

Building individual, institutional and national capacity for child-focused research

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- A key aim of Young Lives is to help develop and stimulate infrastructure for research, teaching and learning in low- and middle-income countries.
- Young Lives has facilitated the setting up of new centres focused on child research in both Ethiopia and India.
- Young Lives has also enabled a large number of students and researchers to develop expertise in social science research, giving them the skills and experience needed to achieve significant appointments in the study countries.
- Data workshops run in the study countries, especially Peru, have trained a wide range of students, academics and other professionals in the use of Young Lives data.

Setting the scene

One of Young Lives' key aims as set out in its 2015 Theory of Change is to provide 'important social science infrastructure for research, teaching and learning in low- and middle-income countries'. It does this through the high-quality data that it makes publicly available. The use of such data requires skilled researchers to mine it for insights, and social science research centres that actively promote research into child poverty and can sustain this beyond the lifetime of an individual study.

Young Lives has made a significant contribution in terms of skilling up a new generation of researchers and facilitating the setting up of new centres focused on child research, both of which build capacity in the use of child research to influence global policy. Young Lives' considerable social capital is based on a network of expert country directors, country partners and international collaborators, who together enable Young Lives to have an influence beyond its size and attract talented young researchers to engage with the study.

New centres

New research centres have been established in India and Ethiopia as a consequence of Young Lives activity in these countries. Both of these demonstrate the way in which Young Lives has raised the profile of child research in the areas where it is based and which will sustain and grow beyond Young Lives.

- In Ethiopia, a new **Centre for Child Research (ECCR)** was set up in December 2016 to build capacity for child-focused work in Ethiopia. The centre is part of the Ethiopian Development Research Institute (EDRI); Young Lives' research partner in Ethiopia. Young Lives played a role in the establishment of the Centre; the separate Child Research and Practice Forum (CRPF), which emerged from a Young Lives consultation workshop on orphans and vulnerable children, gave important impetus to the decision to set up a dedicated child research centre. Young Lives also serves as a central member of the Centre's advisory group. The centre is headed by Yisak Tafere, who continues to work for Young Lives (see below). This centre is a major legacy of Young Lives' and DFID's investment in child research in Ethiopia. ECCR is now Young Lives' main research partner in a newly funded stream of comparative research on young people's experiences of marriage and parenthood.

■ In India one of Young Lives' partners, the Centre for Economic Social Studies in Hyderabad (CESS), set up a **Division of Child Studies** which is now engaged in its own research, funded by UNICEF among others. The partnership with Young Lives, along with other ongoing work on the Human Development Report for Andhra Pradesh, enabled CESS to develop particular expertise on children and poverty and this was one of the elements which led to the establishing of this new division, backed by UNICEF and intended to foster the development of a better evidence base for child-focused policy in India.

■ **In Peru: Santiago Cueto** (Young Lives Country Director) was recruited onto the committee of the Brookings Institution Global Programme on Educational Indicators and the advisory group of UNESCO's flagship global education monitoring report. His recognition on this was substantially contributed to by his work with Young Lives. He is also a member of Peru's National Council of Education. **Vanessa Rojas Arangoitia** (Lead Qualitative Researcher) is drawing on Young Lives research to carry out a PhD in Barcelona. **Alan Sanchez** became the Principal Investigator in Peru, having worked as a Young Lives Research Assistant and obtaining his DPhil at Oxford.

A generation of researchers

A large number of students and researchers have been able to develop expertise through their work on Young Lives. There are many examples of country staff achieving appointments or being asked to advise as a direct result of the experience and expertise gained through working for Young Lives. Examples include the following:

■ **In Ethiopia: Yisak Tafere** (Lead Qualitative Researcher) was appointed to become the Director of the new Ethiopian Centre for Child Research in early 2017. Yisak has worked for Young Lives since 2007 and obtained his PhD from Trondheim University, Norway, using Young Lives research in Ethiopia. **Tassew Woldehanna** (Principal Investigator) is leading both the World Bank's Early Learning Partnership programme and DFID's RISE programme, as well as leading the survey for the GAGE programme (Gender & Adolescence: Global Evidence) in Ethiopia, drawing on Young Lives survey content and learning. **Workeneh Abebe** is now the country director for the GAGE programme, having been a Qualitative Research Assistant for Young Lives in Ethiopia and then a field researcher who worked very closely on the school survey component. Several other Young Lives field researchers have also worked for GAGE.

“ I am really grateful to Young Lives and, of course, DFID for the opportunity I gained in pursuing my PhD. I feel I am a beneficiary of the highest level of capacity-building by Young Lives and I intend to use this in having a significant role in the establishment and expansion of the new Child Research Centre in Ethiopia, which will continue to collaborate with Young Lives. ”

Dr Yisak Tafere, Ethiopian Centre for Child Research

■ **In India: Uma Vennam** (Lead Qualitative Researcher) was appointed Rector and Pro-Vice-Chancellor of SPMVV, the Women's University in Tirupati. Through her Young Lives role, Uma has been invited to partner with other important studies in India: Family Lives and the Environment (ESRC funded and led by the University of Sussex), and the ERC Connectors Study. Uma is the study's advisor in India and in 2018 will be hosting a summer school at SPMVV to train young Indian scholars on multi-methods research. **Abhijeet Singh** (Quantitative Research Officer) is leading DFID's RISE programme in India, and in 2017 joined the Stockholm School of Economics as an Assistant Professor.

Teaching and learning

Young Lives has had a significant impact on teaching and learning. Many doctoral students both at Oxford and in the study countries have based their theses on Young Lives data and are continuing to do so. Young Lives published 50 student papers using Young Lives data for postgraduate study and is aware of the data having been used in a series of others. Since Young Lives' data is archived, so becoming a public good, this legacy will grow well beyond the study.

Data workshops run in the study countries, especially Peru, have trained hundreds of students, academics and other professionals in the use of Young Lives data. In Peru, workshops convened for Government staff have shown them how to access and use Young Lives data and methods for their own analysis and, eventually, for decision-making as well as highlighting the latest findings. For example, Research Officers from the Ministry of Education and the Economy and Finance Ministry used Young Lives data to review the factors that contribute to youth unemployment. In March 2018 the Peru Young Lives team organised a methodology workshop which ran over three days and attracted 24 participants including economists, psychologists and medical staff, who were trained in qualitative techniques and tests and the use of the longitudinal databases. In Oxford, Young Lives staff were invited to run a workshop at the 2017 AAGE Conference on 'Culture, Commitment and Care across the Life Course'. The workshop examined the issues involved in designing and carrying out research with longitudinal mixed methods, the ethics involved in longitudinal research, and using Young Lives research to inform policy.

The team at the Open University (OU) responsible for developing a new undergraduate degree on Childhood Studies (launched March 2014) used Young Lives as a case study of international research on children and poverty interwoven throughout the course. Young Lives worked with the OU team to develop and supply materials and core readings, including audio interviews about our methods and a case study of developing longitudinal research as a chapter in one of the core course text books. The course will run for at least 8 years, and is expected to reach more than 40,000 students.

Within Oxford's Department of International Development, Young Lives has generated considerable interest among students and has had an influence on PhD research, with some students adopting Young Lives methods even when pursuing PhDs about developing countries that are not in the Young Lives study. Young Lives has also provided

methodology lectures to the post-graduate students, showcasing how to go about mixed methods research.

Beyond academia, Young Lives has collaborated with Oxfam's Youth and Education team to create high-quality classroom resources for the teaching of geography, maths, English and ICT to children aged 11-16. The resources are based on the Young Lives data and interviews with study children, and help learners to explore, through the curriculum, how inequality and poverty affect the lives of children in different parts of the world. *Everyone Counts* is a free downloadable maths teaching resource for 9-12-year-olds based on the Young Lives book *Changing Lives in a*

Changing World. The Mathematical Association was involved at all stages, and Rachel Horsman from the Association described it as "*A great resource ... The real-life data and links between the pupils overseas and at home make the whole project more engaging for pupils.*" *Everyone Counts* has been downloaded more than 18,760 times (reaching an estimated 270,000 learners), far exceeding original estimates, and has been welcomed by teachers and students alike. The Oxfam team subsequently worked with Young Lives on *More or Less Equal*, a cross-curricular resource for 11- to 14-year-olds covering mathematics, geography and English, which was highly commended in the 2017 Geographical Association awards.