



CYW-RPF

**Children, Youth and Women
Research and Practice Forum**

**CYW-RPF
Quarterly
Newsletter
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Editor's Note

Dear readers,

Welcome to the September 2025 edition of the CYW-RPF Quarterly Newsletter. In this issue, we present highlights from three important research studies recently shared at our monthly CYW-RPF seminars. The first, conducted by the Centre for Information Resilience (CIR), is titled "NO SAFE SCROLL: Investigating TFGBV on TikTok and YouTube in Ethiopia." The second, presented by Children in Crossfire, examines "Early Childhood Education Quality and School Readiness in Ethiopia: Findings from the Baseline Assessment in Woliso and Addis Ababa." The third, from Bahir Dar University, focuses on "Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in the Northern Ethiopia Conflict: Prevalence and Response in Afar, Amhara, and Tigray."

This edition also features our newly published volume, which brings together 14 research papers presented at the anniversary workshop under the theme "Protection and Empowerment of Children, Youth, and Women."

As always, we warmly welcome your feedback, insights, and contributions. For more information, please contact us at crpf.ethiopia@gmail.com or +251 11 154 0121.

Proceedings of the CYW-RPF 15th Anniversary Workshop Published

The Children, Youth and Women – Research and Practice Forum (CYW-RPF) has released the proceedings of its 15th Anniversary Workshop, held in February 2025 in Addis Ababa. Since its launch in 2010, the Forum has become a dynamic platform linking research, policy, and practice on issues affecting children, youth, and women in Ethiopia. Over the past 15 years, CYW-RPF has hosted more than 170 research presentations, fostering evidence-based dialogue and collaboration among government institutions, academia, civil society, and development partners.

The newly published volume compiles 14 research papers presented at the anniversary workshop under the theme "Protection and Empowerment of Children, Youth and Women." The studies cover a wide range of pressing issues, including child protection, early childhood education, youth employment, gender-based violence, multidimensional poverty, reproductive health, political participation, and the impacts of conflict on education and well-being.

With contributions from universities, government ministries, research centers, and NGOs, the publication reflects the Forum's inclusive spirit and its commitment to translating knowledge into action that advances the well-being of children, youth, and women nationwide.

To access the proceedings, visit: <https://bit.ly/45NH0M3>

Research Summaries from CYW-RPF presentations

NO SAFE SCROLL: Investigating TFGBV on TikTok and YouTube in Ethiopia

Felicity Cole-Morgan Mulford and Adyam Solomon

Introduction

Technology has become a powerful medium for communication, especially among young people in Ethiopia. The rise of social media platforms such as TikTok and YouTube has created both opportunities and challenges in shaping perceptions, behaviors, and social dynamics. This research, conducted under the framework of the Collective Impact Research (CIR) on Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV), sought to explore the influence of TikTok and YouTube on youth in Ethiopia, with a particular focus on risks, gender dynamics, and exposure to harmful online content. The study examined how young people engage with these platforms, the benefits they derive, the forms of violence they encounter, and the existing measures to mitigate risks.

Methodology

The research employed a mixed-methods approach combining qualitative and quantitative data collection. Surveys were conducted with young people across diverse backgrounds to capture patterns of use, levels of engagement, and exposure to online harms. Focus group discussions and in-depth interviews provided deeper insights into individual experiences and perceptions, while key informant interviews with parents, educators, and digital safety experts helped contextualize the findings. TikTok and YouTube content was also analyzed to examine recurring themes, narratives, and representations that may contribute to gender-based violence or reinforce harmful stereotypes. This methodological design enabled the study to highlight not only the scale of youth engagement with social media but also the social and psychological dimensions of their experiences. By triangulating multiple data sources, the research offered a holistic understanding of how Ethiopian youth navigate the opportunities and threats of digital platforms.

Key Findings

The study uncovered several significant findings:

- 1. High Levels of Engagement:** TikTok and YouTube were found to be the most widely used platforms among Ethiopian youth, serving as sources of entertainment, education, self-expression, and social networking.
- 2. Exposure to Harmful Content:** Many young people reported frequent exposure to inappropriate content, including misogynistic narratives, body shaming, and sexualized material. Such content contributes to reinforcing harmful gender stereotypes and normalizing online harassment.
- 3. Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV):** The research highlighted increasing cases of TFGBV, including cyberbullying, non-consensual sharing of intimate images, and targeted harassment of women and girls. Young women were found to be disproportionately affected, limiting their freedom of expression online.
- 4. Limited Awareness of Digital Safety:** Despite their heavy use of social media, many young people had limited knowledge of privacy tools, reporting mechanisms, or safe online practices. Parents and educators also lacked adequate digital literacy to guide or protect youth effectively.
- 5. Positive Potential of Platforms:** Despite risks, both TikTok and YouTube were recognized as valuable tools for learning, activism, and income generation. Some young people used them to share educational content, promote social causes, and explore creative entrepreneurship.

Conclusion

The research concludes that while TikTok and YouTube provide Ethiopian youth with important avenues for creativity, connection,

and opportunity, they also expose them to significant risks, particularly gender-based violence and harmful stereotypes. The disproportionate targeting of young women demonstrates the urgent need to address digital safety and inclusivity. Without deliberate interventions, the negative impacts of TFGBV could undermine the social and psychological well-being of young people, limit women's participation in digital spaces, and entrench existing gender inequalities.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the research puts forward the following recommendations:

- 1. Strengthen Digital Literacy:** Schools, youth organizations, and community programs should prioritize digital literacy training to empower young people with skills for safe and responsible use of social media.
- 2. Parental and Educator Engagement:** Awareness-raising initiatives targeting parents and teachers should be introduced to enhance their ability to support young people in navigating online risks.
- 3. Policy and Regulatory Measures:** The Ethiopian government and relevant institutions should enforce stricter policies against online harassment and harmful digital content, while ensuring accountability from platforms.
- 4. Platform Accountability:** TikTok and

YouTube should be engaged to improve content moderation, provide better reporting systems in local languages, and take stronger action against TFGBV.

- 5. Support for Survivors:** Establish accessible reporting and support mechanisms, including counseling and legal aid, for survivors of TFGBV.
- 6. Promote Positive Content Creation:** Encourage and support youth-led initiatives that use TikTok and YouTube for educational, cultural, and socially constructive purposes.



Research Summaries from CYW-RPF presentations

Early Childhood Education Quality and School Readiness in Ethiopia: Findings from the Baseline Assessment in Woliso and Addis Ababa

Fantahun Admas (PhD) and Temesgen A. Zeleke (PhD)

Introduction

Early Childhood Education (ECE) plays a vital role in laying the foundation for lifelong learning, cognitive growth, and social development. In Ethiopia, where access and quality of ECE remain uneven, understanding children's school readiness and the quality of learning environments is critical for shaping effective interventions. Children in Crossfire, in partnership with Addis Ababa University's Centre for Early Childhood Education and

Development and ECD Measure, conducted a baseline study from December 2024 to March 2025. The research assessed children's school readiness and the quality of ECE in Woliso (a rural area in Oromia) and deprived districts of Addis Ababa. Using internationally recognized tools, the study provides insights into both the developmental levels of children and the quality of learning environments, helping identify key gaps and priorities for intervention.

Methodology

Two standardized tools were employed:

- 1. International Development and Early Learning Assessment (IDELA):** Used to measure children's readiness for primary education across multiple domains, including early literacy, numeracy, motor development, social-emotional growth, and executive function. In Woliso, 25 out of 85 schools (29.4%) were sampled, with five children randomly selected per school, giving a total of 125 children. In Addis Ababa, the study sampled 670 children across 134 classrooms in nine high-density schools.
- 2. Brief Early Childhood Quality Inventory (BEQI):** Used to assess the quality of ECE provision. Trained enumerators conducted 90-minute classroom observations on play-based learning, conversational learning, relationships, and safe/stimulating environments. Educators also completed short questionnaires on their knowledge, attitudes, and practices. In Woliso, 25 classrooms were observed, while in Addis Ababa, 24 classrooms across nine schools were assessed.

This mixed approach allowed for a nuanced understanding of both children's development and the enabling environment in which learning occurs.

Key Findings

School Readiness (IDELA):

- In **Woliso**, most children were in the "emerging" category across developmental domains, with nearly one in four classified as "struggling" or "very much struggling." Motor skills were relatively stronger (75%), but social-emotional skills lagged (52%). Early literacy and numeracy also showed significant gaps.
- In **Addis Ababa**, outcomes were stronger, with close to 60% of children achieving mastery. However, 40% remained in struggling categories. Motor skills again scored highest (82.9%), while social-emotional development was lowest (72.2%). Within numeracy, simple problem-solving was a weak area, while in socio-emotional development, peer relationships scored lowest.

ECE Quality (BEQI):

- Woliso:** Play-based learning opportunities were limited, with only 44% of classrooms

allowing children choice in activities. However, strong positive findings included minimal use of corporal punishment and respectful teacher-child interactions. Classroom environments often lacked sufficient indoor space, though access to water and toilets was relatively high. KG classrooms scored higher than Bu'ura Boru (satellite centers), and urban schools performed better than rural ones.

- Addis Ababa:** Quality varied, with Amharic classrooms outperforming Afaan Oromo classrooms. Play-based learning was very limited (only 8% of classrooms allowed child choice). Sanitation was poor, with only 25% of classrooms having access to clean water, though toilet access was high (92%). Larger class sizes (averaging 70+ students) correlated with lower quality scores. Educators in Amharic classrooms had far more experience (15 years on average) compared to their Oromo counterparts (2 years).

Comparative Insights:

- Addis Ababa children outperformed Woliso children overall, highlighting the impact of context, teacher qualifications, and resources.
- Disparities existed within Addis Ababa as well, with language of instruction and teacher experience influencing outcomes.
- Resource shortages, overcrowding, and inconsistent curriculum coverage were common challenges across both locations.

Conclusion

The baseline study reveals both progress and pressing challenges in Ethiopia's ECE landscape. Addis Ababa shows stronger readiness outcomes and more structured learning environments, yet still faces overcrowding and resource shortages. Woliso, as a rural context, demonstrates deeper challenges, with a higher proportion of struggling learners and weaker quality indicators. Across both sites, socio-emotional development, problem-solving, and play-based learning remain underdeveloped. The findings underscore the urgent need for targeted interventions to enhance ECE quality, equip teachers with adequate training, and ensure that children—particularly in fragile and rural settings—are prepared for primary school.

Recommendations

- Target struggling learners: Interventions should focus on children in Woliso and

- those in Addis Ababa who fall within the "struggling" categories, with tailored support programs.
- Address weak domains: Strengthen numeracy (especially problem-solving) and socio-emotional development (peer relationships) through improved curriculum and teacher training.
- Enhance ECE environments: Expand indoor learning spaces, ensure access to sanitation and handwashing facilities, and reduce class sizes where possible.
- Invest in teacher development: Provide training on holistic child development, foundational skills, and inclusive practices to better support struggling learners.
- Promote equitable access: Address disparities between rural and urban contexts, and between Amharic and Afaan Oromo classrooms, by allocating resources and teacher support strategically.

- Strengthen collaboration: Share findings with schools, parents, and government actors to foster a collective response and accountability for improving ECE quality.



Research Summaries from CYW-RPF presentations

Sexual and Gender Based Violence in the Northern Ethiopia Conflict: Prevalence and Response in Afar, Amhara, and Tigray

Tenagne Yismaw and Belayneh Admasu

Introduction

Armed conflict often exacerbates pre-existing gender inequalities, increasing the vulnerability of women and girls to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). The northern Ethiopia conflict (2020–2022) in Tigray, Amhara, and Afar led to widespread atrocities, including gang rape, forced incest, sexual slavery, and public assaults—acts designed to destroy social and ethnic identities. Despite the Rome Statute's classification of conflict-related sexual violence as a war crime, enforcement has been limited. While humanitarian responses such as one-stop centers, mobile clinics, and psychosocial support have been introduced, survivors continue to face stigma, displacement, and limited access to justice and services. Against this background, the present study sought to estimate the prevalence of SGBV and assess the effectiveness of response mechanisms in the three conflict-affected regions.

Methodology

The study used a convergent parallel mixed-methods design, emphasizing qualitative insights. A multistage sampling technique selected 384 participants from 12 kebeles in Afar, Amhara, and Tigray to estimate SGBV prevalence. For the qualitative component, 24 survivors participated in in-depth interviews (IDIs), and 18 key informants (KIIs)—including officials from health, police, prosecution, and women's affairs—were engaged. Data were collected through surveys, IDIs, and KIIs by trained female health professionals, with tools piloted and translated. Quantitative data were analyzed in SPSS (v27), while qualitative data underwent thematic analysis.

Key Findings

- Prevalence of SGBV: The study confirmed a high prevalence across the three regions, disproportionately affecting wom-

en and girls but also impacting men, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. In some areas, more than 40% of respondents reported incidents.

2. Consequences: Survivors experienced profound physical and psychological harms—ranging from injuries, depression, and suicide attempts to unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections, and social isolation. Economic devastation compounded their vulnerabilities.

3. Response Mechanisms:

- **Health Services:** Emergency care, STI treatment, contraception, and one-stop centers were available but limited by systemic collapse, looting, staff shortages, and road blockages, particularly in Tigray and Afar.
- **Psychosocial Support:** Survivors faced stigma and rejection. While counseling and group therapy were provided by NGOs and government experts, shortages of trained personnel and safe spaces undermined coverage.
- **Legal Aid:** Police, prosecutors, and health workers collaborated, yet access was hindered by destroyed institutions, underreporting, and weak referral systems. Survivors often prioritized health needs over legal redress.
- **Economic Empowerment:** Livelihood programs and emergency relief were implemented, especially in Amhara, but unmet needs remained widespread.

4. Systemic Challenges: Referral systems were unclear, services lacked 24/7 accessibility, coordination among providers was weak, and survivors had little trust in justice institutions. Transparency and accountability mechanisms were largely absent.

Recommendations

- 1. Comprehensive Survivor Support:** Deliver integrated packages—medical, psychosocial, economic, and legal—tailored to conflict survivors, with urgent focus on Tigray and Afar.
- 2. Expand Psychosocial and Mental Health Services:** Train counselors in trauma-informed care, establish safe spaces, and promote community-based healing.

3. Strengthen Health Systems: Rehabilitate facilities, ensure reproductive health services, and deploy mobile clinics in underserved areas.

4. Enhance Legal Aid and Justice Access: Train police, prosecutors, and judiciary on survivor-centered approaches; enforce accountability to rebuild trust.

5. Standardize Guidelines: Develop and implement SGBV service protocols to ensure transparency, quality, and survivor-centered care across all regions.

6. Improve Coordination: Establish integrated case management and strengthen inter-institutional collaboration among health, justice, and social services.

7. Accountability for Perpetrators: Enforce penalties against officials obstructing justice and strengthen oversight mechanisms.

8. Legal Empowerment: Launch awareness programs to inform survivors of their rights and encourage pursuit of justice without fear of stigma.

Interested to Know about CYW-RPF?

The Child Research and Practice Forum (CRPF) was recently renamed Children, Youth and Women Research and Practice Forum (CYW-RPF) in order to expand the mandate of the Forum at the request of stakeholders and after holding a survey poll of the mailing list members.

CRPF was established in 2010 to promote work on child research, policy and practice. CYW-RPF makes use of monthly seminars, quarterly newsletters and annual publications as a means to achieve its objectives. The publications are also available on the Young Lives Ethiopia website (<https://www.younglives-ethiopia.org/>). CYW-RPF is organized by Young Lives with the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs and UNICEF.

If you want to know more, please contact us via crpf.ethiopia@gmail.com