

Ethiopian Centre for Child Research

The Ethiopian Development Research Institute (EDRI) has established the Ethiopian Centre for Child Research in partnership with UNICEF Ethiopia and Addis Ababa University

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MISSION

The mission of the Ethiopian Centre for Child Research (ECCR) is to generate multidisciplinary child-focused research and evidence on policy and practice to inform decision and enhance programmatic capacity concerning the development, equity, wellbeing and protection for children in Ethiopia.

VISION

A research centre of excellence working for the well-being of Ethiopian children.

COUNTRY CONTEXT

According to the Central Statistical Agency (CSA) census of 2007, the Ethiopian population was 73,845,035. Children constitute 52% of the

general population. The population is growing at a rapid pace and the estimate for 2017 is 94,351,001.¹ According to the latest projections from the Central Statistical Agency (CSA)², in the last 20 years the proportion of the population under 15 has doubled from 19.6 million in 1984 to 39.6 million and almost half of the population is below 15³. Ethiopia, thus has a very young age structure, and issues concerning children and youth are crucial to the country's development.

This generation represents the future human capital of Ethiopia and an opportunity for the country to harness the demographic dividend. Thus, how the benefits of economic growth are distributed within society over the next few years will shape children's future and the future of the country as a whole.

1. Central Statistical Agency (2013)
2. Central Statistical Agency (2012)

3. Population aged 0-14 is 44.5%; 15-64 is 52.4 % and 65 years and above is 3.1 % of the total population

Despite considerable progress with the Government aiming for Ethiopia to reach a Lower Middle-Income Country status by 2025, poverty reduction remains a crucial development agenda and manifest inequalities persist having detrimental impacts on children and youth.

While enormous progress has been made in reaching the quantitative targets on the majority of the Millennium Development Goals: maternal and newborn health and nutrition, child protection commitments and gender-based violence targets are lagging. In addition, the quality of basic social services and of equity in access for the hard-to-reach populations still remained a challenge.

The latest annual review of the Ethiopian Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) clearly recognized that many social indicators are lagging and that a systematic and comprehensive analysis of bottlenecks and barriers would reveal the most appropriate strategic options based on high quality data, as well as practices and lessons learned from around the world. Furthermore, indicators and measurement and monitoring of progress regarding children and youth require further development and mainstreaming.

RESEARCH CONTEXT

Currently in Ethiopia the institutions with strong data gathering capacity are government organisations such as the CSA or EDRI as well as private consulting firms. Although academic institutions, professional associations and private think tanks conduct some research, they have limited

capacities and tend to respond to short-term funding opportunities. The data collected may not also be nationally representative to be of use in informing public policies. Besides, they lack strong or consistent focus on children's issues.

UNICEF plays a key role in sponsoring research and has jointly produced with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Cooperation (MoFEC) an overview on the situation of children entitled "The Equitable Path To Growth and Development" (2015).

The Addis Ababa University's Institute of Development and Policy Research (IDPR), Centre for Gender Studies (CGS), and Centre for Human Rights (CHR) have carried out sporadic work on children's issues but there has not been a comprehensive, systematic attempt to document data on children's issues, monitor changes over time and use such data for policy engagement and programme formulation.

RATIONALE

Generally, there is limitation in collecting original data that enables to generate evidence and policy options. Government institutions lack resources and capacity, international and local non-government organisations have tended to carry out or support limited and fragmented programme-oriented research, often dependent on donor interests and funding. The lack of sustainable researches and networks highlights the urgent need to maintain an independent research centre of excellence to promote children's wellbeing and protection in Ethiopia. The ECCR was established to fill the

research gaps in the field and was inspired by the collaborative work of EDRI and Young Lives⁴ longitudinal research in Ethiopia and motivated by the Child Research & Practice Forum, which was also initiated by both EDRI and Young Lives as well as other partners.

With initial funding support from UNICEF Ethiopia, the centre has been engaged in the establishment process starting in July 2016 and operation commenced in December 2016.

STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT

The ECCR is located within the EDRI, coordinated by a small team and overseen by a multi-stakeholder advisory board which includes: Addis Ababa University, CSA, EDRI, Education Strategy Centre, MoFEC, Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs, Ministry of Youth and Sports, National Planning Commission, UNICEF and Young Lives Project. While the advisory board takes responsibility of providing broader strategic direction of the centre, representation and expertise from institutions will depend on topics of future research. The advisory board is assisted by ad-hoc technical review groups which are set up to oversee the design and quality of specific research projects.

OBJECTIVES

ECCR is committed to the following objectives:

1. To conduct high quality, interdisciplinary and independent operational research, on children and young people in Ethiopia.
2. To organize and promote

seminars and thematic workshops.

3. To promote evidence-based programmes by developing key findings and proposals from research and evaluations through workshops and publications.
4. To develop the capacity of Ethiopian researchers and staff of government and non-government agencies to carry out relevant and appropriate child and youth focused research to inform policy and practice.
5. To generate an open-access database for policy-makers, practitioners and researchers to build bridges that link research, theory and practice to inform policy and programming on child and youth-related issues.
6. To provide technical backstopping for government departments, child-focused organisations and civil society organisations to improve their programmatic competencies, monitoring, evaluation and delivery of quality services for children and youth.

RESEARCH THEMES AND PROJECTS

The ECCR has developed research themes planned for study over the next few years. The themes have been adopted and informed by reviewing the research context and immediate needs. However, these will be further developed through dialogue with stakeholders, funders and research partners. Themes include: child survival and development (nutrition, health and education), child protection (marriage, violence, child abuse, trafficking,

migration, orphans and vulnerable children and social protection), population dynamics and economic growth, young people's transition into labour markets and to adulthood.

CURRENT RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

- Dynamics of Multidimensional Wellbeing of Children in Ethiopia: Evidence using longitudinal data on children from Young Lives study (2002-2013)
- Urbanization Trends and Urban Child Poverty and Vulnerabilities in Ethiopia
- Monetary assessment of Child poverty
- Comparing Child Poverty in Pastoralist and non-Pastoralist areas with a focus on education.
- Understanding Children's Labour in Ethiopia

EXISTING AND FUTURE PARTNERSHIPS

The ECCR is currently establishing partnerships and research collaborations with potential researchers and research institutes nationally and globally. It works closely with national public institutes and agencies, NGOs (for example, Save the Children, OAK Foundation), Universities, Research Institutes and

Professional Associations who help identifying and promoting child and youth related research issues and collaborate in the research processes, dissemination and incorporation of research findings into child-and youth focused policies programs.

The partnership will be expanded beyond the advisory board to included institutions prepared to undertake collaborative work on child and youth research.

The centre will maintain links with similar child research institutes in Africa and globally.

The ECCR also fundraises to ensure a continuous functioning of the centre. UNICEF Ethiopia has been instrumental in the establishment of the ECCR by providing start-up funding, in addition to undertaking some child-focused collaborative researches. While the UNICEF-EDRI partnership is expected to continue and be strengthened, ECCR plans to expand its scope of activities and is looking for potential funders in specific areas of child research.

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