derg period when cooperatives were disbanded. Respondents in a male focus group also suggested that political appointees and militia were given land. However, others argued that these were important grazing resources, and even staged a demonstration against the allocation. Nonetheless, those in favour of the allocation contended that it was wealthier people with larger herds who wanted to retain the land as communal grazing. There were also sub-kebele rivalries, with people in one area not wanting young people from another area or clan to be allocated the land. A cooperative was allocated a tractor to plough the communal grazing land but the opposition meant that the tractor remained idle.

Types of activities, profitability and viability

In the rural areas the types of activities and loans prioritised for MSEs were agricultural or industrial activities involving hard labour. Some young people would prefer to engage in other

15 Gashaw (2019) reports similar findings.

businesses, and in Lomi they hoped that electricity would be provided to their kebele to enable non-agricultural work such as establishing a mill house.[16]

In some cases, the profitability of the type of work and competition from private ventures were also issues. In Zeytuni, some young people preferred to organise their own groups for cobblestone production and sell their cobblestones to private contractors or even to the MSEs. In Lomi, some previously established MSEs were unsuccessful and disbanded. These included one formed to extract and sell sand, which was not profitable as the area was far away from urban areas which would need it, and members began leaving until the MSEs eventually collapsed.

Some MSEs face problems that can affect their viability, such as drought. Dechasa joined a youth cooperative to produce onion seedlings with water from a pond dug by the Government, but in the first year the crop perished. He recalled:

> We bought the seeds for 700 birr (300 birr/1 kg), but no water was harvested from the pond as the rain did not fall. The seeds that we sowed remained in the soil. We thought to make profit by growing and selling the seedlings. We invested the 700 birr to make a profit … but it failed. Thus, we have not divided the money or taken a loan.

Preference for individual enterprise and own groups over MSEs

There was a strong feeling among many young people of preferring working on their own or in self-organised groups. The reasons for this included the question of trusting other members and the fact that some worked harder than others for equal payments. For instance, Gobena explained he left the group that was allocated the tractor since the land was far away, the other members were from another locality, and he did not trust them to be honest about the income. To try to ensure that everyone participated, some groups, such Dechasa's, introduced penalties (10 birr for anyone who did not show up for a day and 5 birr for arriving late). In Gomen town in Tigray, Kibrom was part of a metalwork MSE trained and organised by the municipality. However, they disagreed and stopped working together and he now works directly with the municipality collecting rubbish on a contract basis.

Many young people who are members of groups continue to work largely on family plots or hope to be given land by their families. Dechasa received a quarter of a hectare from his family and rents an additional quarter of a hectare for 3,500 birr. He mentioned that his group had agreed that once the onion seedlings they planted on the government land were ready for transplanting, they would share and plant them on their individual land. Gobena, who dropped out of his cooperative, said he would not envisage joining another cooperative, as: "I want to work and live independently."

Problems of group loans

There were a number challenges regarding group loans. Youth groups had to show that they had saved before they could apply for loans, and had to specify what the loans were for, and loans were often restricted to specific types of activities. In Lomi, the husband of Wubanchi joined an MSE producing cereals. His group had been saving and had used some of these savings to purchase improved seeds. They were waiting to apply for loans, but these have

16 Gashaw (2019) also reports preferences for 'transformational work' such as woodwork, metalwork and car repairs.

been frozen because earlier groups had defaulted. He is hopeful that the Government will provide loans in the future.

In order to get loans, young people are expected to involve their parents as guarantors, with land assets as collateral, which some of the older generation are not keen to do for fear that the young people might misuse the funds or not be able to repay them. The women and children's affairs officer in Lomi suggested that the kebele administration would force young people to pay back previous loans by selling plots given to them by their parents. Similarly, in the small town of Kok in Amhara, a young women's focus group suggested that parents did not trust their children enough to provide their houses as collateral.

In some cases, groups took out loans and then used them for different activities or divided the loan among themselves. According to the women and children's affairs representative in Lomi, a youth group that received loans last year for livestock rearing divided the funds among themselves and members rented other farmland for crop production on a private basis. She stated:

> Youths are challenging! Other than advising them, we cannot force them to use the money for the intended aim. Instead, they divided the money among themselves and got involved in crop production individually … There is no group of youths which has worked as a group … each group with 20 or 30 members took 20 hectares of land. They should have worked together on the land. But they disbanded after sharing the money among themselves.

The job creation representative mentioned that before he assumed office, five young people had received loans from the Youth Revolving Fund of between 70,000 and 170,000 birr for cattle fattening and instead bought motorbikes or did not invest the loans as expected. He was charged with recouping the loans and was worried since there had been no follow up, and some of the young people had migrated, even abroad. As a result of people defaulting on loans, the wereda has not provided loans this year.

Regulations, bureaucracy and corruption

The regulations and bureaucracy around establishing and running MSEs discouraged many young people from forming groups and explain why members leave the MSEs, which often leads to them collapse. Senia, who was put into a group in Addis Ababa to set up a tailoring business, found that bureaucracy was taking too much time and they did not start the business; she now hopes to set up her own business.

In Zeytuni, the work processor mentioned that some groups, especially university graduates, got fed up with the bureaucracy involved in setting up youth groups and left. The process requires groups to come together and the administration to identify resources, and then the proposal has to be publicly approved by the community before it can go to the wereda, which assesses and approves the proposal and provides training. The work processor also noted that, while the groups involved in cobblestones and mining were expected to expand their business with more wereda support within a year and give up the land to other younger groups, those involved in agricultural activities retained land access for five years.

A woman in a focus group in Lomi also suggested that the bureaucracy necessary for establishing and running youth MSEs groups was discouraging young people. She further claimed that cooperative members were asked to pay for different processes to be facilitated, implying that corruption was an issue. The husband of Wubanchi said his agricultural MSE

had not finished renewing their licence the previous year, because of the bureaucracy involved, so they were afraid to cultivate the land as some MSEs got into trouble with community members who grazed their livestock on it. There was also considerable pressure for groups to save and increase the scale of their activities; if they didn't, they were liable to be replaced after a year by other groups of unemployed young people. The rule that access to land should devolve to new groups after five years was seen as discouraging investment by failing to provide security of tenure.

3. Factors affecting transitions to work

The types of work young people are involved in depend on a combination of interconnected factors operating at different levels: the community, the family/household and the individual.

3.1 Community characteristics

The locations in which young people live influence the opportunities for employment, income generation, and involvement in government-supported job creation programmes. There are clear differences between rural and urban areas, and regional, geographical and cultural characteristics are also important. The extent of sites' linkages to markets, investment from the private sector, and government development interventions also matter.

An earlier paper on community variations and change in the 20 Young Lives sites considered differences and changes in remoteness resulting from improved transport, communications and electricity supplies, differences in community economies in terms of livelihoods, shocks and external support, and differences in cultural and social organisation (Pankhurst and Tiumelissan 2012).

3.1.1 Urban/rural differences and linkages

As young people transition to adulthood, differences between urban and rural areas have an important impact on the types of work available and the opportunities for employment and own account work. In urban sites there is a greater range of types of work in which young people engage. There are also more opportunities in informal sector activities and to generate income through casual brokering work. Work connected to modernisation, communications and globalisation is also interrelated with changing youth values.[17]

The remoteness of some rural areas affects young people's job opportunities in several ways. In Lomi, participants of a male focus group stated:

> Within the locality there are no businesses or factories that would create employment for youths. Even in the nearest local town there are no companies that create employment for youths. The remoteness disadvantages the youth. Moreover, electricity could have helped youth to engage in service sectors.

17 For similar findings, see Pankhurst and Dom (2019) and Pankhurst (2020).

Within urban sites, there are also more significant contrasts between young people who are doing very well and those who are working for meagre wages or facing unemployment. Some of the former become successful entrepreneurs, raising large sums as capital and employing others; the latter are involved in petty trade or only find occasional work, and some face difficulties surviving.

In urban sites, while gender differences in the division of labour remain stark, there are more work opportunities for young women, especially those who have finished secondary education. In rural sites, work opportunities are generally more linked to land-based activities in agriculture, with young women's work outside the domestic domain mainly related to petty trade and the sale of food and drinks. Differences between households are not as prominent and gender roles are more clearly delineated, with only a few examples of successful young women having completed secondary and college education or investing income earned through migration.

However, these differences depend to some extent on the specific characteristics of the urban or rural area, and there are significant differences within the categories, partly related to size and global linkages. Three of the urban sites are located within large cities, two in Addis Ababa and the third in Hawassa, the regional capital of SNNP. The two other urban sites are within small but growing towns in Amhara and Tigray regions. There is a greater range of activities and opportunities in the large cities.

Locational characteristics within towns and cities and recent changes also matter. While both sites in Addis Ababa are in poorer parts of city, Bertukan is close to a vegetable and fruit market providing trade and wage labour opportunities, especially in portering. Menderin is also in a poor area, with young people mainly involved in a range of informal activities. However, its recent reconstruction and the relocation of many households has affected work opportunities. In Leku, in Hawassa, there are opportunities in trade and services, as well as employment in the industrial park.

Features of the local economy, proximity to markets, agricultural investment projects, construction and factories, and global linkages explain considerable differences in young people's work opportunities between the five rural sites (see site descriptions in Annex 1)

Investment projects and factories have brought about considerable changes in the work environment. In Zeytuni the stone quarrying industry and recent construction of a plastic factory have had important effects, and there is also a textile factory where some young women work. Some households who lost land when the factory was built have used their compensation provided to diversify their livelihoods and offer alternative opportunities to their children. In Tach-Meret, a factory packaging haricot beans provides opportunities for wage labour especially for girls and young women. In Leki, a large international flower farm employs over 30,000 workers, mostly young women, a winery has recently been established employing local people, including graduates, and local investors have established irrigated farms employing children and youth. However, some of these investments also have a detrimental effect on the environment, and there are health risks from chemicals and discharges.[18] Views about agricultural and industrial wage labour are mixed, and it is often seen as a temporary option for those without other options.

18 Environmental and health risks and lack of proper protection have become a widespread problem of the growing horticulture and industrial sector (Defar and Ali 2013; Sefisa 2018; Abebe et al. 2018).

3.1.2 Roads and markets

Roads and proximity to towns also matter, especially for market connections and involvement in petty trade, and for a few young women, handicrafts. The improvement of roads can stimulate businesses. For instance, the head of the women and children's office in Leku stated:

> There are good recent developments in the improvement of internal roads with cobblestones and even asphalt in some directions, which improved the area [and] also creating a chance for some businesses to emerge or households to open small businesses facing these newly built roads.

Some young men have also found work opportunities in the transport sector in rural areas, using horse carts and motorbikes, and in urban areas driving *bajaj*. A few found jobs as lorry assistants in rural areas or minibus assistants in urban areas, and one in informal car sales and decorating.

Gomen in Tigray is bisected by a major road, stimulating urbanisation and opportunities in construction daily labour and other income-generating activities. Leki is relatively close to a large and growing town, with work related to urban–rural linkages, including the sale of agricultural produce and fish, and transport opportunities for young men driving horse carts. Tach-Meret in Amhara has a road passing close by, with two small towns a few kilometres away on either side, and Timatim is close to a relatively new road leading to a medium-sized town, where some of the rural residents have found work. In this site the Gurage traditions of migration and enterprise are also evident, with cases of young people rapidly improving their livelihoods by mobilising family, ethnic and urban connections, and sometimes opening businesses in the town.

3.1.3 Electricity

Access to electricity has important implications for employment and income generation. By the Round 3 survey in 2009, only four of the Young Lives rural communities were not connected to the national grid. During the fifth qualitative wave in 2019, Lomi still did not have access to electricity. The women and children's affairs representative contrasted the differences between urban and rural youth job creation possibilities related to electricity access:

> In urban areas, the government has organised the youths who have the skill of vocational works such as woodwork, metalwork and store keeping. In the countryside, these jobs are unthinkable because we do not have electricity and the plots of land needed for shelter for the businesses.

A participant of a male focus group stressed the importance of electricity in attracting investors as well as enabling youth to engage in the service sector. A local farm employer suggested that electricity could enable a flour factory to be established, as the area produces wheat. Electricity provision is currently planned for the kebele and one caregiver mentioned that the authorities had mapped the area and promised to provide services this year.

Although other rural sites do have access to electricity, provision to some areas can be delayed. For instance, the kebele administrator in Tach-Meret mentioned that funds had been provided for electricity services for 490 households but stopped after telegraph poles were provided for only 29 households, suggesting that there was corruption involved.

Participants of a male focus group in the same kebele also complained that electricity was not provided for young people running established businesses, and even if it was promised, there were delays in installation.

The availability and cost of electricity also matter. Electricity cuts and power fluctuations affect some businesses. For instance, Worku, in Gurage, noted that electricity fluctuations were a serious constraint to his bakery until he bought a generator, and in Gomen town in Tigray, Merawi, who works part time for his parents in their hollow-block concrete business, mentioned that the extent he works depends on the availability of electricity.[19] Planned increases in electricity costs may become a more important issue. Some of the larger factories were already said to be affected, and in Menderin in Addis Ababa a women's focus group mentioned that increasing costs had hindered young women producing potato fries to sell in the streets.[20]

3.1.4 Mobile phones and internet

Mobile phones have made a tremendous difference to people's lives and work. While they have somewhat bridged the urban–rural divide, gender divides remain, with lower mobile phone access and ownership by young women than young men.[21] Mobiles have been an important way for young people to keep in contact with employers and for business activities. For instance, Kasech, from Menderin, worked for a while in a factory and then a beauty salon after returning from working abroad. She is currently unemployed and uses her mobile to call a job broker. Wage labourer Miruts, from Zeytuni, said:

> A mobile phone is very important for finding better work opportunities. I have my own mobile and can communicate with my friends and employers.

Mobile phones are also important for business transactions. Nigisti, from Gomen, who has a clothes boutique, said:

> [My] mobile phone is very important in getting orders and sharing information from wholesalers in Mekele. They call me when new clothes come from foreign markets.

For the most part, the influence of the internet on job markets and employment has yet to be felt in Young Lives sites in Ethiopia, and the urban–rural digital divide is very significant.[22] Although several students in urban areas mentioned using the internet for their studies and to look for scholarships, only one Younger Cohort man, Kebede in Addis Ababa, had found a job through the Ethiojobs website. One Younger Cohort woman, while still a student at a private college in Addis Ababa, started an online business with her cousins selling clothes using the Telegram app.

Nonetheless, it is clear from the interviews that most young people find jobs through friends, word of mouth, or occasionally from seeing job adverts. Marta found her bank job when her

19 Other studies have also noted that interruptions and low voltage are major constraints young people face in income generation (Abebe et al. 2018; Hadis and Ali 2018).

20 Gashaw (2019) also found that young people running woodwork and metalwork businesses, beauty salons and satellite TV enterprises, mentioned frequent and prolonged power cuts and low voltage as serious problems.

21 Well over a third of young men, but only a quarter of young women, were frequently using mobile phones with internet (Pankhurst et al. 2018).

22 Three times more urban youth (45.2 per cent) than rural youth (14.7 per cent) at age 22 were using mobile phones with internet (Young Lives 2018).

friends saw the vacancy in a newspaper. Tagesech found her cleaning job in a government office as friends had read the vacancy announcement.[23]

3.2 Family and household differences

The work trajectories of older boys and girls, and the opportunities for young men and women to find jobs or start businesses, as well as the constraints they face, are very much related to their family's circumstances and the households in which they live. Earlier work has shown that children start work at a young age and contribute to their households in rural areas by herding livestock, carrying water and wood, and doing domestic work in the house (Heissler and Porter 2010). Gender differences in children's work become increasingly accentuated with age and through adolescence, often requiring girls to work longer hours, which affects their schooling (Pankhurst, Crivello and Tiumelissan 2016).

Children from poorer households and those whose families have faced economic problems such as crop failure or livestock losses, health problems, or social problems such as divorce and remarriage or living in single parent households, are more prone to be expected and feel obligated to work more for the family, which often affects their schooling and sometimes causes them to drop out (Tafere and Pankhurst 2015). Children from families that have faced social shocks, such as the death or divorce of parents, are often at risk of having to migrate for work, and girls may face gender-based violence (Pankhurst and Crivello 2020). Children who are living with their working mothers often help them with their businesses, notably in petty trade and food and drink production.

The transition from school to work is also affected by poverty.[24] This begins with some children starting school later or missing school to contribute to family work, which affects their performance or leads them to drop out for some years or altogether to work full time. Poverty and family problems can also prevent young people who have not done well at school continuing beyond primary school, given the cost of transport and/or living in towns, and the college fees if their grades are not sufficient to join public universities.

Conversely, adolescents and young people from better-off families have a better start in school and more opportunities to pursue education, which potentially leads to better jobs. Moreover, they are more likely to receive family support with land, livestock and resources, and endowments on marriage. They may have more opportunities to work in family businesses, or more chance of being given capital or loans to establish businesses themselves. In addition to working on family farms, some young boys still at school were using family horse carts to generate income. In Gomen town, Ayni could not find work after finishing Grade 10 and is helping her mother in her shop. Rekik, a young woman from a relatively wealthy family in Addis Ababa, works part time in several of her family's businesses. Rekik, who is in Grade 11, works in her family's café in her spare time. During the summer break she has been working in her father's office as a receptionist and secretary, for which he offered to pay her 2,000 birr a month and buy her a guitar. She also works occasionally for her brother in his photo-editing business.

23 Relatives, friends and networks have also been recorded as important routes to employment (Broussard and Tekleselassie 2012).

24 This topic is discussed in greater detail in Tafere and Chuta (2020b).

Family support in establishing businesses is also crucial, as in the case of Seifu, who helped in his father's traditional clothes shop until his father bought a *bajaj* for him, with Seifu gradually paying back the loan. We have also seen several cases of young people who were able to establish businesses with money from remittances from siblings, and in Zeytuni, from parents' compensation for lost land.

3.3. Age, gender and individual factors

The most important factors relating to individual characteristics are gender and age, although these intersect with family wealth and poverty, and community conditions. Education and individual attributes also matter, although these too are often related to family circumstances and gender.

3.3.1 Age and cohorts

Transitions to the labour market are gradual, as can be seen by examining the changes in work patterns of the Young Lives qualitative Older Cohort sample between the ages of 19 and 22 (Favara, Chang and Sánchez 2018). The Younger Cohort, aged around 18 in 2019, were less well established in work activities, with many still in education and only working part time for families or themselves. Of the 47 cases considered here, only 12 were from the Younger Cohort since most were still at school and only worked part time. The extent of their work for pay or on their own account largely depended on their gender, household wealth, location and community circumstances. In urban sites, part-time employment for boys included jobs in garages, spare-parts shops, woodwork, metalwork, and electronics repairs. A few young women from wealthier households worked for their families, and one was working in TV dramas and commercials and running an online business. In rural areas, work outside the home included petty trade, and in Leku agricultural wage labour for both boys and girls, and a few Younger Cohort women had been involved in industrial work in agro-processing and textile factories. Younger Cohort boys and girls were also involved in some part-time income-generating work, which was also gendered, with two girls selling clothes and a boy doing electronic repair work.

3.3.2 Gender

Gender is undoubtedly the most salient diacritical factor explaining work opportunities outside the home. Women in Ethiopia generally face higher unemployment and are more involved in the informal sector (Broussard and Tekleselassie 2012). Only 16 of the 47 cases considered in this paper are women, whereas equal numbers of young men and women were interviewed in the main study. Most of the women are engaged in domestic work, with some involved in part-time income generation, sometimes selling crops, livestock or livestock products, notably eggs and butter.

Gender roles place considerable additional burdens on working women in both formal and informal settings. One of the few women who was successful in getting a well-paid job was Selamnesh, from Kok, who was a cashier in a local town. However, as she walks to work and sometimes comes back late, her family meet her, since it is unsafe.

A few women were successful in finding gainful employment based on doing well in education, but others could only find less well-paid or menial jobs, especially if they lived in rural areas, sometimes despite having qualifications that should have enabled them to find

better work. Daksise graduated in statistics a year ago but has not been able to find work in her rural area. She has registered as an unemployed graduate with the kebele but has not heard of any opportunities and continues to ask her friends in the regional capital about work opportunities. She would not mind being part of a group doing something such as opening a shop, but would prefer employment.

Some young women stopped working whey they got married. For instance, Meselech, from Tach-Meret, worked in the oil seed factory. She ended up marrying the controller, had a child and left paid work. She hopes to study accounting and her husband has promised to support her. She would like to continue working in a couple of years. Although some husbands were supportive of their wives working, several women mentioned their husbands not wanting them to work after they got married, which sometimes led to marital strife and even divorce.[25]

Others, such as Welela, from Kok, gave up working when they had children. She had been studying electrical installation in a TVET college but became pregnant, stopped studying and got married. Her husband was working in a factory and she worked in a school as a cleaner but gave it up when she had a second child. She hopes to complete her electrical installation studies and get a better job.

Family problems, including divorce, were another reason why women stopped paid work. Berhan, from rural Leki, was married and living with her husband in a local town, where she began working as a cleaner in a college. However, her marriage broke down and she suffered from depression, so she left her job and went back to live with her parents.

Some young women stopped selling their handicraft products upon marriage or childbirth. Wubanchi stopped making baking pan lids for sale when she was eight months pregnant, but hopes to resume it when her baby is six months old. Family obligations were another reason for stopping work, as in the case of Rahnia. She worked as a messenger in a private business for three years after finishing Grade 10, but stopped to look after the children of her migrant sister.

Gender differences in work types are even more salient in own-account work than in employment. Women are involved mainly in petty trade and selling food, clothes and handicrafts, whereas men are mainly involved in transport, leisure services and technical repair work.

More significantly, most of the entrepreneurs who were able to mobilise considerable capital and employ others were men, including the most successful rural case of a man involved in food production – mainly a female domain – opening a bakery with three branches. However, gender, wealth and family support intersect, and there was one case of a woman who opened a coffee house and another a boutique with money received from remittances.

The only employment category where women predominate is factory work. Among our sample, only women were employed in textile and agro-processing factories, where female labour is preferred. However, this work is poorly paid, and health risks are a major concern in factories.

In jobs created through MSEs, despite the intention to include women, most of the youth groups are dominated by men. In both the agricultural and the cobblestone cooperatives,

25 This topic is discussed in more detail in Pankhurst and Crivello (2020).

women are a small minority, in the latter working only in administration and finance. This is attributed in part to the nature of the work involved, but job creation officers suggested that women bowed to social norms and even when registered, ended up letting their husband work in their place.

There were also risks of gender discrimination and sexual harassment. Zahara, who runs a small café with her sister, pointed out that young women working in bars faced risks from male customers:

> In the café, we only sell hot drinks, but in the bars, women face many challenges. If a woman who has no relatives opens a bar, men may disturb and beat her, break the bottles and cause risks to her life.

Yerusalem mentioned that the modelling work she wants to do involves late evening recording, and the male directors expect models to have affairs with them. She has also had to contend with her family not liking her working in advertising, and she has not told her father that she did an advert for sanitary pads as she knows he would disapprove. More generally, many young women and women's focus groups mentioned commercial sex when asked about undesirable work.

Managing income-generating work outside the home at the same time as carrying out domestic and care work puts a considerable strain on women, who often work long hours and walk long distances, as Mina from Timatim explained:

> When I return home, I prepare food for children even during night-time. It is me who does the whole domestic work even if I get tired. I wake up at 4 am … in order to prepare food for my children, before I leave for the marketplace … It is me who does the whole domestic work including cooking, washing clothes. Also, I help my spouse with planting vegetables in the land located close to the house. I myself care for the baby, carrying it while working and washing clothes since we can't afford to hire a housemaid.

3.3.3 Education[26]

We found that some of the best-paid workers were educated women, but there were also young women with good qualifications who were unable to find work relating to their education. Many women found menial and low-paid jobs but had to give these up because of family obligations. Young women have to contend with community and family attitudes and expectations that they should marry, and once they do so, they may be expected to stop working for pay, especially once they have children.

3.3.4 Abilities, determination and ambition

Young people's successes are related to the combination and intersection of several factors. These include age and experience (with more success cases among the Older Cohort), gender (with more opportunities for young men), and education (with better-paid work opportunities for those having completed tertiary education). Even more important were family circumstances (with young people from wealthier families often able to receive more support with their studies), working for family businesses, setting up their own businesses, and benefiting from remittances.

26 The transition from school to work is covered by another paper in this set (Tafere and Chuta 2020b).

There are also more intangible aspects to success related to the young person's capabilities, determination and ambition. Many of the cases show how young people strive hard to improve their livelihoods. Those who are most successful often try several ventures, and despite doing well, want to increase the scope of their businesses and diversify. For instance, Afework was not content with his pool house business and started a game zone. He wants to expand that into larger premises with a restaurant. Worku opened three branches of his bakery and wants to open a shop selling construction materials and a poultry farm. In some cases, a young person's ability to learn and get on with their boss also matters, Desta, a Younger Cohort boy, was a quick learner while in wage labour and trained as a welder on a good salary, while many of his peers remained in low-paid manual labour.

However, even though individual drive, grit and ambition are very important ingredients of success, the more enterprising young people were arguably able to succeed largely by mobilising family support and resources.

There has been considerable government recognition and promotion of entrepreneurs, notably 'model farmers', with media attention and prizes awarded (Berhanu and Amdework 2011). Less attention has been given to creating jobs for young people living with disabilities, even though this was mentioned as one criterion by the kebele representative in Lomi. However, in Addis Ababa the caregiver of Belayneh mentioned that her eldest, paralysed, son was working in mobile phone maintenance and had received training for this from the kebele.

4. Conclusion

This paper considered the work that young men and women undertake for pay and to generate income, through employment, their own businesses and youth cooperatives in ten Young Lives sites. We discussed 47 cases in relation to four broad work categories: professional full-time jobs, agricultural and industrial wage labour, own-account income-generating work and businesses, and government-promoted MSE cooperatives.

Professional jobs are more common in the urban sites among the Older Cohort. A few women are among the highest paid young people, while most do menial, low-paid jobs. Wage labour is more common in the rural sites, and is seen as an option that young people engage in temporarily to earn income, with some able to invest savings in small income-generating ventures. Men are involved in construction and agricultural wage labour, while factory work is largely carried out by women, which young women stop doing after marriage. However, with wage labour there are health risks, and the pay and conditions are poor, so most young people who have alternatives seek to move to other work. Only a few young people worked in industrial parks, finding the poor pay and night shifts unacceptable and moving on as soon as they could. Unless they have qualifications which lead them to expect to find better-paid jobs, many prefer to work in their own income-generating activities and ideally establish businesses. The types of income-generating activities that young men and women do are highly gendered and, especially among the Younger Cohort, are generally small scale or part time, and only a few young men and fewer young women were able to establish viable businesses.

Government-sponsored MSE cooperatives in rural areas were mainly concerned with agriculture (in Lomi) and cobblestone production (in Zeytuni). In both places, women were largely excluded and graduates not keen on manual cooperative work. There were also intergenerational tensions since parents were often unwilling to guarantee loans with property collateral, and in Lomi there were conflicts over communal grazing land being allocated to agricultural youth groups. Other problems related to the limited profitability of some types of work, preferences for business activities that were often not available, and the use of loans for activities different from those for which the loan was taken. Groups often shared loans among themselves to use on an individual basis, and defaulting led to loans for new groups being frozen. The pressure for cooperatives to expand and become more productive businesses, and for funds and land to devolve to younger groups, also raised worries about security of tenureand about sustainability. The bureaucracy involved in setting up and running cooperatives, and allegations of corruption discouraged many from forming or continuing working in cooperatives. Most importantly, young people generally prefer working on an individual basis, or with a few friends they trust, and are wary of working in cooperatives.

The kinds of paid and income-generating work that young people do depend on combinations of community, household and individual characteristics. Young people in urban sites had a greater range of opportunities in both professional jobs and own-account income generation and businesses, and the diversity of occupations was greater in the three sites within cities than in the small towns. Young people in rural sites had more opportunities for wage labour in agricultural and industrial investment projects and for involvement in government-promoted MSE cooperatives. However, differences between communities were also very important and related to agricultural investment, industrialisation, roads, electricity, communications and global links. In Addis Ababa, young people in one of the sites, Menderin, faced serious problems with urban development, which forced them to relocate and disrupted their livelihoods. Comparing the two rural sites in Oromia, both in Rift Valley, young people in Leku had far more opportunities, since it was close to a large town and a lake with jobs in irrigated agricultural projects and fishing. Comparing the two small towns, Kok in Amhara benefited from rapid development as a result of increased tourism.

Household characteristics, especially family wealth, were fundamental to young people's work and the ways they combined or replaced family work with work for pay and own-account income generation. Poverty or household shocks led some to start working for pay or earning income while still adolescents, often dropping out of school, which reduced their options for finding better-paid employment in the future.

Conversely, better-off families in rural areas often involved their children in family work on their own land, reducing the need for them to do wage labour, and provided them with land and livestock when setting up their own households. Better-off households were also more capable of supporting their children to continue to secondary school and to tertiary education, especially if they did not do well enough to join public universities, by covering the costs of private college tuition and living in towns. In some wealthier households, especially in urban areas, young people worked, often part time, for family businesses, and some families were able to help their offspring set up businesses. Most important in this respect was the role of remittances, mainly from sisters working in Arab countries, which provided key capital for entrepreneurially minded youth.

The combination of gender and age was very significant in explaining the work young people did. At around 18 years old, the Younger Cohort were less involved in the job market, with many being still in education or working part time, and only a few were in gainful employment, underscoring the Round 5 quantitative survey evidence that the transition to the labour market is gradual, and slower than in the other Young Lives countries (Favara, Chang and Sánchez 2018).

Gendered work roles and domestic, reproductive and care work constrain women's involvement in work for pay and income generation, involving a double burden and long hours of work. There were a few exceptional cases of very successful women, some in employment following successful pathways from education to work, and also some in their own income-generating activities. However, women were also involved in menial and low-paid jobs and often had to abandon these on marriage or childbirth because of family commitments and gender norms. Young women were recruited into agricultural wage labour, and were preferred for industrial work in factories, though conditions were often poor, wages low, and potential health risks present, especially in flower farms, agro-industries and textile factories. Most took on such work if they had no alternative or while seeking better options. Own-account work was also strongly gendered, with young women working in food services, shops and clothing, and men in transport, technical and repair work, and youth leisure services. Women were also hardly involved at all in the agricultural and cobblestone production youth groups, partly because of the nature of the work and partly as a result of gender norms and biases.

The intersection of gender, age and wealth explains much of the variation in employment opportunities. This is especially so for own-account work, particularly businesses set up through family support, especially remittances from female migrant relatives. There are, however, cases of entrepreneurship where individual character, determination and ambition made a considerable difference despite the odds. Most of the more successful cases, however, are men who were more able to mobilise family and other resources, and face fewer constraints and domestic pressures. Nonetheless, some women's resilience and grit have enabled them to find good jobs or set up viable businesses.

5. Policy implications

Youth unemployment is one of the most pressing issues facing Ethiopia. This paper provides evidence about young men and women's own initiatives and endeavours to find jobs and generate income, and their experiences with wage and group work.

There is a **mismatch between the jobs available and the expectations of young people** who have completed higher education; graduates, and even those completing secondary school, feel that they are entitled to government jobs, have less interest in technical, vocational and business jobs, and are reluctant to engage in farm work. Addressing this issue requires **facilitating options for businesses and entrepreneurs, putting more emphasis on non-farm rural investment and supporting a more diverse range of occupations in the job creation schemes**.

Many adolescents in the Younger Cohort work as well as study, and some from poorer families need to earn income to support their families. **Options for more flexible schooling, including shift, part-time, evening and weekend, and distance learning, should be prioritised, while ensuring that quality is not compromised**. **Preventing harmful and underpaid child labour requires the promotion and regulation of appropriate work for adolescents**.

Young women are under-represented in the labour force. Gender norms constrain their ability to continue with secondary and tertiary education and training, as well as their chances to become involved in paid and income-generating work. Redressing this imbalance requires **greater promotion of women's education and training, and of equal opportunities at work**. Women who do work outside the home face challenges in combining domestic work with paid and income-generating work, and many are obliged to give up work when they get married or have children. **Improving women's opportunities requires greater emphasis on childcare services (such as crèche and day care facilities), more flexible working conditions , and changes in social norms relating to the division of labour between women and men**.

Agricultural and industrial development have created increased job opportunities for young people. However, in some cases **health and environmental risks require further monitoring and mitigation measures**. Low pay and in some cases poor working conditions mean that many young people only engage in such work if they do not have alternatives, or do so temporarily to generate income for survival or to invest in other work. **Further regulation of working conditions is required,** while workers' pay and conditions should be improved.

Young men and women from very poor families or from families facing economic or social shocks are more constrained in their choices and more likely to do wage labour or work in low-paid menial jobs. **Providing them with better opportunities for education, training and work, and improving access to credit and social protection for vulnerable families, can help prevent these young people from dropping out of school early and enable them to combine school and work, to find appropriate work, or to establish their own businesses**.

The MSE cooperative model of youth group job creation faces a number of challenges. The limited involvement of graduates requires **the types of work included in the scheme to be**

rethought. Non-farming rural enterprises and businesses run by individual entrepreneurs should be supported. The de facto exclusion of women in many youth groups requires the **promotion of types of work in which women can engage, establishing more women's groups and encouraging young women's private enterprise**.

Improvements to the cooperative group and loan modalities could include the following: broadening the scope of what loans can be used for, to better relate to young people's preferences; allowing smaller groups of friends and existing self-initiated groups with greater trust; relaxing the pressure for cooperatives to expand their businesses and increasing the time for which they receive support before resources and loans are transferred to other groups; promoting security of tenure over resources, where this is an issue; addressing inter-generational tensions over the use of common property resources; allaying concerns over parental guarantees for loans and provision of property collateral; reducing bureaucracy and red tape; and preventing nepotism and corruption in the setting up and running of group and individual businesses. Most importantly, **the job creation model needs recalibrating to give more emphasis to supporting individual businesses and entrepreneurship**.

Annex 1. Brief site descriptions

- **Bertukan** is located in the centre of Addis Ababa. Many residents' livelihoods are based on the informal economy, mainly fruit and vegetable trading on the streets. This provided many young people in the area with access to paid work, including as day labourers.
- **Menderin** is located in a different part of Addis Ababa. Most dwellers earn their living from petty trade and casual work. Services such as roads, electricity and piped water are inadequate. Part of the area has been redeveloped, so residents have been relocated to the outskirts of the city, with limited work opportunities, leading many to have to commute to the areas they worked in previously, which has caused them to incur high transport costs and taken away productive time.
- **Kok** is a semi-urban community in Amhara region known for its tourist attractions. Surrounded by poor rural communities, residents earn a living from small-scale trade and other income-generating activities. Young men are also involved as tour guides.
- **Tach-Meret** is a rural community in Amhara, which predominantly grows crops but is vulnerable to seasonal food shortages. Many poor households depend on the state-run PSNP. The community is close to a town, where many households and young people access services such as education, healthcare, tap water, electricity and markets. There are also opportunities for formal and informal employment.
- **Leki** is in the Rift Valley in Arsi Zone of Oromia close to a lake, where some young men engage in fishing, and 8 kilometres from a major town with market opportunities, where some young people are involved in transporting goods via horse cart. Some households have access to small-scale irrigation, and private investors employ young men and women in agricultural daily labour, mainly vegetable production.
- **Lomi** in Arsi Zone is more remote, without irrigation, with limited investment, and lacking electricity. Most people are farmers and there are far fewer opportunities for young people to find non-farm work. However, there is some agricultural wage labour, and the Government has organised young people into MSE cooperatives, mainly around agricultural activities on communal grazing land.
- **Timatim** is a densely populated, rural community in Gurage Zone of SNNP region. The main livelihood is agriculture, including the staple *enset*, coffee and *khat* as cash crops, complemented by earnings from small trade and other income-generating activities. Six kilometres away, there is a large town, where some young people are involved in motorbike transport and a few have found work or set up businesses.
- **Leku** is located at the centre of Hawassa, the capital city of SNNP region. The majority of the households live in poor economic conditions. They earn a living through petty trade, daily labour, street vending and self-employment, and there is a lot of inward migration from within the region.
- **Zeytuni** is a rural site in Tigray. Residents depend on farming for their livelihoods, and as the area is food-insecure it receives PSNP support. However, in recent years, young people have been generating additional income through small-scale irrigation activities and wage labour in the fast-growing construction sector in nearby towns.
- **Gomen** is a small semi-urban site in Tigray. A road crosses the town, triggering rapid urbanisation and offering opportunities for wage labour in the construction sector and for small businesses and other income-generating activities.

Annex 2. The 47 main cases studied in this paper

Table A2.1. *Respondents in the study, by work category and type, cohort, sex and location*

Name	Category/sector	Type of work	YC	OC	M	F	Urban	Rural
EMPLOYMENT								
Adesech	PROFESSIONAL	Bank		1		1	1	
Selamnesh		Cashier		1		1		1
Kifle		Footballer		1	1		1	
Yerusalem		Advertising and drama	1			1	1	
Kebede	TECHNICAL	Site engineer		1	1		1	
Yitbarek		Auto-electrician		1	1		1	
Desta		Welder	1		1			1
Senia		Tailoring assistant		1		1	1	
Ayalew		Woodwork	1		1		1	
Nuru		Garage	1		1		1	
Kibrom	MANUAL	Sanitation worker		1	1		1	
Esu		Assistant driver		1	1			1
Seida	CLERICAL AND SALES	Clerk		1		1		1
Tagesech		Messenger		1		1	1	
Abera		Spare parts shop worker	1		1		1	
Total employment			**5**	**10**	**9**	**6**	**11**	**4**

Name	Category/sector	Type of work	YC	OC	M	F	Urban	Rural
WAGE LABOUR								
Mitiku	AGRICULTURE	Irrigation	1		1			1
Gemechu		Wage work		1	1			1
Hassen				1	1			1
Shebeshi			1		1			1
Bezach	INDUSTRY	Agro-processing bean factory		1		1		1
Yenealem				1		1		1
Yihune		Construction, wheat factory		1	1			1
Etsegenet		Textile factory	1			1		1
Fanus		Plastics factory guard		1		1		1
Girma		Construction, electricity		1	1		1	
Total wage labour			**3**	**7**	**6**	**4**	**1**	**9**

Name	Category/sector	Type of work	YC	OC	M	F	Urban	Rural
OWN WORK								
Nigisti	TRADE	Clothes boutique		1		1	1	
Mina		Crops resale		1		1		1
Ayni	HANDICRAFTS	Knitted clothing	1			1	1	
Wubanchi		Baking pan lids		1		1		1
Ayu	FOOD AND BEVERAGE SERVICES	Restaurant		1		1		1
Birikti		Coffee house		1		1	1	
Zahara		Café		1		1		1
Worku		Bakery		1	1			1
Afework	LEISURE SERVICES	Pool house and game zone		1	1		1	
Dembel		Music video and rental		1	1		1	
Seifu	TRANSPORT SERVICES	Bajaj mototaxi		1	1		1	
Chala		Motorbike		1	1			1
Tenkir		Motorbike		1	1			1
Bereket		Car broker and car decorating		1	1		1	
Assefa		Horse cart		1	1			1
Beyene	TECHNICAL REPAIR	Satellite dish repair		1	1		1	
Gulilat		Stove repair	1		1		1	
Total own work			**2**	**15**	**10**	**7**	**9**	**8**

Name	Category/sector	Type of work	YC	OC	M	F	Urban	Rural
GROUP WORK								
Dechasa	AGRICULTURE	MSE seedlings		1	1			1
Gobena		MSE crops		1	1			1
Mihretu	INDUSTRY	MSE cobblestone		1	1			1
Miruts		Cobblestone own group	1		1			1
Maregey		Cobblestone own group	1		1			1
Total own work			**2**	**3**	**5**	**0**	**0**	**5**

Overall totals	**12**	**35**	**30**	**17**	**21**	**26**

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Jobs, Businesses and Cooperatives: Young Men and Women's Transitions to Employment and Income Generation in Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, agricultural development, industrialisation and private sector investment, along with government job creation initiatives, have brought about radical changes in the employment landscape. This working paper contributes to understanding the work of young men and women in different contexts, both in paid employment and when generating their own income.

Few young people found well-paid jobs related to their qualifications. Younger men and women were often still in education, though some worked part time. Wage labour included work in irrigated agriculture, on flower farms and in factories. However, pay was low and work conditions were hard and involved health risks, so young people tried to move on to better-paid employment or their own businesses.

Most young women and men were engaged in their own income-generating activities. However, only a few had successful businesses, often relying on family support and remittances from female relatives. Youth micro and small-scale enterprise (MSE) cooperatives in agriculture and cobblestone production were dominated by men. Despite some successful examples, the MSEs faced many challenges and most young people preferred to undertake their own work.

Community contexts and opportunities, family circumstances, and age, gender and education explain most of the variation and success in jobs and income generation. However, individual determination and ambition also made a difference.

Young Lives

An International Study of Childhood Poverty

About Young Lives

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

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

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- *Policy Studies Institute*
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