Gender and Adolescence Research Panorama

Research, Events, Conferences and Calls for Papers

Quarter 3: 2019 Edition

gage
GENDER &
ADOLESCENCE:
GLOBAL
EVIDENCE

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RESEARCH

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Adolescent well-being: Cross-cutting findings

Progress for every child in the SDG era: The situation in 2019

This report is a follow-up to the 2018 report, Progress for every child in the SDG era. It aims to predict whether the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for children are attainable.

'This report is part of a series of UNICEF reports tracking progress on the child-related indicators in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This 2019 edition revisits the conclusions of Progress for every child in the SDG era, a report released in March 2018, and it reveals the latest assessment on the world's performance in meeting the 2030 Agenda for Children. Almost a billion (945 million) children live in countries where the SDGs remain out of reach, and countries are most likely to be off track to meeting progress envisioned by the SDGs. Many children remain effectively uncounted given the limited coverage of SDG data, but this situation is improving. Between 2018 and 2019, the likelihood of a country having no or insufficient data to assess its trajectory towards a child SDG target has fallen from 62 to 56 per cent. On average, 75 per cent of child-related SDG indicators in every country either have insufficient data or show insufficient progress to meet global SDG targets by 2030. The report calls for a step change now, both in assessing the situation of children everywhere and using data to target our efforts to reach those at greatest risk of being left behind.'

Download: UNICEF (2019) Progress for every child in the SDG era: are we on track to achieve the SDGs for children? The situation in 2019. New York: UNICEF Open Access

Protecting and supporting internally displaced children in urban settings: Key challenges and recommendations

This report aims to understand the specific challenges faced by displaced children in urban settings, looking particularly at their negative coping strategies and access to services.

'At the end of 2018 over 17 million children were internally displaced by conflict or violence, and millions more by disasters or other causes. Within a global context of increasing urbanization, towns and cities are becoming a major refuge for displaced populations, including children. The majority of the world's internally displaced persons (IDPs) already live outside camps, with many fleeing to urban areas. Displaced children and their families in urban settings may find it difficult to access basic services, including housing, protection and education. The problem stems from discrimination and stigmatisation, lack of documentation, financial barriers, inadequate information about available services and difficulty navigating the systems.'

Download: UNICEF and Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) (2019) Protecting and supporting internally displaced children in urban settings: key challenges and recommendations. New York and Geneva: UNICEF and IDMC Open Access

Education and learning

Adolescents in jordan: education and learning

This GAGE policy note summarises our baseline findings on adolescents' education and learning in Jordan, highlighting how outcomes differ by gender, age and region. It also evaluates the impact of UNICEF Jordan's Makani programme.

'The Jordanian government – together with international development partners – has made considerable strides in meeting the global commitment to 'No Lost Generation' and in scaling up educational opportunities for refugee populations. By converting hundreds of schools to run double-shifts, and hiring thousands of teachers, the Ministry of Education is

providing formal schooling to over 130,000 Syrian children. Despite efforts, however, a large majority of (70%) Syrian adolescents are not attending secondary school. GAGE's 2018 baseline findings, from research with host and refugee communities, highlight the fragility of adolescents' high educational aspirations and underscores the need for significantly more support if Jordan is to deliver on its new National Youth Strategy's goal of providing learning environments that are "safe, supportive and stimulating".'

Download: Presler-Marshall, E., Jones, N., Baird, S. and Malachowska, A. (2019) Adolescents in Jordan: education and learning. London: Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence Open Access

Beyond survival: Rohingya refugee children in Bangladesh want to learn

This report from UNICEF provides evidence on whether Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh are accessing their right to education and highlights the significant challenges that many refugee children face.

'In the past two years, an immense effort by humanitarian partners including UNICEF has helped stabilize the situation for Rohingya refugees from Myanmar who are living in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. But meeting their day-to-day needs is an ongoing challenge, and so is the task of providing for their longer-term needs – especially those related to education. Refugee children and young people are clamouring for more than survival; they yearn for quality education and the opportunity to develop skills that can provide a path to a better future. This UNICEF advocacy alert details the challenges mentioned above and efforts to address them, noting that the ultimate solution to the crisis is the voluntary and safe return of Rohingya refugees to their former communities in Myanmar. The report calls on the Government of Myanmar to establish conditions that would allow such a return as soon as possible. It also calls on the Government of Bangladesh and the international community to ensure that Rohingya refugee children and young people have access to the full range of rights and opportunities afforded to them by the Convention on the Rights of the Child.'

Download: UNICEF (2019) Beyond survival: Rohingya refugee children in Bangladesh want to learn. Dhaka: UNICEF Open Access

Addressing education inequality in sub-Saharan Africa

This analysis uses demographic and health survey (DHS) data from 25 countries in sub-Saharan Africa to capture education inequality. It highlights the lack of progress made in secondary and tertiary level at targeting inequality.

'This paper examines the impact of wealth inequality on education inequality in the sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries, including by decomposing inequality across gender. Specifically, it analyzes the impact of wealth concentration on the distribution of educational attainment using a sample of cross-sectional data from the USAID Demographic Health Survey on 25 countries, and deploying the education inequality Gini, generalized Lorenz curve, and Lorenz concentration curve. Educational attainment and wealth index were estimated to capture education inequality and wealth concentration. The findings confirm that social exclusion has remained chronic in SSA. Apart from Zimbabwe, SSA have not only failed to raise incidence levels of secondary and tertiary education, but also have largely been unable to reduce education inequality. Regardless of oil and gas endowments, investments going to education have remained low in these countries, while gender disparity on educational attainment burdening females has been high in Nigeria, Gambia, Ghana and Guinea. With the exception of Comoros, wealth concentration is the prime cause of education inequality in the remaining countries. The findings call for effective policies for the poor and females to raise their education levels thereby enabling them to earn incomes to break the vicious cycle of education inequality caused by wealth inequality.'

Download Temitope Obasuyi, F.O. and Rasiah, R. (2019) 'Addressing education inequality in sub-Saharan Africa' African Journal of Science, Technology, Innovation and Development 11(5): 629–641. doi:10.1080/20421338.2019.1567655

Left out, left behind: Adolescent girls' secondary education in crises

This report from Plan International examines global access to secondary education for refugee adolescents from a gender perspective.

'This report aims to understand more about the intersection between humanitarian crises, gender, age and education, paying close attention to gaps in secondary education. Where data permits, we explore the impact that humanitarian crises have on adolescent girls' educational attainment, how this contrasts to that of adolescent boys, and how results differ between geographies. Adolescence – which runs from age 10 to age 19 – is a critical time in a girl's development. It is a time when different expectations about appropriate behaviour often intensify and gender identities become stronger. During this time – the period when a girl would be transitioning to lower secondary and then on to upper secondary education – domestic and reproductive roles too often begin to dominate their lives at the expense of learning. Adolescent girls face challenges unique to their age and gender that are different to those faced by adult women and adolescent boys. Harmful social norms that devalue their education, school-related gender-based violence (GBV) and other forms of GBV in the home or the community, early marriage and pregnancy are all major obstacles to learning that are amplified in times of humanitarian crisis. Heightened insecurity, the breakdown of social support networks and cultural structures can exacerbate gender inequality, compounding the challenges faced by boys and girls. In this context, the ability of girls and boys to continue their education – particularly at secondary level – often comes under strain. This is despite the fact that, when asked, girls and boys consistently prioritise education during and after a humanitarian crisis. Education provides them with a sense of normality, safety and protection, and hope for the future.'

Download: Plan International UK (2019) Left out, left behind: adolescent girls' secondary education in crises. London: Plan International UK Open Access

Equitable access to quality education for internally displaced children: Challenges and recommendations

This report provides an overview of the challenges internally displaced children face in accessing education, and suggests a number of recommendations for achieving equitable access to education.

'The exact number of children living in internal displacement worldwide is unknown, but there were estimated to be over 17 million at the end of 2018, as a result of conflict and violence, and millions more due to disasters. Five million youth, aged between 18 and 24, were also living in internal displacement. Too many internally displaced children grow up deprived of an education and the long term opportunities it affords. A lack of capacity, resources and persistent insecurity, social tensions and discrimination are all significant barriers to education in many displacement situations. Internal displacement often places huge strains on already inadequate educational infrastructure, and when displaced children do attend school in many cases it is through parallel systems. These tend not to have qualified teachers or offer certified examinations, and risk having their funding cut at short notice.'

Download: UNICEF and IDMC (2019) Equitable access to quality education for internally displaced children: challenges and recommendations. New York and Geneva: UNICEF and IDMC Open Access

Bodily integrity and freedom from violence

Adolescents in Jordan: Freedom from age- and gender-based violence

This policy note by GAGE highlights the key baseline findings on adolescents' experiences of age- and gender-based violence in Jordan and the impact of UNICEF Jordan's Makani programme on adolescents' bodily integrity.

'The Jordanian government, together with international development partners, has committed to ensuring that young people grow up in an environment free from violence and embrace the values of tolerance and peace. Yet GAGE research suggests that adolescents in Jordan — irrespective of whether they are Jordanian or refugee or whether they live in host communities or formal or informal camps — continue to face multiple age- and gender-related risks, and that programming needs to do much more to mitigate these.'
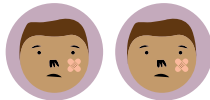
Many adolescents face multiple risks of violence because of their age and/or gender

Boys are twice as likely to experience physical punishment at school than girls (58% versus 25%).
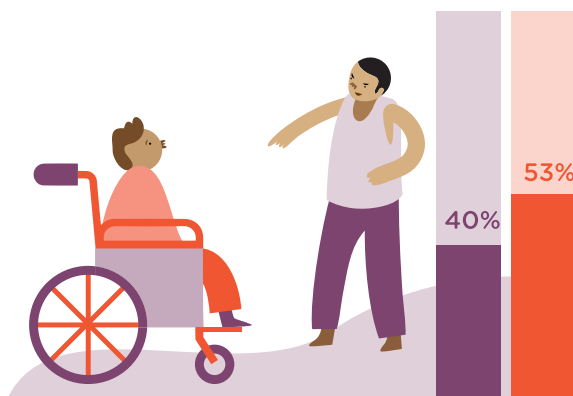
25%   58%

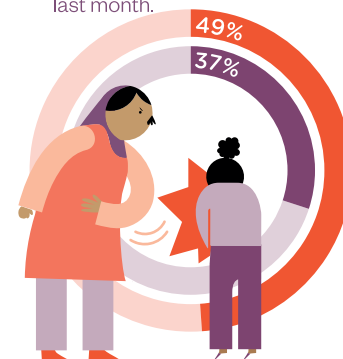Of GAGE older (15-17 years) refugee girls, nearly one in five are already married.

53% of adolescents with disabilities have been bullied.

40% of adolescents without disabilities have been bullied.

40%   53%

49% of adolescents have experienced violence at home.

37% of mothers admit to beating or slapping their adolescent in the last month.

49%
37%

Graphic designed to illustrate the GAGE baseline findings in Jordan by Ottavia Pasta/GAGE 2019

Download: Presler-Marshall, E., Jones, N., Baird, S. and Malachowska, A. (2019) Adolescents in Jordan: freedom from age- and gender-based violence. London: Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence Open Access

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18+ Ending child marriage and teen pregnancy in eastern and southern Africa: Learning for change

Plan International's report provides an overview of a selection of successful initiatives carried out as part of its 18+ Ending Child Marriage in Eastern and Southern Africa programme, and provides key policy and programme recommendations.

'Despite global declines in the rates of child marriage, an estimated 1 in 5 women worldwide are married as children … [and] it is most common in sub-Saharan Africa … Teen pregnancy is also a major social and health issue which can cause severe issues for both adolescent mothers and children – both in the short-term and on an intergenerational level. The purpose of this report is to help inform more effective, contextualized interventions to address CEFM and teen pregnancy. The report documents case studies of programme innovations and successes carried out as part of Plan International's 18+ Ending Child Marriage in Eastern and Southern Africa Programme (18+ RESA). This report also includes the stories of young people, told in their own words and images, who have confronted CEFM and teen pregnancy and risen above their challenges to become advocates for change in their communities. Ending CEFM and teen pregnancy requires work across all sectors and at all levels. It requires understanding the complex drivers behind the practices in different contexts in order to adapt interventions. 18+ RESA Programme takes a multi-level, holistic approach to identify and address the root causes or 'drivers' of CEFM, as well as relevant agents of change at all levels … Building on the successes and lessons learned within the 18+ RESA Programme, and with the support of communities, governments and other NGOs; we have learned how young people can be empowered to take on the child marriage problem in their communities.'

Download: Plan International (2019) 18+ Ending child marriage and teen pregnancy in eastern and southern Africa: learning for change. Lusaka: Plan International Open Access

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Unintentional injuries and violence among adolescents aged 12–15 years in 68 low-income and middle-income countries: A secondary analysis of data from the global school-based student health survey

This report reveals the extremely high rates of violence, unintentional injuries and bullying in 68 low- and middle-income countries, highlighting the disproportionate impact on adolescent boys.

'Injuries and violence account for a substantial proportion of the global burden of disease in adolescents, especially among low-income and middle-income countries (LMICs). We aimed to compare the prevalence of unintentional injuries and violence among young adolescents in LMICs. We did a secondary analysis of data from the Global School-based Student Health Survey (GSHS) for adolescents aged 12–15 years from LMICs collected between 2009 and 2015 … We used survey data to calculate the overall prevalence of serious injuries and violence … and bullying per country … Logistic regression models adjusted for sex, weights, stratum, and primary sampling unit were used to analyse the differences in prevalence of serious injuries, violence, and bullying. We included data from 68 LMICs, including 164 633 young adolescents (77 707 [47·2%] boys; 86 926 [52·8%] girls). The overall prevalence of physical attack, physical fighting, and serious injuries during the past 12 months were 35·6% (95% CI 30·7–40·5), 36·4% (29·9–42·9), and 42·9% (39·0–46·9), respectively. Prevalence varied by WHO region and was higher among boys than girls for injuries (47·8% vs 37·5%, p=0·00094), physical attack (41·0% vs 29·4%, p=0·001), and physical fighting (45·5% vs 26·9%, p<0·0001). Fractures (22·6%, 95% CI 19·1–26·1) and cuts (21·8%, 16·8–26·8) were the most common types of serious injury, and falling was the main cause of these injuries (33·1%, 30·2–35·9). The overall prevalence of bullying at least once in the past 30 days was 34·4% (27·1–41·7), irrespective of age and sex. The most common types of bullying were physical (18·3%, 13·7–23·0), verbal–sexual (13·2%, 10·2–16·2), and racial–ethnic (11·6%, 9·2–14·0). The prevalence of unintentional injuries and violence remain high among young adolescents in LMICs. These countries should prioritise the development of anti-violence and anti-injury programmes to improve health in their young adolescent populations.'

Download: Han, L., You, D., Gao, X., Duan, S., Hu, G., Wang, H., … and Zeng, F. (2019) 'Unintentional injuries and violence among adolescents aged 12–15 years in 68 low-income and middle-income countries: a secondary analysis of data from the Global School-Based Student Health Survey' The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health 3(9): 616–626 doi:10.1016/S2352-4642(19)30195-6

Child marriage, intimate partner violence and mental health among young Ethiopian women

This policy note from GAGE and ICRW uses data from a three-year study in Ethiopia to evaluate the links between child marriage, intimate partner violence (IPV) and psychosocial well-being, and provides a number of recommendations for programme implementers.

'Despite widespread knowledge of the negative implications of child marriage on girls' overall well-being, there is a dearth of information on the impact of child marriage on mental health and the mechanisms that influence it. Given these gaps, this brief explores the relationship between child marriage and mental health, assesses if IPV mediates this relationship and provides recommendations for future research and programming.'

Download: Sebany, M., Kapungu, C. and John, N. (2019) *Child marriage, intimate partner violence and mental health among young Ethiopian women: a research and programmatic brief*. Washington DC: International Center for Research on Women Open Access

Keeping the promise: Ending violence against children by 2030

This report provides an overview of the current data on violence against children and highlights five key components of a successful global approach to tackling this problem.

'We know that no child is "immune" to violence, and that every child is vulnerable. The report outlines a number of key risk factors, including discrimination, poverty, disability and gender, with girls affected disproportionately by certain forms of violence, boys affected more than we once thought, and both unlikely to report the violence they experience … We know that violence breeds violence, with children experiencing it in many forms across many contexts, and often carrying their experiences into adulthood where violence may be passed down as a grim legacy to their own children. Yet, as this report also shows, we also know that success breeds success: an incentive to redouble efforts on ending violence against children, anywhere and everywhere.'
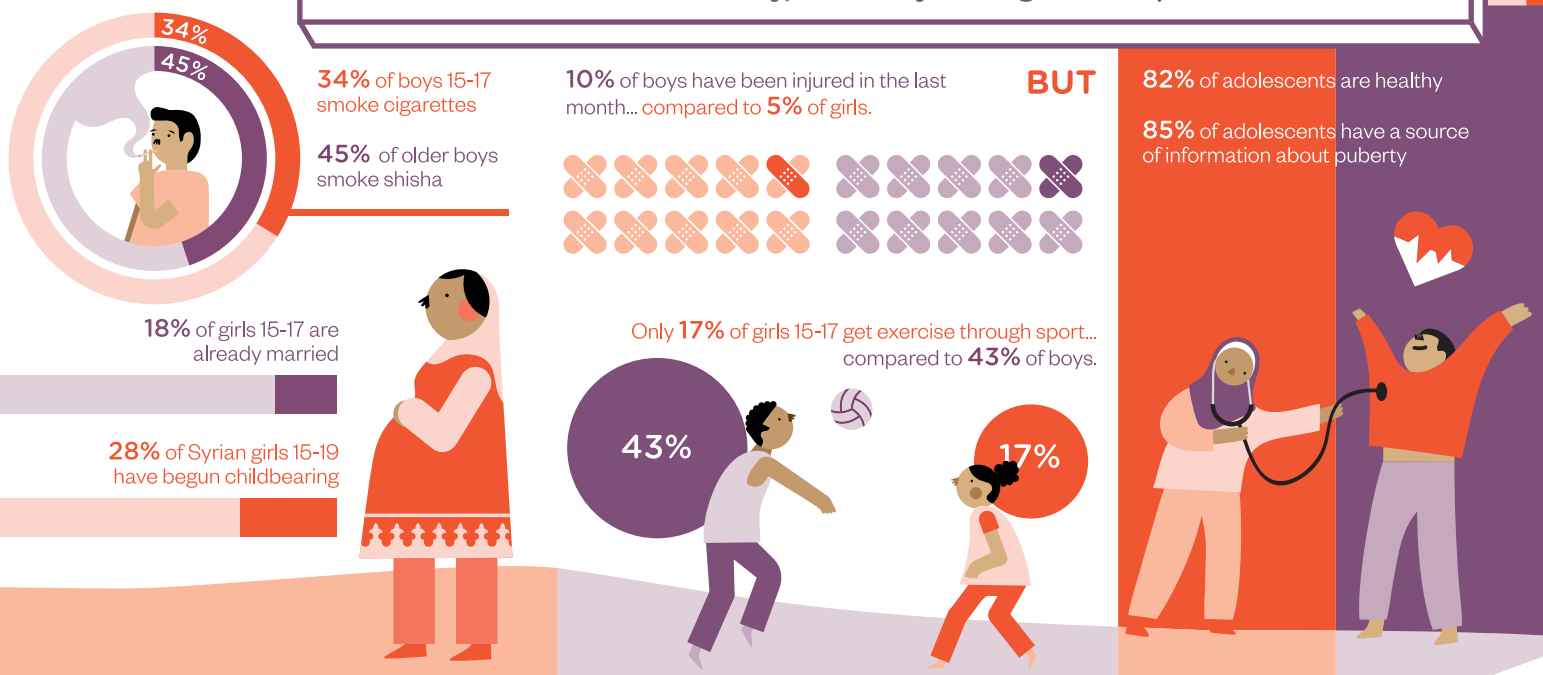
Sexual and reproductive health

Maternal age and offspring human capital in india

This report links adolescent motherhood with a range of negative consequences for children, including both cognitive and health impacts, and shows the disproportionate impact on female children of adolescent mothers.

'Early motherhood remains a widespread phenomenon in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). While the consequences of early motherhood for the mother have been extensively investigated, the impact on their children is severely understudied, especially in LMICs, which host 95% of teen births globally (WHO, 2014). Using panel and sibling data from India, this paper investigates the effect of early maternal age on offspring human capital development in terms of health and cognition, and relies on mother fixed effects to allow for household and mother unobserved heterogeneity. Furthermore, this paper explores the evolution of these effects over time during childhood and early adolescence for the first time. Results indicate that early maternal age has an overall detrimental effect on offspring health and cognition. We show that children born to early mothers are shorter for their age and perform poorer in the math test. Interestingly, the effect on child's health is observed at early ages and weakens over time, while the cognition effect surges only in early adolescence. The analysis on heterogeneous effects suggests that children and in particular girls born to very young mothers are worst off. The transmission channel analysis tentatively hints at some behavioral channels driving the relationships of interest and documents a positive (and modest) association between height-for-age and subsequent math performance. Overall, our results support both restorative policies assisting children born to early mothers and preventive policies tackling early pregnancy.'

Download: Perez-Alvarez, M. and Favara, M. (2019) Maternal age and offspring human capital in India. IZA Discussion Paper No. 12489. Bonn: Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA) Open Access

Most adolescents are healthy, but they face gender-specific health risks

34% of boys 15-17 smoke cigarettes

45% of older boys smoke shisha

10% of boys have been injured in the last month… compared to 5% of girls.

BUT

82% of adolescents are healthy

85% of adolescents have a source of information about puberty

18% of girls 15-17 are already married

28% of Syrian girls 15-19 have begun childbearing

Only 17% of girls 15-17 get exercise through sport… compared to 43% of boys.

43%

17%

Graphic designed to illustrate the GAGE baseline findings in Jordan by Ottavia Pasta/GAGE 2019

Child marriage among boys in high-prevalence countries: An analysis of sexual and reproductive health outcomes

This article addresses the lack of evidence on child marriage among boys and documents the sexual and reproductive health outcomes associated with early marriage for boys.

'While the determinants and impacts of child marriage among girls have been well documented, little research exists on the practice among boys. This paper explores the sociodemographic profile of men who married by age 18 and assesses whether they are more or less advantaged than their peers in terms of their sexual and reproductive health outcomes. This analysis used the most recent data from nationally representative household surveys for the 15 countries with the highest prevalence of marriage by age 18 among men aged 20–24 at the time of the survey … Available reproductive health indicators were explored, comparing men who married during childhood and men who married in adulthood … For this subset of countries, the prevalence of child marriage among men aged 20–24 ranges from 8.4 to 27.9%. The practice appears most common among respondents living in the poorest households and in rural areas, and with no education or only primary schooling. Men who married as children appear less likely to have comprehensive knowledge of HIV than their peers who married in adulthood. Little difference among men who married by age 18 and those who married in adulthood was observed regarding knowledge or use of modern methods of contraception. In almost all countries with data, the odds of having fathered three or more children among men aged 20–29 are higher for those who married as children compared to their peers. In four countries, the odds of exceeding one's ideal family size among men aged 40–49 also appear higher among those who married during childhood compared to men who married at older ages. These results highlight the need for further research to identify drivers of the practice and short- and long-term outcomes for men who married during childhood, specifically concerning fatherhood, fertility preferences, and completed family size.'

Download: Misunas, C., Gastón, C. and Cappa, C. (2019) 'Child marriage among boys in high-prevalence countries: an analysis of sexual and reproductive health outcomes' BMC International Health and Human Rights 19(1) doi:10.1186/s12914-019-0212-8 Open Access

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"It is a thing that depends on God": Barriers to delaying first birth and pursuing alternative futures among newly married adolescent girls in Niger

This qualitative study in Niger explores the range of factors that influence married adolescent girls' ability to delay their first birth.

'Pregnancy among adolescent girls in Niger contributes to 34% of all deaths among females ages 15–19, but there is a dearth of research as to the specific contextual causes. In Zinder region, an area that is especially impoverished and where girls are at heightened risk, there is very little information on the main obstacles to improving adolescents' health and well-being. This qualitative study examines the underlying social, individual and structural factors influencing married girls' early first birth and participation in alternative opportunities (such as education or economic pursuits) in Niger. In July of 2017, researchers conducted in-depth interviews … in three communes of Zinder Region, Niger. Participants (n =107) included adolescent girls, husbands of adolescent girls, influential adults, community leaders, health providers, and positive deviants … Participants recognize the health benefits of delaying first birth, but stigma around infertility and contraceptive use, desire for children, and belief that childbirth is "God's will" interfere with a girl's ability to delay. Girls' social isolation, lack of mobility or autonomy, and inability to envision alternatives to early motherhood compound the issue. Participants favour adolescents' pursuit of increased economic opportunities or education, but would not support delaying birth to do so. Findings indicate the need for a holistic approach to delaying early birth and stimulating girls' participation in economic and educational pursuits. Potential interventions include mitigating barriers to reproductive health care; training adolescent girls on viable economic activities; and providing educational opportunities for girls. Effective programs should also include or target immediate members of the girls' families (husbands, parents, in-laws), influential local leaders and members of the community at large.'

Download: Samandari, G., Grant, C., Brent, L. and Gullo, S. (2019) '"It is a thing that depends on God": barriers to delaying first birth and pursuing alternative futures among newly married adolescent girls in Niger' Reproductive Health 16(1) doi:10.1186/s12978-019-0757-y Open Access

Sexual and reproductive health needs of adolescent girls and young women in sub-Saharan Africa: Research, policy and practice

this collection of articles all relate to the common theme of adolescents' sexual and reproductive health needs, providing evidence from a range of topics and methodologies.

'Seventeen articles make up this special collection, covering a range of different, but cross-cutting themes. These highlight contemporary concerns in African research and scholarship about the factors configuring the sexual and reproductive health needs of adolescent girls and young women (AGYW). The articles interrogate contextual and cultural impediments, problematic representations, perceptions of vulnerabilities and rights, experiences of gender-based violence, coercive sex, unplanned motherhood – and agency, resistance and strategic interventions. While a diverse range of issues, theories, and methodologies are evident, all the articles reflect on how the circumstances of young women in Africa can be effectively improved to engender empowerment, good health, and personal and sexual autonomy.'

Download: Naidoo, K., Adeagbo, O. and Pleaner, M. (2019) 'Sexual and reproductive health needs of adolescent girls and young women in sub-Saharan Africa: research, policy, and practice' SAGE Open 9(3) doi:10.1177/2158244019859951 Open Access

Health and nutrition

Adolescents in Jordan: Health, nutrition, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)

This GAGE policy note provides an overview of the main findings from the Jordan baseline research on adolescents' health, nutrition and WASH, and the impact of UNICEF Jordan's Makani programme.

'During adolescence – a time of rapid physical growth and change – young people need access to relevant health, nutrition, hygiene and sanitation related information, services and supplies. GAGE research found that much more could be done to improve adolescents' physical health and help them develop the habits and patterns that will support good health over the life course.'

Download: Presler-Marshall, E., Jones, N., Baird, S. and Malachowska, A. (2019) Adolescents in Jordan: health, nutrition and WASH. London: Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence Open Access

State of food security and nutrition in the world 2019: Safeguarding against economic slowdowns and downturns

This global report aims to provide an overview of food security and nutrition, and highlights that adolescent mothers are likely to have low birthweight babies.

'This joint report … presents the latest estimates on food insecurity, hunger and malnutrition at the global and regional levels … Among other highlights, this edition finds that … more than 820 million people in the world were still hungry in 2018, underscoring the immense challenge of achieving the Zero Hunger target by 2030 … Hunger is on the rise in almost all African sub-regions, making Africa the region with the highest prevalence of undernourishment. Hunger is also slowly rising in Latin America and the Caribbean, while Western Asia shows a continuous increase since 2010, with more than 12 percent of its population undernourished today … A greater focus on overweight and obesity, including child overweight and adult obesity, is needed to better understand the different dimensions of these nutrition challenges … The report calls for action to safeguard food security and nutrition through economic and social policies … It calls for action, as well, to tackle inequalities at all levels through multisectoral policies making it possible to more sustainably avert food insecurity and malnutrition.'

Download: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Food Programme (WFP) and World Health Organization (WHO) (2019) *The state of food security and nutrition in the world 2019: safeguarding against economic slowdowns and downturns*. Rome: FAO Open Access

Trends and correlates of overweight among pre-school age children, adolescent girls, and adult women in South Asia: An analysis of data from 12 national surveys in 6 countries over 20 years

This study uses data from nationwide surveys in six countries in South Asia to analyse the key trends and relationships in overweight females.

'Overweight has become a global pandemic and is associated with a rise in diet-related non-communicable diseases and associated co-morbidities. Most of the world's undernourished people live in South Asia, yet the number of overweight and obese individuals in this region is growing. This study explores trends and correlates of overweight among pre-school age children, adolescent girls, and adult women in South Asia. Using pooled data from 12 national surveys in six countries, generalized linear mixed models were run to analyze relationships. Overweight children had significantly higher odds than non-overweight children of having an overweight mother (Adjusted Odds Ratio: 1.34, p < 0.01). Overweight adolescent girls were more likely to come from a wealthier household (Adjusted Prevalence Ratio (APR): 2.46, p < 0.01) in an urban area (1.74, p < 0.01), and have formal education (1.22, p < 0.01), compared to non-overweight girls. Similar relationships were seen among overweight vs. non-overweight adult women. In Bangladesh, India, and Nepal, overweight among girls and women increased over time, while differentials associated with household wealth, urban residence, and formal education attenuated over time. Overweight and obesity are becoming more prevalent across South Asia in a context of persisting undernutrition. Once a condition of the wealthier, more educated and urban, rates of overweight are increasing among poorer, less educated, and rural women. This requires immediate attention to 'multi-use' policies and programmes.'

Download: Harding, K., Aguayo, V. and Webb, P. (2019) 'Trends and correlates of overweight among pre-school age children, adolescent girls, and adult women in South Asia: an analysis of data from twelve national surveys in six countries over twenty years' Nutrients 11(8): 1899 doi: 10.3390/nu11081899 Open Access

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Cannabis use and leisure-time sedentary behaviour among 94,035 adolescents aged 12–15 years from 24 low- and middle-income countries

This article analyses data from 24 LMICs to assess the association between cannabis use and sedentary behaviour in adolescents aged 12–15 years.

'Adolescents spend a high proportion of their leisure time in sedentary behaviour, which is associated with adverse physical and mental health outcomes. Exploring factors associated with leisure-time sedentary behaviour (LTSB) is important for the development of targeted interventions. The aim of this study was to explore associations between cannabis use and LTSB in adolescents from 24 low- and middle-income countries. Data from the Global School-based Student Health Survey were analysed. Data on past month cannabis use and LTSB during a typical day were collected. Multivariable logistic regressions were conducted to assess the associations. Among 94,035 adolescents aged 12–15 years [age = 13.7 ± SD 0.9 years; 49.2% female], the prevalence of high LTSB (≥3 h/day) was 26.6%, while 2.8% used cannabis at least once in the past 30 days. In adjusted analyses, compared to those who did not consume cannabis in the past 30 days, the OR (99%CI) for high LTSB among those who used cannabis 1–2 times, 3–9 times, 10–19 times, and ≥20 times were 0.89 (0.58–1.35), 1.96 (1.26–3.07), 1.97 (0.71–5.47), and 2.34 (0.95–5.78), respectively (test for trend p < 0.01). Our data suggest that frequent cannabis use is associated with increased odds for being more sedentary in adolescence. Future longitudinal data are required to confirm/refute the findings to inform public health campaigns.'

Download: Vancampfort, D., Firth, J., Smith, L., Stubbs, B., Rosenbaum, S., Van Damme, T., ... and Koyanagi, A. (2019) 'Cannabis use and leisure-time sedentary behavior among 94,035 adolescents aged 12–15 years from 24 low- and middle-income countries' Addictive Behaviors 99: 106104 doi: 10.1016/j.addbeh.2019.106104

Psychosocial well-being

Creating evidence-based youth mental health policy in sub-Saharan Africa: a description of the integrated approach to addressing the issue of youth depression in Malawi and Tanzania

This article describes an integrated programmatic approach to addressing mental health among young people in sub-Saharan Africa.

'Addressing depression in young people is a health-care policy need in sub-Saharan Africa. There exists poor mental health literacy, high levels of stigma, and weak capacity at the community level to address this health-care need. These challenges are significant barriers to accessing mental health care for depression, soon to be the largest single contributor to the global burden of disease. We here describe an innovative approach that addresses these issues simultaneously while concurrently strengthening key mental health components in existing education and health-care systems as successfully applied in Malawi and replicated in Tanzania … Funded by Grand Challenges Canada, we developed and applied a program called "An Integrated Approach to Addressing the Challenge of Depression Among the Youth in Malawi and Tanzania" (IACD). This was an example of, a horizontally integrated pathway to care model designed to be applied in low-resource settings. The model is designed to 1) improve awareness/knowledge of mental health and mental disorders (especially depression) in communities; 2) enhance mental health literacy among youth and teachers within schools; 3) enhance capacity for teachers to identify students with possible depression; 4) create linkages between schools and community health clinics for improved access to mental health care for youth identified with possible depression; and 5) enhance the capacity of community-based health-care providers to identify, diagnose, and effectively treat youth with depression. With the use of interactive, youth-informed weekly radio programs, mental health curriculum training for teachers and peer educators in secondary schools, and a clinical competency training program for community-based health workers, the innovation created a "hub and spoke" model for improving mental health care for young people. Positive results obtained in Malawi and replicated in Tanzania suggest that this approach may provide an effective and potentially sustainable framework for enhancing youth mental health care, thus providing a policy ready framework that can be considered for application in sub-Saharan Africa.'

Download: Kutcher, S., Perkins, K., Gilberds, H., Udedi, M., Ubuguyu, O., Njau, T., … Hashish, M. (2019) 'Creating evidence-based youth mental health policy in sub-Saharan Africa: a description of the integrated approach to addressing the issue of youth depression in Malawi and Tanzania' Frontiers in Psychiatry doi:10.3389/fpsyt.2019.00542 Open Access

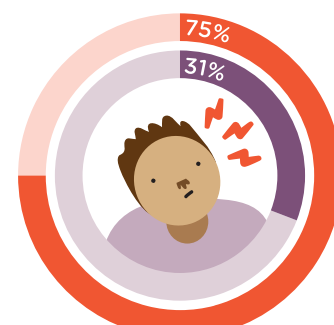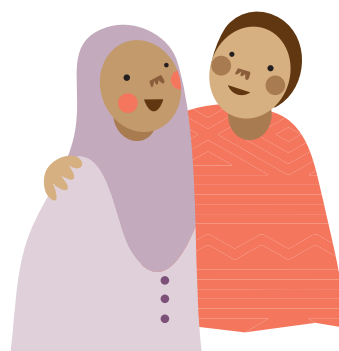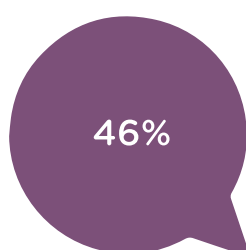## Many adolescents need more emotional support.

Less than **10%** of girls can talk with their fathers about when they will be married.

Only **46%** of boys can talk with their mothers about being bullied.

71% of adolescents have a friend they trust
64% of adolescents with a disability have a trusted friend
61% of married girls have a trusted friend.

75% of adolescents are resilient

31% of adolescents report psychological distress.

46% **10%**

75%
31%

Graphic designed to illustrate the GAGE baseline findings in Jordan by Ottavia Pasta/GAGE 2019

Child marriage and psychological well-being in Niger and Ethiopia

This article uses both qualitative and quantitative methods to assess the association of child marriage with a number of psychosocial consequences.

'Despite an understanding of the circumstances of child marriage, including how it limits agency and erodes childhood support systems, not much is known about the relationship between child marriage and mental health of child brides, especially in the sub-Saharan African context. To address this gap, we use large-scale population-based data from ever-married women aged 18–45 in Niger (n = 2764) and Ethiopia (n = 4149) to examine the association of child marriage with overall psychological well-being and its sub-domains: depression, anxiety, positive well-being, vitality, self-control and general health. We complement this with qualitative data from Ethiopia to further contextualize the psychological well-being of child brides … Our regression analysis found significant negative associations between very early marriage (marriage at 15 years or earlier) and overall psychological well-being in both Niger and Ethiopia. With the exception of self-control, all sub-domains of psychological well-being – depression, anxiety, positive well-being, vitality and general health – were negatively associated with very early marriage. In addition, in the qualitative analysis, Ethiopian child brides reported suffering emotional distress and depression induced by the burden of handling marital responsibilities at an early age. The study highlights that even in settings where child marriage is normative, marrying very early is associated with negative outcomes. Further research is needed to understand the mechanisms that make those married during early adolescence particularly vulnerable to psychological distress, so that programs can address those vulnerabilities.'

Download: John, N., Edmeades, J. and Murithi, L. (2019) 'Child marriage and psychological well-being in Niger and Ethiopia' BMC Public Health 19(1) doi:10.1186/s12889-019-7314-z Open Access

The relationship between multiple exposures to violence and war trauma, and mental health and behavioural problems among Palestinian children and adolescents

This article explores the relationship between Palestinian adolescents' exposure to different forms of violence and a number of psychosocial outcomes.

'The current study aims to investigate the effect of cumulative exposure to violence on mental health amongst children and adolescents living in the Gaza Strip. The sample consists of 1029 children and adolescents aged 11–17 years. Of them, 533 (51.8%) were female and 496 (48.2%) were male. War-traumatic events were measured using the War-Traumatic Events Checklist (W-TECh). Violence was derived from the Multicultural Events Schedule for Adolescents (M.E.S.A.) containing three domains: violence at home, violence in the neighbourhood, and violence at school. Emotional and behavioural problems were measured using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ). Posttraumatic Stress Disorder was measured using the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorders Symptoms Scale (PTSDSS). Finally, depression symptoms were measured by the Depression scale. Around two thirds of the children (64.5%, N = 665) reported that they were exposed to violence at home, 48.2% (N = 497) to violence in the neighbourhood, 78.2% (N = 806) to violence at school. In addition, boys significantly showed more exposure to violence compared to girls. Moreover, the prevalence of PTSD according to DSM-5 is 53.5% (N = 549). The results also showed that cumulative effect of exposure to violence in more contexts (political war trauma, violence at home, neighbourhood and/or school) predicted higher levels of PTSD, social and emotional problems, depression, and overall mental health problems amongst children. Cumulative exposure to violence may increase the propensity of developing mental health problems such as PTSD, emotional and behavioural problems, and depression symptoms and thus interventions should be targeted to these populations.'

Download: El-Khodary, B. and Samara, M. (2019) 'The relationship between multiple exposures to violence and war trauma, and mental health and behavioural problems among Palestinian children and adolescents' European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry doi: 10.1007/s00787-019-01376-8

Voice and agency

Adolescents in Jordan: Voice, agency, mobility and social cohesion

This GAGE policy note highlights the key findings from our baseline research in Jordan and evaluates the effectiveness of UNICEF Jordan's Makani programme on adolescents' voice and agency.

'Due to generational hierarchies in Jordan, opportunities for adolescents to exercise voice and agency – over their own lives, in their households and their broader communities – are fairly limited. Our research suggests that government and humanitarian programming could do much more to provide young people with opportunities to participate in community affairs and to build social cohesion and a sense of shared belonging.'

Download: Presler-Marshall, E., Jones, N., Baird, S. and Malachowska, A. (2019) Adolescents in Jordan: voice, agency, mobility and social cohesion. London: Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence Open Access

Voice, choice and power: Evidence and recommendations for increasing girls' and young women's agency and decision-making through U.S. foreign assistance

This brief evidence review and policy brief highlights the need to give young people the specific tools they need to be able to access agency across all aspects of their lives.

'Four in ten people alive today are under the age of 25. That means that children and youth comprise roughly 42 percent of the world's population. A majority live in low- and middle- income countries, nearly half of which are in Sub-Saharan Africa. This concentration of young people has ignited policymaker interest in unlocking the so-called "demographic dividend," or the potential for greater economic returns when a young generation is positioned to thrive. Policymakers and development practitioners often focus on assets and opportunities that young people must be equipped with to contribute meaningfully to the communities and society around them. However, an often overlooked success factor is personal empowerment, or the ability of young people to make and act on their own decisions regarding crucial life choices, such as education, employment and family formation. When youth have the agency to make key decisions for themselves across all aspects of their lives – from health, education, marriage, family planning, household expenditures, and beyond – they are more likely to grow into successful, healthy adults.'

Download: Hinson, L., Clement, R. and Thompson, L. (2019) Voice, choice and power: evidence and recommendations for increasing girls' and young women's agency and decision-making through US foreign assistance. Washington DC: International Center for Research on Women Open Access

Girls have less freedoms than boys which shapes their opportunities to interact with peers and the wider world

45% of girls are online   56% of boys are online

Of all GAGE refugees adolescent boys are nearly twice as likely as girls to have a mobile phone for their own use (46% vs 25%).

Of all GAGE adolescent girls, nearly one third do not leave home on a daily basis.

1/3

Graphic designed to illustrate the GAGE baseline findings in Jordan by Ottavia Pasta/GAGE 2019

Measuring agency as a dimension of empowerment among young adolescents globally; findings from the global early adolescent study

This article uses data from the Global Early Adolescent Study to assess whether three specific forms of agency are a measurable concept among 10–14-year-old adolescents.

'Agency, a domain of empowerment, is a measurable construct amongst early adolescents age 10-14. Three sub-scales – Voice, Freedom of Movement, and Behavioral Control and Decision-making – comprise the measurement of agency. Differences in the Freedom of Movement sub-scale show a growing equity gap between boys and girls across multiple countries. Users of the scales must consider context when adapting the items to account for differences in culture and environment.'

Download: Zimmerman, L., Li, M., Moreau, C., Wilopo, S. and Blum, R. (2019) 'Measuring agency as a dimension of empowerment among young adolescents globally; findings from the Global Early Adolescent Study' SSM – Population Health 8: 100454 doi: 10.1016/j.ssmph.2019.100454 Open Access

My body, my life, my world: A global strategy for adolescents and youth

This report from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) describes its global strategy to empower adolescents and youth to understand their rights and make informed choices about their lives and bodies.

'My Body, My Life, My World is UNFPA's new global strategy for adolescents and youth. It puts young people – their talents, hopes, perspectives and unique needs – at the very centre of sustainable development. In doing so, it supports the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and aligns with the new United Nations Strategy on Youth as well as UNFPA's 2018-2021 Strategic Plan. Everything UNFPA does rests on the commitments to sexual and reproductive health and rights for all, which is embodied in the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development and its Programme of Action. These commitments are crucial for adolescents and youth. Young people realizing their rights to make informed choices about their own bodies, their own lives and the world they live in is a matter of justice and a driver of a lifetime of returns.'

Download: UNFPA (2019) My body, my life, my world: a global strategy for adolescents and youth. New York: UNFPA Open Access

Real choices, real lives: girls challenging the gender rules

This Plan International report is the second in a series of three reports that follow the lives of 142 girls from poor families in South Asia. It aims to understand their ability to reject gender norms and expectations in their lives.

'This latest report from the Real Choices, Real Lives Cohort study is the second in a series of three reports for 2019, focusing on the South East Asian countries – Cambodia, the Philippines, and Vietnam … The report looks in-depth at the responses of the 46 girls across the three South East Asian countries to the gender socialisation process which has surrounded them from birth. The analysis is based particularly on data from 2015 to 2018, when the girls moved from middle childhood into early adolescence. It draws substantially on detailed longitudinal case studies of three girls. These girls' stories were selected, not as representative examples, but because they provide more pronounced cases of 'pushback' and, through the girls' varied experiences, enable us to consider different potential influences. The study identifies the strength of gendered expectations, but also that there is potential for gender norms to shift – with girls, and their families, questioning what is considered appropriate and beginning to do things differently, or aspiring to things being different. We see that there can be 'glitches' in the process of gender norm reproduction, and the report therefore looks closely at: how and why girls start to question the expectations they grow up with; and when and why they decide that "something different" is possible. Our analysis provides the girls foundation for considering whether they continue to hold this belief as they grow older. Real Lives is uniquely placed to track this as the girls continue to grow up and to use this information to both support girls' resistance and influence programming and policy within the international development community.'

Economic empowerment

Adolescents in Jordan: Economic empowerment and social protection

This GAGE policy note provides a summary of our key findings from baseline research on adolescents' economic empowerment in Jordan, including an assessment of the impact of UNICEF Jordan's Makani programme.

'Adolescents need tailored support to develop the aspirations and skills they need to become the 'generation capable of creativity and innovation with high productivity' envisioned by Jordan's new National Youth Strategy. GAGE research findings suggest that adolescents in Jordan, especially Syrian refugees, remain vulnerable to exploitative child labour and rarely benefit from programming for economic empowerment.'

Adolescent economic empowerment in Dhaka, Bangladesh

This GAGE policy note presents our baseline findings on Bangladeshi adolescents' economic empowerment in Dhaka, highlighting specific experiences shaped by gender.

'Although the Bangladeshi Labour Act 2006 prohibits people younger than 14 years from working and limits those aged between 14 and 18 from working in hazardous jobs, these activities are prevalent. In particular, rates of female child labour were found to be high in Dhaka, at 4.8%, more than twice as high as the rates in any other division. Income generating opportunities in urban centres, such as Dhaka, are highly gendered: boys work in the services sector on average 50 hours weekly and earn 50% more than girls, girls work in garment factories an average of 40 hours weekly. This brief explores the economic aspirations of adolescents in slums around Dhaka, what kinds of skills or training they are receiving, including numeracy and literacy, whether they have access to resource endowments, savings and credit, and how they access these. In Dhaka, baseline data collection entailed quantitative interviews with 780 adolescent girls and boys and more in-depth qualitative research involving 36 adolescents and their families and communities. We also look at whether any social protection provisioning exists and whether the sort of work adolescents are doing can be classified as 'decent work' under International Labour Organization guidelines.'

Fiscal space for child-sensitive social protection in the MENA region

This report provides an overview of social protection schemes in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region looking specifically at their reach to children in poverty.

'The prevalence of multidimensional poverty in the MENA region, especially among children, is high. A child's experience of poverty and vulnerability differs from that of an adult, especially with the irreversible and detrimental consequences that impact child's survival and development. Social protection policies and programming can help address the multifaceted nature of child poverty and vulnerability. In fact, realizing the right to social protection can augment realizing other rights to basic social services, including health, nutrition and education … Realizing the right to social protection requires adequate, efficient, equitable and sustainable financing, which is far from optimal in the MENA region. The region has recently witnessed the introduction of new flagship social protection programmes. However, comparing coverage estimates of social protection programmes with the incidence of children's multidimensional and monetary poverty reveals that hardly any of the programmes are large enough to cover all vulnerable children. To expand child-sensitive components in social

protection schemes requires funding, and governments of MENA countries are to consider different options to finance such an expansion. The "Fiscal space for child-sensitive social protection in the MENA region" study aims to assess how MENA countries can expand financing of child-sensitive social protection financing in a sustainable manner, and how to create fiscal space and accelerate investments in social protection while highlighting the limitations of deficit financing and other revenue-increasing alternatives.'

Download: Bloch, C., Bilo, C., Helmy, I., Osorio, R.G. and Soares, F.V. (2019) Fiscal space for child-sensitive social protection in the MENA region. Brasília and Amman: International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth and UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Regional Office Open Access

Against the odds: Why some children fare well in the face of adversity

This article by Young Lives aims to understand how and why some adolescents who face significant challenges and adversity are able to thrive.

'This article asks why some children growing up in poverty seem to fare well, despite the odds being stacked against them early in life. The data come from Young Lives, a 15-year mixed methods study of childhood poverty tracing the trajectories of a cohort of boys and girls (n = 4,000) born in 1994 in Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam. We use survey data to identify children in the poorest households who, by age 22, were faring well. The article addresses three main questions: (a) What are the key determining moments in children's lives? (b) What makes a difference for children during these turning points? And (c) what made a difference in the lives of those children who have fared well despite facing adversity? The findings demonstrate the crucial role of children's social relationships and support networks, migration, institutional barriers, the importance of hope and 'second chances'. However, a longitudinal approach illuminates the ongoing nature of human vulnerability and the fragility of young people's life trajectories in contexts of poverty.'

Download: Crivello, G. and Morrow, V. (2019) 'Against the odds: why some children fare well in the face of adversity' The Journal of Development Studies doi: 10.1080/00220388.2019.1626837

Putting Children First: New Frontiers in the Fight Against Child Poverty in Africa

This edited book brings together contributions to help understand, and provide solutions to, child poverty. It includes a chapter by GAGE entitled 'Disentangling urban adolescents' vulnerabilities to age- and gender-based violence through a capability lens in Ethiopia and Rwanda'.

'Despite important strides in the fight against poverty in the past two decades, child poverty remains widespread and persistent, particularly in Africa. Poverty in all its dimensions is detrimental for early childhood development and leads to often unreversed damage for the lives of girls and boys, locking children and families into intergenerational poverty. This edited volume contributes to the policy initiatives aiming to reduce child poverty and academic understanding of child poverty and its solutions by bringing together applied research from across the continent. With the Sustainable Development Goals having opened up an important space for the fight against child poverty, not least by broadening its conceptualization to be multidimensional, this collection aims to push the frontiers by challenging existing narratives around child poverty, exploring alternative understandings of the complexities and dynamics underpinning child poverty and, crucially, examining policy options that work to reduce child poverty.'

Download: Roelen, K., Morgan, R. and Tafere, Y. (eds.) (2019) Putting children first: new frontiers in the fight against child poverty in Africa. Stuttgart: ibidem Press

SPECIAL ISSUE CALLS

IFJP (International Feminist Journal of Politics)

Special issue on Gendered Global Health Beyond Reproductive Health/Justice

This special issue will aim to bring to light broad topics of gendered global health that go beyond sexual and reproductive health, using a range of non-traditional methods of scholarly writing. **Abstract deadline is 1 October 2019.**

Further information can be found here

Journal of International Medical Treatment

Special issue on Adolescent Health: Stress, Sleep, and Lifestyle

This special issue aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of sleep problems in adolescents and the impact of sleep problems on mental health, focusing on health-promoting factors. It requests longitudinal, intervention, cross-sectional and qualitative studies that explore sleep length and its relation to other factors such as obesity and physical activity. **Abstract deadline is 30 October 2019.**

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 that take place in resource-limited settings. Submit your paper online by 30 November 2019.

Further information can be found here

Children and services review

Special issue on Innovative Initiatives in Child Development

This special issue aims to examine innovative initiatives that target child development. Manuscripts should ideally focus on poverty, education, health, child welfare, domestic violence, and abuse and neglect, looking specifically at their intersection with child development. It aims to include scholarly papers that analyse innovative initiatives from a range of entities: governments, private companies, social enterprises, social impact bonds (pay for success initiatives), and non-government organisations. Submit your paper online by 1 Febuary 2020.

Further information can be found here

Children and services review

Special issue on Psychosocial and Developmental Support Services for Children and Youth in LMICs

This special issues aims to use interdisciplinary research to understand the challenges and progress within psychosocial and developmental support services in low- and middle-income countries. Assessments of specific vulnerable groups or comparative assessments across sections are particuarly required. Submit your proposal by 1 February 2020.

Further information can be found here

EVENTS

WORLD BANK YOUTH SUMMIT 2019: SMARTER CITIES FOR A RESILIENT FUTURE

Course dates: 2–3 December 2019   **Location**: Washington DC, USA

Event outline: This youth summit organised by the World Bank provides a platform for young people across the globe to come together to discuss solutions that will aim to create sustainable and healthy cities.

More information on the summit can be found here

3RD INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON HIV & ADOLESCENCE

Course dates: 2–4 October 2019   **Location**: Nairobi, Kenya

Event outline: This workshop will bring together experts who work with adolescents with HIV to share knowledge and best practice. It will cover a range of disciplines, looking at the impact of being HIV-positive on the social, behavioural, physiological and biological aspects of adolescents' lives.

More information on the workshop can be found here

THE NAIROBI SUMMIT ON ICPD25

Course dates: 12–14 November 2019   **Location**: Nairobi, Kenya

Event outline: The Nairobi summit is held 25 years after the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) at which a landmark Programme of Action was adopted by governments across the world. This summit aims to accelerate progress on gender equality, including tackling gender-based violence and enabling access to sexual and reproductive health rights.

More information on the summit can be found here

CONFERENCES

MIGRATING WORLD: INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES TO MIGRATION AND INTEGRATION

Date: 22 February 2020   **Location**: Oxford, UK

Conference outline: This one-day international conference at the University of Oxford aims to gather academics from many countries to understand our migrating world and current trends in international migrations.

More information on the conference can be found here **(deadline for paper proposals is 15 October 2019)**

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CHILDREN'S STUDIES

Date: 7 March 2020   **Location**: London, UK

Conference outline: This conference brings together professionals and academics from a range of disciplines to discuss the subject of childhood from a social science and humanities perspective. Topics include: anthology of children and childhood, and children and human rights.

More information on the conference can be found here **(deadline for paper proposals is 20 October 2019)**

Send us your UPDATES!

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GENDER & ADOLESCENCE: GLOBAL EVIDENCE

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