

This fact sheet presents findings from the fourth round of data collection carried out by Young Lives in Ethiopia in late 2013. It reports on outcomes for the Older Cohort at age 19 in terms of education, employment and marriage, showing clearly how young people's opportunities in life are influenced by their gender, their family's wealth level and background circumstances. Almost 60% of the young people were still in education at age 19 (27% combining this with work), 28% had left school and were working, and 7% were not studying, working or married. Young people from poorer groups and rural areas were more likely to have left full-time education, many without a secondary-level qualification. By the age of 19, 13% of the girls in our sample were married – and 10% already had a child of their own. Early marriage and child-bearing is most common for girls in rural areas and from poor households. Our findings show that, despite high aspirations earlier in adolescence, by age 19 the reality for many young people is very different.

## Young people in Ethiopia: Policy context

The Government of Ethiopia has shown considerable commitment to improving opportunities for young people. A National Youth Policy was approved in 2005 to promote young people's participation in governance and economic, social and cultural activities. In 2006 a Rural and Urban Youth Package with a Multi-Sectoral Youth Development Strategy Plan (2006-2015) were designed. In 2013 an Adolescent Development and Participation Strategy was drafted focusing on the 10 to 19 age group to reinforce linkages between policies, strategies and programmes designed for children, adolescents and youth. The current Growth and Transformation Plan (2010-2015) has a section on Youth Development seeking to promote youth participation in democratic governance and economic and social initiatives, by mainstreaming youth issues within other development programmes, increasing the number of youth centres, strengthening youth associations, and encouraging youth entrepreneurship. Recently, Micro and Small Enterprises have been promoted on a large-scale, especially for urban youth.

## Key findings

- At age 19, 59% of the Older Cohort were still in education: 15% had not completed upper primary school, 21% were in secondary level, 10% were in pre-university level school and 9% were in vocational training.
- There are small but significant gender differences within these average figures: 66% of girls were still in education, compared with 56% of boys, and the girls had, on average completed slightly higher levels of schooling than the boys.
- 41% of the Older Cohort had already left school, 30% after completing upper primary or secondary school, but one in ten children had left school with only lower primary-level education (or less).
- While 31% of young people were studying full-time, 27% of them were combining work and school, and 31% were working (and no longer in school).
- There are some gender differences since most girls were only studying (39%) or studying and working (23%), while most of the boys were working (36%) or studying and working (32%). The proportion of boys who were only studying (25%) was much lower than the proportion of girls (39%).
- 13% of the girls in our sample were married and two-thirds of them had already had a baby by the age of 19 (10% of the total sample), compared to only 1% of the boys who were married and 2% who had fathered a child.

## Education outcomes of 19-year-olds

When we interviewed the Older Cohort children in 2009 (aged 15) 90% were attending school. Most were in upper primary school and had yet to complete Grade 8, at which point many young people’s educational trajectories diverge.

At age 19, 59% of the Older Cohort were still in education: 15% had not completed upper primary school (up to Grade 8), 21% were in secondary level (Grade 9 or 10). At post-secondary level, young people can choose between academic or vocational education, and we found that 10% of the Older Cohort were now in pre-university level school, 9% were in vocational training, and 5% were at university. There are small gender differences within these average figures: 66% of girls were still in education, compared with 56% of boys, and the girls were, on average, in slightly higher levels of education than the boys.

By comparison, 40% of the Older Cohort had already left school, almost a third after completing upper primary or secondary school, but 10% had left school with only lower-primary level education (or less). More boys than girls had left school, more young people from rural areas or the poorest households, and in particular regions (notably Tigray), see Table 1. This illustrates again the different life trajectories that open up very early in life for different groups of children.

**Table 1. 19-year-olds currently enrolled or no longer in education**

	Boys	% of boys	Girls	% of girls	All	% of sample
<b>19-year-olds currently enrolled</b>						
Primary level (up to Grade 8)	79	16.2	59	14.0	138	15.2
Secondary (Grade 9 or 10)	98	20.1	89	21.2	187	20.6
Pre-university level	38	7.8	50	11.9	88	9.7
Vocational	36	7.4	42	10.0	78	8.6
University	24	4.9	24	5.7	48	5.3
<b>Total currently enrolled</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>56.4</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>65.5</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>59.3</b>
<b>19-year-olds no longer in school (and highest qualification achieved)</b>						
No qualification	60	12.3	34	8.1	94	10.4
Lower primary	86	17.6	55	13.1	142	15.6
Upper primary	57	11.7	52	12.4	109	12.0
Secondary	6	1.2	3	0.7	9	1.0
	2	0.4	8	1.9	10	1.1
Higher secondary	1	0.2	0	0.0	1	0.1
<b>Total no longer in school</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>43.6</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>36.2</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>40.2</b>
<b>All children</b>	<b>488</b>		<b>420</b>		<b>908</b>	

The chances of still being in education are closely related to household wealth: 73% of young people from better-off households were still enrolled compared with only 50% from the poorest households. Two-thirds of young people in urban areas were still in education, compared with just over a half in rural communities. See Table 3.

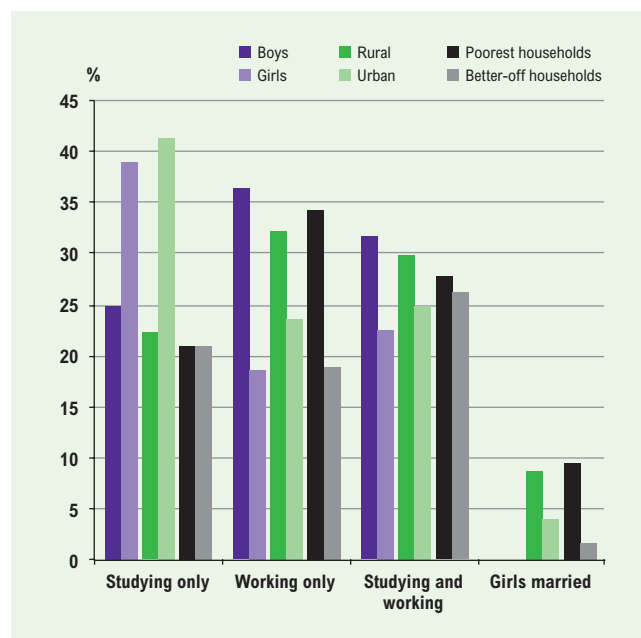
About 27% of the Older Cohort were working as well as studying, spread fairly evenly across wealth levels, with relatively small differences between young people in urban areas (25% of whom were working as well as studying) and rural areas (30%).

## Starting work

While 31% of young people were studying full-time and 27% combining work and school, 31% were only working (and no longer in school). One in twelve of the girls (7.5%), were married and not working outside the home, although a similar number (6%) were married and working, and 3 girls continuing their education even though they were already married. Only 7% of the Older Cohort were not studying or working or married at age 19. See Table 3.

There are some gender differences in what the 19-year-olds are doing, since most girls are only studying (39%) or studying and working (23%), while most of the boys are working (36%) or studying and working (32%). The proportion of boys who are only studying (25%) is much lower than girls (39%).

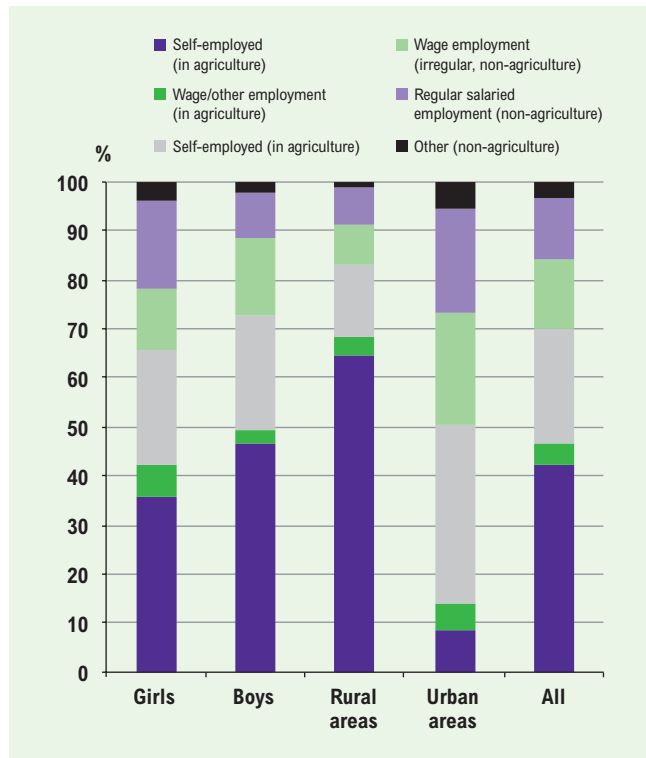
**Figure 1. Current education/employment of 19-year-olds**



We asked what activities they were doing: 42% said they were self-employed working in agriculture, while 23% were self-employed in the non-agriculture sector, with only 14% in wage employment – which shows the over-riding importance of the agricultural sector in rural areas and the informal sector in urban areas. As might be expected, there were significant differences in the types of employment available in rural or urban areas. Almost half of the sample were working in the

agriculture sector (two-thirds in rural areas). Young men were slightly more likely to be working in self-employed agriculture than in the non-agricultural sector and young women slightly more likely to be in non-agricultural employment.

**Figure 2. Employment sector of 19-year-olds currently in work (2013)**



### Marriage and fertility

While the number of young people married or cohabiting by the age of 19 is low (6% of the sample), there are considerable gender differences. About 13% of girls had married (or a few cohabiting) compared to only 0.6% of boys. A similar gender disparity emerges from the fertility figures: 10% of girls had already had a baby but only 2% of boys had fathered a child.

Strong socio-economic patterns emerge regarding marriage: girls in rural areas, from poorer backgrounds or with less educated mothers are more likely to marry young. Also marriages are clustered in few regions, the highest being recorded in Oromia and Amhara with 11% and 10% respectively. Fertility rates are also higher in Oromia and Amhara.

**Table 2. Marriage and fertility age 19 (2013)**

	Girls	%	Boys	%
Single (never married)	365	86.9	485	99.4
Married or cohabiting*	55	13.1	3	0.6
Total	420	100	488	100
Has had a child	37	8.8	6	1.2

\*Includes 3 girls who are separated or divorced.

### Education and employment aspirations

When we interviewed these young people at the age of 12 (in 2006), the education aspirations of all children were high (slightly higher for boys). Assuming no constraints and that they would be able to stay on in school as long as they wished, 56% of the boys and 44% of the girls had said they would like to go to university.

The reality at the age of 19 was a little different: while 9% of the girls and 9% of the boys had reached university, many were still in upper primary and secondary education (and a few in pre-university or vocational education) indicating that they have not yet reached their aspirations, although some may still do so if they continue with their education.

The picture was not so positive for young people who were no longer in school, many of whom had similarly high aspirations at age 12 (72% of the boys and 66% of girls had hoped to go to university). Our data show that although almost all children start with high educational aspirations, household circumstance or events intervene for many children, especially those from rural areas or poorer backgrounds. We see in our qualitative sub-sample interviews many instances of children's education being interrupted because of economic shocks and adverse events such as drought, family illness or death, or because they were needed to care for siblings or other family members.

### Conclusions

Our findings suggest that there are more positive education outcomes for girls who are more likely to still be in school at age 19 and to have completed higher grades than boys. Many young people are now combining working with their education. The chances of still being in education are closely related to household wealth: 73% of young people from better-off households were still studying compared with only 50% from the poorest households. Two-thirds of young people in urban areas were still in education, compared with just over a half in rural communities. By the age of 19 most of the young people were involved in working, and almost a third were in full-time work, with higher proportions for young men. In rural areas most were involved in the agricultural sector and in urban areas in the informal sector.

Although fewer young people are married than might have been expected, early marriage is still an issue for girls, particularly from poorer and rural backgrounds. We saw in earlier interviews that these young people had high education aspirations at age 12, but many have not fulfilled those ambitions yet. From our in-depth qualitative interviews it is evident in that there are considerable hurdles that children and young people have to face, notably economic shocks and adverse events such as drought, family illness or death, and demands on their time related to care for siblings or other family members. Therefore, inter-sectoral interventions should seek provide social protection to prevent children from suffering from such risks.

**Table 3: Education and employment of young people age 19 (2013) (%)**

	Studying full-time	Working full-time (paid or unpaid)	Studying and working	Married (not studying or working)	Married and studying	Married and working*	Not studying, working or married	Sample size
<b>Gender</b>								
Male	24.8	36.3	31.6	0.0	0.0	0.6	6.8	488
Female	39.0	18.6	22.6	7.4	0.7	5.0	6.7	420
<b>Urban or rural location</b>								
Urban	41.4	23.6	24.8	1.9	0.7	1.4	6.3	432
Rural	22.3	32.1	29.8	4.8	0.0	3.8	7.1	476
<b>Household wealth (using Young Lives wealth index)</b>								
Bottom tercile	21.5	34.3	27.7	5.3	0.3	3.9	6.9	303
Top tercile	46.4	18.9	26.2	1.0	0.3	0.3	7.0	302
<b>Caregiver's education level</b>								
No education	26.3	35.2	25.3	3.7	0.2	2.5	6.8	438
Lower primary (Grades 1-4)	30.7	24.2	28.5	4.3	0.4	4.0	7.9	277
Upper primary (Grades 5-8)	38.8	19.0	35.5	2.5	0.8	0.8	2.5	121
More than Grade 8	52.8	15.3	22.2	0.0	0.0	1.4	8.3	72
<b>Region</b>								
Addis Ababa	56.9	18.5	16.2	0.8	0.8	0.0	6.9	130
Amhara	30.6	24.2	30.1	5.4	1.1	3.2	5.4	186
Oromia	29.2	23.2	27.0	6.5	0.0	4.9	9.2	185
SNNP	24.1	28.7	39.8	0.9	0.0	3.2	3.7	216
Tigray	25.1	42.4	18.8	3.1	0.0	1.6	8.9	191
<b>Average of all children</b>	<b>31.4</b>	<b>28.1</b>	<b>27.4</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>6.7</b>	
<b>Sample size</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>908</b>

Note: 2 girls who are married and working are also still studying and have been included here

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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