The intersections of school, work and learning: Children in Ethiopia, Andhra Pradesh, India, Peru and Vietnam.

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Abstract

This chapter synthesizes recent research from Young Lives, a longitudinal study of children growing up in poverty in four countries, Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam. The chapter focuses on spatial and temporal aspects of learning and working. Using case studies from qualitative research as well as survey data, it describes first the extent and forms of work children undertake and how these change over time, second, how poverty influences children's work activities, and third, what skills children learn through work. The fourth section explores the intersections of school and work. The chapter also draws on research findings from other studies in Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam, and reflects on the commonalities and differences between the countries to attempt to deepen understandings of how social change and processes of modernization affect children's daily lives. The chapter argues three central premises: first, that in differing parts of the world, children are involved in work to a significant extent, depending on context; second, that this is changing rapidly as school systems expand, which means that children's time use is contested; and third, while work may conflict with school, it has some intrinsic value in terms of skill formation, and may enable (some) children to go to school.

Introduction

As enrollment rates of children in primary school have increased globally, and school attendance has become the predominant desired activity for children, children's time spent working has arguably become more problematic in economic terms as it is seen as inhibiting children's human capital formation. There have been increasing calls for 'child labour' to be 'eliminated', for children to spend more time in school and for the school leaving age to be raised. However, social anthropologists have long recognised that children learn copious skills from a young age by accompanying mothers, fathers, older siblings and participating in the work of household production systems. As Montgomery (2009) points out, children's

work has often been understood merely as socialisation and the process of becoming a competent adult in a particular society (see Paradise and Rogoff, 2009, for an overview of socialisation approaches to understanding cultural practices that support informal learning). The 'new' social studies of childhood that developed during the 1980s emphasizing children's agency changed this view (see eg Niewenhuys, 1994, 1996). Subsequent research (mainly ethnographic, and thus small-scale) has emphasised the contributions that children make to household production, whether in the form of wage labour, to family subsistence farming, or domestic work. A recent seminal text highlights the importance of understanding children's work holistically, in context, and as a continuum - having benefits, as well as potential risks, for children (Bourdillon et al., 2010).

First, though, it is important to be clear about definitions. This chapter uses the term *children's work*, in line with definitions used by social geographers, sociologists and social anthropologists, instead of the term 'child labour', a term which, over the course of the 20th century, came to refer to work that is harmful to children, mainly in line with definitions set by the International Labour Organisation[1] (Bourdillon et al., 2010). There is, however, a risk of romanticising children's work, when any form of work can be exploitative and/or harmful, and this needs to be balanced by recognition of the contributions that children make to family livelihoods, whether via waged work, or domestic work within their households (Montgomery, 2009).

The chapter is based on a synthesis of papers from Young Lives, integrated with findings from other research. Young Lives is a 15-year study (2002-2017) investigating childhood poverty in Ethiopia, Peru, India (the former state of Andhra Pradesh, which bifurcated in 2014 to form Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, henceforth UAP, United Andhra Pradesh) and Vietnam. Young Lives collects longitudinal data from two cohorts of children in each country: 2,000 children born in 2000–1 (the younger cohort) and 1,000 children born in 1994–5 (the older cohort). Although the sample is not representative, it has a pro-poor focus in that poor rural and urban sites were intentionally over-sampled (see www.younglives.org.uk). A survey is carried out every three years (2002, 2006, 2009, 2013) with the children and their caregivers, and is complemented by qualitative research (2007, 2008, 2010, 2014) with a nested sample of children, their caregivers, and other key figures in the community (see Crivello et al., 2013, Crivello, forthcoming, Morrow and Crivello,

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[1] ILO, the UN organization that sets legal standards to promote decent work, combining Trades Unions, employers' and governmental organizations (ILO, 2004).

2015). Young Lives surveys ask children about attendance at school, time-use, work, subjective well-being etc, and the qualitative research also focuses on children's time-use and well-being, experiences of school.

Young Lives research offers comparability across four countries at a time of rapid modernisation. The longitudinal nature of Young Lives research also enables the avoidance of the 'ethnographic present', highlighting the temporal/dynamic and spatial aspects of children's work.

The chapter is structured as follows. First, general trends in children's work and types of activity they undertake are described, with a brief discussion of gender differences. The second section explores the intersections of work and poverty, and explores what children's social responsibilities mean to them and their families. The third section looks at learning and skills development that takes place through work. The fourth section explores how children combine school and work, how working can conflict with schooling, and how on the other hand, work can enable children to go do school.

1. Extent and forms of work children undertake – change over time
(a) rates of school enrolment and work
As is the case globally, rates of school enrolment (especially in primary school) have increased very markedly since 2000 in all four countries (Bourdillon and Boyden, 2014). Parents and children have embraced globalised messages about the potential of formal schooling and qualifications to ensure better livelihoods (Boyden, 2009, Morrow, 2013a). Abate and Abebe (2013) note for Ethiopia, that 'despite the problems children face in attending school, nearly all ... emphasised the future relevance of education, as this is seen to help them in obtaining formal employment' (p143). This is a key difference between the current situation facing children and that facing previous generations. Children have to manage the hopes invested in education as a route out of poverty, while maintaining their traditional working roles and contributions to the household (Morrow and Vennam, 2012). School enrolment requires a shift in children's time use, but in all four countries, evidence shows that attendance at school does not mean that children stop working altogether (Morrow, Tafere & Vennam 2014, Pells and Woodhead, 2014).

The numbers of young children reporting **paid work** at the age of 8 were already relatively low in 2002 and the trend away from paid work has continued (see Table 1 below). For

example, in Ethiopia, 8 per cent of 8-year-olds reported undertaking paid activities in 2002. Approximately seven years later, less than 1 per cent of 8-year-olds were doing paid work (Woldehanna et al., 2011). Similarly, in UAP, participation in paid employment among 8-year-olds declined from 6.2 per cent in 2002 to 3 per cent in 2009. The decline was most marked for children from the Scheduled Tribes (from 17.9 per cent to 3.8 per cent), though there was a severe drought in 2002, which may have contributed to the high levels of child work at that time (Morrow et al., 2014, Galab et al., 2011).

Table 1. 8-year-olds reporting working for pay over the last 12 months, 2002 and 2009 (%) Source: Pells and Woodhead (2014)

	2002	**2009**
Ethiopia	8.0	0.3
Andhra Pradesh	6.2	3.0
Peru	23.2	8.8
Vietnam	11.4	0.0

Note: The wording of the question to children varied slightly in 2002 and 2009. In 2002 the question asked: 'Have you done anything in the last 12 months to earn money for yourself and for your family?' In 2009 the wording was: 'Now I want you to think about the past year. Did you do anything to help your family, or to get money or things for yourself?' A follow-up question then asked which of the stated activities were paid and which were unpaid.

Analysis of data from the Older Cohort illustrates trends in children undertaking paid work between 8 and 15 years old. Figure 1 below shows that paid work increased in UAP at each age point and in Peru increased between the ages of 8 and 12 before levelling out. In Ethiopia the percentage of children reporting paid work after age 8 declined.

Figure 1. Children reporting working for pay over the last 12 months, at ages 8 (2002), 12 (2006) and 15 (2009) (%) Pells and Woodhead (2014)
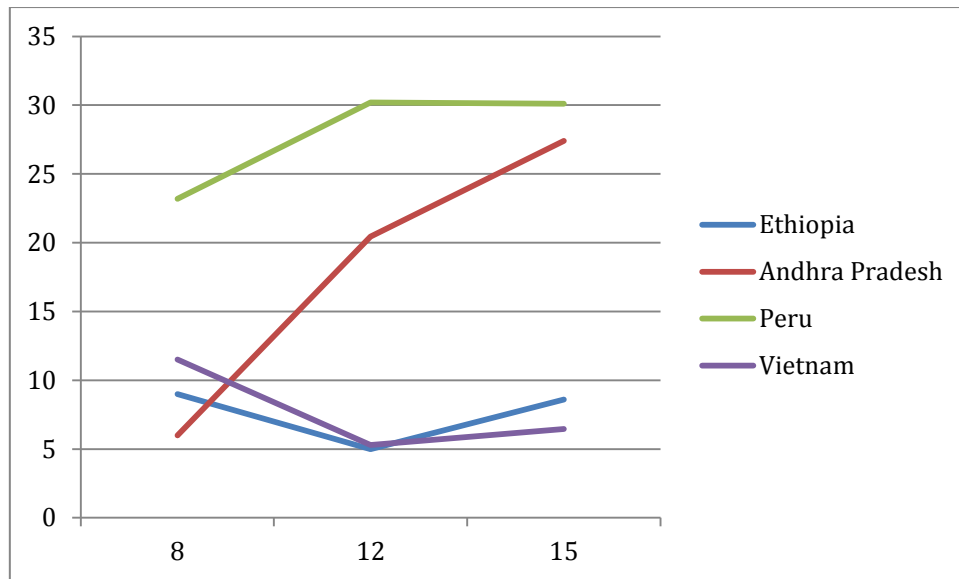
In **Peru,** nearly three-quarters of all 8-year-olds were doing household chores in 2009, while in rural areas children were also engaged in activities such as agriculture and cattle-raising (Cueto et al., 2011). Seven per cent of children in the least poor wealth quintile were working on family farms or businesses, but this increased to 26 per cent of children in the poorest quintile.

In **Vietnam**, in 2009, none of the 8 year old children reported undertaking paid work, and fewer than 5 per cent (n=85) of children reported working on family farms or herding sheep or cattle, more boys than girls.   Among disadvantaged ethnic minority Cham H'Roi children in the Northern Uplands region, 13 per cent were participating in agricultural work for the household (Le et al., 2011). For the children who reported some work on their household farm, or herding for their households, the average time use was about two and a half hours per day. Among 15 year olds in 2009, six per cent of the 15 year olds reported some paid work. This varied between region, with more children working for pay in the Central Coast rural area and the Mekong Delta than other regions. For many of the children who do paid work, the working day was longer than eight hours. The average length of a working day for children in the Northern Uplands and the children from ethnic minorities was nearly ten hours (Le et al., 2011).

In summary, in all four countries, numbers of children working (paid and unpaid) increase with age, and vary by gender, and location. Work patterns vary according to children's location and economic status, and meeting the demands of schooling. However, the overall

trend over time is a marked decline in numbers of children working for pay at an early age. There are differences according to gender, explored in more detail in the next section.

(b) What kinds of work do children do?

The types of work children undertake are spatially structured. The majority of children reported involvement in household chores or work on family farms and within family businesses. In **Ethiopia,** in 2009**,** 90 per cent of 8-year-olds undertook some kind of family-based work (Woldehanna et al., 2011). In rural areas, household chores took up the biggest proportion of children's time, followed by childcare activities and unpaid work for family, mostly farming and herding cattle. Oldest girls typically had a heavier burden of tasks than their brothers or younger sisters (Heissler and Porter, 2013). Generally, boys spent more time on unpaid work on family farms or businesses and girls spent more time caring for others and on domestic tasks. Men and older boys undertook ploughing with oxen; younger boys herd goats, girls carried their younger siblings on their backs. Poluha (2004), in fieldwork in Addis Ababa (2000-2002) also found most children 'in the poorest section' undertook some form of work, often working for cash within their homes.

Abebe (2007, 2008) explored children's work in Gedeo, southern Ethiopia, a coffee producing area (fieldwork conducted 2005 and 2006) and found that export-led crops like coffee had altered children's work patterns. Children described

> different practical tasks which they performed, such as running errands, tending cattle, collecting and splitting fuel wood, harvesting grass, weeding, chopping *enset,* fetching water, milking, cooking, sweeping floors, washing, making and serving coffee, in addition to playing (Abebe, 2008, p20).

Abebe emphasises structural forces that disrupt livelihoods in Ethiopia, such as global food prices, affect children's time use drastically. 'Children's work is structured and restructured as a result of the temporality of income secured from commercial crops. Children must adapt to the seasonal nature of their livelihoods by engaging in other income-generating activities when agricultural activities are restricted' (Abebe, 2007, p. 85; see also chapters in Abebe and Kjørholt, 2013, Poluha 2004). These patterns are likely to persist, as discussed below.

In **UAP**, Young Lives findings match those in earlier and ongoing research on children's work in India (see seminal work by Nieuwenhuys, 1994; see also Dyson, 2014). Morrow and Vennam (2012) describe two rural communities in UAP, and illustrate how the activities

children undertake depended on stages of life cycle of crops, and tasks are structured by gender.

In **Peru,** children's work activities mirrored those of the adults around them. Cussianovich and Rojas (2014) found that 'all young people in rural areas do agricultural activities for their families without receiving monetary payment. Boys and girls participate equally' (p. 167). In urban areas,

> families also expect their children to be involved in unpaid family work, although not with the same intensity as in rural areas. Unlike in rural areas, only some young people are engaged in their parents' economic activities, almost all of which are related to informal trade (Cussianovich and Rojas, 2014, p.167; see also Invernizzi, 2003).

In **Vietnam,** as noted, children from minority ethnic groups were more likely to be involved in farming and household labour. Qualitative research in Lao Cai province in 2008 (Truong, 2010) explored how children describe adversity, and found that among Kinh (ethnic majority), Hmong and H'Roi (minority ethnic groups) 'household chores and agricultural tasks are the most common forms of work for all ethnic groups' (p318). However, Truong (2008) describes different degrees of intensity, according to ethnicity:

> For the minority, 'to go to work' (*di lam*) literally means doing agricultural tasks on a regular basis, whereas Kinh children describe their involvement in rice transplanting and harvest as supplementary. Moreover, Hmong and H'Roi children always elaborate on the volume of work done, the quantity produced or money earned. (Truong, 2008, p. 319)

A 14 year old H'Roi girl explained:

> The plot is for growing beans. During harvest, my mother and I worked for three days and brought home seven and a half sacks of beans. I delivered the beans to the factory. It was the first time I drove a motorbike and the bean sacks were so heavy it was hard to balance and drive. (Truong, 2008, p. 319)

While a 14 year old Hmong girl explained how:

> Apart from working in our own fields my sisters and I joined [together] to grow maize in a plot of my uncle. Since his family settled downstream his land was left fallow here in the uphill. We collected a few hundred thousand *dong* from the sale of the harvest. We went to the market place and hung out. We gave the money to mother in the end. (Truong, 2008, p.319).

Truong (2010) notes that agricultural tasks also were differently valued:

> [The] difference in children's views of work across ethnic groups is informed by the ecological and technological conditions in which they operate: cattle tending for the

minority children entails long hours far from home, where as pig and poultry feeding fits in the households chores of the Kinh. Although the work can be just as hard as that of their ethnic minority peers, Kinh children tend to view their jobs as seasonal and subsidiary. In contrast, ethnic minority children see their work as a major resource that they bring to their family (Truong, 2010, p.319).

Vu (2011) also describes children's work in Vietnam, focussing on Van Lam, a mountainous community in south central coast. Ethnic minority Cham H'roi children work from an early age, often on family farms but also in wage labour chopping sugar cane (Vu, 2011). For example, a 16 year old girl described how she herded cattle, picked vegetables for the pigs, ploughed the fields, cooked, bathed her younger sister, and did grocery shopping. She also looked after her grandmother who had broken a leg, taking her meals everyday and helping her wash. She left school in 3rd grade when she was 10 years old, and could no longer read or write. She said she had 'returned all her knowledge back to her teachers already'. Ethnic majority (Kinh) young people were less likely to describe leaving school early, but if they did, they found wage labour quite easily (Vu, 2011; see also Rydstrøm, 1998, Rubenson, 2005).

C) Gender, sibling composition and birth order

As noted, children's work activities varied along gender lines to varying degrees. Tasks were allocated according to gender, as well as to birth order, age and perceived competence and physical strength. For example, in **Ethiopia,** girls described gradually becoming more competent at various specific cooking tasks (Chuta, 2014; Chuta and Morrow, 2014). Ali et al. (2013) describe how in Sheko (southern Ethiopia)

> food culture and habits are based on gender and age differentiation. Many food production tasks are left to the mother and children (especially the girls) rather than to male adults. Women and children play paramount role in the production, collection, and preparation of food while the role of adult men is very limited with the exception of hunting bigger animals (Ali et al., 2013, p.198; see also Regassa and Kjørholt, 2013).

Boys, especially in Ethiopia, expressed resentment if they had to take on what they see as female tasks like cooking and cleaning, in the absence of any females in the household (Boyden, 2009, see also Abebe, 2007, 2011).

Morrow et al. (2014) describe the case of a 12 year old girl, who had started school when she was about 8, and she had also started work, picking coffee. She said: 'I can do all types of household tasks... for example, I bake *injera* and fetch water ... six months ago, I couldn't

bake *injera* and now I can' (Morrow et al., 2014, p.146). Poluha (2004) describes many examples of girls' responsibilities at home, compared with boys:

> Girls were expected to spend their time after school at home and help run the house. Girls cooked, cleaned the house, washed dishes, made coffee, ran errands and did some of the shopping. The work could take them several hours. Boys on the other hand were expected to haul water and run errands. A few boys would sweep the floors, make coffee and clean the house. (p47)

In UAP, work roles were also highly gender specific - tasks done by boys and men tended to be more physically risky and difficult – for example, in paddy, operations include ploughing, sowing, transplanting, weeding, spraying of fertilisers and pesticides, watering/irrigating, harvesting, bundling, thrashing, collecting grain, marketing. Girls and women undertook transplanting, weeding, harvesting, bundling (Morrow and Vennam, 2012). The mother of a 13 year old girl described how her daughter was able to take on certain tasks:

> Now she can cook one kilo of rice, but doesn't know how to cook two, three kilos of rice. She cooks well. If we tell her this many people and cook one kilo of rice, then she cooks, but if people are more, how can she cook then? She is still a small girl. (Morrow and Vennam, 2010, p.310).

Ames (2013b) explores gender differences in children's roles in rural Peru, and suggests that girls were not always disadvantaged. She found that boys were more likely than girls to have left school without completing secondary education. The boys had all been over-age (i.e. a year or two behind the expected grade for their age). They had all been involved in agricultural work while at school, but they left school to migrate for work, to contribute to the household economy. This suggests that 'pressing economic needs may impact more on boys, whose paid labour in agriculture may be required earlier' (Ames, 2013b, p.272).

This pattern is found in Ethiopia and Vietnam too. Age intersects with gender, in relation to who works and who stays at school, and gender gaps become more pronounced as children grow up. Pells and Woodhead (2014) suggest

> As children become older, the opportunity costs of schooling rise and changes in employment opportunities such as the opening up of factories, can contribute to children, particularly boys, leaving school in order to work to support their families. ... poor boys [are] more likely than poor girls to have stopped school by the age of 15. This could be linked to higher wage-earning potential for boys and in the case of Vietnam, boys doing less well in exams (Pells and Woodhead 2014, p.57).

> In Ethiopia, the most common reason for not attending school for girls was to look after siblings, and the second was that the direct costs of schooling were considered to be too high; a reason which was much more commonly given for girls than for boys

(Frost and Rolleston, 2011; see also Abebe, 2007, 2011, for a description of the gendered division of labour in Gedeo).

In summary, the extent to which children work, and the types of activity they undertake, varies between countries, but it is inevitably underpinned by household poverty. Gender and ethnicity also structure children's roles (depending on availability of girls/boys of the appropriate age) and the value they and their parents attach to work (see also Punch, 2001, who suggests that it is important to consider intra-generational factors in the analysis of household division of labour, arguing that children's unpaid household work often cuts across gender, and more often than not does not reflect adult divisions of labour).

2. Intersections of work and poverty – interdependence of family members

As Boyden (2009) suggests, multiple recurrent adverse events and the persistence of poverty mean that families have to balance the need for survival with the anticipated rewards of keeping children in school. Children may miss school because they play an important role in managing risks faced by families, through their work and care activities (see also Chuta, 2014; Heissler and Porter, 2013; Ogando Portela and Pells, 2014; Vennam et al., 2010). Boyden (2009) suggests that

> there needs to be more attention to the things that some [children] gain, and to the things many of them do, to prevent or mitigate risk. The boys and girls ... do not appear simply as helpless victims of circumstances beyond their control. Many are extremely concerned about the hardships endured by their families, and express a desire to assist them.... (p. 126).

Global ideals of childhood emphasise that childhood should be risk-free, yet, as Bourdillon (2014) argues, poor children need to learn risk, and work can be seen as one site where they learn how to prepare to deal with risks (see also Morrow and Vennam, 2012). Work also appears to be associated with a sense of well-being and important pro-social skills, as well as with disapproval of inactivity or 'idleness' in others... work can be regarded as a protective factor in some instances, and may enhance resilience in some children, especially when it can be combined effectively with schooling' (Boyden, 2009, p. 127). As Chuta (2014) argues, children are severely affected by economic adversity, but they are not passive in such situations: 'they are capable social actors who shape their difficult circumstances, as well as being shaped by them' (Chuta, 2014, p.2).

In some cases, costs related to education were a factor in decision-making, as children from poor households may work to pay for their schooling (Boyden, 2009; Heissler and Porter,

2013; Tafere and Camfield, 2009). However, as Boyden (2009) emphasises, children are integrated into their families through work, and in poor households in low-income countries, generations are interdependent: 'coping with adversity is a collective rather than an individual responsibility and involves recognition of mutual obligations between generations of children, parents and grandparents' (p. 127). Contrary to assumptions that children are compelled to work by their parents, children often described work as a source of pride as they felt it was important to support their families and was part of what is considered being a 'good child', especially for sons to support their families/mothers This is the case in all four countries (Boyden, 2009, Crivello et al., 2014, Morrow, 2013a, b, Abebe, 2008). For example, in UAP, one boy recounted how his mother had been told by others in the community: "Look, you are a blessed one. You are being looked after by your son and there is no need for you to work. He is not only earning but also taking care of you." The boy said, "I felt very happy. I want to get a good name, still want to work hard and do better things" (Morrow and Vennam, 2012).

A further aspect of temporality in relation to work was the interplay between the present and anticipated future. Children found many ways to generate cash, effectively managing economic adversity in the present but also making plans for future difficulties. Chuta (2014) describes the case of a 16 year old girl from a very poor neighbourhood in Addis Ababa. Her father had died young, and her mother was often ill. The girl was in Grade 10 when she was interviewed, and she worried that she might fail the National Exam, and become a burden to her family. She described how:

> she had already made herself ready by learning other necessary skills like embroidery and sewing that would help her earn a living. [She] was not totally relying on her formal education. She had been learning how to sew at the local mosque for the past six or seven months in case she needed that to fall back on (Chuta, 2014, p14).

Ogando Portela and Pells (2014) analyse children's experiences in Ethiopia and Vietnam, and illustrate how poverty intersects with work. A case study of a boy living in a rural drought-prone area in Ethiopia shows how family members are interdependent. The boy was eager to attend school and enrolled at age 7, but then his father became ill and lost his job. The family income declined and his older brother went to work in a local stone-crushing plant, so he had to take responsibility for cattle-herding. Repeated droughts meant the family struggled to feed the cattle, and his mother was thinking of selling the cattle to feed the family and send the children to school. However, his father died, and he had still not started school by age 10. He said he preferred to work to support the family (Ogando Portela and Pells, 2014, p77). In

2009, few households in Ethiopia reported children having permanently left school by age 12. Orkin notes that 'more common are repeated periods of absence, the inability to concentrate at school because of worries about the home situation or hunger due to food shortage, and children taking on additional responsibilities at home' (Orkin, 2010, 2012; Pells, 2011).

In UAP, India, a 15 year old boy described how he had left school, and started working on the farm (Morrow and Vennam, 2012, p.553-4):

> What else can I do, sitting at home all the time, the day long? It is terribly boring and anyway we do need some money for the household. I started to work,... No one asked me to work and they wanted me to remain at home but I felt very bad ... so I thought it would be better to work.

Cussianovich and Rojas (2014) describe how young people in Peru did not consider family work to be a 'job', but a way of 'helping' or supporting their families. In general, they assumed these tasks as responsibilities that must be met by household members. Young people valued this role and said, for example, that they had been working in the family fields since they were young, and this had allowed them 'to learn how to grow and harvest crops, pull out weeds, fertilize and spray land, and care for their animals' (Cussianovich and Rojas, 2014, p.168). In 2011, 17 out of 23 young people in the qualitative sample 'were currently working or had worked for money. Many considered paid work as part of their responsibilities arising from their own development towards 'becoming an adult' (p.168). Young people also valued work, because it allowed them to acquire skills that would be useful in the future. For example, one boy explained that work 'has helped me a little':

> It's made me see that earning a living is not so easy, that you have to work hard if you are not yet anything, if you've just finished school. You can say that the future that awaits you requires a bit of hard work, right? (Cussianovich and Rojas, 2014 p169).

Crivello and Boyden (2014) also note that economic crises affect the likelihood of children taking on greater responsibilities:

> For example, in 2008, several families in Andahuaylas struggled to cope with the rising cost of living, coupled with a drought. Boys and girls who in the previous year had not been working for pay sought paid work. This was the case for 14-year-old Esmeralda, who lived with her mother and grandmother. ... Esmeralda bore considerable responsibility at home and took a job as a farm hand during weekends and holidays, earning around 3.5 US dollars for a full days work. She was able to pay

for her schooling, clothing and food, thus saving her mother these expenses (Crivello and Boyden, 2014, p.387).

Powerful norms relating to family interdependency also operate in Vietnam. Crivello, Vu and Vennam (2014) illustrate this with the case of an older cohort girl, who had left school because of a series of family difficulties – her mother had a degenerative disease, a hailstorm destroyed the harvest, their house was damaged by flooding. She failed the entrance exam to upper secondary school, and her mother refused to let her resit the exam, reasoning that 'it would be a waste of time if she failed again' (Crivello et al., 2014, p.103). She is now working

> at a leather factory ten kilometres from home and eventually she decided to live in the workers' compound there, to avoid commuting. With both her parents ill and a disabled brother, [she] considers herself the most capable worker. She works six days a week, returning home on Sundays to help her mother on their farm. She gives most of her earnings to her mother (Crivello et al., 2014, p.103)

In summary, rates and intensity of work for children depended very much on the intersection between local employment availability (or the lack of it), family economic circumstances, and fluctuated according to demand. Familial expectations placed on children were important factors. Thus, family members can be seen to be interdependent, and in the absence of adequate social support systems, such as health insurance, children make a valuable contribution to subsistence survival. This illustrates the spatial and temporal dimensions of children's work.

3. What do children learn through work? skills development

While most international attention has focused on the harmful effects of hazardous child labour, moderate levels of work may contribute to children's sense of social responsibility within their households and wider community. Work can support children's learning and acquisition of skills (Bourdillon et al., 2010, Boyden, 2009). Children gain considerable knowledge through work, and this has long been recognised in social anthropology and social geography research, and is recognised by parents and children in all four countries. However, it is difficult to measure precisely what knowledge and skills are gained, not least because whatever children learn though work is contextually specific.

In Ethiopia, Abebe (2008) describes how 'parents in Gedeo felt that school education offered little preparation for work...' (p.19) He also found that 'schoolwork seems to occupy very little of children's engagement in relation to what they do and/or believe is important for

them to do during the course of a day'. Abebe suggests that the work tasks children undertook outside school provided children with competencies that

> are relevant in their daily livelihoods as well as being appropriate for preparing them for responsibilities in later life. However, they seem not only to be marginal within the school curriculum, but are also very difficult to measure in achievement tests, thus reflecting contrasts between indigenous perspectives on child development, and the formal educational model of cognitive growth (p.20).

Abebe and Kjørholt (2013) note that: 'although local knowledge can be seen as an integral part of informal education and socialisation that children acquire as part of growing up, this knowledge is gradually eroding. … knowledge from schools is being privileged over informal, tacit knowledge…' (p.31). The concern is that

> Many local knowledge systems in Ethiopia are at risk of becoming extinct. This is partly because globally natural environments are rapidly changing, and there are fast-paced economic, political and cultural transformations. … Many children in Southern Ethiopia, ... learn agricultural skills but have no land on which to practice them; they attend school only long enough to learn skills that are inappropriate for non-agricultural employment; or they may learn to work with and use local resources, most of which are disappearing fast. (Abebe and Kjørholt, 2013, p.31).

Ali, Dessalegn and Abebe (2013) explore indigenous knowledge about local food plants and resources, and how this knowledge is acquired by children. They conclude that this process is under threat, as 'the ways in which children acquire the knowledge to exploit vegetation resources in a more balanced way is being compromised' (Abebe and Kjørholt, 2013, p.33).

> Children learn about local food items by listening to their mothers and other older children … they often talk about the plants while picking and eating them. The acquisition of knowledge about different plants is by directly involving themselves in collecting, preparing and consuming them. Children are also in charge of the work of bringing some fruits and plants which are vital for the livelihood of their family (Ali et al., 2013, p.198).

Abate and Abebe (2013) describe children's gradual skill development though their involvement in paid work in *khat* farms and markets

> Boys start to work in the *khat* business by assisting family members (parents and older siblings) or friends in the business… Many boys learn to prune and wrap *khat* first by doing it for free or for a small tip. (p134)… Once children have acquired experience, they may not continue to work for the same employer... (p135).

Through their work on markets, children learn about entrepreneurship, and this opens up to them possible livelihoods for the future.

Work is also considered preparation for the future in UAP, India. Children and caregivers believe that learning manual skills is important, given uncertainty over whether children will be able to complete their schooling and whether skilled jobs will be available (Morrow, 2013b; Rolleston and James, 2011). As a 15 year old boy in UAP explained:

> As it is, we are not sure of getting employment after completion of education. We are not sure of getting a job. So we cannot depend on one source for employment alone. We have to take up studies and work simultaneously during holidays. If we do these two things at a time, maybe we will be able to do some work to survive in case we don't get a job. We can do one of these jobs and earn a living. We can also have some confidence in us that we can take up one of these jobs and survive. If we depend totally on education alone we will not be able to do any work in case we don't get a job.

For girls, learning household chores and how to farm is considered essential for marriage prospects, particularly in rural Ethiopia and UAP. As one mother in UAP explained: "If we give her away to another's house, there they will scold her if she does not do the work, saying, 'Who taught you the work? Did your mother and father not teach you?'" (Pells, 2011, Morrow and Vennam, 2012). Girls said that prospective in-laws 'will certainly ask what we have learned in our parents' house'. As one girl said:

> after they get married and go, when there is more work, then the work learned here will come in very useful, and if they go there, without these skills, it would be very disadvantageous. So it is better to learn as they will be equipped for the future (Morrow and Vennam, 2012, p.554).

Work is understood as teaching children skills that are useful. One girl said: 'when we grow up, we can do the work'. One boy said: 'Since we have no education, this is useful'. When asked what he had learned by working from an early age, one boy commented: 'I can do things on my own. I need not depend on others'. In a group discussion children mentioned that the suitable age to start work is 17 to 20 years. However, children talked about how occasional work was useful as training for full-time work and suggested that they should start earlier than that, so that they would be prepared for work by the time they are 18 or 20. 'Learning work should start early, or else the learning will never take place, because it is difficult to learn as adults' (Morrow and Vennam, 2012, p.554).

In Peru, Crivello and Boyden (2014) describe how 'work affords children practical skills that would enable them to 'fend for themselves' in the case of premature parental death or sudden illness' (Crivello and Boyden, 2014, p.386).

> They cited other advantages, as when they work on other people's land for pay, keeping some of their earnings for personal use and giving the remainder to their mothers. Children who work with their families may be given the occasional 'tip', but 'not having to ask my mother for money' was widely cited as a benefit of paid work. (Crivello and Boyden, 2014, p.386; see also Cuissanovich and Rojas, 2014).

Ames (2013a) analysed the accounts of children aged 5 and 6 and their parents in two rural communities in Peru. She describes the learning and development of competencies that enable children to contribute to family livelihoods:

> Adults clearly signalled that children would start a more significant involvement with the household and farm tasks from the age of 5. Although some adults said children might start to help at an even younger age – about 2 or 3 years old – most agreed that at 5 years old, children 'have more knowledge' and 'they can understand' and thus they are required to take on more responsibilities at home. Adults also agreed that as a result of the progressive participation of children in these responsibilities between the ages of 10 and 12 they were already fully involved in farm work and competent in a variety of household and agricultural activities (Ames, 2013, p.147; see also Bolin, 2006).

Older children in Peru, as noted above, are 'already fully involved in agricultural and domestic work, were very aware of this' (Ames, 2013a, p.149). For example, Crivello (2011) describes how one girl lived with her grandparents for schooling, worked in her mother's shop when at home, and was paid a small wage. The girl's mother believed working was good for children so they do not become lazy: 'because by knowing how to work they can earn their money and in that way can be educated also' (p401). At the following round of fieldwork, the girl had returned home because she missed her family, and then took on responsibility for caring for her younger sisters and other domestic tasks, as well as working for pay as a day labourer during harvest (Crivello, 2011, p.401). Children who worked learned useful skills in their daily activities, through farm work, herding and selling in the market place. Their work was valued because it represented something 'to fall back on' in case they failed to secure professional careers' (Crivello, 2011, p.404, see also Ames, 2013b).

It is interesting to note that in all four countries, children and parents have a clear view that skills learned through work are important as a back-up if education fails to lead to improved prospects and a route out of poverty. However, the long term consequences for what

knowledge is likely to be lost through attendance at school, and withdrawal of children from family-based work, is only now beginning to be explored.

4. Intersections of school and work

In all four countries, children and their caregivers were acutely aware that a balance has to be struck between work and school, and that combining the two may be difficult for children and causes tensions within families and schools. However, disentangling the relationship between work and school is not straightforward. The following sections explore first, examples where work conflicts with school, and second, where work enables children to go to school.

a) Working conflicts with school

In Ethiopia, Abate and Abebe (2013) found that 'nearly all the children reported that their school achievement was negatively affected by work because the work left inadequate time and energy for study. Children often missed classes and did not have time to do homework' (p141). Similarly, Orkin (2012) found that 'children who needed to work worried about finding jobs, which in turn affected their concentration at school':

> Senayit was due to start Grade 5 in the 2008/9 school year. Her parents were both seriously ill. She worked on vegetable farms at weekends and sometimes before or after school in order to buy pens, exercise books, coffee and food for her family. She said, 'I think about my parents while I am in class or studying: this definitely affects my learning' (Orkin, 2012, pp.7-8).

Orkin describes how boys in Leki earned money catching fish, which was profitable at certain times of the year:

> Fishing paid less well than working on vegetable farms. However, it was available year-round, and was particularly profitable during Lent (fasting season- when Orthodox Christian families do not eat meat). Boys rowed boats to deeper water in the middle of the lake to set their nets. Once there, it made sense for them wait there for the day, so they missed school (p8).

Despite the high hopes for education in Ethiopia, the quality of schooling is unsatisfactory (Bourdillon and Boyden, 2014)**.** In parts of rural Ethiopia, a shift system still operates, which means that children attend school in the morning or afternoon. Orkin (2012) explored whether work and schooling are complementary or competitive, and concluded that the characteristics of work (hard physical labour) and characteristics of schooling (high costs, and inflexibility) combined to cause difficulties (see also Admassie, 2003, who suggested a flexible schooling system that recognised the seasonal demands for children to work might be

effective; and see Abebe, 2011). Children are aware that working affects educational attainment. In UAP, one girl said 'Our education will be spoiled... the children who go regularly to school score more marks than we do' (Morrow and Vennam, 2009). Some children also described being punished by teachers for missing school in order to work.

In some countries, further factors may operate to make work more attractive than school, alongside poverty. One of these is ethnicity. In Vietnam, schooling is conducted in Vietnamese, and children who do not speak Vietnamese at home describe finding school boring (Vu, 2014). They also describe not feeling welcomed at school. For example, an older cohort boy who had left school at 15, described being teased for being from an ethnic minority.

> According to his grandmother, parents, and sisters, he was the breadwinner in his family, and knows how to do many kinds of work on the farm. He once took care of the farm for 6 weeks while his father was in hospital, staying up in the hills for 6 weeks, with no TV, no cellphone no friends or electricity (Vu, 2011)

Drawing on longitudinal data comparing the two cohorts, Morrow et al. (2014) explore changes in rural children's time-use and the expansion of schooling in two rural communities, one in Ethiopia, and the other in Telangana (UAP) over the period 2002-2011, and found that while children were spending more time in school, they were still to varying degrees combining school with work. In Telangana, there had been a change in children's time use in three years, with children spending more time in school. This had taken place through a combination of surveillance and infrastructural improvement. In rural Ethiopia, more children were going to school, but in 2011,

> boys were still expected to contribute to the household economy.... children express the view that they want to attend school. Some refuse to work, and this seems more explicit in 2011 than in 2007. Schools are more accessible in rural areas and, where possible, children attend school, though where family circumstances dictate, parents prioritise children's work (Morrow et al., 2014, p.148).

In summary, children and young people face competing pressures as they try to combine school with traditional work roles, in order to meet familial expectations that they will contribute to households, especially in rural areas. This varies across time and place, according to regional and local seasonal crop cycles.

b. Work enables children to go to school

In numerous instances, working for pay enabled children to attend school. Orkin (2012) found that children in rural Ethiopia worked as casual wage labourers for planting seedlings and harvesting, and

> many children used their wages to buy school materials, which made work and schooling complementary... children had to buy exercise books, stationery and adequate clothes and shoes. Two children interviewed had dropped out of school because their parents could not afford these things. They worked and saved money and returned to school the next year (2012, p.7).

Morrow et al. (2014) describe the case a girl in rural Ethiopia who had started going to school when she was 8, and also started work, picking coffee. She said 'If I didn't have a job, I couldn't have attended class because I would have had a financial constraint. Furthermore, our standard of living has improved since I started work' (Morrow et al., 2014, p.146). Chuta (2014) describes how an older cohort boy in Addis Ababa was

> trying to gain work skills after his father had a car accident. He said he could handle his situation by doing some paid work, even in some future uncertainties. In addition to learning how to become a professional football player, he was already working as a taxi driver. ... he knew he should give attention to his education even though he had no one to help him pursue it. He said 'I have convinced myself that if there is no one who is ready to cover my school fees, I will work during the day and learn in the evening' (p14).

Differing livelihood zones (space) have differing timings in the ways they demand children's involvement in work, with implications for national and regional policies in relation to the school calendar. Orkin found in rural Ethiopia, that

> schooling was structured to accommodate children's work to some extent. The Leki school management committee, in consultation with farmers, adjusted the school calendar and moved the times of the school day according to the cycle of subsistence activities. In October, there was a two-week break so children could help with the harvesting, and when school resumed it was moved from morning to afternoon. In November, school was moved back to the morning. In April, school was moved back to the afternoon because of tilling. (Orkin, 2010, p.10).

On the other hand, Abebe, in research in Gedeo found that the school calendar and agricultural work cycles were not in tandem, and that work affected the schooling of children in gender-specific ways. In coffee-livelihood zones of southern Ethiopia, children, especially boys, had the highest level of absenteeism from school during the coffee harvesting season – October to December - because they were required to pick coffee berries that mature on the tree top irregularly (Abebe, 2011). Orkin also found that 'the school calendar did not change

around the vegetable harvest, when many poorer children worked on vegetable farms' (Orkin, 2010, p.10).

Frost and Rolleston (2011) report on group discussions with children in rural Ethiopia, and found that:

> Poor children in rural areas often only have two choices: they can drop out of school to allow them to work or they can go to school if these activities are flexible, but they cannot give up work. They said the shift system helped prevent dropouts and that teachers needed to be more supportive of working children by providing extra tutorials for missed classes (Frost and Rolleston, 2011, p. 14; see also Boyden, 2009).

Similarly, in Peru, Ames (2013a) notes that children actively contribute, earning cash to pay for school expenses, including uniforms, school materials, and even the paper sheet to print the exams, and bus fares (see also Cuissanovich and Rojas, 2014).

Sometimes children work to earn money to support their siblings' education. For example, in Vietnam, Morrow and Vu (forthcoming) describe how an older cohort girl stitched shopping bags at home to supplement the family income. She had also helped her father with construction work. The money earned paid for her older sister's tuition fees – 'back then, my family was short of money, I lent that money to my sister for her tuition fees'. One of her uncles had scolded her for working 'He said I failed [my exams] because I was absorbed in working'.

Formal education is very highly valued and competitive in all four countries. In Vietnam, and children describe pressure on their time and the strong desire to succeed (Vu, 2011). This leads to complex dynamics within families. Girls are expected to contribute to domestic work, but this can conflict with study time. For example, a 17 year old girl with a younger brother and younger sister, described how her mother had given up her job to take on her (daughter's) share of the housework, so she could have time to study. Here, there is a tension between filial piety and pressure to achieve at school, and schooling has taken priority. Conversely, a boy who had previously lived with relatives so he could study at a nearby high school, but had moved back to care for his father, who was mentally ill, while his brother was away on military service. His case illustrates the tensions between education and duty to care for parents. He said:

> I take time to take care of him [father]. For example, I normally go to school in the morning so mom can take care of him, I come home at noon so I usually bring food for him to eat. After that, at night I boil water for him to wash himself, then after hanging around for a bit, he goes to sleep, I wash his clothes when I can, if not then,

my mom would wash it. After dinner, I remind my dad to take his medicine, then he goes to sleep.

He described how he helped his mother, and earned extra money folding pineapple bags. He wanted to go to university, and wanted to support his mother.

In UAP, children were acutely aware that working conflicted with school, and some described being punished for missing school because of work (see also Morrow and Singh, 2014; children recount similar experiences in Ethiopia). A 12 year old girl described how she was punished if she missed school:

> I get hurt if teachers scold me. Sometimes they also beat us. Madam beats us more. She sometimes beats with stick.... If we do not complete our homework, she beats... She beats if [we are] not regular to school.... I feel very bad when teacher scolds me. I like to be regular to school, do home work, but I cannot do it all. It is difficult, but I have no choice but to do it.

A 13 year old boy who was also involved in cotton pollination work described how he had missed school, and when he returned: 'They [school management] beat us, madam. They hit us because I didn't go to school for one month, and they have taught the lessons and I missed [them]'. Ranadeep's mother explained:

> My boy scolds me for this. He liked going to school, but we stop him, he makes a lot of argument. Otherwise, ... we don't get labourers in time and there is no other way for us, so we had to do it like that. When he is absent without intimation to teachers, they shout at him and he is terrified.... His father goes there and informs them. ... they scold us, they say, "how will he get on if he is absent for such a long time?"... we try to pacify them by telling them about our problems at home (Morrow, 2013a).

It is vital to acknowledge that working has negative consequences for children, including injuries (Morrow, Barnett and Vujcich, 2013), and exhaustion (Morrow and Vennam, 2012, Tafere and Pankhurst, 2015, Ogando Portela and Pells, 2014). As Crivello and Boyden (2014) note for Peru, but applicable in all four countries,

> farm work is often carried out under arduous conditions, and in boys' and girls' own words, described as 'tiring work', 'having to walk far to the fields', and under the 'unrelenting sun'. They complained about returning from work 'dirty', 'exhausted', 'suffering from the heat' and with 'sore shoulders' (Crivello and Boyden, 2014, p.388).

However as Crivello and Boyden (2014) also note, the quality of schooling that children are receiving is often poor, which makes it 'difficult to predict which strategy of protection –

school or work – will have the most positive outcomes for children and their families' (p389; see also Murray, 2014; and Niewenhuys (1994) who argued that while compulsory education may be seen by governments as helping to reduce the incidence of child labour, in Kerala schooling has not reduced children's responsibilities, instead it has effectively intensified the time-space of their burdens and duties).

Discussion and Conclusions

This chapter has described the spaces, values and meanings of children's work in four countries. There are commonalities and differences in spatial and temporal dimensions of children's work and learning. Children manage a number of demands, especially if their households/living situations are poor, and in rural areas, there are seasonal demands of agriculture for children's work. Work is often taken for granted by children, something they undertake as part of their daily routines, though arguably this has become more problematic as the priorities for children's time use have shifted to attendance at school. However, while work may conflict with schooling, work is not without intrinsic future value, because children gain important knowledge through work, and are thus prepared for the future and married life. Therefore, school and work need to be considered in relation to each other, not as separate discrete activities. Finally, work in many forms is part of children's responsibilities within their households, and is a way they are integrated into family systems.

Work for children has been pervasive in the countries in which Young Lives conducts research, but is showing signs of decline for younger children, as primary schooling has been extended. Combining school and work causes difficulties for children, and the knowledge and skills gained through work do not appear to be valued in formal systems. There is a risk that children and families are blamed and punished when they work, but the demand for work is related to structural factors elated to poverty, economic shocks and insufficient availability of, or failure of, existing social protection schemes to act as safety nets. On the other hand, money earned through work may enable (some) children to go to school.

Generally, children's competencies and responsibilities increase through their involvement in work. They gain substantive knowledge about copious aspects of daily life. They also learn about the risks from work. This knowledge is not recognised or valued, and in mainstream development discourses is seen negatively as conflicting with school, the acquisition of formal qualifications, and human capital development, and thus as detrimental to the development of whole societies in the global South. Polarised views - of work as 'bad' for

children, 'schooling' as good - are problematic, from children's points of view, because schooling does not appear to be the universal panacea it is held to be by international development agencies, governments, communities, parents and children alike (Murray, 2014).

However, it is important to balance an understanding of the positive aspects of work (learning, integration, interdependence) with an appreciation of the negative aspects of work (risks of injury, exhaustion, interference with schooling and so on). Children's activities need to be understood holistically, from their point of view. Finally, there is acknowledgement by children and caregivers that skills learned through working will be useful if the promises of formal schooling are not met. At a time of rapid social and economic change, it is difficult for parents and children to know what skills are going to be necessary in future. It is clear that rural livelihoods like farming are not an aspiration for young people, and they want to escape the poverty of their households. This leads to a further potential problem relating to skill development. As Abebe (2008, p. 23) asks: 'to what extent are schools preparing children and young people to deal with transient livelihoods? How can education ... be made responsive to the wider cultural, socio-economic and political changes that are taking place?' This is a challenge for governments, education systems, communities, families and children, globally.

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