

Proceedings of the workshop on the issue of
Childhood Poverty

Organized by

PANE and the SCF-UK Young Lives Project

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Background:

Studies indicate that poor families and children are particularly vulnerable to crisis and shocks, and unexpected circumstances such as illness or injury can put great strain on already stretched household budgets. Such shocks are a major risk to children with effects in term of both their own life course and also with regard to the intergenerational persistence of poverty, as missed opportunities in childhood may catch the children into a poverty trap in adulthood. Children living in households with lower spending power tend to do less well in school compared to other children even in the same community but living in households with better spending power. Low household spending power reduces children's self esteem and agency. It increases shame as well as sense of lack of respect and inclusion. Young people with high self esteem have better mental and physical health. Achieve better educational out comes and enjoy better economic prospects than their peers with lower self esteem....

At was against this background that PANE and the Young Lives Project recently organized a join event on the issue of Childhood Poverty. The event which took place at MN International Hotel brought together ____ participants drown from various stakeholders.

Purpose:

The purpose of the event was to brainstorm over the impacts of childhood poverty on prospects of Ethiopian children and come up with policy recommendations.

Specific Objectives:

1. create awareness on the state and impacts of childhood poverty
2. mobilize support for Young Lives Project
3. come up with concrete policy recommendations for upcoming PASDEP
4. share and disseminate information on best practices

Expected Outputs:

1. the state of childhood poverty and best practices in reducing its impacts exhausted
2. concrete policy recommendations for upcoming PASDEP generated

3. information on best practices shared among stakeholders as well as disseminated to others interested in the form of proceedings, etc ...

Timetable:

Refer to Appendix 1

Participants:

Refer to Appendix 2

SECTION II: SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

Opening Session:

The opening session was graced by the presence of David Throp, Country Director of SC UK, who had to depart later due other commitments. Mr Throp, in his welcoming remarks said YL is a major international policy research project being implemented in four counties including Ethiopia. He expressed happiness over working together with PANE and the staff and renewed SC UK's commitment to continue supporting the network and its cause. E He wished the participants fruitful deliberations and hoped for resourceful outcomes that could be used by interested institutions.

Having thanked the participants for their attendants PANE executive director Eshetu Bekele for his part gave a recap of a history and objectives of PANE and the purpose of the joint event. Mr. Eshetu said PANE emerged as a consequence of PRRSP process in the form of IPRSP. According to Mr. Eshetu at the time Ethiopia had a broad and divers civil society sector working in different areas but all concerned with reducing poverty. Hence many of them saw the launch of the PRSP process as a good opportunity since they had been keen to work with government with on effective policies and strategies to reduce poverty. Accordingly NGOs PRSP taskforce was formed in 2001 to facilitate their participation. The task force produced the NGOs perspective on the first Ethiopian PRSP-IPPRP which was shared with the government during the consolation process. The task force stayed with SDPRP for three years and was later in 2004 transformed into PANE incorporating regional chapters from across the country. SCUK was one of the founding members. PANE is currently actively working on policy research and has

contributed to the development of the second Ethiopian PRSP – PASDEP. It generally works to reduce poverty through facilitating and coordinating the engagement of CSOs in PASDEP and MDGs; undertaking and encouraging research on key poverty and development issues; promoting dialogue on policy issues, and playing a proactive role in policy design; monitoring and evaluating the impact of development programs; and providing capacity building support to civil society groups, community-based organizations, and local governments.

Paper Presentations:

Three presentations highlighting the state of childhood poverty both nationally and internationally were delivered on the occasion of the PANE-Young Lives joint workshop.

Time: 9:20 – 9:40 am

Topic: **International study of childhood poverty**

Presenter: Bekele Tefera

In his presentation, Policy Coordinator of Young Lives, Bekele Tefera introduced the project and highlighted findings of international study on childhood poverty. He said YL is a DFID-funded international policy research project. It is being implemented in Ethiopia, India, Peru, and Vietnam tracking the lives of 12,000 children over 15-year period of the MDGs and beyond. The project aims at evidence-based policy advocacy through conducting quantitative and qualitative as well as policy research and analysis. The objective is to improve awareness on the causes and consequences of childhood poverty, build understanding on how to break the poverty cycle, and inform the development and implementation of policies and practices. The project is being implemented in partnership between SCUK and research institutions in UK and study countries. It is managed by the University of Oxford. In Ethiopia the project is being executed in partnership between SCUK and EDRI in Addis Ababa, Amhara, Oromia, SNNP and Tigray States.

Findings:

Material Well-being:

- material poverty shapes children's views of their lives and aspirations for the future,
- Relative more than absolute poverty tends to influence child wellbeing
- Strong correlation between material circumstances and psychological indicators of self-efficacy, sense of inclusion and educational aspiration

Psychosocial Wellbeing:

- Family, social and cultural dimensions are important to child wellbeing in addition to materials wellbeing
- Systematic correlation between levels parental education and children's psychological indicators particularly for self esteem
- Psychosocial measures are relevant life-skills that may affect children's success in the labour market as adults – may also be another mechanisms by which poverty is transmitted across generations
- Urban children who are better off in material wellbeing have lower level of subjective wellbeing than rural children –suggesting relative rather than absolute poverty being important influence on psychosocial wellbeing
- Death of a father at age 8 to 12 years reducer's child's sense of optimism compared death of a parent at earlier age

Nutrition and wellbeing:

- Controlling for the effect of household material circumstances:
- Psycho-social indicators of children's self-esteem, shame, agency and sense of respect are negatively associated with stunting across study countries

- Stunted children in Ethiopia and Vietnam have lower educational aspirations for themselves than non-stunted children
- Lower aspiration may affect children's ability to take advantage of future opportunities when offered

Education:

- Children and their caregivers have high aspirations for education and educational level correlates to wellbeing – the higher the better
- Education aspiration across the study countries are high and strongly correlated with household material circumstances,
- Caregivers aspirations for their children are strongly shaped by poverty-90% of better households in Ethiopia anticipate university attendance compared with 52% among the poorest households

Policy Recommendations:

- Target children instead of adults in PSNP (change part of PSNP into school feeding)
- Provide schemes with negative gender impacts (on boys/girls)
- Enroll adults who can't do PWP into DSP
- Increase payment to PWP by indexing the wage rate to inflation(so that children are not required to engage in paid/unpaid work)

Time: 9:20 – 9:40 am

Topic: **Productive Safety Net Programme and Children’s Time Use between Work and Schooling in Ethiopia**

Presenter: Tassew Woldehanna

“Ethiopia’s employment programme started in the 1980s and associated with the rehabilitation programme known as the Food for Work programme. From 1997 to 2004, the government introduced relief-based and Cash for Work Programmes known as EGS. Associated with these, there were Free Food Aid Programmes that provided food aid to people affected by drought. In 2005, a new public employment programme popularly known as the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) was established in order to support households in absolute poverty and to protect households from falling into poverty. The PSNP has two components namely the Public Work Programme (PWP) and Direct Support Programme (DSP). While beneficiaries have to supply labour in return for a daily unskilled wage to be part of the PWP, poor people unable to supply labour are entitled to be part of the DSP in order to get free cash and/or food aid. Complementary to PSNP is an agricultural extension support programme designed to help households involved in agriculture proper.”

The hypothesis of the study is that the provision of public work and agricultural extension support programs via the promotion of labour-intensive activities, while augmenting aggregate economic development, could be detrimental to child well-being pursued without precautionary management measures. In order to create a win-win situation where both national economic development and children’s rights are realized, it is crucial to have a deep understanding of the relationship between support Programmes and children’s time use.

Using propensity score matching techniques and data collected by Young Lives, the study has investigated the time allocation of children to work, schooling and studying at home and come up with the following findings:

Findings:

- PSNP improved child well-being

- PSNP reduced total time spent on working/childcare/household chores
- PSNP increased time girls spent on studying
- PSNP improved quality of education
- PWP increased time children spent on paid work
- PWP reduced time girls spent on childcare/household chores
- PWP increased time girls spent on studying
- DSP reduced paid/unpaid child work
- DSP increased grade completed by urban/rural boys
- DSP reduced time rural boys spent on unpaid work outside home
- DSP reduced time rural girls spent on childcare/household chores
- DSP reduced time boys spent on paid/unpaid/total work
- DSP reduced time girls spent on paid/total work
- DSP increased grade completed by urban boys
- ASP reduced time boys/girls spent on paid work/childcare/household chores
- ASP increased time boys/girls spent on schooling

Policy Implications:

- Shifting support from PWP to
 - Conditional (on school attendance)
 - Activities with higher income effect than substitution (extension support)
- Target children instead of adults in PSNP (change part of PSNP into school feeding)
- Provide schemes with negative gender impacts (on boys/girls)

- Enroll adults who can't do PWP into DSP
- Increase payment to PWP by indexing the wage rate to inflation(so that children are not required to engage in paid/unpaid work)

Time: 9:40 – 10:15 am

Topic: **Educational Trajectories of Children Living in Poverty**

Presenter: Yisak Tafere

“Transitions can be characterized as both events and more subtle processes of becoming somebody that are woven through the fabric of everyday life. To some extent it is possible to distinguish social transitions, which may be formal or informal, from formal institutional transitions, but these are often interwoven. Transitions reflect existing inequalities and may reproduce them due to their influence on children’s life trajectories and adult outcomes. Transitions encompass agency, representations and meanings, expectations, and finally identity and well-being.”

“In many contexts adults define transitions in relation to their desire for children to become ‘good adults’ and function well in a particular setting. This may, for example, mean that they become ‘better adults’ than their parents, but only by continually demonstrating that they adhere to their parents’ values and wishes. Children’s transitional experiences are partly influenced by their parents’ decisions which are based on parents’ perceptions of what constitutes a good transition. As their parents’ perceptions may be influenced by norms originating in their community, understanding community contexts helps us understand how children’s transitions are constructed and guided, and provides invaluable background to investigating children’s experiences. Both adults and children describe formal transitions in and out of schooling and work during 11 to 13 years of age as being the most significant. Marriage is a good example of a rite of passage that is engaged in alongside institutional transitions and has considerable influence on their success or failure; it also has a clear gender dimension.”

Using the life course theory and data collected by Young Lives, the study has analyzed the views of caregivers and other adults in five rural, semi-urban, and urban communities of Ethiopia on the nature and timing of transitions made by children aged 11 to 13 years. The three transitions

selected were schooling, work and early marriage (for girls). The following are the main findings of the study:

Findings:

- Specific socio-cultural/material contexts affect transitions into/out of school/work/early marriage
- Parents' expectations/experiences affect transitions into/out of school/work/early marriage
- Children's transitions are rarely linear/singular/focused solely on learning
- Early marriage/involvement in too much/heavy labour/interrupted schooling have negative impacts
- Successful transitions of children from poor communities is reduced by having too many potentially contradictory opportunities too soon

Policy Recommendations:

- Revisit educational policy
 - provide equal opportunities for rural and urban children by extending preschool to rural
 - government-funding for preschools would increase access by poor
 - 'Self-contained' schooling may reduce educational quality – this requires further research/analysis
- Consider further interventions to support education of poor children (e.g. grants for uniforms & school

SECTION III: DISCUSSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Questions & Answers:

- Q1. Were children with disabilities (CWDs) considered during sampling? If so, what are the findings regarding the impact of childhood poverty (CHP) on CWDs? What, for instance, is the impact of CHP on education of CWDs? If not, are there any future plans to study the condition of CWDs?
- A1. The studies used random sampling. There wasn't any special attention attached to CWDs. But when they were found they were recorded and studied. Though they may dropout due to problems CWDs are sent to preschool earlier than others. This may be because their parents think that they can't contribute much even if they were kept at home. Or it may be because parents fail to manage CWDs at home. The reason behind sending them to school earlier may not therefore be genuine. There were but few CWDs found in both young and old cohorts. Qualitative study was done for health. During discussions with communities long-term illnesses particularly mental health problem have come out repeatedly. The trend is to be seen yet. The case of CWDs needs to be studied in further depth as it is intended to be included in the upcoming PASDEP. It will be discussed further with all concerned including donors.
- Q2. It was indicated in the studies that though the PWP component of the PNSP has increased the amount of time children, particularly girls, spent on education, it also increased the amount of time children spent on paid work outside home too. Don't the two findings contradict each other? If so, what is the use of implementing the PNSP?
- A2. The substitution effect of the PWP component of the PNSP hinders children living in poverty from attending schooling. This happens when children have to substitute their parents at PWP or at home. Hence, both their marks as well as their highest grade completed may be affected. But once they are in the classroom, it helps them follow their lessons attentively with full stomach. Child labour was found to be at its highest particularly at the age of 10 for the children at this stage tend to combine both work and education. Before this stage or afterwards child labour seemed relatively lower. This is because the children stick themselves more to education than combining both. So, while PNSP was found to reduce child work at times, it was also seen increasing child work at

other times. Much better results are expected if PSNP was to be targeted specifically at children rather than at households.

- Q3. The education policy of Ethiopia has stipulated primary education to be compulsory. Do you think Ethiopia is in a position to realize this?
- A3. Interest for education is out there among the society in Ethiopia. No need of imposing it at all. What we need to do in the Ethiopian context is just ensure access and support children living in poverty and their families.
- Q4. Were there any efforts made to involve stakeholders and other relevant institutions in the YL project?
- A4. the YL Ethiopia project is core-funded by DFID with sub-studies funded by IDRC. It is being implemented with the involvement and support of various institutions including MoH, MoE, MoLSA, MoFED, UNICEF, WFP, SC, PANE and EEA who are also advisory board members of the project. YL enjoys sound relations with all. Also nationally, the project has an excellent network. It is being implemented in close collaboration and consultation with regional authorities at all levels as well as with the active participation of the respective communities. The project attaches prime attention to community reciprocity. Everything is done based on information gathered from and conversations held with all concerned including the recipient communities. The outcomes are also discussed with them. The project's working papers are consulted more by regional authorities than by federal. We also have close contacts with policy makers and we shall be lobbying for children to be represented at ministerial level instead of their current representation only at department level.
- Q5. Is CHP different from HHP? Could it be effectively addressed in isolation of HHP?
- A5. Even though CHP seems to be part of HHP, that's not always the case. Although the two of them appear to overlap each other, the impact of poverty may vary from a member of a household to another. A child who belonged to a poor household at one point of time in history may one day find itself in a different standard of living regardless of that of its household.
- Q6. How do the impacts of urban and rural CHP compare and contrast in the studies?
- A6. The impact of CHP among urban and rural communities is not the same. The resulting shock in terms of livelihood such as hunger and child work had been worse

among rural children than urban at least until the recent economic crisis which is extremely affecting urban and rural communities alike. The impact of CHP on education is also harsher among rural children than urban. There are wider educational opportunities among urban communities than rural. There are both privately and community/government owned preschools in abundance for them to choose from. On the contrary in rural areas, preschools, even government owned are hardly available let alone the alternatives. And children who pass through preschool were proved to be much more creative than those who don't particularly when they embark on their future careers. The project shall therefore be pushing for policy changes in this regard also, i.e. for more schools particularly for more preschools and secondary schools to be opened in rural areas. Yet another source of concern among several rural communities in Ethiopia is the inaccessibility of secondary schools. Children are required to cross long distances to pursue secondary education. This exposes particularly girl students to HTPs such as abduction, rape and early marriage. Hence, not many parents in such areas would dare to take the risk and send their daughters to the schools. Nor would many girls to go. This forces many girls to dropout. The situation is yet another policy issue that calls for construction of more secondary schools in rural Ethiopia.

- Q7. What do we mean by child labour? What exactly does it refer to-only when a child works outside his house or also when it works inside its own house?
- A7. According to ILO, if child work goes to the extent of affecting the education of a given child, then it is regarded as child labour. In other words, if a child is made to work for over 2 hours, the activity is no more considered as child work but as child labour. But if the activity is somehow hazardous to the child, however short it may be it is taken as child labour. As a matter of fact child work is not that uncommon in many parts of the world. Nor is it a taboo. Humans, by nature, would like their offspring to get involved and learn how to work. The most important thing however is that the activity should be simple and does not have to take much of their school and leisure time. Otherwise it is considered as child labour.
- Q8. It was indicated in the presentations that PWP increases demand for labour is that a way of recommending the DSP instead? If so, how about the dependency impact of the latter?

- A8. Seen from children's point of view, the DSP component of the PSNP yields good results. It is not however advisable as it discourages hard work and causes dependency syndrome. The question should therefore be how could we run the DSP without its ill effects? In order to do so, we need to pose certain preconditions. For instance we may target support at only those children who regularly attend school. The support may be in the form of school materials.
- Q9. How are beneficiaries of PSNP supposed to graduate from both the PWP and DSP schemes? Is it on their own request or regardless of that?
- A9. It is unlikely that a recipient of PSNP would come up and say "I graduate!" nor can the programme tell someone to do so at least until it provides them with a relatively sustainable means of livelihood such as animal husbandry or fattening.
- Q10. The YL project is being simultaneously implemented in Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam. What important lessons can Ethiopia learn from all or any of the other three countries?
- A10. The project is being simultaneously implemented in the four nations of Ethiopia, India, Peru, and Vietnam. A core questionnaire common to all four countries as well as country-specific questionnaires was used in the studies. Ethiopia and Vietnam in particular share certain similarities in their backgrounds in that both have undergone the socialist ideology. Accordingly Ethiopia can draw valuable lessons from Vietnam's conditional cash transfer scheme, educational structure, and school feeding programme. The Viets also have a good health financing system. They fully cover the medical expenses of poor children. Trade too has become a very important sector in present day Vietnam. Those and other effective schemes together have helped the nation make a big leap in terms of reducing the number of people below the poverty line to 5 to 6 per cent from as high as 70 per cent. Hence as Ethiopians we have very useful lessons to draw from the Viets.
- Q11. Organizations such as CCF Ethiopia, CCFC and WVE have introduced feeding centers for children between 1 and three years of age under the early childhood care and development scheme. Are your studies in favor of this approach or not?
- 11. In India they have introduced school feeding Programmes so as to encourage enrollment, ensure retention as well as increase the highest grade completed. They have

also put in place a supplementary mechanism to discourage absence from school. If a family fails to send a child to school it is fined 2 rupees. Why then keep them home when there is the resource. So, introducing the school feeding scheme particularly among relatively poorer communities in Ethiopia would considerably contribute to higher enrollment, retention and grade completed by children in those communities. Though the document devotes only a paragraph to child nutrition as a scheme, it is already incorporated in Ethiopia's PASDEP. There is a need for a fresh research into the PSNP before a recommendation for only evidence-based recommendations could be brought before policy makers. Only then could the issue of child nutrition assume its proper place in PASDEP.

Recommendations:

- 1. The case of CWDs needs to be studied in further depth as it is intended to be included in the upcoming PASDEP. It will be discussed further with all concerned including donors.
- 2. Interest for education is out there among the society in Ethiopia. No need of imposing it at all. What we need to do in the Ethiopian context is just ensure access and support children living in poverty and their families.
- 3. The impact of CHP on education is also harsher among rural children than urban. There are wider educational opportunities among urban communities than rural. There are both privately and community/government owned preschools in abundance for them to choose from. On the contrary in rural areas, preschools, even government owned are hardly available let alone the alternatives. And children who pass through preschool were proved to be much more creative than those who don't particularly when they embark on their future careers. The project shall therefore be pushing for policy changes in this regard also, i.e. for more schools particularly for more preschools and secondary schools to be opened in rural areas. Yet another source of concern among several rural communities in Ethiopia is the inaccessibility of secondary schools. Children are required to cross long distances to pursue secondary education. This exposes particularly girl students to HTPs such as abduction, rape and early marriage. Hence, not many parents in such areas would dare to take the risk and send their daughters to the schools. Nor would

many girls to go. This forces many girls to dropout. The situation is yet another policy issue that calls for construction of more secondary schools in rural Ethiopia.

- 4. The substitution effect of the PWP component of the PSNP will have a negative impact particularly on rural girls. It makes them more vulnerable to abuses such as abduction, rape and early marriage. This will in turn have a negative effect on their highest grade completed. The studies should therefore come up with a more in-depth analysis of the PSNP from gender perspective; highlight its negative impact particularly on rural girls and forward recommendation for policy shift.
- 5. Seen from children's point of view, the DSP component of the PSNP yields good results. It is not however advisable as it discourages hard work and causes dependency syndrome. The question should therefore be how could we run the DSP without its ill effects? In order to do so, we need to pose certain preconditions. For instance we may target support at only those children who regularly attend school. The support may be in the form of school materials.
- 6. It is unlikely that a recipient of PSNP would come up and say "I graduate!" nor can the programme tell someone to do so at least until it provides them with a relatively sustainable means of livelihood such as animal husbandry or fattening.
- 7. Ethiopia can draw valuable lessons from Vietnam's conditional cash transfer scheme, educational structure, and school feeding programme. The Viets also have a good health financing system. They fully cover the medical expenses of poor children. Trade too has become a very important sector in present day Vietnam. Those and other effective schemes together have helped the nation make a big leap in terms of reducing the number of people below the poverty line to 5 to 6 per cent from as high as 70 per cent.
- 8. In India they have introduced school feeding Programmes so as to encourage enrollment, ensure retention as well as increase the highest grade completed. They have also put in place a supplementary mechanism to discourage absence from school. If a family fails to send a child to school it is fined 2 rupees. Why then keep them home when there is the resource. So, introducing the school feeding scheme particularly among relatively poorer communities in Ethiopia would considerably contribute to higher enrollment, retention and grade completed by children in those communities. Though the document devotes only a paragraph to child nutrition as a scheme, it is already

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