



# **YOUNG LIVES SCHOOL SURVEY**

**INDIA  
2010/2011**

## **RESEARCH PROTOCOL FOR THE QUALITATIVE SUBSTUDY**

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Please refer to accompanying justification documents for further details on the development and use of the Young Lives school survey questionnaires.

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## **Background to study**

The India school component was conducted with a subsample of just under 1100 younger cohort children, during the months Dec 2010-Mar 2011. Fieldwork revealed that 18% of these children had moved schools since Round 3 of the household survey (conducted late 2009). This rate of movement is perhaps quite surprising, since the school survey sample consists entirely of children registered as being in class 5 or below, with the majority studying in class 2 or 3. Furthermore, school history data from round 3 reveals that for some of these children, it is not the first time they have changed schools. Since these 'movers' were not tracked to their new schools as part of the school component, our plan is to investigate their changing experiences and the forces shaping parents' decisions, through more detailed qualitative work.

The Young Lives sample, through being multi-site and longitudinal in nature is in an excellent position to consider parents' changing school choices over time, and which factors have been most important in shaping these changing choices over a child's life course. This moves beyond the normal scope of school-choice literature which tends to focus on single sites, or snapshots of time, to demonstrate the often changing nature of household decision-making, the importance of local context in shaping school choice, and the main factors shaping parents' school-related decisions.

This study will involve in-depth qualitative work with decision-makers and Young Lives children in three sites which demonstrated high rates of school movement between Round 3 and the school survey. It will provide in-depth data on: (i) the household decision-making processes shaping school choices; and (ii) children's perspectives on these school choices, and their experiences of changing school.

## **Main Research Questions**

This study seeks to gather very detailed information on:

- household decision-making processes shaping school choices of primary school age children;
- children's perspectives on these school choices, and their experiences of changing school.

It will be based on a subsample from the Young Lives school-component sample in three sites which demonstrated high rates of school movement between Round 3 and the school survey.

In-depth semi-structured interviews will explore the perspectives of the household decision-maker(s) and children on education in each community, perceptions of difference between specific private, government and other schools in each community attended by Young Lives children, and detailed information on caregiver schooling decisions for the Young Lives child, and other children in the household of a similar age, together with children's own perspectives on their experiences. The aim is to build a multilayered picture of the forces driving and the impacts of differentiated and changing school choices in the study communities.

The main research questions are:

- What are the values, beliefs and perceptions and expectations/aspirations of caregivers, children and the community concerning schooling in their community and the education policies which may affect them?

- What are the processes underlying school choice for the Young Lives child and other children of a similar age in the household?
- How much influence do Young Lives children have over the decisions that shape the school(s) they attend?
- What is children's perception and understanding of the process of changing schools, and how do their experiences differ across different schools in the community?

### **Research Methods**

***The below sections serve as a guide to data collection and are not an interview schedule. Methods are outlined, and in some cases possible questions or prompts are detailed.***

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#### **Decision maker interviews & school history draw and tell**

- This interview is designed to elicit the views of household decision-makers about schools in the community, and the school decisions they have made for the Young Lives child and any additional children in the household of a similar age.
- Where possible the 'decision-maker' or 'decision-makers' should be involved in this interview, but if it is only possible to interview the mother/female caregiver this is fine, the interviewer must ensure to gather information on the respondents views as well as their interpretation of the 'decision-makers' views.
- It should begin with an introduction to the substudy, to set the respondent at ease
- The interview can then proceed, asking the respondent to construct a school history timeline which can then be used to elicit more detail on the factors contributing to particular school decisions.
- Interviewers may choose whether to ask respondents to construct the timeline and then proceed with more detailed questions, or whether to ask respondents to elaborate upon the decision-making process whilst they are constructing the timeline.

## INTRODUCTION

**Aim:** The fieldworker should explain why they are conducting the interview and what information they are trying to discover. This introduction should also aim to gather some basic information about the respondent(s) such as:

- how long they have resided in the community
- what their occupation is
- the composition of their household, the whereabouts of different household members etc
- their own educational backgrounds and experiences
  - *Can you talk a little about your personal experience of schooling? Did you go to school? Did other household members go to school when you were young? What type of school did you and your siblings go to? Has schooling been important in determining the life you currently lead?*
- Who is/are the primary decision-maker/s in the household

*What entitles this person to be the decision maker e.g. their status as income-earner or family elder. Do they make collective decisions? If there is disagreement does someone make the final decision? Are they influenced by any other extended family member e.g. an uncle who lives in the city?*

## SCHOOL HISTORY DRAW-AND-TELL

**Aim:** This follows the same format as the exercise used in previous rounds of qualitative research but has a focus on education and school movement experiences of the Young Lives child and other children in the household of a similar age.

Additionally it can be used to map community events and changes in the school supply make-up of the site onto the school histories of the Young Lives child, for example through including environmental shocks, changes in household composition or the closure of particular schools in the school timeline of the Young Lives child. This can be completed first, with the interview following-on and using it as a prompt, or the interview can be incorporated, with interviewers asking respondents to elaborate on the drawing as they construct the timeline. FIELDWORKERS MUST DECIDE WHICH APPROACH THEY FEEL IS THE MOST APPROPRIATE.

### **Process:**

#### Step One: Drawing the Timeline

Provide the respondent(s) with a pen or marker and a piece of paper for drawing.

- 1) Draw a line representing the Young Lives child's school history.
- 2) Place a point on the timeline indicating the present
- 3) Explain that everything before a certain point is the past and everything after it is the future.

Ask the respondent to *think about their child's schooling in the past, up until this moment*, including anganwadis and kindergarten classes as well as primary schools. Then, *ask them to fill in the timeline* with the time the Young Lives child first attended school or preschool, detailing the type of school e.g. government, private, recognized, unrecognized etc. Ask the participant(s) to build up the timeline with any changes in the school the Young Lives child attended as well as any point at which children's education was interrupted. They might also usefully include community or household level events that have shaped their decisions such as a poor harvest etc

Next, ask the respondent to add in the educational trajectories of other school children of a similar age in the household and how this has changed.

Next, ask the respondent to *think about the future*. Ask the respondent to *fill in the major changes they think will happen in the future to the Young Lives child's attendance at school*, this might include attendance at different types of school or drop-out from school or movement into work.

#### Step Two: Discussion

Use the timeline to generate discussion and lead the interview outlined below.

## INTERVIEW

**Aim:** The school history draw and tell should be used as a guide. Working through the drawing, fieldworkers can ask respondents to expand upon the different choices they have made for the Young Lives child, and the forces that have shaped these choices and then moving on to the experiences of other children in the household of a similar age

**NOTE:** The below questions are a **guide** to the lines of questioning that you may explore during the interview, organized thematically. The wording of questions and order can be modified according to context and the flow of discussion.

### **Theme: Schools in the community**

**Aims to gather information on:** *Picture of education in the community and differences between schools*

#### **Suggested questions and sub-questions:**

- How have the number/types/quality of primary schools in your community changed since CHILD was born?
- Can you tell me about the different schools that are now available in your community? Do particular groups of families send their children to particular schools? If so, why does this happen?
- What are the main features of the school that CHILD attends in terms of resources, teaching, other children in the school etc? What are main reasons CHILD goes to this school now?
- What terms are commonly used to describe each of the schools in the community? Or what do people say about each school and why?
- If there are both government and private schools in your community are there large differences between the two? Can you talk about what these differences are? (perhaps make reference to two particular schools previously mentioned)
- In your view, what makes a 'good quality school?' Does such a school exist in your community? Are you able to send your children to this school? If not, would you like to? What is stopping you from being able to?
- How do children's experiences differ between NAME government and NAME private school in your community? (refer to specific schools mentioned in the school history timeline or previous questions)
  - **PROBE:**
    - > *Groups of friends*                      > *subjects studied*                      > *medium of instruction*
    - > *relationship with teacher*

### **Theme: Household school choice**

**Aims to gather information on:** *School choice decisions for the Young Lives child and other school-age children in the household*

#### **Suggested questions and sub-questions:**

- Using the school history drawing, ask the respondent about the thoughts and factors that shaped the Young Lives child's school career
  - How old were they when they started at this school?
  - Can you tell me about the school you first enrolled this child in? Can you describe the school? What was good about the school? What was bad about the school? Why did you specifically choose this school for this child?

- *PROBE:*
  - *Gender*
    - Is it more important for girls or for boys to attend school?
    - If family have selected one school for a boy and another for a girl, probe about why this is the case. What is different about these two children that led you to select different schools?
  - *Child and/or family health*
  - *Distance*
  - *Cost of transport*
  - *Cost of schooling*
  - *English medium*
  - *Impact of school on social mobility/marriageability/future work*
- If this child then changed schools, can you explain why you decided to move the child?
- Did the child have a role in making the decision?
- Was there anything happening in the community or household at that point in time that influenced your decision?
  - *PROBE (as above, but perhaps also):*
    - *Change in quality of original school*
    - *Change in income of household or other household change*
    - *Change in community*
    - *New school open*
    - *Child had bad experience in previous school*
      - Could anything have been done at school or by you to improve the child's experience at this school?
- What was the impact on CHILD of movement? Did they take time to adjust? Did you notice any changes in their behavior? Do they still play with the same children as before they moved school? Do they have the same type of relationships with teachers as they did in the old school?
- Would you make the same decisions for this child again? If not, what factors would make you change your mind?
- Can you talk about what will happen to each child's schooling in the future? Will there be changes? If so, can you explain what they are and why they will occur?

REPEAT THIS FOR OTHER CHILDREN OF A SIMILAR AGE IN THE HOUSEHOLD.

- If the parent has made different school choices for different children in the household probe around what is different between the children that led to these different decisions. Is it gender? Is it perceived intelligence?

*If there is more than one child in the household:*

- Can you tell me more about how you selected which child for each different type of school? Was it part of a larger household strategy? E.g. send one child to private school to help others with homework.
- If you had had fewer children, do you think the schools your children attend would have been different? (Could ask on an individual child basis).
- If CHILD had been a boy/girl would you have made a different decision on which school to send them to?

**Theme: Factors influencing school choice and planning for the future**

**Aims to gather information on:** *Whether school decisions are made with a conscious long-term plan in mind, or whether they are more short term in nature.*

**Suggested questions and sub-questions:**

- Can you tell me who makes the decisions about schooling that we have just talked about? Did any other member of the household or extended family influence the decision?
- If one or more children in the household attend a private school, can you explain why you are willing to forgo the income you spend on school fees for that child's education? Where does the money you spend on school fees come from?
- What were you thinking about when you made these decisions? If so, what influence does the future of the household have on the schools you choose for the children and vice versa?
- Can you tell me what you would do if your child did not want to attend the school you had selected?
- How long will the YL child continue to attend this school for?
- Do you think that going to school is important for your child/children? If so, why?
- Do you think schooling benefits your children? If so, how and why?
- Does schooling benefit you and the wider household? Does it change anything for other members of your household?

**Young Lives child interviews & school history draw and tell**

- This interview is designed to elicit the views of children about schools in the community, their experiences of moving school, and their role in the decisions that led to them moving school.
- It should begin with an introduction to the substudy, to set the child at ease
- The interview can then proceed, asking the child to construct a school history timeline which can then be used to elicit more detail on the factors contributing to particular school decisions.
- Interviewers may choose whether to ask children to construct the timeline and then proceed with more detailed questions, or whether to ask respondents to elaborate upon the decision-making process whilst they are constructing the timeline.



## INTRODUCTION

**Aim:** Before commencing the school history draw and tell the fieldworker should explain why they are conducting the interview and what information they are trying to discover.

This introduction should also aim to gather some basic information and put the child at ease.

## SCHOOL HISTORY DRAW AND TELL

**Aim:** This follows the same format as the exercise used in previous qualitative research but has a focus on education, school movement and experience. It should be used to get a clear picture of children's changing experiences of schooling and how the child's experience at each new stage differed; how they felt about it, how it compared to their previous experience, how their relationships with their peers, their teachers and their siblings has changed, whether it changed their ideas about the future. It would also be interesting to ask children to explain the schooling experiences of other school-age children in the household, and how it had a direct impact on their experience of schooling.

This can be completed first, with the interview following-on and using it as a prompt, or the interview can be incorporated, with interviewers asking respondents to elaborate on the drawing as they construct the timeline. **FIELDWORKERS MUST DECIDE WHICH APPROACH THEY FEEL IS THE MOST APPROPRIATE.**

### **Process:**

#### Step One: Drawing the Timeline

Provide the respondent(s) with a pen or marker and a piece of paper for drawing.

- 1) Draw a line representing the Young Lives child's school history.
- 2) Place a point on the timeline indicating the present
- 3) Explain that everything before a certain point is the past and everything after it is the future.

Ask the respondent to *think about their schooling in the past, up until this moment*. Then, *ask them to fill in the timeline* with their movement into school. Ask the participant(s) to gradually build up the timeline with any changes in the school they attended as well as any point at which their education was interrupted. They might also usefully include community level events that have shaped their decisions such as a poor harvest etc

Next, ask the respondent to add in the educational trajectories of any other school-age children in the household that is important to them or of relevance to their experience of schooling.

Next, ask the respondent to *think about the future*. Ask the respondent to *fill in the major changes they think will happen in the future to their attendance at school*.

#### Step Two: Discussion

Use the timeline to generate discussion and lead the interview outlined below.

## INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW

**Aim:** The school history draw and tell should be used as a guide. The purpose is to gather children's perspectives on their experiences of movement between schools and the impact of school-related decisions. This should include their impressions of the schools they have attended, how they are different from each other, their feelings and attitudes towards moving between schools, and the role they played in making decisions about their schooling.

**NOTE:** The below questions are a **guide** to the lines of questioning that you may explore during the interview, organized thematically. The wording of questions and order can be modified according to context and the flow of discussion.

**Theme:** *Schools in the community*

**Aims to gather information on:** *Young Lives children's understandings of the differences between particular schools in their community*

**Suggested questions and sub-questions:**

A good way to approach this may be to ask children about two particular schools (for example perhaps one government and one private) that you have come across through the group mapping work or the school history timeline. Ideally, these would be schools that the child has attended, but only if this split emerges naturally. Then ask the child to describe the differences between the two, using some of the below questions as a guide:

- Can you tell me about X school and X school?
  - *What are the schools themselves like? How is this different? How are the teachers different in the two school?*
- Can you tell me about the types of student who attend these two schools? (FIELDWORKER: ask the child to think about a child he/she knows or knows of who attends each of the schools before asking this question).
  - *How do these children differ? Are there more girls or boys at one of these schools? Do these children do the same sort of activities after school? If not, how do they differ?*

**Theme:** *Household school choice*

**Aims to gather information on:** *Young Lives children's involvement in school-related decisions and their experiences of moving between schools*

**Suggested questions and sub-questions:**

Using the school history drawing, ask the child to think about the different schools they have attended and how they felt before starting in each school, and what happened when they eventually attended that school.

- Can you tell me about the first school you attended? Can you describe the school? What was good about the school? What was bad about the school? Did you like going to this school?
- Can you tell me who made the decision that you would go to this school? Do you know why they chose this school? What was important?
  - *PROBE:*

- *Gender*
- *Child health*
- *Distance*
- *Cost of transport*
- *Cost of schooling*
- *English medium*
- Did their parents ask which school they would like to attend? Did this influence their parents decision? How did they feel during their first week at the new school?
- If you had the choice would you have attended the same school? If not, which school would you have liked to attend and why?
- If the child has moved school, ask them what they felt towards the end of their time in the first school? Did they know why they moved schools? If so, how do they know? Who made the decision or was important in helping their caregivers make the decision? Did their parents explain to them?
- REPEAT THIS PROCESS FOR EACH TIME THE CHILD HAS MOVED SCHOOLS

Using the data on the additional children in the household of a similar age ask the child to talk about the different experiences of schooling of these siblings.

- For example, if the Young Lives child is in a government school but another child in the household is in a private school, sensitively ask about why the child thinks this sibling is enrolled in a different school? What is different about this school? Will this be important for the other child's future?
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**Theme:** *The long-term value of schooling*

***Aim:*** *Whether Young Lives children are aware of the potential long-term impacts of the schools they attend and the importance of this in the household*

- If you had a choice which school in the community would you attend? Can you explain what is good about this school and why you would like to go there?
- *Selecting particular schools of a different type to that attended by the Young Lives child ask:* If you wanted to move to NAME school, would you be able to ask your parents? Do you think they would be willing to help? What about if you wanted to go to X school, do you think your parents would allow you to move? If not, why not?
- Is going to school important for your future? If so, can you explain why? Is the particular school you are in important for your future? If so, can you explain why? For example, how might your future differ to that of a child in NAME school? If the child has moved schools you could ask, do you think going to the other school would have had a different impact on your future? If so, can you explain what and why that might be?
- Does your going to this particular school benefit the household? If so, can you explain the ways in which it does so? Does it change anything for other members of your household? (e.g. which school they go to?)