



# Youth Transitions: Skills, Work, and Family Formation

## Preliminary Findings from the 2016 Young Lives Survey (Round 5): Ethiopia

This fact sheet presents findings from the fifth round of data collection carried out by Young Lives in Ethiopia in 2016. Young Lives has followed two cohorts of children born seven years apart since 2002. This fact sheet focuses on our Older Cohort (22-year-olds in 2016) to explore issues related to education, labour market skills, employment and marriage, and how young people's opportunities in life are influenced by their gender, their family's wealth level, and background circumstances.

This fact sheet looks at the proportion of the Older Cohort who were still in school, were working full-time, or were neither studying nor working, and the imbalance in relation to poorer groups and those from rural areas. It also looks at the proportion of the young people in our sample who were married or already had a child of their own. Finally, it identifies differences between urban and rural areas in the use of digital devices.

### Key Findings

- At 22 years of age, one-third of the Older Cohort children were still enrolled in formal education. Slightly more of them were men than women, reversing the situation at age 19 when more women were in education than men.
- Of those who were still in education, 41% were at university, 22% in vocational college, and the rest still at school. While more than half (53.4%) of the young people in the urban sites currently in education were at university, almost half (47.5%) of those in rural sites were still at school in grade 10 or below.
- For those who were no longer in schooling, more than half (52.5%) had left full-time education without a secondary level qualification.
- Almost one-third of the Older Cohort women were already married or cohabiting and just over a quarter had a child. Relatively few of the young men were married or cohabiting and even fewer had a child.
- About four fifths of the young people 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. While 58% of the employed young people from rural sites were working in agriculture, 91% of those employed from the urban sites were working in other sectors.
- Usage of digital devices among 22-year-olds is low, and there is a huge difference between urban and rural areas in their use.

## The policy context in Ethiopia

Ethiopia's population currently has the highest proportion (22%) of 15-24 year-olds in the world (Population Reference Bureau, 2017). In view of this, the government has adopted and been implementing several policies relevant for young people, including the National Youth Policy (2004), the Rural and Urban Youth Package (2006); the Multi-Sectoral Youth Development Strategy Plan (2006-2015); the Adolescent Development and Participation Strategy (2013); and most recently the National Children's Policy (2017), and the Youth Development and Growth Strategy (2017).

Nevertheless, there are many barriers to the active participation of youth in socio-economic, political, and cultural life; the country is still characterised by a low youth development index<sup>1</sup> and was ranked 125<sup>th</sup> of 170 countries in 2013 (Youth Policy, 2014). Lately, youth unemployment has become a particularly pressing issue, at times resulting in out-migration of young people to towns and abroad. In recognition of this, the government established a Youth Revolving Fund in early 2017 to provide financial assistance for young people to create jobs.

## Education

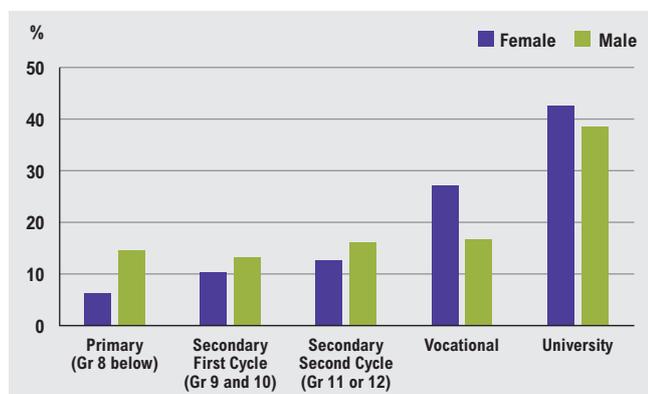
By 19 years of age, about 60% of the Older Cohort children were still in some form of education, with a greater

proportion of girls (64%) than boys (56%). However, by the age of 22, only one third of them were in education, with slightly more young men (38%) than young women (34%). Of those still in education, 41% were at university, 22% in vocational school, 15% in preparatory (Grades 11 and 12 in preparation for tertiary), 12% in lower secondary school and 11% in primary school. The probability of attending technical and vocational education and training or university at the correct stage for age is strongly linked with household wealth: while 78% of those currently in education from the richest households are either in vocational college or at university, 58% of those currently in education from the poorest households are still in grade 12 or below (or overage for grade).

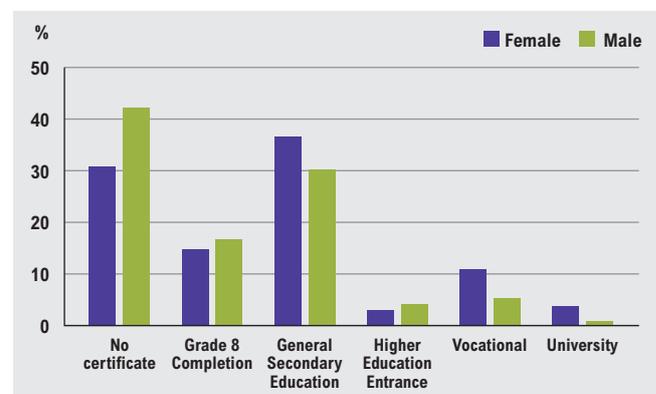
Many young people in Ethiopia either progress through school very slowly or leave school early (Figure 2). For those in the Older Cohort who had left education, 53% do not have a General Secondary Education certificate (59% of men, 46% of women). Only 2% had left university with a degree by the age of 22. More than 40% of the men and about 30% of the women left education without completing grade 8.

In terms of location, 68% of children enrolled in rural areas are still in grade 12 or below, compared to 21% in urban areas, and 50% of children in rural areas no longer in education do not have a school certificate, compared to 23% in urban areas (Figures 3 and 4).

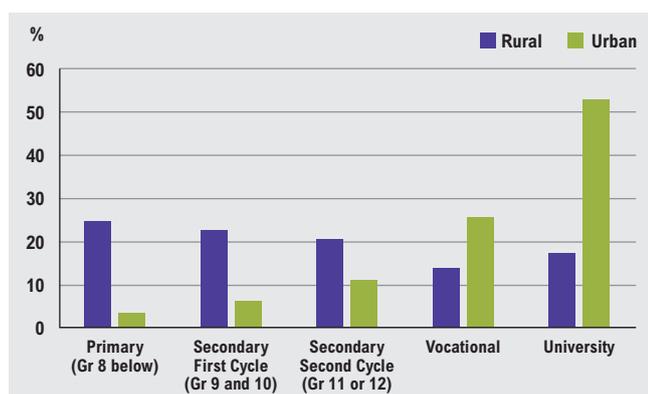
**Figure 1. Grade of children currently in education**



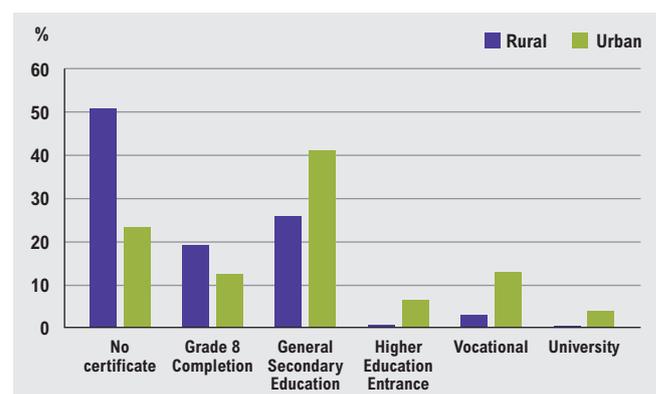
**Figure 2. Highest certification of children not in education**



**Figure 3. Grade of children currently in education**



**Figure 4. Highest certification of children not in education**



<sup>1</sup> The Youth Development Index measures five key aspects of youth development: Education, Health and Well-being, Employment and Opportunity, Political Participation and Civic Participation

## Marriage and fertility

32% of the young women had married by 2016 (of whom 47% had married by the age of 18). By contrast, only 7% of young men had married by this point. There are also considerable gender differences in fertility rates. 26% of young women had had a child by the age of 22, 10% by 18. By comparison, only 2% of young men had fathered a child by age 22 (Table 1).

**Table 1. Marriage and Fertility**

	Female	%	Male	%	Total	%
<b>Marriage</b>						
Never married or cohabited	246	68.0	383	93.2	629	81.4
Married or cohabiting	116	32.0	28	6.8	144	18.6
Married/cohabited by age 18	55	15.2	11	2.7	66	8.6
Married/cohabited after age 18	61	16.9	17	4.1	78	10.0
<b>Fertility</b>						
Never had a child	267	73.8	403	98.1	670	86.6
Has had a child	95	26.2	8	1.9	103	13.4
Has had a child by age 18	37	10.2	2	0.5	39	5.0
Has had a child after age 18	58	16.0	6	1.5	64	8.2
Average number of children	1.2	–	1.1	–	1.2	–
<b>Sample size</b>	362	100	411	100	773	100

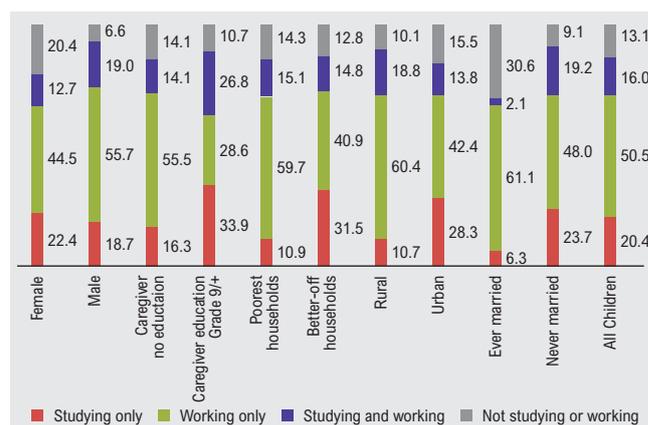
## Activity Status

By the age of 19 (in 2013), for every ten Older Cohort children, three were studying full-time, three were working and no longer in school, three were both studying and working, and one was neither studying or working. But this pattern had changed by the age of 22, with five working full-time, two studying full-time, two combining work and school, and one neither studying or working. There are, however, important differences by socio-economic status.

Many of those who were studying full-time came from better-off households and urban sites, while of those who were working full-time the majority came from rural sites and poorer households. Also, young men and those from rural sites appeared to be more likely to combine work and school than young women and those from urban sites. The level of education a caregiver had also seems to be associated with young people's economic activities: while most of those whose caregivers had less than nine years of schooling were already working full-time, 61% of those whose caregiver had nine or more years of education were still at school (34% studying full-time, 27% combining school and work).

In terms of relationships, those who had married or cohabited were much less likely to be in school (6%) than those who never married or cohabited (24%). Gender also plays a role in what 22-year-olds do after marriage: 56% of married females are working full-time while 36% neither study nor work outside of the home. On the other hand, 83% of married males are working full-time (Figure 5).

**Figure 5. Work and education activities of 22-year-olds (%)**



## Employment status

78% of the young people aged 22 were working either full- or part-time in the 12 months preceding the survey, with considerable variation across rural and urban locations (68% for urban sites versus 89% for the rural sites). While 58% of those employed in the rural sites worked in agriculture, 91% of those employed in urban sites worked in non-agricultural sectors. The great majority (81%) of those working in agriculture are self-employed, while 58% of those working in other sectors are paid employed workers.

## Labour market skills

17% of the 22-year-olds have had training of some kind, notably more men (22%) than women (11%). The likelihood of having received training is also closely associated with socio-economic background: 7% from poor households compared to 24% from better-off households. The difference between rural (8%) and urban (24%) sites is also large; young people from sites within Addis Ababa had an even higher likelihood of having received training (31%). 53% of those who undertook training received a certificate, regardless of gender or parental background. About 30% of the young people are able to drive. More young people (51.1%) from sites within Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' (SNNP) region can drive a vehicle (including a motorcycle) compared to sites within other regions.

## Digital skills

Overall, there is low usage of digital devices among the 22-year-olds. Only 18% had often used a computer, 2% a tablet, 18% the Internet, and 32% a mobile phone with internet. Those who use such devices frequently started using them at around 17 or 18 years of age. More young men (36.7%) tend to have repeatedly used mobile phones with internet access than young women (25.7%). In terms of socio-economic background, the largest difference was in usage of mobile phones with internet (11% of the poorest and 56% of the richest). Indeed, there also is a huge digital divide between those from urban (45.2%) and rural (14.7%) sites that needs to be addressed.

## Conclusions

The Young Lives children in Ethiopia have grown up during a period of immense social and economic change. As well as the largest young generation ever, this is also the generation that has had the longest time in education and with high hopes that this will lead to better futures. While early adulthood is a time when young people move from education and into work, a substantial minority still remain in some kind of education, often combining this with work. It is notable that, at 19 years of age more women than men were in some form of education. By the

age of 22 this had reversed with more men still enrolled than women. While some young people are accessing university and vocational education, minorities report still being in school at that age. Nearly four fifths of 22-year-olds were in some form of work. It is striking that most agricultural work was reported to be self-employed, while non-agricultural work was more likely to be paid employment. One key aspect of change is the digital revolution. While many young people have access to devices such as internet enabled phones, marked digital divides remain by gender, location and socio-economic status, which may undermine equal access to information and opportunities.

**Table 2. Education and employment of youth aged 22 years in 2016**

	Activities (%)				Certificate and skills (%)			Sample size
	Studying only	Working only (paid or unpaid)	Studying and working	Not studying or working	Received any training	Obtained certification for training received	Skilled in driving (licenced and non-licenced)	
<b>Gender</b>								
Female	22.4	44.5	12.7	20.4	11.9	51.2	6.4	362
Male	18.7	55.7	19.0	6.6	21.2	54.4	50.9	411
<b>Caregiver education</b>								
None	16.3	55.5	14.1	14.1	15.2	52.6	25.9	375
1 to 4 years	22.8	51.1	13.9	12.2	14.3	54.3	30.8	237
4 to 8 years	22.9	42.9	21.9	12.4	24.8	48.1	40.0	105
More than 8 years	33.9	28.6	26.8	10.7	23.2	64.3	35.7	56
<b>Wealth Index</b>								
Bottom tercile	10.9	59.7	15.1	14.3	7.0	40.0	22.1	258
Middle tercile	19.0	50.8	18.2	12.0	19.4	38.0	33.7	258
Top tercile	31.5	40.9	14.8	12.8	24.1	69.8	34.2	257
<b>Location</b>								
Rural	10.7	60.4	18.8	10.1	8.4	35.7	26.3	346
Urban	28.3	42.4	13.8	15.5	23.7	58.1	33.0	427
<b>Sites in Region</b>								
Addis Ababa	22.2	46.8	14.3	16.7	31.0	59.0	31.7	126
Amhara	27.9	42.2	16.2	13.6	14.3	56.5	15.6	154
Oromia	12.3	62.3	13.0	12.3	8.0	21.4	32.1	162
SNRP	23.3	43.9	23.3	9.4	17.8	36.4	51.1	180
Tigray	14.5	58.6	11.7	15.2	15.2	86.4	15.2	145
<b>Marital Status</b>								
Ever married/cohabited	6.3	61.1	2.1	30.6	–	–	–	–
Never married/cohabited	23.7	48.0	19.2	9.1	–	–	–	–
<b>Average of all young people</b>	20.4	50.5	16.0	13.1	16.8	53.4	30.0	–
<b>Sample size</b>	773	773	773	773	773	133	773	773

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Young Lives is an international study of childhood poverty, following the lives of 12,000 children in four countries (Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam). In Ethiopia, Young Lives is in partnership with the Ethiopian Development Research Institute (EDRI) and Pankhurst Development Research and Consulting Plc.