Gender and Adolescence Research Panorama

Research, Events, Conferences and Calls for Papers

Quarter 2: 2019 Edition

gage GENDER & ADOLESCENCE: GLOBAL EVIDENCE

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Research

Abstracts are quoted from the original source. For more information, please follow the hyperlinks provided.

Adolescent well-being: cross-cutting findings

Leave no adolescent behind: the gender- and age-specific vulnerabilities of adolescent refugees and IDPs

This policy note highlights the importance of age and gender in shaping the vulnerabilities of young refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

'There are more refugees in the world today than at any other time in history and evidence suggests that young people and adolescent girls are particularly vulnerable to the challenges that occur in conflict-affected settings. This policy brief highlights the key findings and policy recommendations in relation to adolescent girls' and boys' experiences in refugee and IDP communities across Ethiopia, Rwanda, Jordan, Palestine, Nepal and Bangladesh. Key findings include: lack of support to return to school, lack of access to WASH facilities and SRH information, significant rate of sexual violence, which has an impact on adolescent girls' mobility and rates of child marriage, lack of economic opportunities, and significant psychosocial outcomes as a result of conflict. It is vital to support refugee and IDP adolescents to access tailored psychosocial, health and education services, access the labour market and TVET course and to tackle child marriage and violence at the community level.'

Download: Jones, N., Devonald, M. and Guglielmi, S. (2019) 'Leave no adolescent behind: the gender- and age-specific vulnerabilities of adolescent refugees and IDPs'. Policy note. London: Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence. Open Access

Changing lives in our lifetime: Global Childhood Report 2019

This report highlights the progress the global community has made towards improving child outcomes across a range of domains, including health, education and protection from violence, over the last two decades – and identifies areas in which progress has been limited.

'In commemoration of its founding 100 years ago, Save the Children is releasing its third annual Global Childhood Report to celebrate progress for children. We examine the major reasons why childhood comes to an early end, and find significantly fewer children suffering ill-health, malnutrition, exclusion from education, child labor, child marriage, early pregnancy and violent death… In the year 2000, an estimated 970 million children were robbed of their childhoods due to these causes. That number today has been reduced to 690 million2 – meaning at least 280 million children are better off today than they would have been two decades ago… we find countries have made impressive progress in fulfilling children's rights by reducing under-5 mortality. Countries have also made substantial progress in enrolling children in school and reducing malnutrition, child labor and child marriage. Progress in these areas has resulted in millions fewer children missing out on childhood. However, the world has made less progress in reducing adolescent births and child homicide, and there has been no progress at all in reducing the number of children living in areas of violence and conflict. In fact, the number of children living in war zones or forced to flee their homes due to conflict has skyrocketed since 2000… Finding ways to fulfill children's health, education and protection rights in conflict zones is central to the challenge of ensuring every child has the childhood they deserve.'

Download: Geoghegan, T. (2019) *Changing lives in our lifetime: Global Childhood Report 2019*. Connecticut: Save the Children. Open Access

Raising the visibility of IDPs: a case study of gender- and age-specific vulnerabilities among Ethiopian IDP adolescents

This article explores the age- and gender-related vulnerabilities of adolescent internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Ethiopia.

'Over 1.39 million people were displaced in Ethiopia in 2018 – mainly along the Oromia and Somali regional border – due to a sudden escalation of ethnic violence. This article explores the gender- and age-specific vulnerabilities of adolescents affected by internal displacement in Ethiopia. It highlights the highly varied experiences of adolescent girls and boys, with young people both as targets and perpetrators of violence during the initial displacement, and involved in different ways in the armed defence of their communities. Adolescent boys reported facing serious physical threats and were often specifically targeted. Adolescent boys in the host community were organised locally into groups that play a central role in protecting the community in the absence of broader state-provided security. In addition, sexual violence – including rape and sexual torture – against young women and girls was widespread during displacement. While violence was a central theme during displacement, limited access to livelihoods, social protection and education were also major challenges. It is critical for the international community to advocate for and monitor the extent to which IDPs are provided with adequate support services. More specifically, humanitarian agencies need to ensure that the specific age- and gender-related needs of adolescent IDPs are met and that survivors of physical and sexual violence have access to adolescent-sensitive healthcare and, where possible, counselling to overcome the trauma.'

Download: Jones, N., Yadete, W. and Pincock, K. (2019) 'Raising the visibility of IDPs: a case study of gender- and age-specific vulnerabilities among Ethiopian IDP adolescents', in *Making humanitarian action work for women and girls*. London: Humanitarian Exchange. Open Access

The state of the World Father's report: unlocking the power of men's care

This report synthesises global evidence about the importance of fathering and includes children's and adolescents' own perspectives about how fathers make them feel loved.

'The third State of the World's Fathers is rooted firmly in a feminist analysis of care, and the belief that unpaid care work must be valued as much as paid work, and shared equally between men and women... To better understand the perspectives of children on their fathers' behaviors when it comes to household work and caregiving, and their perspectives on what it means to be a father in general, Plan International staff conducted focus group discussions with adolescent sons and daughters of participants in the Fathers' Clubs.... Adolescents in Bangladesh, Ghana, Haiti, and Nigeria discussed their expectations of good fathers as those who show affection for their children and who show their children that they love them...adolescents explained that good fathers listen to their children when they speak, share their concerns, and provide good counsel to their children. Adolescents place a great deal of value on fathers who spend time with their families and children instead of spending their leisure time outside the family home...Both boys and girls recognized a relationship with their fathers that allows adolescents to feel loved and supported as something they cherish and want more of. With changes in their fathers' behaviors at home, including in how their fathers interact with their children, adolescents described feeling more at ease and comfortable with their parents.... Finally, these improved relationships with their fathers and their fathers' changed behaviors at home have long-lasting impacts that adolescents already recognize. Adolescent boys and girls explained that being part of this change themselves at a young age has provided inspiration for skills they want to carry forward when they become parents, including adolescent boys imagining their future as fathers.'

Download: van der Gaag, N., Heilman, B., Gupta, T., Nembhard, C. and Barker, G. (2019) *State of the world's fathers: unlocking the power of men's care*. Washington DC: Promundo-US. Open Access

Programming with adolescent boys to promote gender-equitable masculinities

This evidence review examines programming aimed at promoting gender-equitable masculinities in adolescent boys in low- and middle-income countries.

'Recent years have seen a rapid increase in the number of programmes working with men and boys to change norms around masculinity that undermine gender equality. Although adolescence is increasingly recognised as a critical period for forming one's gender identity and adhering to prevailing gendered norms, very few reviews of knowledge on promoting gender-equitable masculinities draw out specific impacts on adolescent boys. This review is intended as a contribution to filling that gap. This review brings together evidence from 36 studies, both quantitative and qualitative, of 34 programmes working with adolescent boys and young men to promote more gender-equitable masculinities in LMICs. A key limitation of these studies was lack of long-term evidence; only three studies reported on findings a year or more after boys had stopped participating and none examined the impact of single-sex or mixed groups. Overall these programmes have had a wide range of positive impacts on the attitudes towards gender-based violence, gender roles and divisions of labour, and child marriage. However, some issues showed no change, including homophobic attitudes, girls' mobility and attitudes around sexual relationships. The review found that the following factors are important for effective transformation of masculinities: allowing sufficient programme time (6 months or more), investing in good facilitators who have received effective training, taking time to introduce sensitive issues, including vocational skills and economic empowerment, and tailoring programmes to marginalized groups.'

Download: Marcus, R., Stavropoulou, M. and Archer-Gupta, N. (2018) *Programming with adolescent boys to promote gender-equitable masculinities: a rigorous review*. London: Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence. Open Access

Progress of the World's Women 2019–2020: Families in a changing world

Drawing on global evidence, this report explores how families and gender roles are and are not changing and it highlights key implications for adolescents in terms of child marriage, unpaid work and household violence.

'The world is rapidly changing. Families, and the role of women and girls within them, are also changing…Drawing on the best available data from around the world, this Report proposes a comprehensive agenda for key policy actors – including gender equality advocates, national governments and international agencies – to make human rights a reality for all women and girls, no matter what kind of family they live in…. Today, there are many indications that women are increasingly able to exercise agency and voice within their families. These include the rising age of marriage; greater social and legal recognition of a diversity of partnership forms; declines in birth rates as women are better able to choose whether and when to have children, and how many; and women's increased economic autonomy. These transformations are both causes and consequences of large-scale demographic changes, dramatic shifts in women's and girls' access to education and employment, ideational and normative changes, and legal reform, often driven and inspired by women's activism…. Women and men across all world regions are delaying marriage. This has enabled women to complete their education, gain a stronger foothold in the labour market, and support themselves financially… [However] while overall, women's access to economic resources has improved, the distribution of unpaid care work remains very unequal. Compared to men, women do three times the amount of unpaid care and domestic work within families, with particularly stark inequalities in developing-country contexts, where access to time-saving infrastructure and public services is more limited… [Additionally] despite these efforts, violence against women and girls in families persists at astonishingly high rates throughout their lives and across world regions. '

Download: UN Women (2019) *Progress of the world's women 2019-2020. Families in a changing world*. New York: UN Women. Open Access

Education and learning

Adolescent education and learning in Ethiopia
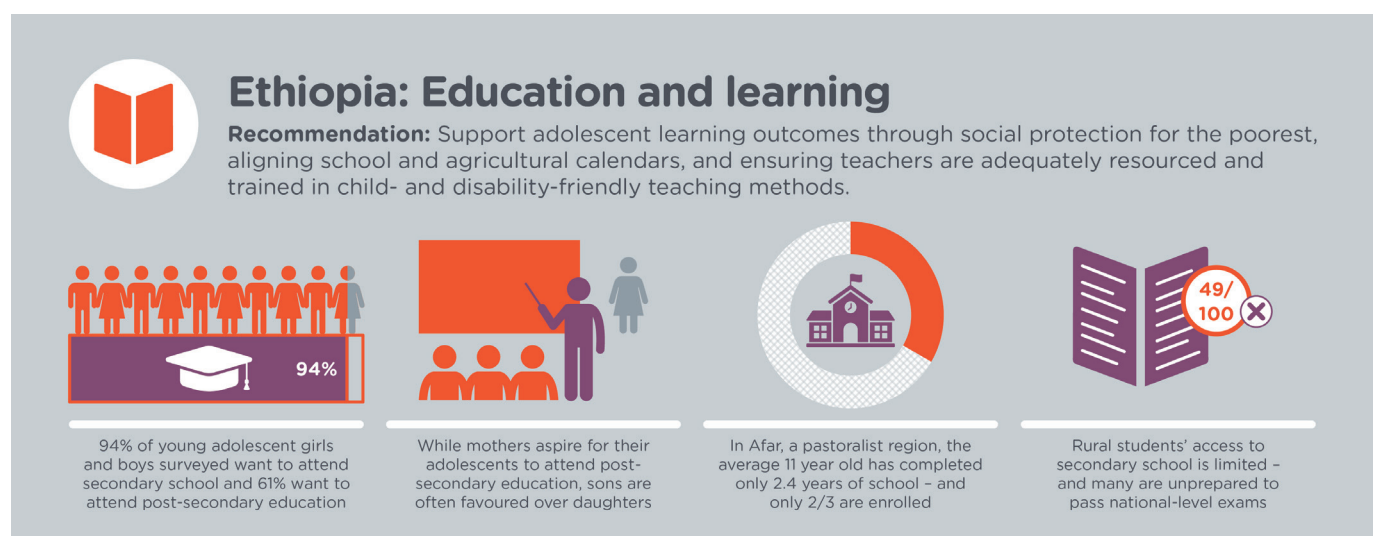
This GAGE report summarises GAGE baseline findings in regard to the gendered and regional-specific patterning of adolescent education and learning in Ethiopia.

This report on adolescent education and learning is one of a series of short reports presenting findings from GAGE's baseline work in Ethiopia. Our work, which involved two cohorts (the younger aged 10–12 and the older aged 15–17),

included nearly 7,000 adolescents and their caregivers. We found that adolescent educational aspirations are generally quite high, albeit varied across contexts, and that parental support for education is growing intergenerationally. Most young people – and their parents – see a secondary education as required for the futures they envision. Our survey found that while nearly all young people were (or had been) enrolled in primary school, rates of repetition and drop out are high, especially for those who enroll late and live in rural areas. In line with previous research, we found that the quality of education provided by Ethiopian schools, especially those in rural areas, is extremely low. Poor learning outcomes, which drive exam failure, and high real and opportunity costs, prevent most adolescents from attending, much less completing, secondary school.

Download: Jones, N., Presler-Marshall, E., Hicks, J., Baird, S., Yadete, W. and Woldehanna, T. (2019) *Adolescent education and learning in Ethiopia*. A report on GAGE Ethiopia baseline findings. London: Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence. Open Access

Ethiopia: Education and learning

Recommendation: Support adolescent learning outcomes through social protection for the poorest, aligning school and agricultural calendars, and ensuring teachers are adequately resourced and trained in child- and disability-friendly teaching methods.

94%

94% of young adolescent girls and boys surveyed want to attend secondary school and 61% want to attend post-secondary education

While mothers aspire for their adolescents to attend post-secondary education, sons are often favoured over daughters

In Afar, a pastoralist region, the average 11 year old has completed only 2.4 years of school – and only 2/3 are enrolled

49/100 ✗

Rural students' access to secondary school is limited – and many are unprepared to pass national-level exams

❝ *When we go to their homes to bring students to school, there are some mothers who throw stones at us. They think the girls should help them in the house because they have no other support.*❞ School principal in East Hararghe, Oromia, Ethiopia

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Relationship between children's cognitions and later educational progress in rural South Africa: a longitudinal study

This study provides evidence that helping young adolescents develop emotional resilience can improve their longer-term educational outcomes.

'Children in low-income and middle-income countries (LMICs) who remain in school have better health and employment outcomes. South Africa, like many LMICs, has a secondary school completion rate under 50%, leaving room for improvement if we can identify factors that affect educational attainment. This is the first longitudinal study to examine the effects of childhood mental health and cognitions on educational outcomes in LMIC. Using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) and Cognitive Triad Inventory for Children (CTI-C), we assessed the psychological functioning and cognition of children aged 10–12 in rural South Africa. We linked that data with measures of educational progress collected 5 years later and examined associations between educational progress and (1) behavioural and emotional problems and (2) cognitive interpretations, adjusting for possible confounders. Educational data were available for 443 individuals. 92% (n=408) of individuals had advanced three or fewer grades in 7 years. Having more positive cognitions (CTIC-C) was positively associated with progressing at least three grade levels (adjusted OR 1.43, 95% CI 1.14 to 1.79). There was no evidence for an association between emotional and behavioural problems (SDQ) and educational progress (OR 0.90, 95% CI 0.72 to 1.11). If children in LMICs can develop more positive perspectives, they may be able to stay in school longer. Cognitions can be modified, and future studies should test interventions that work to improve cognition in childhood, guided, for example, by principles of cognitive–behavioural therapy.'

Download: Cortina, M., Jack, H.E., Pearson, R., Kahn, K., Tollman, S., Hlungwani, T., Twine, R., Stein, A. and Fazel, M. (2019) 'Relationship between children's cognitions and later educational progress in rural South Africa: a longitudinal study'. *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health* 73(5): 422–426. doi: 10.1136/jech-2018-211361.

Pathways to and beyond education for refugee youth in Jordan and Lebanon

This study explores the challenges faced by Syrian refugees living in Jordan and Lebanon in regard to secondary and post-secondary education and highlights how young people could be better supported to develop the skills they need for economic independence.

'Almost three million Syrian refugees have sought refuge in Jordan and Lebanon…more than half of Syrian refugees are children and youth. Enrollment in formal education for refugees has only slightly increased since the start of the conflict… Despite global efforts to address education, the scale of the conflict, among other reasons, have resulted in a continued state of crisis… This study explores the state of refugee education in Jordan and Lebanon to identify the key challenges inhibiting access and completion of secondary, technical and vocational (TVET), and tertiary education… Although the funding for refugee education has not been sufficient, it has been largely focused on the primary level…significant gaps in access continue to persist at all levels of education, but most strikingly at the secondary level… While support for increasing access to higher education for refugees remains low, another critical challenge is its relevance to the labor market and the employability of refugees upon graduation. Policy recommendations: providing more sustainable financing for secondary education and TVET in order to ensure that students have access to secondary schools…investing in remedial and accelerated learning programs at the secondary level…providing professional academic orientation and college and career counseling…offering more innovative and labor market responsive solutions to TVET…aligning higher education with the needs of the future.'

Download: El-Ghali, H.A., Alameddine, F., Farah, S. and Benchiba, S. (2019) *Pathways to and beyond education for refugee youth in Jordan and Lebanon.* Beirut: Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education. Open Access

Every learner matters: unpacking the learning crisis for children with disabilities

This report highlights the continued disadvantages that children and adolescents with disabilities face in terms of accessing quality education around the world.

'Today in many countries, there has been some progress made in including children with disabilities in education; however, the barriers around ensuring educational access, meaningful participation, equal and personalized learning opportunities remain. Despite the rapid school expansion and push to improve the quality of education in recent years, the experiences of children with disabilities to access quality education remain unchanged… Overall this paper highlights that the education of children with disabilities needs attention beyond access to education. Although children with disabilities have started going to school, they are far behind their peers in every aspect – enrolment, school completion and learning outcomes. The learning crisis for children with disabilities is exacerbated by underestimation of the numbers of children with disabilities in the education system due to lack of well-established screening and identification methods… National, regional and international assessment used to measure learning outcomes can be discriminatory towards children with disabilities… achievement in learning is dependent upon the learning opportunities available to children in an environment which promotes learning. The curriculum needs to be developed in a way that ensures equitable acquisition of desired competencies for all students including children with disabilities.'

Download: World Bank Group (2019) *Every learner matters: unpacking the learning crisis for children with disabilities.* Washington DC: World Bank Group. Open Access

Bodily integrity, autonomy and freedom from violence

Adolescent bodily integrity and freedom from violence in Ethiopia

This GAGE report summarises baseline findings in regard to adolescent experiences of bodily integrity and freedom from violence in Ethiopia, highlighting gender, age and regional differences. This report on adolescent bodily integrity and freedom from violence is one of a series of short baseline reports focused on emerging mixed-methods findings from GAGE's work in Ethiopia. Our sample included nearly 7,000 younger (aged 10–12) and older (aged 15–17) adolescents and their caregivers. We found that age-based violence, including violent discipline by parents and teachers, is endemic and that peer violence and sexual violence are both 'normal' and driven by violent masculinities. Child marriage and FGM/C, while declining – in some regions – remain common and are driven by gender norms that prioritise marriage and motherhood. While most cutting and child marriage are arranged by adults, with girls given no input into decisions that will shape their bodies and lives, in some contexts, adolescent girls are 'choosing' to conform to expectations largely because alternative pathways do not yet exist.

Download: Jones, N., Presler-Marshall, E., Baird, S., Hicks, J., Emirie, G., Yadete, W., Alemayehu, Y., Bekele, B. and Woldevesus, E.K. (2019) *Adolescent bodily integrity and freedom from violence in Ethiopia*. A report on GAGE Ethiopia baseline findings. London: Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence. Open Access

Unsafe on the street: girls and young women's experiences of group harassment

This research explores the group dynamics that drive adolescent boys and young men to sexually harass girls and women in Delhi, Kampala, Lima, Sydney and Madrid.

'In 2018, Plan International's ground-breaking research report, Unsafe in the City, shone a light on the relentless harassment and abuse that girls and young women face in the streets of their cities and underlined what girls and young women thought could and should be done about it… Through fresh analysis of the data that informed Unsafe in the City, this report takes a closer look at the group dynamics which underpin the abusive behaviour of men and boys towards girls and young women… Research findings: Group dynamics seem to aggravate and normalise gender-based violence and harassment: girls and young women told us how severe, persistent and frightening this harassment is… Street harassment perpetrated by groups of men and boys is overwhelmingly sexual in nature…Verbal harassment, and in particular catcalling, is the most common form of street harassment perpetrated by groups across the cities surveyed… Overwhelmingly, group harassment occurs on the city streets as girls and young women go about their everyday lives…In some cities, a disturbing amount of harassment happens in and around school buildings, with groups of men and boys gathering to target women and girls as they arrive, leave or walk past… Group harassment is repetitive: it often happens at the same time, in the same place, every day…Key recommendations: Men and boys need to recognise that their behaviour is intolerable and change it by learning to respect girls and women as their equals: standing out against the culture of verbal and physical abuse, not standing by….Those in authority and positions of power in cities, at all levels, must listen to and work with girls and young women, involving them in co-designing the provision of services and the policies that govern their cities…Many aspects of group sexual and street harassment are not covered by current legislation, public law and policy making needs to be extended to fill these gaps.'

Download: Plan international (2019) *Unsafe on the streets: girls' and young women's experiences of group harassment*. Surrey: Plan international. Open Access

Arab youth involvement in violence: a socio-ecological gendered perspective

This research explores the extent to which gender shapes Arab-Israeli adolescents' involvement with violence.

'Previous research has extensively used a socio-ecological perspective to find the correlates of youth involvement in violence. However, little is known about the extent to which ecological factors correlated with youth violence are

affected by gender, especially in non-Western cultures. The role of gender in the association between individual, family, and contextual factors and Arab youth involvement in several types of violence (severe physical, moderate physical, and verbal and indirect violence) was explored using a socio-ecological perspective. The study was based on a large random sample of 3,178 Arab students, aged 11–18, from Israel. Information was collected from the adolescents through a structured, anonymous self-report questionnaire which they completed in the classroom under the guidance of a research assistant. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured for all participants. Gender was found to moderate the association between impulsivity and parental support and all types of violence except verbal violence. No interaction effect was found in the association between affiliation with delinquent peers and exposure to community violence and Arab youth involvement in violence. The results emphasize the importance of exploring gender differences with respect to risk and protective factors for violence. This knowledge is an important step in the design and implementation of gender-specific intervention strategies to deal with youth violence. '

Download. Khoury-Kassabri, M. (2019). 'Arab youth involvement in violence: a socio-ecological gendered perspective'. *Child Abuse & Neglect* 93: 128–138. doi: 10.1016/j.chiabu.2019.05.003.

Child discipline in low- and middle-income countries: socioeconomic disparities at the household- and country-level

This research explores the relationship between household poverty and country-level human development indicators and child discipline practices.

'In the past month, around eight out of ten children worldwide have experienced violent discipline. Understanding the economic and social contexts in which parents are more likely to use disciplinary practices is necessary to reduce violence against children, yet there is currently limited critical examination of this at a country wide level in low- and middle-income countries (LMICS). Using Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey data between 2010 and 2013, 231,221 parents from 32 LMICS were included. The prevalence of past-month non-violent discipline, physical discipline, psychological aggression, belief in the utility of physical discipline, and incongruence of disciplinary practice and belief were estimated. Country-level prevalence was regressed on country-level stressors (economic burden, economic inequality, human security, and human development). Individual-level disciplinary practices and beliefs were regressed on household wealth. Country-level stressors predicted psychological and physical discipline use and belief in the utility of physical discipline. Lower household wealth was associated with increased violent disciplinary practice and belief, and with increased likelihood of using violent discipline, even when the caregiver did not believe in its utility (OR = 1.63 [1.34, 1.98])...Parental disciplinary beliefs and practices reflect complex interplay with broader social, political and economic contexts and should not be taken to be defined by monolithic views of culture'.

Download. Beatriz, E. and Salhi, C. (2019) 'Child discipline in low- and middle-income countries: socioeconomic disparities at the household- and country-level'. *Child Abuse & Neglect* 94: 104023. doi:10.1016/j.chiabu.2019.104023

The effects of conflict and displacement on violence against adolescent girls in South Sudan: the case of adolescent girls in the protection of civilian sites in Juba

This research highlights that violence against adolescent girls in conflict-affected South Sudan is high and driven by patriarchal practices.

'There is a paucity of data on violence against women and girls (VAWG) during times of conflict in general and even less information specifically on violence against adolescent girls. Based on secondary analysis of a larger study on VAWG in South Sudan, this article highlights the specific experience of conflict-affected adolescent girls resident in the Juba Protection of Civilian sites. Quantitative data from a cross-sectional household survey shows that the prevalence of non-partner sexual violence (NPSV) (26.5%) and intimate partner violence (IPV) (43.1% of partnered respondents) was high among a cohort of girls who were of adolescent age during the 2013 crisis. Direct exposure to armed conflict increased the odds of respondents experiencing NPSV (AOR: 7.21; 95%CI: 3.94–13.17) and IPV (AOR: 2.37; 95%CI: 1.07–5.29).

Quantitative and qualitative data also showed that patriarchal practices, compounded by poverty and unequal power relationships within the home, remain some of the primary drivers of VAWG even in conflict-affected settings. Prevention activities need to consider these wider underlying drivers of VAWG during times of armed conflict, as they remain key factors affecting violence against adolescent girls.'

Download: Murphy, M., Bingenheimer, J.B., Ovince, J., Ellsberg, M. and Contreras-Urbina, M. (2019) 'The effects of conflict and displacement on violence against adolescent girls in South Sudan: the case of adolescent girls in the Protection of Civilian sites in Juba' Sexual and Reproductive Health Matters 27(1): 1601965. doi: 10.1080/26410397.2019.1601965.

"Where's the money?" How the humanitarian system is failing to fund an end of violence against women and girls

This research highlights the mismatch between the incidence of gender-based violence in humanitarian contexts and the funding directed at ending it.

'Violence against women and girls is a global problem of epidemic proportions. Evidence shows that over one-third of women and girls globally will experience some form of violence in their lifetime... Gender-based violence (GBV) is exacerbated in emergencies, where vulnerability and risks are higher and most often, family and community protections have broken down... Sexual exploitation of women and girls in emergencies – including by aid workers and peacekeepers – is also increasingly recognized as a problem that the humanitarian sector must address... Key findings from the report include the following: Violence against women and girls remains an underfunded area of humanitarian response compared to other sectors, and funding requests do not match the scale of the problem... The lack of GBV expertise (at the field level and in senior management positions) inhibits the prioritization of GBV services within humanitarian response plan... progress toward localization of humanitarian action, including GBV response, has been slow... It is difficult to find consistent, reliable information about levels of investment to address GBV in emergencies... Based on these finding this report recommends: Immediately tripling funding levels for humanitarian crises... developing universal guidelines to better anticipate and integrate the costs of GBV services into humanitarian appeals...Taking action to help grow the available pool of GBV specialists and experts... Promoting the participation of women's organizations in finding local solutions for addressing GBV... Improving reporting, tracking and coding of investments to ensure the sector has an accurate understanding of how fully it is (or is not) responding to the need for GBV programming... Increasing transparency around donor investments, commitments and priorities so the total amount of funding for GBV can be more easily quantified and therefore planned again.'

Download: International Rescue Committee (IRC) and Voice (2019) *Where's the money? How the humanitarian system is failing to fund an end of violence against women and girls*. New York: IRC and Voice. Open Access
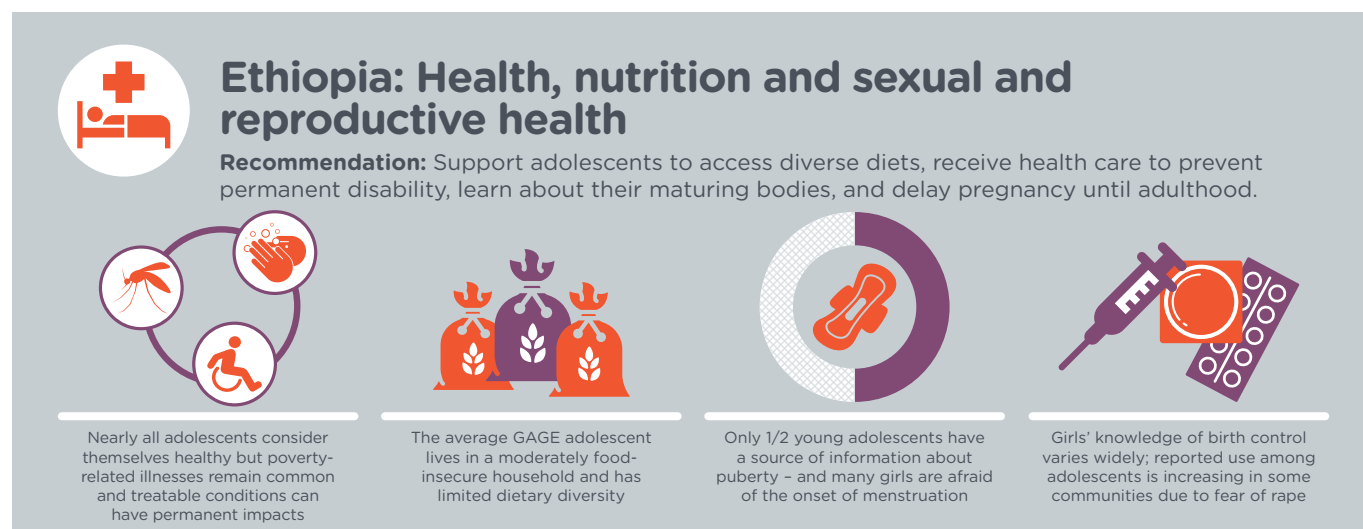
Sexual and reproductive health

Adolescent health, nutrition and sexual and reproductive health in Ethiopia

This GAGE report summarises our baseline findings in regard to adolescent health, sexual and reproductive health and nutrition in Ethiopia, highlighting diversity in outcomes by gender, age and region.

This report on health, nutrition, and sexual and reproductive health is one of a series of short baseline reports focused on emerging mixed-methods findings from GAGE's work in Ethiopia. Our sample included nearly 7,000 younger (aged 10–12) and older (aged 15–17) adolescents and their caregivers. We found that while most adolescents report good health, poverty-related disease remains common and exposure to modern health risks, such as substance use, is increasing. In addition, although food security is improving over time, the average adolescent's diet is of poor quality and includes too few micronutrients. Despite school-based classes, young adolescents – especially those in rural areas – have limited access to timely information about puberty, meaning that many girls are unprepared for and scared by menarche. Adolescents' access to, and uptake of, SRH information and services is highly variable and largely shaped by where they live.

Ethiopia: Health, nutrition and sexual and reproductive health

Recommendation: Support adolescents to access diverse diets, receive health care to prevent permanent disability, learn about their maturing bodies, and delay pregnancy until adulthood.

Nearly all adolescents consider themselves healthy but poverty-related illnesses remain common and treatable conditions can have permanent impacts

The average GAGE adolescent lives in a moderately food-insecure household and has limited dietary diversity

Only 1/2 young adolescents have a source of information about puberty – and many girls are afraid of the onset of menstruation

Girls' knowledge of birth control varies widely; reported use among adolescents is increasing in some communities due to fear of rape

Because my mother-in-law has awareness about the health risks of delivering at an early age she told me to take contraceptives for one year. I told my husband but he refused.'' 15-year-old married girl from Batu, Oromia, Ethiopia

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Social, biological, and programmatic factors linking adolescent pregnancy and early childhood undernutrition: a path analysis of India's 2016 national family and health survey

This research identifies and explores the many links between adolescent pregnancy and child undernutrition.

'Adolescent pregnancy and child undernutrition are major social and public health concerns. We aimed to examine associations between adolescent pregnancy and child undernutrition in India, where one in five adolescents live, and one in three of the world's stunted children. Data were from India's fourth National Family Health Survey, 2015–16. Primiparous women aged 15–49 years who gave birth between 2010 and 2016 were classified on the basis of age at first birth: 10–19 years (adolescence), 20–24 years (young adulthood), and 25 years or older (adulthood)...Multivariable regression and structural equation models were used to understand the extent to which offspring undernutrition is linked to adolescent pregnancy and the potential social, biological, and programmatic pathways. Of the 60096 women in the sample, 14107(25%) first gave birth during adolescence. Children born to adolescent mothers had lower scores Z scores for length or height-for-age (mean difference −0•53 SD), weight-for-age (−0•40 SD), and weight-for-length or height (−0•16 SD) than children born to adult mothers. Compared with adult mothers, adolescent mothers were shorter (−1•21 cm, 95% CI −1•78 to −0•65), more likely to be underweight (18 percentage points, 15–21) and anaemic (8 percentage points, 6–11), less likely to access health services (−4 to −15 percentage points), and had poorer complementary feeding practices (−3 to −9 percentage points). Adolescent mothers also had less education (−3•30 years, 95% CI −3•68 to −2•91), less bargaining power (−7 to −15 percentage points), and lived in poorer households (−0•66 SD, 96% CI −0•82 to −0•50) with poorer sanitation (−28 percentage points, −32 to −24). In the path analysis, these intermediate factors predicted child anthropometry, with the strongest links being mother's education (18%), socioeconomic status (13%), and weight (15%). Children born to adolescent mothers are at risk of being undernourished...Policies and programmes to delay pregnancy and promote women's rights could help break the intergenerational cycle of undernutrition through many routes.'

Scaling-up normative change interventions for adolescent and youth reproductive health: an examination of the evidence

This is an evidence review of adolescent and youth reproductive health interventions in low- and middle-income countries that have included community-based norm change components and have been scaled up.

'Adolescent and youth reproductive health (AYRH) outcomes are influenced by factors beyond individual control. Increasingly, interventions are seeking to influence community-level normative change to support healthy AYRH behaviours. While evidence is growing of the effectiveness of AYRH interventions that include normative change components, understanding on how to achieve scale-up and wider impact of these programs remains limited. We analysed peer-reviewed and grey literature from 2000 to 2017 describing 42 AYRH interventions with community-based normative change components that have scaled-up in low/middle-income countries. Only 13 of 42 interventions had significant scale-up documentation. We compared scale-up strategies, scale-up facilitators and barriers, and identified recommendations for future programs. All 13 interventions addressed individual, interpersonal, and community-level outcomes, such as community attitudes and behaviours related to AYRH. Scale-up strategies included expansion via new organizations, adapting original intervention designs, and institutionalization of activities into public-sector and/or nongovernmental organization structures. Four overarching factors facilitated or inhibited scale-up processes: availability of financial and human resources, transferability of intervention designs and materials, substantive community and government-sector partnerships, and monitoring capacity. Scaling-up multifaceted normative change interventions is possible but not well documented. The global AYRH community should prioritize documentation of scale-up processes and measurement to build evidence and inform future programming.'

Download: Nguyen, G., Costenbader, E., Plourde, K.F., Kerner, B. and Igras, S. (2019) 'Scaling-up normative change interventions for adolescent and youth reproductive health: an examination of the evidence'. *Journal of Adolescent Health* 64(4): S16–S30. doi: 10.1016/j.jadohealth.2019.01.004. Open Access

Prevalence and risk factors of repeat pregnancy among South African adolescent females

This research explored which South African adolescent girls are most – and least – at risk of repeat pregnancy.

'In the era of HIV/AIDS, repeat pregnancies among adolescents indicate the growing problem of high-risk sexual behavior and the status of reproductive health services. A cross sectional survey was conducted to establish the prevalence and risk factors of repeat pregnancies among South African adolescents. A total of 326 adolescents participated in this study at a district hospital in, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa from June 2017 to November 2017. Data was analysed using R Software. Out of the 326 adolescents, 19.9% had experienced a repeat pregnancy. The risk factors associated with adolescent repeat pregnancy included a history of spontaneous abortion (p<0.001) and previous contraceptive use (p<0.001). A higher level of education (p<0.001) and emotional support from family (p=0.007) were found to be significant protective factors against adolescent repeat pregnancy. These findings have implications for future interventions aimed at reducing repeat pregnancy among adolescents'

Download: Govender, D., Naidoo, S. and Taylor, M. (2019) 'Prevalence and risk factors of repeat pregnancy among South African adolescent females'. *African Journal of Reproductive Health* 23(1): 73–87. doi: 10.29063/ajrh2019/v23i1.8 Open Access

Advancing the evidence base on child marriage and HIV

This paper argues that we need better evidence on the relationship between child marriage and HIV.

'We argue in this paper for new research on the relationship between child marriage and HIV.... It is clear from the existing evidence that some of the factors that make girls more vulnerable to HIV are the same as those that expose them to child marriage. These include poverty, low educational attainment, and gender inequality, which limit girls' ability to make decisions about their own lives, including if, when, how and with whom to have sex, and if, when and whom to marry....As a starting point, we must increase our response to the knowledge that, in many parts of the world, girls and

young women are disproportionately affected by both child marriage and HIV, with harmful gender norms and gender inequalities underlying girls' vulnerability. Once married, child brides face profound health consequences as a result of their early marriage; in some contexts, this may include an increased vulnerability to HIV.'

Download: Girls Not Brides and United Nations Children's Fund (2019) *Advancing the evidence base on child marriage and HIV.* London and New York: Girls Not Brides and UNICEF. Open Access

Health and nutrition

Progress in adolescent health and wellbeing: tracking 12 headline indicators for 195 countries and territories, 1990–2016

This research presents country-level adolescent health indicators and notes that progress since 1990 has been variable—and often offset by demographic change.

'Rapid demographic, epidemiological, and nutritional transitions have brought a pressing need to track progress in adolescent health. Here, we present a country-level estimates of 12 headline indicators from the Lancet Commission on adolescent health and wellbeing, from 1990 to 2016…. We drew data from the Global Burden of Diseases, Injuries, and Risk Factors Study (GBD) 2016, International Labour Organisation, household surveys, and the Barro-Lee education dataset. From 1990 to 2016, remarkable shifts in adolescent health occurred. A decrease in disease burden in many countries has been offset by population growth in countries with the poorest adolescent health profiles. Compared with 1990, an additional 250 million adolescents were living in multi-burden countries in 2016, where they face a complex burden of disease. The rapidity of nutritional transition is evident from the 324•1 million (18%) of 1•8 billion adolescents globally who were overweight or obese in 2016, an increase of 176•9 million compared with 1990, and the 430•7 million (24%) who had anaemia in 2016, an increase of 74•2 million compared with 1990. Child marriage remains common, with an estimated 66 million women aged 20–24 years married before age 18 years. Although gender-parity in secondary school completion exists globally, prevalence of NEET remains high for young women in multi-burden countries. Although disease burden has fallen in many settings, demographic shifts have heightened global inequalities. Global disease burden has changed little since 1990 and the prevalence of many adolescent health risks have increased. Health, education, and legal systems have not kept pace with shifting adolescent needs and demographic changes. Gender inequity remains a powerful driver of poor adolescent health in many countries.'

Download: Azzopardi, P., Hearps, S.J.C., Francis, K.L., Kennedy, E.C., Mokdad, A.H., Kassebaum, N.J. et al. (2019) 'Progress in adolescent health and wellbeing: tracking 12 headline indicators for 195 countries and territories, 1990–2016'. *The Lancet* 393(10176): 1101–1118. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(18)32427-9 Open Access

Association of leisure-time sedentary behavior with fast food and carbonated soft drink consumption among 133,555 adolescents aged 12–15 years in 44 low- and middle-income countries

This research examines the relationship between changes in adolescent diet and physical activity levels in low-and middle-income countries.

'Rates of sedentary behaviour (SB), fast food and carbonated soft drink consumption are increasing worldwide, especially in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). Given that these behaviours have been linked to adverse health outcomes among adolescents, this presents a new but rapidly growing challenge. However, very little is known about the associations between SB and fast food or soft drink consumption among adolescents in LMICs. Thus, data from the Global school-based Student Health Survey (GSHS) were cross-sectionally analysed in 133,555 adolescents aged 12–15 years from 44 LMICs…. The data were collected in the form of self-report questionnaires. Associations were assessed with multivariable logistic regression analysis and meta-analysis. The overall prevalence of fast food consumption (at least once in the previous 7 days) and carbonated soft drink consumption (at least once per day during the past 30 days) were 49.3% and 43.8%, respectively. The overall pooled estimates based on a meta-analysis with random effects for the association of ≥3 h/day of SB with fast food consumption and soft drink consumption using country-wise estimates were

OR = 1.35 (95% CI = 1.27–1.43, I2 = 62.1%).) and OR = 1.26 (95% CI = 1.19–1.34; I2 = 54.3%), respectively. Spending >8 h/day of SB compared to <1 h/day in females was associated with significantly higher odds for fast food (OR = 1.61, 95% CI = 1.38–1.88) and soft drink consumption (OR = 1.91, 95% CI = 1.60–2.28). Future interventions to address unhealthy behaviours in adolescents should take into account the interrelated nature of SB and unhealthy dietary habits, and seek to further understand the mechanisms linking these behaviours in the LMIC context.'

Download: Ashdown-Franks, G., Vamcampfort, D., Firth, J., Smith, L., Sabiston, C.M., Stubbs, B. and Koyanagi, A. (2019) 'Association of leisure-time sedentary behavior with fast food and carbonated soft drink consumption among 133,555 adolescents aged 12–15 years in 44 low- and middle-income countries'. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity* 16(1): 35. doi: 10.1186/s12966-019-0796-3.

Psychosocial well-being

Adolescent psychosocial well-being and voice and agency in Ethiopia

This GAGE report summarises our baseline findings in regard to Ethiopian adolescents' psychosocial well-being and voice and agency, and the ways in which outcomes differ by gender, age and region.

This report on psychosocial well-being and voice and agency is one of a series of short baseline reports focused on emerging mixed-methods findings from GAGE's work in Ethiopia. Our sample included nearly 7,000 younger (aged 10–12) and older (aged 15–17) adolescents and their caregivers. We found that most adolescents are emotionally resilient and perceive a medium level of decision-making within their own families. Access to information and digital technology is extremely low in rural areas, though growing in urban areas, and older adolescents are more likely to be able to identify a role model than their younger peers. Girls and adolescents from rural areas, especially pastoralist areas, are significantly disadvantaged. Gender norms restrict girls' mobility and access to safe spaces, as well as limit their decision-making over their own lives, and geographic remoteness precludes options for the most rural. We also found that rapid intergenerational change has left parents needing support to manage adolescents.

Download: Jones, N., Hicks, J., Baird, S., Devonald, M., Neumeister, E., Presler-Marshall, E., Yadete, W. and Kebede, M. (2019) *Adolescent psychosocial well-being and voice and agency in Ethiopia*. A report on the GAGE Ethiopia baseline findings. London: Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence. Open Access

Ethiopia: Psychosocial well-being

Recommendation: Provide guidance to parents and teachers on supporting adolescents – including on positive disciplinary approaches – and safe, gender-sensitive and adequately resourced spaces for adolescents to interact with peers, alongside social workers and hotlines to support vulnerable young people and those with mental ill-health.

Adolescent girls aged 15–17 are more psychologically distressed than adolescent boys

Adolescents in psychosocial distress are more likely to have access to religious healers than formal services

Adolescents with disabilities are less able to discuss life issues with their parents than those without disabilities

Adolescent boys are more likely to be members of clubs than adolescent girls and have wider peer networks

"*There is a gap in providing emotional support among parents, discussing with children ... It is a gap that results from having no knowledge.*"
Community key informant, East Hararghe

BASELINE REPORT SERIES | gage GENDER & ADOLESCENCE: GLOBAL EVIDENCE

Implementation and effectiveness of adolescent life skills programs in low- and middle-income countries: a critical review and meta-analysis

This evidence review examines the effectiveness of life-skills interventions targeting adolescents in low- and middle-income countries.

'Adolescence represents an unprecedented opportunity to invest in health. Individual adolescent life skills programs in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) have demonstrated success but their effectiveness and key ingredients have not yet been examined. We conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis to identify key implementation processes and effectiveness of life skills programs among adolescents in LMICs which targeted at least one mental health outcome. Six academic databases were systematically searched until July 1, 2016 with no restriction on language and publication type... Meta-analyses with random effects models examined the overall effectiveness, as determined by their primary outcomes. Subsequent exploratory analyses determined which implementation processes predicted trial effectiveness. We included 50 eligible RCTs from 45 articles with a focus on an adolescent health program, which targeted at least one or more mental health outcomes...These interventions were effective in reducing symptoms of anger (SMD = 1.234), improving life skills (SMD = 0.755) and functioning (SMD = 0.491), and decreasing PTSD (SMD = 0.327), depression and anxiety (SMD = 0.305). Trial effectiveness was positively associated with the following life skills: interventions focused on parent-child interactions ($\beta = 0.557$, $p < 0.05$), assessing interpersonal relations ($\beta = 0.204$, $p < 0.05$) and stress management ($\beta = 0.216$, $p < 0.05$). Our results demonstrate the benefits of life skills programs targeting one or more mental health outcomes and co-occurring risk factors in school and community settings. Comprehensive programs focusing on multiple life skills and, in particular, interventions promoting parent-child interactions may hold particular promise in LMICs to address the burden of poor mental health and other health areas.'

Download: Singla, D., Waqas, A., Hamdani, S., Suleman, N., Zafar, S., Zill-e-Huma, Saeed, K., Servili, C. and Rahman, A. (2019) 'Implementation and effectiveness of adolescent life skills programs in low- and middle-income countries: a critical review and meta-analysis'. *Behaviour Research and Therapy* 103402. doi:10.1016/j.brat.2019.04.010.

A sex-disaggregated analysis of how emotional violence relates to suicide ideation in low- and middle-income countries

This research explores the relationship between young people's suicide ideation and emotional violence in low- and middle-income countries.

'In recent years, research has increasingly focused on examining the relationship between emotional violence and suicidal behaviours, however, this has been mostly limited to high-income contexts. This study examines how exposure to emotional violence is associated with suicide ideation in childhood and adolescence in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), and whether this association differs by sex. We employ nationally representative samples of 13–24-year-old males and females from the Violence Against Children Surveys in Tanzania (conducted in 2019), Kenya (2010) and Haiti (2012). We used logistic regressions to estimate the odds of ever reporting suicide ideation, separately, for each country; models control for self-reported exposure to emotional violence, physical violence from a caregiver, physical violence by an adult in the community, sexual violence, intimate partner violence, and age. Formal moderation by sex for each form of child maltreatment is tested using interaction terms. We find the odds of suicide ideation are consistently and significantly greater for adolescents who report ever exposure to emotional violence. This same consistency is not observed for any other form of maltreatment across countries. The size of the relationship between emotional violence and suicide ideation is statistically significantly larger for males in Kenya only. Research in LMICs should explore the mediating factors linking emotional abuse in childhood and adolescence to suicide ideation in adolescence, paying special attention to whether these pathways might operate differently by sex.'

Download: Seff, I. and Stark, L. (2019) 'A sex-disaggregated analysis of how emotional violence relates to suicide ideation in low- and middle-income countries'. *Child Abuse & Neglect* 93: 222–227. doi: 10.1016/j.chiabu.2019.05.008.

Measuring adverse child experiences among young adolescents globally: relationships with depressive symptoms and violence

This research examines the relationship between young adolescents' exposure to adverse child experiences and their mental health outcomes and their perpetration of violence.

'The purpose of the study was to develop a measure of Adverse Child Experiences (ACEs) applicable for young adolescents in low- and middle-income countries and to analyse the relationships of ACEs against two outcomes: depressive symptoms and violence perpetration. There is a paucity of research on the consequences of ACEs on adolescent health and behaviour from low- and middle-income countries and virtually no multinational studies. As part of the Global Early Adolescent Study, an 11-item measure of ACEs was developed and piloted with 1,284 adolescents aged 10–14 years in 14 urban communities in an equal number of countries. With one exception where interviewers were used, data were self-reported anonymously using tablets. Results compared a summative ACEs index score and latent class analysis. Findings show high rates of ACEs exposure experienced by young adolescents in resource-poor neighbourhoods in low- and middle-income countries; disproportionate exposures of boys and strong associations between ACEs and both depressive symptoms and violence perpetration. Latent class analysis provided modest refinement over a summed ACEs score. While interventions tend to focus on behavioural outcomes, evidence suggests that ACEs exposure is a strong antecedent related to both depressive symptoms and violence perpetration.'

Download: Blum, R., Li, M. and Naranjo-Rivera, G. (2019) 'Measuring adverse child experiences among young adolescents globally: relationships with depressive symptoms and violence perpetration'. *Journal of Adolescent Health* 65(1): 86–93.

Voice and agency

Self-efficacy, agency and empowerment during adolescence and young adulthood in Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam

Drawing on Young Lives data from four low- and middle-income countries, this paper explores how gender shapes self-efficacy and agency in adolescence and young adulthood.

'This working paper examines gender gaps in empowerment and the timing of their emergence through adolescence and young adulthood for two cohorts of children living in Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam. It uses longitudinal data from Young Lives on two psychosocial competencies – self-efficacy and agency – associated with the notion of empowerment. In all four countries, gaps in self-efficacy emerge in late adolescence, widening particularly between the ages of 15 and 19 and favouring boys. The results are more heterogeneous for agency; gaps widen between the ages of 12 and 15 and favour boys in Ethiopia and India, and girls in Peru and Vietnam. However, for the latter, the gaps close or even reverse in favour of boys by age 22. Our analysis pays special attention to the sub-national context: whether young people grow up in urban or rural areas. We find important gaps were found for rural girls, who show the lowest levels of agency and self-efficacy across the four countries. Finally, we explore the relationship between background characteristics and these two measures in mid-adolescence and young adulthood (ages 15 and 22). We find that these outcome measures correlate positively with the socio-economic level of the household in which they were born and grew up.'

Download: Espinoza Revollo, P. and Ogando Portela, M.J. (2019) Self-efficacy, agency and empowerment during adolescence and young adulthood in Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam. Oxford: Young lives. Open Access

Positive youth development programs in low- and middle-income countries: a conceptual framework and systematic review of efficacy

This evidence review examines the impact of positive youth development programmes in low- and middle-income countries.

'Positive youth development (PYD) has served as a framework for youth programs in high-income countries since the 1990s and has demonstrated broad behavioural health and developmental benefits. PYD programs build skills,

assets, and competencies; foster youth agency; build healthy relationships; strengthen the environment; and transform systems to prepare youth for successful adulthood. The goal of this article was to systematically review the impact of PYD programs in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). Targeted searches of knowledge repository web sites and keyword searches of Scopus and PubMed identified over 21,500 articles and over 3,700 evaluation reports published between 1990 and mid-2016. Ninety-four PYD programs with evaluations in LMICs were identified, of which 35 had at least one experimental or rigorous quasi-experimental evaluation. 60% of the 35 programs with rigorous evaluations demonstrated positive effects on behaviours, including substance use and risky sexual activity, and/or more distal developmental outcomes, such as employment and health indicators. There is promising evidence that PYD programs can be effective in LMICs; however, more rigorous examination with long-term follow-up is required to establish if these programs offer benefits similar to those seen in higher income countries.'

Download: Catalano, R.F., Skinner, M.L., Alvarado, G., Kapungu, C., Reavley, N., Patton, G.C., Jessee, C., Plaut, D., Moss, C. et al. (2019) 'Positive youth development programs in low- and middle-income countries: a conceptual framework and systematic review of efficacy'. *Journal of Adolescent Health* 65(1): 15–31. doi:10.1016/j.jadohealth.2019.01.024.

Gender attitudes in adolescence: evaluating the girl rising gender-sensitization program in India

This study evaluated the impact of a gender-sensitisation programme in India and found evidence that programmes can shift restrictive gender norms.

'Despite the gains India has made over the past 20 years, it remains a country with significant gender inequalities. Gender sensitization and empowerment programs during adolescence, when gender attitudes are formed, have the potential to diminish gender inequity. The Girl Rising 'Gender-sensitization program' was implemented in 254 schools in India to support adolescents in identifying, articulating, and sharing their gender-related experiences. A quasi-experimental study was conducted with a one group pre- and post-test with a sub-sample of schools in rural Punjab and Rajasthan, India (n=2,894 adolescents). Multivariable regression analyses adjusting for gender, grade, and district found that gender equality scores increased by 0.66 points (p < .001), gender roles/privileges/restrictions mean score increased by 0.41 points (p < .001), and gender attribute mean score increased by 0.17 points (p < .001). Gender-sensitization programs can play an important role in forming and changing gender attitudes during adolescence, and have the potential to alter their short and long-term beliefs.'

Download: Vyas, A.N., Malhotra, G., Nagaraj, N.C. and Landry, M. (2019) 'Gender attitudes in adolescence: evaluating the Girl Rising gender-sensitization program in India', *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, pp. 1–14. doi: 10.1080/02673843.2019.1598450 Open Access

Economic empowerment

Adolescent economic empowerment in Ethiopia

This report presents GAGE baseline findings on Ethiopian adolescents' economic empowerment, highlighting differences in outcomes by gender, age and region.

This report on economic empowerment is one of a series of short baseline reports focused on emerging mixed-methods findings from GAGE's work in Ethiopia. Our sample included nearly 7,000 younger (aged 10–12) and older (aged 15–17) adolescents and their caregivers. We found that adolescent occupational aspirations are high, with most young people expressing a strong preference for non-agricultural, and even professional, livelihoods. However, although few adolescents complete secondary school, there is limited uptake of the technical and vocational training that might support such career pathways. Government programmes require exam scores that rural adolescents can too rarely provide and private programmes are expensive. We also found that adolescents' access to assets and resources is limited and that

social protection programmes, while improving household food security and children's access to school, are often not taking adequate account of adolescents' age- and gender-related needs. Child labour remains common, especially for older adolescents and in urban areas.

Download: Jones, N., Hicks, J., Baird, S., Devonald, M., Neumeister, E., Presler-Marshall, P., Iyasu, A., Yadete, W. (2019) *Adolescent economic empowerment*. A report on GAGE Ethiopia baseline findings. London: Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence. Open Access

Formal-sector employment and Africa's youth employment crisis: irrelevance or policy priority?

This evidence synthesis is aimed at exploring the role and potential of formal sector employment in meeting Africa's youth un- and under-employment crisis.

'Youth employment has risen to the top of Africa's development agenda. But there is an often-ignored tension between the current policy and implementation focus on self-employment and entrepreneurship, and the ability of employment in the informal economy to meet the SDG commitment to "decent work for all". Formal-sector employment is more likely to offer decent work, but a policy focus on it can be dismissed as unrealistic, if not elitist. This paper aims to review and synthesise evidence about formal-sector employment in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and young people's engagement with it, for the purpose of bringing such employment more centrally into policy and interventions to address the continent's youth employment crisis. The article reviews evidence provided by selected labour market surveys and recent research studies from SSA on formal-sector employment and informal employment within the formal sector. Formal-sector employment is concentrated in urban areas, as are the vast majority of young Africans who have completed secondary school, and it is more likely to provide decent work than other forms of employment. These facts make it a serious mistake to underestimate the role of employment in the formal sector in addressing Africa's youth employment challenge. A long-term commitment to (a) the creation of new employment opportunities within the formal sector and (b) improving the governance of labour markets should be central to the coordinated response to Africa's youth employment crisis. Building on the existing base of educated young people and formal-sector employment in urban areas is likely to be the most effective way of creating a "decent work economy"'.

Download: Sumberg, J., Flynn, J., Mader, P., Mwaura, G., Oosterom, M., Sam-Kpakra, R. and Shittu, A. (2019) 'Formal-sector employment and Africa's youth employment crisis: irrelevance or policy priority?'. *Development Policy Review*. doi:10.1111/dpr.12436. Open Access

Ethiopia: Economic empowerment

Recommendation: Promote and enforce safe, non-exploitative labour practices for young people; strengthen access to and quality of technical and vocational training pathways, and savings and credit programmes for adolescents; and ensure social assistance programming is informed by adolescent-, gender- and disability-specific lenses.

Female caregivers have high aspirations for their adolescents' futures in professional – not agricultural – employment

But there are major differences in aspirations for girls. In pastoralist Afar, 25.2% want their daughters to be home-makers, compared to less than 1% in rural South Gondar

Older boys are twice as likely as older girls to have control over financial resources likely because they are twice as likely to be in paid work

Nearly one-third of rural adolescents live in households benefitting from the Productive Safety Net Programme

" *I wanted to continue my degree … But my family stopped sponsoring me and I stopped learning … Then I went to Sudan to work on the sesame harvest.*"
17-year-old boy, South Gondar

BASELINE REPORT SERIES

Gender and age-responsive social protection: the potential of cash transfers to advance adolescent rights and capabilities

This policy note synthesises what is and is not known about how cash transfers can help support adolescent capabilities and transitions in developmental and humanitarian contexts.

'Adolescence is recognized as a window of opportunity for offsetting childhood disadvantage and altering life trajectories. With more than one billion adolescents in the world, and many countries in the Global South experiencing a youth bulge, there is increasing urgency for national governments and donors to provide greater support, services and programming to this age group. Evidence on the economic and social impacts of cash transfers (CTs) highlights that such programmes can reap multiple dividends across the life cycle – including in terms of school and health service uptake, intrahousehold decision-making, and intimate partner violence. There is growing interest in how to leverage these programmes to improve adolescent well-being across the second decade of life and beyond. This brief reviews the impact of cash transfers on adolescent boys and girls (10–19 years) rights and capabilities through a gender and capability lens. It focuses on three key capability domains: education, sexual and reproductive health, and freedom from violence. The brief highlights the importance of a "cash plus" approach to enhancing adolescents' well-being and achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.'

Download: Jones, N., Presler-Marshall and Kahane, M. (2019) *Gender and age-responsive social protection: the potential of cash transfers to advance adolescent rights and capabilities*. London: UN Women & Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence. Open Access

Child poverty in Mozambique – multiple overlapping deprivation analysis

This research estimates and explores multi-dimensional child poverty in Mozambique.

'In this paper we provide we provide estimates and analysis of multidimensional child poverty in Mozambique. Drawing on data from the Mozambique Household Budget Survey of 2014/15, we define child multidimensional poverty using the Multiple Overlapping Analysis (MODA). We define three age groups of children, and a total of seven dimensions of deprivation: Family, Nutrition, Education, Child labour, Health, WASH, Participation, and Housing. Results show that 81% of children are deprived in at least two dimensions. Children are especially vulnerable in rural areas, where deprivation rates reach 95%, and in the provinces of Niassa, Zambezia, and Cabo Delgado. The dimensions that more frequently overlap in Mozambique are Housing, Health, and WASH, with one third of children being deprived in these three dimensions at the same time. The data also allows the analysis of the interplay between monetary and multidimensional child poverty: 46% of children suffer both forms of poverty. Children who are poor and deprived are children who live in rural areas, in more remote provinces; they live in households whose heads are less educated and whose main activity is agriculture. Finally, there is a direct correlation with shocks affecting the household and multidimensional poverty, with children of families who experienced weather shocks being more likely to be poor, deprived, or both.'

Download: Ferrone, L., Rossi, A., Bruckauf, Z. (2019). Child Poverty in Mozambique – Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Analysis, Innocenti Working Papers No. 2019-03, UNICEF Office of Research. Florence: Innocenti. Open Access

SPECIAL ISSUE CALLS

Social Work

Special issue on Mainstreaming Gender: An Intersectional Feminist Perspective on Social Work's Grand Challenges

This special issue will mainstream gender by placing it at the center of the conversation about the Grand Challenges for Social Work to advance the understanding of the ways that gender affects social policy, status, identity, rights, and responsibilities. **Abstract deadline is 15th July.**

Further information: can be found here

Global Health Action

Special issue on Gender Inequalities in Health: From Theory to Action

This special issue aims to contribute to better understanding the relationship between gender (in)equalities and health (in)equalities by expanding knowledge on how gender inequalities in society generate inequalities and inequities in health, disease, mortality, disability and access to health care. **Abstract deadline is 31st of July**.

Further information: can be found here

International Journal of Human Rights in Healthcare

Special issue on Sex Trafficking and Violence against Women

The main objective of this special issue is to assemble a coherent set of scholarly work on the impact of macro-level factors on sex trafficking and VAW that have a potential to move the understanding of these issues forward theoretically, empirically, and practically. **Abstract deadline is 31st July**.

Further information: can be found here

Social Science and Medicine

Special issues on Rethinking Syndemics Through Method, Over Time, and Across Spatial Boundaries

This Special Issue will revisit the kinds of quantitative and qualitative data useful for analyses of syndemics, how to evaluate the implications of syndemics for the burden of disease, and what these interactions convey. Moreover, there are opportunities to use syndemic theory to rigorously investigate how syndemic interactions change over time and across geographic boundaries. **Abstract deadline 1st September**.

Further information: can be found here

Global Pediatric Health

Special issue on Global Adolescent Medicine Updates: Empowering and Caring For the World's Youth

This Special Collection will include articles describing interventions and clinical innovations in adolescent health in a global context. Topics will ideally describe interventions and innovations, which take place in resource-limited settings. **Submit your paper online by the 30th November**.

Further information: can be found here

EVENTS

MOOC ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN THE CONTEXT OF MIGRATION

Date: 10th June – 21st July 2019   **Location:** Online

Event outline: This free online course, run by the Global Campus of Human Rights, provides participants with knowledge, multiple perspectives and examples of practices that can help them develop and reinforce their critical understanding and effective action in a field that is at the crossroads of gender, migration and human rights studies. For refugees and migrants, especially women and girls, moving and crossing borders often comes with heightened risks such as physical harm, sexual and gender-based violence (GBV), psychosocial trauma and exploitation, including trafficking. Addressing the root causes of forced and economic migration and ensuring that human rights are protected throughout the whole process are essential steps towards a stronger recognition of equal dignity for all.

More information: on the course can be found here

CONFERENCES

4TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY

Date: 16th-19th June 2020   **Location:** Montpellier, France

Conference outline: The 4th International Conference on Global Food Security addresses the topic of food security at all spatial levels from local to global, and from an interdisciplinary and systemic food systems perspective. It aims to better understand environmental, nutritional, agricultural, demographic, socio-economic, political, technological and institutional drivers, costs and outcomes of current and future food security. Interactions with contextual factors including climate change, urbanisation, greening the economy and data-driven technologies will be central. The conference addresses the triple burden of malnutrition: hunger, micronutrient deficiencies and obesity.

More information and call for contributions: on the conference can be found here **deadline for abstracts 20th September**

THE 6TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON RESEARCH IN BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Date: 30th – 31st October 2019   **Location:** Penang, Malaysia

Conference outline: : In line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, the theme of this unique event, ICH 2019, is "Innovation and Transformation in Humanities for a Sustainable Tomorrow." The organizers encourage submissions from any discipline (humanities, arts, science and technologies, medicine, engineering, etc.) that approaches this main theme from a variety of related thematic issues with respect to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

More information: on the conference can be found can be found here

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