



International Conference on Advancing Adolescent Resilience and Rights in a Changing World

Book of Abstracts

September 2026

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Conference overview

International Conference on Advancing Adolescent Well-being, Rights and Resilience in a Changing World

22–23 September 2026 | Addis Ababa University, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Adolescence is a pivotal stage of life marked by significant physical, psychological, social and cognitive change, and investing in adolescent well-being and rights yields lasting benefits for individuals and societies alike; however, today's adolescents face a complex, uncertain world shaped by climate change, conflict and displacement, economic insecurity, inequality, digital transformation, and shifting social and gender norms – challenges that bring both new risks and new opportunities for growth and resilience. In response, the *International Conference on Advancing Adolescent Well-being, Rights and Resilience in a Changing World*, organised by the Center for Human Rights at Addis Ababa University, the Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE) programme, and QUEST Research, Training and Consultancy Services PLC, brings together researchers, policymakers, practitioners, development partners, civil society, academics, and young scholars to share evidence and strengthen collaboration on issues affecting adolescents in Ethiopia and beyond.

The conference provides a multidisciplinary platform for examining how contemporary social, economic, technological, environmental and humanitarian changes are shaping adolescents' rights, well-being, opportunities, and resilience. It places particular emphasis on translating research evidence into policy and practice and on ensuring that adolescents are recognised not only as beneficiaries of interventions but also as active participants and agents of change. The conference is organised around **six principal thematic areas**, complemented by cross-cutting themes:

1. **Adolescent Rights, Protection, and Well-being** – including child protection and safeguarding, violence against adolescents, child marriage and female genital mutilation, adolescent participation and agency, psychosocial well-being and social protection.
2. **Health, Nutrition, and Sexual and Reproductive Health** – addressing adolescent health systems, sexual and reproductive health and rights, menstrual health, youth-friendly services, nutrition and health education.
3. **Education and Skills Development** – focusing on access to quality education, education in emergencies and conflict-affected settings, gender disparities in education, skills development, vocational training, employment and entrepreneurship.
4. **Gender Equality and Social Inclusion** – examining gender-transformative approaches, intersectionality, disability inclusion, marginalised and minority adolescents, displacement and migration, digital inclusion and gender-responsive programming.
5. **Digital Transformation and Adolescents** – exploring artificial intelligence and adolescent well-being, digital rights and online safety, social media, digital literacy and citizenship, and digital access and the digital divide.
6. **Climate Change, Humanitarian Crises and Resilience** – addressing climate-related impacts, adolescents in humanitarian and conflict settings, humanitarian responses, climate adaptation, psychosocial support and crisis-responsive programming.

A central contribution of the conference is the dissemination and synthesis of evidence from more than a decade of longitudinal research under the GAGE programme – including its flagship study on adolescent

well-being and its five-year longitudinal evaluation of interventions addressing child marriage and female genital mutilation in Ethiopia's Afar and Somali regions – alongside research and practical lessons shared by Ethiopian and international universities, research institutions, government agencies, civil society organisations, donors and development partners. Over two days, the scientific conference will feature keynote addresses, plenary and parallel sessions, oral and poster presentations, and opportunities for interaction and knowledge exchange, with presentations selected through a rigorous scientific abstract review process to ensure research quality, thematic diversity, relevance, and policy and practical significance, bringing together researchers, academics, policymakers, practitioners, and development professionals working on adolescent well-being, rights, resilience, education, health, gender equality, social protection and related fields.

Through this combination of evidence generation, knowledge exchange, policy dialogue, and partnership building, the conference seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing adolescents, and to identify practical, contextually relevant approaches for advancing their rights, well-being, and resilience in Ethiopia and beyond. Ultimately, the conference is expected to generate strengthened research and institutional partnerships, evidence-informed recommendations for policy and programming, enhanced research capacity among emerging scholars, and wider dissemination of research through the Conference Abstract Book and a planned special issue of the *Ethiopian Journal of Human Rights*.

The conference organisers wish to sincerely thank Global Research and Technology Development, funded by the UK Government, the Government of Ireland International Development Programme and the Gates Foundation for their generous support of this event.

A Decade-long Longitudinal Evidence by GAGE

Young people's bodily integrity in Ethiopia: findings from GAGE Endline Findings

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Objectives: This study examines the vulnerabilities, trends, and systemic drivers surrounding the bodily integrity of Ethiopian youth in line with Sustainable Development Goals 16 (protection from violence and exploitation) and 5 (eradication of child marriage and FGM). **Methods:** Utilising data from the Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE) longitudinal study, this paper presents outcomes for two cohorts (mean ages 18.3 and 22.5) across five rounds from 2017 to 2025. The mixed-methods sample spanned multiple rural and urban locations, encompassing a panel of more than 6000 young people across Afar, Amhara and Oromia regions, as well as Dire Dawa City Administration. **Findings:** While corporal punishment and teacher-led violence halved as cohorts matured, normalised marital violence, child marriage, and near-universal female genital mutilation persist in rural areas. Emerging risks like online exploitation and conflict-driven forced recruitment present novel threats. Notably, reporting remains extremely low due to institutional collapse, social stigma, and deep-seated reliance on customary justice, particularly compounding risks for youth with disabilities. **Implications:** Policy and practice must prioritise localised parenting education, teacher training on positive discipline, tailored anti-FGM programming, and accessible reporting infrastructure within conflict-affected communities.

Keywords: gender, adolescence, family violence, teacher violence, peer violence, child marriage, FGM, Ethiopia

A decade of adolescence in six countries: an overview of GAGE endline findings

Nicola Jones

Objectives: This study synthesises cross-country endline findings from the Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE) longitudinal study to map adolescent capability development and youth transitions into early adulthood. **Methods:** Tracking parallel age-cohorts across a decade, the research evaluates trajectories across six conflict-affected and developing contexts: Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Jordan, Lebanon, Nepal, and Gaza. **Findings:** Across all sites, adolescent educational enrolment has collapsed over time due to compounding barriers, though learning quality uniformly lags behind enrolment and retention. Severe food insecurity, high healthcare barriers, and restricted economic "waithood" persist, disproportionately affecting youth with disabilities and refugees. While peer bullying has generally declined, severe threats persist through rising gang activity, and child marriage rates remain stagnant despite increased legal awareness. Deeply entrenched gender disparities mean young women face shrinking mobility and declining monetary control, while young men retain household authority. Furthermore, acute geopolitical conflict across four countries has acutely destabilised education, health, and psychological well-being. **Implications:** Programmatic interventions cannot rely on national averages. Policy and programme actors must deploy tailored, group-specific frameworks that provide free secondary schooling, targeted economic stipends, and accessible mental health services.

Keywords: gender, adolescence, mixed methods, longitudinal research, capabilities, intersectionality

Young people's education and learning in Ethiopia: findings from GAGE Endline Findings

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Objectives: This study examines the structural barriers and trajectories influencing access to quality education for Ethiopian youth in line with Sustainable Development Goal 4 on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education for all. **Methods:** Utilising endline data (2024–2025) from the longitudinal Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE) study, this paper examines educational access across urban, rural, pastoralist, and conflict-affected communities. **Findings:** Across all regions, high educational aspirations are severely bottlenecked by poverty, poor infrastructure, and child marriage. Regionally, urban Dire Dawa exhibits high enrolment and a model for disability-inclusive schooling, while progress in pastoralist Afar is hampered by severe climate shocks and language barriers. Strikingly, gender dynamics invert by location: boys maintain higher enrolment in rural East Hararghe and Afar; conversely, in conflict-torn South Gondar, warfare and militia recruitment have disproportionately driven boys out of school, leaving girls more likely to remain enrolled. **Implications:** Policy frameworks must go beyond national averages to deploy localised interventions, including school feeding, social protection for education especially for girls at secondary level, native-language teacher recruitment, and accelerated online learning hubs in active conflict geographies.

Keywords: gender, adolescence, education, enrolment, retention, disability-inclusive, Ethiopia

Young people's disrupted developmental trajectories in conflict-affected northern Ethiopia

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Objectives: This study examines the intersecting impacts of armed conflict and climate polycrisis on the developmental trajectories, psychosocial well-being, and gendered vulnerabilities of adolescents in northern Ethiopia. **Methods:** Longitudinal qualitative and quantitative data from the Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE) programme were collected through participatory tools, focus groups, and interviews with adolescents, parents, and community key informants across nine woredas in Amhara and Tigray. **Findings:** Deliberate destruction of school infrastructure and compounding droughts led to a collapse in previously near-universal education, leaving youth profoundly disillusioned. Consequently, adolescents turned to high-risk coping mechanisms: boys faced severe psychological pressures to join armed factions due to exclusion and poverty, while a resurgence of child marriage and cross-border distress migration emerged as widespread economic survival strategies. Pervasive violence left one-fifth of rural youth clinically depressed, severely isolating young women by eroding their supportive social capital and peer networks. **Implications:** Post-conflict reconstruction must prioritise scaling functional, trauma-informed psychosocial services for adolescents, their parents, and front-line service providers. Policymakers must deploy educational catch-up programming, economic stipends to curb child marriage and other negative coping strategies, and community-based support structures, especially for youth with disabilities – both pre-existing and conflict-inflicted.

Keywords: gender, adolescence, education, enrolment, retention, disability-inclusive, Ethiopia

1. Adolescent Rights, Protection and Well-being

Life courses of adolescents from minority and lower socio-economic backgrounds in Somalia

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Adolescence is a critical stage that shapes the life course of future adults. Yet, it is also the stage where adolescents from minority and lower socio-economic backgrounds are most vulnerable to social exclusion and adverse life trajectories. In Somalia, many adolescents from marginalised communities are unable to reach their full potential because of poverty, discrimination, and unequal social relations embedded in the clan system. This paper examines how these structural inequalities shape the life courses of adolescents from minority and poor social backgrounds. Drawing on Johan Galtung's theory of structural violence, the paper reviews existing empirical studies, human rights reports, and evidence on minority communities and adolescents in Somalia. I argue that structural violence, persistent poverty, and social injustice limit adolescents' access to education, employment, and other opportunities that are essential for their well-being and future development. The analysis further suggests that these conditions can increase adolescents' vulnerability to recruitment by extremist organisations such as Al-Shabaab by narrowing legitimate pathways for social mobility, security, and belonging. Rather than viewing recruitment solely through the lens of individual choice, this paper highlights how structural inequalities and exclusion shape adolescents' decisions and life courses. The paper contributes to the growing literature on adolescent well-being, rights, and resilience by showing how addressing structural injustice is essential for creating opportunities that enable marginalised adolescents to build safer and more hopeful futures.

Keywords: lifecourse, adolescents, minority, social stratum, injustice

Adolescent mental health and psychosocial well-being in a changing world: a global review of evidence, rights, and pathways to resilience

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Adolescents are growing up in an era where multiple global threats intersect and converge: rapid shifts in the digital world, worsening climate change crisis, long-term warfare and displacement, and existing socio-economic and gender inequalities. This review consolidates the current global evidence from the second Lancet Commission on Adolescent Health and Well-being (2025), WHO data, and peer-reviewed publications from 2015 to 2026 on the ways these intersecting factors affect the mental well-being of adolescents globally. The evidence is placed within the context of the international rights framework for children, as stated in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the two general comments on adolescent health and well-being (No. 4 and No. 20). It then reviews the available evidence on 'what works' in terms of interventions for adolescent mental well-being, based on the evidence and gap maps on mental health and psychosocial interventions in developing countries, school programmes and longitudinal studies such as the Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE) study. It highlights that although nearly one in seven adolescents worldwide suffers from some form of mental disorder, and although 90 percent of adolescents living in resource-poor environments have limited access to adequate services, there is a considerable body of research regarding interventions that are effective, inexpensive, and respectful of human rights that points toward a possible way forward. This path will require multisectoral financing, active engagement of adolescents in the process of conducting research and shaping policies, and increased involvement of mental health in education, health, and humanitarian sectors. The review ends with policy suggestions to researchers, policymakers, practitioners, and adolescents as they come together to create a rights-respecting future for almost two billion adolescents of the world.

Keywords: adolescent mental health, psychosocial well-being, children's rights, resilience, climate anxiety, digital technology, conflict and displacement, low- and middle-income countries

Readiness of local governments to deliver adolescent-friendly contraceptive services under Nepal's federal health structure

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Background: Adolescent marriage remains a major public health challenge in Nepal, with nearly one in four girls marrying before age 18. Early marriage and higher unmet contraceptive need among adolescent couples contribute to persistent adolescent fertility, with substantial geographical disparities. Nepal's federal health system has devolved responsibility for basic health service delivery, including adolescent contraceptive services, to local governments. This decentralisation creates opportunities for locally tailored responses while presenting challenges in policy development, planning, and implementation. This study examines how local governments formulate and implement health policies and plans to address adolescent-responsive contraceptive services within Nepal's evolving federal health system. **Methods:** This study employed a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design across 28 randomly selected local governments in six districts Surkhet, Banke, Pyuthan, Nuwakot, Parsa, and Siraha identified for high adolescent fertility rates. Local government readiness to deliver contraceptive services was assessed using a structured questionnaire. In-depth interviews were conducted with six local government chiefs or deputy chiefs (one per district) and six health section chiefs from selected local governments to explore policy formulation, implementation, and practices related to adolescent contraception. Key informant interviews were also conducted with two provincial-level and one federal-level family planning and reproductive health focal points to examine policy guidance provided to local levels. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics in SPSS, while qualitative data were analysed thematically. Findings from both elements were integrated to generate comprehensive study results. **Findings:** Findings demonstrate substantial variation in local government readiness to deliver adolescent-responsive contraceptive services, with 39% of them having conducted adolescent needs assessments. Approximately half have formulated local health policies, 54% have enacted local health acts addressing adolescent health, and half have established functional coordination mechanisms to translate national family planning commitments at the local level. Despite these efforts, shortages of service providers, contraceptive commodities, budget, and inadequate infrastructure continue to constrain service delivery. These challenges are further compounded by unclear leadership roles and weak coordination across federal, provincial, and local governments, undermining effective policy implementation and limiting adolescents' access to services. **Conclusion:** Although Nepal's federal system has enabled progress in localising adolescent health policies, persistent governance and health system gaps continue to limit effective implementation. Strengthening local institutional capacity, clarifying leadership and accountability, and improving coordination across government levels are critical to delivering equitable, responsive, and sustainable contraceptive services for adolescents nationwide.

Keywords: adolescent contraception, federal policy, local government, health services, Nepal

Disrupted childhoods: arts-based perspectives on conflict, displacement, well-being, and peace among displaced adolescents in northeastern Ethiopia

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This study examined how armed conflict and prolonged displacement disrupted the lives of displaced adolescents, adversely affecting their psychosocial well-being and forcing them to live in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps for extended periods. A qualitative participatory arts-based research design was employed, combining in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and arts-based methods. A total of 32 adolescents residing in four IDP camps in northeastern Ethiopia participated in interviews and focus group discussions, while 30 adolescents also engaged in arts-based activities by creating drawings and sharing stories about the impacts of conflict, their experiences of displacement, and their perceptions of peace. The findings revealed that adolescents experienced profound stress and trauma beginning with the outbreak of the conflict, continuing throughout their displacement journey, and persisting during their prolonged stay in IDP camps. The disruption of education, compounded by the lack of educational documentation, resulted in many adolescents being enrolled in lower grades alongside much younger children. This experience generated feelings of isolation, embarrassment, and a persistent reminder of their displacement. Through their drawings, participants vividly portrayed the hardships of displacement, their current living conditions, and their aspirations for peace. The findings also showed that many adolescents engaged in daily labour to support themselves and their families, often at the expense of their education and developmental opportunities. Adolescents conceptualised peace through symbols such as national flags, schools, play, work, green fields, and trees, representing normality, stability, safety, and hope for the future. The findings highlight the need for trauma-informed educational approaches, accelerated learning programmes, and comprehensive psychosocial support for conflict-affected displaced adolescents. The findings also emphasise the importance of translating policies on adolescent protection, participation, and well-being into effective interventions that respond to the realities of prolonged displacement

Keywords: displacement, trauma, peace, arts-based

Adapting to field realities: lessons from longitudinal research (GAGE) in Ethiopia, 2017-2025

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Background: Between 2017 and 2025, Laterite supported longitudinal data collection for the Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE) programme in Ethiopia across regions, including areas affected by conflict, displacement, and political instability. Evaluating adolescent and youth health and well-being in such settings requires continuous adaptation of data collection approaches to mitigate ethical, safety, and operational risks. **Purpose and Methods:** This poster outlines practical methodologies to collect longitudinal data while protecting participants and field teams. Strategies included: 1) risk-based fieldwork planning informed by real-time security assessments, 2) adaptive deployment models including phased rollouts and remote supervision, and 3) embedded referral protocols within digital survey tools, enabling enumerators to trigger referral pathways for psychosocial, protection, and other support services. This safeguarding was a core component of routine survey operations and was incorporated into our enumerator training and supervision protocol, including structured escalation procedures and refresher training between rounds as conflict dynamics evolved. **Key findings:** By coordinating closely with local service providers and government actors and iteratively refining our approach to match shifting security dynamics, we maintained research integrity while collecting high-quality data on adolescent health and well-being. **Conclusions and Implications:** Documenting trajectories of at-risk groups, such as adolescents and youth in fragile settings, demands context-responsive methodologies. Our operational strategies demonstrate how ethical, safe longitudinal data collection involving adolescents and youth can be sustained amid instability. These insights are relevant for practitioners conducting research involving adolescents in conflict-affected regions across sub-Saharan Africa.

Keywords: adolescent well-being, longitudinal research, conflict, safeguarding, Ethiopia

Youth networks as rights enablers: building the social foundations for adolescent SRHR rights in Burkina Faso

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Background: In Burkina Faso, the West and Central Africa Commitment and national policies formally recognise adolescents aged 10–24 as rights-holders entitled to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) information, protection and participation. However, these formal rights often lack the social foundations, trust, peer relationships, accessible language and safe spaces needed for adolescents, especially girls and internally displaced youth, to recognise and exercise them. Stigma, linguistic barriers and top-down delivery leave many young people unable to turn entitlements into lived realities. Youth networks are functioning as 'rights enablers' by building these social foundations through inclusive communication, yet this enabling role is rarely analysed as a distinct mechanism. **Purpose:** This practice-based contribution examines how youth-led inclusive communication and peer engagement function as rights enablers, building the social foundations that allow adolescents to move from formal SRHR entitlements to active recognition and claiming of their rights. **Methods:** The analysis draws on implementation experience from the Community of Youth Engagement (Communauté des Jeunes Engagés). It examines the Dynamique Inclusive initiative and related Hello Ado and Family Life Education activities. These efforts used multi-format accessible content (French subtitles, sign language and five local languages) and sustained peer networks to reach approximately 156,259 people in three months (156,046 online; 213 internally displaced persons directly), with adolescents actively involved in content co-creation and community engagement. **Key findings:** Youth networks enabled rights by creating the relational and communicative foundations that formal policies alone cannot provide. Gender-sensitive approaches helped girls develop the trust and peer support needed to recognise and voice their specific rights. Inclusive formats allowed displaced and marginalised adolescents to access and discuss rights in ways that felt safe and relevant. When young people co-created and shared content, rights moved from distant policy to everyday language and relationships. Adolescents began supporting each other, challenging stigma collectively and using rights language to negotiate with families and demand services. These social foundations turned abstract commitments into actionable agency. **Conclusion and implications:** Faso experiences demonstrate that youth networks are essential rights enablers that build the social foundations, trust, peer relationships and accessible communication required for adolescent SRHR rights to become real. Policymakers and practitioners across Africa should invest in youth networks as long-term enablers of rights rather than short-term information providers. This approach is critical for ensuring that the AOC Engagements and national policies translate into adolescents' lived capacity to recognise, support each other and actively claim their rights to information, protection and participation, particularly for girls and those facing multiple barriers.

Keywords: rights enablers, adolescent rights, SRHR, social foundations, youth networks, WCA commitment

Adolescent rights, protection, and well-being in Ethiopia, 2006-2025: a PRISMA 2020 systematic literature review of evidence, challenges, and future directions

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Ethiopia has a large adolescent population experiencing rapid social change, ongoing material deprivation, unequal access to services, and significant gender and geographic disparities. The existing evidence is abundant but scattered across health, education, protection, and social policy areas. The aims of the synthesis are to synthesise the available evidence on adolescent rights, protection, and well-being in Ethiopia from 2006 to 2025. Searches were conducted in PubMed, African Journals Online, Google Scholar, ERIC and WHO IRIS, as well as in UNICEF, Save the Children and government sources. The selection followed PRISMA 2020. Out of 1,344 records identified, 397 duplicates were eliminated, 947 titles and abstracts were screened, 428 full texts were evaluated, and 263 studies were included. Data were organised by design and main thematic area and summarised narratively. The most common topic was sexual and reproductive health and rights, with 130 studies. This was followed by nutrition, food security, and physical health (59 studies), mental health and psychosocial well-being (33), and violence, protection, and harmful practices (21). The remaining studies covered education, agency, and socioeconomic well-being (8), services and policy (8), and substance-related risks (4). Cross-sectional or secondary survey studies made up 134 records, while there were only six randomised or cluster trials and four quasi-experimental studies. Across various areas, factors such as poverty, food insecurity, restrictive gender norms, poor parent-adolescent communication, stigma, rural or pastoralist living conditions, displacement, and inconsistent service quality consistently affected well-being. School-based nutrition, social protection, and youth-friendly service programmes showed potential, but their success depended on the context, and structural barriers remained. Ethiopia has a wide but uneven body of evidence concerning adolescents. The rights and well-being of young people rely on interconnected factors in nutrition, education, psychosocial support, gender roles, and service systems. Policies should shift from isolated responses to those that are age-sensitive, gender-transformative, and equitable across regions, while future research should focus on long-term studies, implementation, and intervention designs.

Keywords: adolescence, Ethiopia, rights, protection, sexual and reproductive health, nutrition, mental health, well-being

Forced recruitment of adolescents into military service in Ethiopia: a doctrinal analysis of legal protections and implementation failures

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Following political transitions in 2018, Ethiopia witnessed escalating intrastate conflicts involving multiple armed groups. From 2020 onward, credible reports have documented the forced recruitment of adolescents into military service by both government forces and non-state actors, representing a grave violation of national and international legal frameworks. This study assesses the adequacy of legal protections for adolescents under Ethiopian law and critically examines the implementation of these norms in the context of forced military recruitment. It seeks to evaluate the gap between legal commitments and state practice and to inform advocacy for greater accountability. A doctrinal legal research method with a qualitative approach was employed. The study synthesises international and domestic legal instruments, alongside reports from governmental and non-governmental organisations, to analyse normative frameworks and documented violations. Although Ethiopia has ratified and domesticated key international instruments on adolescent rights, implementation remains deeply flawed. Forced recruitment persists in defiance of legal requirements, and no meaningful accountability measures have been pursued by the state, despite well-documented evidence from credible bodies. The study concludes that Ethiopia must enforce strict adherence to legal recruitment standards, including age verification and informed consent. This paper addresses a critical gap in legal scholarship and underscores the urgent need for state and non-state actors to compel compliance with human rights norms, thereby protecting adolescents from recruitment-related abuses.

Keywords: adolescent rights, forced recruitment, Ethiopia, child soldiers

The invisible wounds of war: a psychosocial and mental health assessment of conflict-affected children in the Bora community, Tigray

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Armed conflict inflicts severe psychological and structural harm on children, yet post-conflict recovery frameworks frequently prioritise physical infrastructure over mental health. This study investigates the psychosocial and mental health impacts of armed conflict on vulnerable children in the Bora Community, Southern Tigray, two years after the crisis. Grounded in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and Trauma Theory, this research utilised a mixed-methods design. It combined quantitative clinical screenings using the PCL-5 tool for 45 highly vulnerable children with qualitative insights from focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and child testimonies. Findings revealed: 100% of screened children met the clinical criteria for PTSD, with a mean score of 63.9, far above the clinical cutoff score of 33 and regional benchmarks (East Africa: 47.8%). Severity was concentrated among females (73%), full orphans (71.4%), and those from broken families (77%). Furthermore, systematic violence against mothers – including SGBV and extreme poverty—severely impaired primary caregiving capacities, shattering the 'psychological umbilical cord' essential for child emotional regulation. Targeted killing of community and religious leaders severed vital spiritual and social support systems, contributing to a 40% educational dropout rate and widespread child labour, directly violating multiple CRC Articles (6, 9, 19, 20, 24, 27, and 39). Ultimately, child recovery is inextricably linked to maternal rehabilitation and structural restoration. To break intergenerational cycles of violence, interventions must decentralise MHPSS via school-based psychological first aid and trauma-informed pedagogy at the Tabia/Woreda level; couple MHPSS with Income Generating Activities (IGA) to alleviate poverty-induced distress; rebuild indigenous networks by restoring 'broken social platelets' through trusted local networks, legal accountability to end impunity.

Keywords: post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), child trauma, maternal mental health, conflict-affected children, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), Tigray War, Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), ecological systems theory

Cyberbullying, associated factors, and coping mechanisms among female health science students in Hawassa city, Ethiopia

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Cyberbullying has emerged as a concern in recent years, especially due to the widespread use of smartphones. Gaining insight into these dynamics is essential for creating effective interventions to support those affected and foster a safer digital environment in academic settings. This issue is particularly impactful among female university students, who are especially vulnerable to such harassment. Therefore, this study aimed to assess the level of cyberbullying, its contributing factors, and coping strategies among female health science students in Hawassa City. A cross-sectional study design was conducted among 422 Female Health Science students in Hawassa City from April 23, 2025, to June 02, 2025. Simple random sampling was used to select participants. The data was analysed by SPSS version 26. Binary and multivariable logistic regression analyses were used to identify factors associated with cyberbullying. P-value <0.05 with 95% CI was considered to declare an association. The finding of this study shows that overall, 54.8% of students experience cyberbullying, and verbal or written forms were the most frequently reported by the participants. Among those who experienced cyberbullying, the most common coping strategies were seeking support from close contacts and ignoring the situation, with 79.6% and 71.6% of participants, respectively, employing these methods. Attending in private institution (AOR=2.28, 95% CI:1.35-3.83), being a first-year student (AOR=2.22, 95% CI:1.21-4.05), using internet for non-academic purpose (AOR=3.42, 95% CI:1.18-9.92) and spending three to five hours (AOR=2.33, 95% CI:1.39-3.91) and more than six hours (AOR=3.51, 95% CI:1.82-6.75) daily on internet were factors significantly associated with cyberbullying. More than half of the students in this study experienced cyberbullying, highlighting the importance of targeted awareness and digital literacy programmes, particularly for first-year students, to promote purposeful internet use and address the issue.

Keywords: online harassment, digital bullying, cyber abuse, cyber harassment, online bullying

The psychosocial and educational impacts of armed conflict on adolescents in Kobo and Raya Kobo, North Wollo, Ethiopia

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Armed conflict in Kobo town and Raya Kobo woreda, North Wollo, Ethiopia, which began in July 2021, severely disrupted adolescents' well-being, protection, and right to education. Schools were occupied as military camps, while adolescents experienced violence, displacement, looting, and other forms of trauma. This qualitative study examined the psychosocial and educational impacts of the conflict on adolescents in the affected communities. Data were collected through six key informant interviews with school directors, gender-club coordinators, and a guidance counsellor from Gobeye, Robit and Kidus Yoseph secondary schools, and six focus group discussions with women's and men's community groups and in-school adolescent girls aged 12–18 years. Findings indicate persistent conflict-related psychological distress, including fear, anxiety, hypervigilance, hopelessness, withdrawal and declining interest in education. School staff described marked behavioural changes among students, including emotional distress, classroom disengagement, and increased disciplinary problems, which they associated with untreated psychological trauma. Adolescents also reported continued fear and migration to Gulf countries as a coping strategy, with some leaving school as early as grades 9 or 10. At Robit Secondary School, enrollment reportedly declined from approximately 2,600 to 400 students, while 16 female students were reported to have married since the conflict began. Despite these challenges, school directors reported that neither students nor teachers had received psychosocial support during the four years following the conflict. The findings demonstrate that adolescents are coping with significant conflict-related trauma in the absence of adequate institutional protection and support, undermining their well-being and right to education. Strengthening school-based psychosocial services, trauma-informed teacher training, adolescent protection mechanisms, and referral systems is essential to support recovery, resilience, and educational continuity in conflict-affected settings.

Keywords: adolescent, armed conflict, psychosocial support, resilience, trauma, PTSD

2. Adolescent Health, Nutrition and Sexual and Reproductive Health

Global folate deficiency among adolescent girls: a systematic review and meta-analysis

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Introduction: Adolescents have higher nutrient requirements than adults, as this stage accounts for approximately 40% of total adult weight gain, 45% of skeletal mass and about 15% of adult height. Adequate micronutrient intake is particularly essential for adolescent girls to support growth, reproductive health, and cognitive development. Adolescent folate deficiency disrupts hematopoiesis, causing megaloblastic anaemia, and hinders growth, cognition, and immune function, becoming a major public health concern. **Objective:** This global systematic review and meta-analysis aims to address the gap in comprehensive evidence on the prevalence of adolescent folate deficiency. **Methods:** We conducted a systematic literature search in PubMed, HINARI, ScienceDirect, DOAJ, Google, and Google Scholar for studies reporting the prevalence of folate deficiency among adolescent girls up to August 2025. Study quality was assessed using the Newcastle-Ottawa Scale, and evidence certainty was evaluated using GRADE. Heterogeneity was assessed with Cochrane Q and I^2 statistics. A random-effects model was employed to estimate the pooled prevalence of folate deficiency among adolescent girls. **Results:** The pooled global prevalence of folate deficiency among adolescent girls was 26.9%(95% CI: 20.5%, 33.2%), with substantial heterogeneity observed between studies ($I^2 = 99.99\%$, $p < 0.001$). More than one in every four adolescent girls was affected by folate deficiency, representing a significant public health concern. The pooled prevalence of folate deficiency among adolescent girls varied across regions, with the highest rate observed in Africa at 35.5%. **Conclusion:** Folate deficiency among adolescent girls is highly prevalent globally, affecting more than one in four adolescent girls. The burden is particularly higher in Africa, where over one-third of adolescent girls are affected. These findings highlight the urgent need for region-specific strategies to prevent folate deficiency. Implementing targeted nutritional interventions and public health policies is essential to reduce its associated health consequences in this vulnerable population.

Keywords: folate deficiency, adolescent girls, nutrition, public health, meta-analysis

Provider attitudes toward safe abortion care and implications for adolescents, Amhara region, Ethiopia

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Health care providers' attitudes are a critical determinant of access to safe abortion services, particularly for adolescents, who in Ethiopia's 2005 abortion law constitute a distinct legal ground for termination of pregnancy (maternal age <18 years). Provider bias and restrictive interpretation of this ground can disproportionately limit safe, legal abortion access for pregnant adolescents. This study assessed health care provider attitudes toward safe abortion and associated factors in Amhara Region, Ethiopia, with attention to implications for adolescent-specific care. Methods: A mixed-methods study was conducted among 692 health care providers (nurses, midwives, medical doctors, gynaecologists, and health officers) in public health institutions across Amhara Region. Quantitative data were collected via structured self-administered questionnaires and analysed using descriptive statistics and binary logistic regression (n=677 analysed). Qualitative data were gathered through in-depth interviews with 15–20 key informants and analysed thematically. Results: Less than half (47.8%) of providers held a favourable attitude toward safe abortion provision. Favourable attitude was significantly associated with formal training (AOR=6.8), legal knowledge of abortion law (AOR=1.78), and familiarity with current national guidelines (AOR=2.08). Qualitative findings identified religious opposition, unfavourable working environments, family opposition, and negative community response as major barriers. Consistent with prior regional evidence, provider willingness to terminate pregnancy was shaped by legally defined grounds, including maternal age under 18 years and early gestational age. Conclusions: Provider training gaps, limited legal literacy, and unsupportive institutional environments constitute structural barriers to safe abortion access in Amhara Region. Given that adolescent pregnancy is an explicit legal ground for abortion under Ethiopian law, these provider-level barriers carry particular consequences for adolescent girls seeking safe, legal termination of pregnancy. Targeted provider training, legal literacy programmes, and institutional support are needed to protect adolescents' access to safe abortion care.

Keywords: provider attitude, safe abortion, adolescent, Amhara Region, Ethiopia

Prevalence of primary dysmenorrhea, its intensity, impact and associated factors among adolescent female students at Gondar town preparatory schools, northwest Ethiopia

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Background: Primary dysmenorrhea is defined as a crampy pain in the lower abdomen before or during the menstrual period in the absence of any pelvic pathology. It is the leading maternal problem worldwide, but there is limited evidence on the prevalence of primary dysmenorrhea in the study area as well as in Ethiopia. Researching primary dysmenorrhea helps to focus on the treatment plan. The study aimed to assess the prevalence, intensity, impact, and associated factors of primary dysmenorrhea among adolescent female students at Gondar Town Preparatory School. **Methods:** A cross-sectional study design was conducted among female students at Gondar Town Preparatory School. A simple random sampling technique was used to select study participants. A self-administered structured questionnaire was employed. Epi Info version 7 and SPSS version 20 were used for data entry and analysis, respectively. A binary logistic regression model was computed. Variables having a p-value < 0.05 in the multivariate logistic regression model were considered statistically significant. **Results:** A total of 459 adolescent female students participated in the study with a response rate of 96.29%. The prevalence of primary dysmenorrhea among female students was found to be 64.7% (95% CI; 60.2–69.2%). Around 61% reported moderate intensity of menstrual pain and 50.7% complained of lower abdominal pain. Sixty-five percent of study participants reported that absenteeism from school was an impact of menstrual pain. Having an irregular monthly menstrual cycle (AOR = 1.70, 95% CI; 1.02, 2.84) and family history of dysmenorrhea (AOR = 5.19, 95% CI: 3.21, 8.37) were significantly associated with primary dysmenorrhea. **Conclusions:** The prevalence of primary dysmenorrhea was found to be high. Having an irregular monthly menstrual cycle and a family history of dysmenorrhea were determinants of primary dysmenorrhea.

Keywords: female, impact, intensity, primary dysmenorrhea, prevalence, preparatory school students

Geographic inequities of adolescent pregnancy in Ethiopia and their local determinants

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Background: In Ethiopia, the national rate of adolescent pregnancy is high, with significant geographic disparities across regions. Addressing these inequities is crucial for implementing area-and context-specific interventions and allocating resources to regions with a high rate of adolescent pregnancy. Therefore, this study aimed to assess geographic inequities in adolescent pregnancy and its local determinants in Ethiopia. **Methods:** The study analysed data from the 2021 Performance Monitoring for Action Ethiopia survey, using a weighted sample of 1,645 adolescent girls aged 15–19, selected through two-stage cluster sampling with urban-rural stratification. Hot spot analysis identified areas with high and low proportions of adolescent pregnancy. Multi-scale geographically weighted regression determined local determinants of the geographic inequities. A Bayesian conditional autoregressive model analysed geographic dependence and area-level random variances. Significance was determined using p-values < 0.05 and 95% credible intervals. **Results:** The overall prevalence of adolescent pregnancy was 14.7% (95% CI, 12.3%–17.1%), with geographical inequities across different regions. High proportions were found in the Southeastern, Eastern, Southwestern, and Northeastern regions of Ethiopia. Unmet need for contraception, being married, not attending formal education, and being from a poor family were significant local determinants of these geographic inequities. The Bayesian conditional autoregressive model showed that nearby areas have correlated proportions of adolescent pregnancy ($Rho = 0.4964$), and about 20% of the difference was attributable to inequities between clusters, indicating notable geographic clustering among neighbouring adolescent girls. **Conclusion:** At least one in seven adolescent girls becomes pregnant, depending on where she lives. These geographic inequities are influenced by factors such as unmet contraceptive needs, being married, never attending formal education, and coming from a poor family. Therefore, tailored and area-specific interventions are essential for effective prevention strategies.

Keywords: adolescent pregnancy, Ethiopia, geographic inequities

Advancing adolescents' rights and resilience: evidence from a community-led health, climate and digital inclusion model in rural Malawi

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Background: Adolescents in rural Malawi continue to face interconnected barriers that limit their rights to health, education, information, participation and protection from discrimination and harmful practices. Globally, access to comprehensive health information, supportive services and meaningful adolescent participation remains essential for improving adolescent well-being (WHO, 2023). Gender inequalities and harmful social norms continue to affect adolescent girls' education, health outcomes and future opportunities, particularly in low-resource settings (UNICEF, 2022). In Ekwendeni, Mzimba District, challenges including early marriage, early pregnancy, school interruption and limited access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) information, together with climate-related pressures such as food insecurity and livelihood difficulties, affect adolescent resilience. Limited access to safe digital information platforms further contributes to inequalities in access to health and education resources. **Objectives:** To examine how a rights-based, community-led model integrating gender equality, adolescents' health, education support, youth participation, climate resilience and digital inclusion contributes to advancing adolescents' rights and resilience in rural Malawi. **Methods:** A qualitative community-based case study design was used. Participants included adolescent girls, young mothers, youth volunteers and community stakeholders in Ekwendeni. Data were collected through youth-led dialogues, SRH and rights education sessions, menstrual health promotion, mental well-being activities, climate awareness initiatives and digital information approaches, along with programme records, participant reflections and pre- and post-intervention knowledge assessments. Thematic analysis was conducted to identify changes in knowledge, participation, protection and resilience outcomes. **Results:** The initiative reached over 600 adolescent girls and young people, including more than 350 adolescent girls. Knowledge of SRH, rights and well-being increased from 10% before intervention to 65% after intervention. Adolescents showed improved awareness and use of youth-friendly health services and increased participation in decisions affecting health, nutrition and livelihoods. Community support enabled some girls affected by early marriage to return to school, strengthening their right to education and future opportunities. **Conclusion and contribution:** This study contributes new evidence that locally led, rights-based models can turn adolescents' vulnerability into empowerment by integrating health, gender equality, education, climate resilience and digital inclusion. The Ekwendeni experience offers an adaptable model for African and other low-resource settings seeking to advance adolescents' rights by positioning young people as informed rights holders, participants and leaders of change.

Keywords: adolescents' rights, resilience, gender equality, SRH, Digital inclusion, climate action, Malawi

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Bridging the gap between knowledge and contraceptive use among university students: evidence from South Africa

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Background: Young adults attending universities remain vulnerable to unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections despite increasing access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) information and services. Understanding the factors influencing contraceptive use among university students is essential for developing youth-responsive interventions that strengthen adolescent health and well-being. **Methods:** A quantitative cross-sectional study was conducted among 400 undergraduate students aged 18 years and older at a South African university. Participants were selected using stratified random sampling across five campuses. Data were collected using a structured self-administered questionnaire assessing contraceptive knowledge, attitudes, practices, sources of information, and barriers to contraceptive use. Descriptive statistics and Pearson's chi-square tests were performed using SPSS version 28. **Results:** Participants demonstrated high levels of contraceptive knowledge, with healthcare workers and the university Student Health Service identified as the primary sources of information. Condoms, oral contraceptives, and injectable contraceptives were the most recognised methods. Despite high knowledge levels, consistent contraceptive use remained suboptimal. Fear of side effects, misconceptions regarding contraceptive safety, concerns about future fertility, and partner-related influences were among the factors associated with lower contraceptive uptake. Most participants supported expanding comprehensive SRH education and improving access to confidential, youth-friendly contraceptive services. **Conclusion:** High levels of contraceptive knowledge do not automatically translate into contraceptive use. Universities have an important role in creating supportive environments where adolescents and young adults can access accurate information, confidential counselling, and affordable, evidence-based contraceptive services. Strengthening these services is essential not only for improving sexual and reproductive health outcomes but also for enabling young people to exercise their reproductive autonomy and rights.

Keywords: contraception, contraceptive use, university students, sexual and reproductive health, South Africa

Between protection and autonomy: adolescent sexual and reproductive rights in Africa's changing legal landscape

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Background: Adolescents across Africa continue to experience significant sexual and reproductive health challenges, including early pregnancy, child marriage, sexual violence, sexually transmitted infections, and limited access to reproductive health information and services. While African states have adopted international and regional human rights frameworks recognising adolescents as rights holders, legal and policy approaches often continue to emphasise protection through restrictions and control. This creates a tension between safeguarding adolescents from harm and recognising their evolving capacities, autonomy, and ability to participate in decisions affecting their lives. **Purpose:** This paper examines whether contemporary African legal frameworks achieve an appropriate balance between protecting adolescents and respecting their sexual and reproductive autonomy. It explores the extent to which laws and policies promote adolescents' rights to health, dignity, privacy, information, and participation. **Methods:** The study adopts a doctrinal and comparative legal analysis of international and regional human rights instruments, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and relevant sexual and reproductive health rights frameworks. It also analyses selected African legal approaches relating to adolescent healthcare access, sexuality education, and reproductive decision-making. **Key findings:** The paper argues that although protective legal frameworks are essential in addressing exploitation and vulnerability, excessive paternalism may limit adolescents' ability to exercise fundamental rights. A rights-based approach requires moving beyond protection of adolescents as passive recipients of care towards recognising them as active participants with evolving capacities. **Conclusions:** Achieving adolescent sexual and reproductive rights in Africa requires legal systems that protect young people from harm while simultaneously empowering them through access to information, healthcare, and meaningful participation in decisions affecting their lives.

Keywords: adolescent rights; sexual and reproductive health rights, autonomy, human rights law, Africa

Prevalence and factors associated with viral non-suppression among adolescents and young adults aged 15–24 years living with HIV in Uganda: Uganda Population-based HIV Impact Assessment (UPHIA) 2020–2021

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Background. Adolescents and young adults (AYA) aged 15–24 years living with HIV experience disproportionately poor treatment outcomes compared with older adults, and viral non-suppression in this group sustains both onward HIV transmission and drug resistance. Despite Uganda's substantial progress toward the UNAIDS 95–95–95 targets, the population-level burden and determinants of viral non-suppression among young people remain incompletely characterised. This analysis aimed to estimate the prevalence and factors associated with viral non-suppression among adolescents and young adults living with HIV in Uganda. **Methods:** We conducted a secondary analysis of UPHIA 2020–2021, a nationally representative, cross-sectional household survey. The analytic sample comprised biomarker-confirmed HIV-positive participants aged 15–24 years with a valid viral load result ($n = 164$). Viral non-suppression was defined as HIV-1 RNA $\geq 1,000$ copies/mL. Prevalence was estimated overall and stratified by sex, comparing adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) with young men. Logistic regression identified factors independently associated with non-suppression. A $P < 0.05$ is considered statistically significant. **Results:** Of 164 HIV-positive AYA aged 15–24 years with a valid viral load result, 75 (45.7%; 95% CI 37.9–53.7%) were virally non-suppressed. Non-suppression was higher among young men (18/30, 60.0%; 95% CI 40.6–77.3%) than among AGYW (57/134, 42.5%; 95% CI 34.0–51.4%). In adjusted logistic regression, participants not on ART (aOR 71.3, 95% CI 23.0–220.8, $p < 0.001$), previously married (aOR 7.1, 95% CI 1.5–34.5, $p = 0.015$), and currently married/in-union (aOR 5.5, 95% CI 1.5–20.2, $p = 0.011$) had significantly higher odds of being virally non-suppressed. **Conclusions:** Nearly half of HIV-positive adolescents and young adults aged 15–24 years in Uganda are virally non-suppressed, with young men, married/previously married individuals, and those not on ART most affected. ART initiation and retention are the proximate determinants of suppression in this age group. Youth-targeted differentiated service delivery, peer adherence support, and attention to the specific vulnerabilities of young men and married women are urgently needed to close the viral suppression gap and advance Uganda's progress toward the UNAIDS third 95.

Keywords: HIV, viral non-suppression, adolescents, young adults, antiretroviral therapy, population-based HIV impact assessment

Disability-inclusive adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health at community level: lessons from Lurambi sub-county, Kakamega county, Kenya

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Background: Adolescents and young people with disabilities (AYPWDs) face significant barriers to accessing accurate, confidential, and disability-responsive adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health (AYSRH) information and services. In Lurambi Sub-County, Kakamega County, these barriers include stigma, misconceptions about sexuality and disability, caregiver overprotection, communication challenges, inaccessible information, limited capacity among teachers and healthcare providers, and concerns about confidentiality. Conventional AYSRH programmes may not adequately address the diverse communication, learning, mobility, and support needs of AYPWDs. Intervention and Methodology A community-based intervention was implemented to strengthen disability inclusion within existing AYSRH programming. The approach engaged AYPWDs, caregivers, teachers, community actors, and healthcare providers, while avoiding the creation of parallel services. Community dialogues addressed stigma, misconceptions, and negative attitudes towards the sexual and reproductive health needs of young people with disabilities. School-based AYSRH delivery was adapted to support different learning and communication needs. Teachers, community actors, and healthcare providers received capacity building on disability-responsive communication, respectful care, confidentiality, and referral. Linkages and feedback mechanisms between communities, schools, and health facilities were also strengthened. AYPWDs were actively involved in identifying barriers and informing programme adaptations. Results: Implementation experience demonstrated increased participation of AYPWDs in school and community AYSRH activities. Engagement with caregivers contributed to greater understanding and openness towards adolescent sexuality and reproductive health. Teachers and healthcare providers reported improved confidence in communicating with and responding to the needs of AYPWDs. Strengthened coordination between community structures, schools, and health facilities improved referral linkages and access to available services. Importantly, incorporating feedback from AYPWDs shifted the approach from providing services for young people with disabilities to developing more inclusive services with them. Practical Significance and **Conclusion:** The Lurambi experience demonstrates that disability-inclusive AYSRH can be strengthened by adapting existing community, education, and health systems rather than creating costly parallel structures. Key priorities for scale-up include accessible information, frontline-worker capacity building, caregiver and community engagement, stronger stakeholder coordination, and meaningful participation of AYPWDs in programme design and monitoring. Embedding disability inclusion into routine AYSRH programming can contribute to more equitable participation and access to essential sexual and reproductive health information and services. The Lurambi experience provides practical lessons for strengthening inclusive AYSRH programming in Kakamega County, Kenya, and similar settings.

Keywords: adolescents and young people with disabilities, AYSRH; disability inclusion, sexual and reproductive health; social inclusion, adolescent rights, community-based programming, Lurambi; Kakamega, Kenya

Knowledge, access, and use of modern contraception and economic empowerment among adolescent females in Ethiopia: a longitudinal analysis

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Background: Modern contraception has been linked to women's economic empowerment through positive associations with education, labour participation, and earnings. However, this evidence centres on adult women in high-income countries. Measurement of adolescent economic empowerment and its association with contraception in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) remains underexplored. **Purpose:** We examine adolescent female contraceptive engagement (knowledge, access, use) and economic empowerment in Ethiopia by: (1) developing life-course-relevant empowerment measures at two time points; (2) analysing concurrent contraceptive-empowerment associations; and (3) testing if contraceptive engagement predicts empowerment over time. **Methods:** We use two rounds of the Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence study in Ethiopia (2021- 2022; 2024-2025). Guided by four empowerment domains, we use psychometrics to develop age-relevant empowerment measures for females aged 10-21 (2021-2022) and 14-24 (2024-2025). In each round, we regress empowerment on contraceptive engagement indicators using OLS. We then estimate the association between contraceptive engagement and subsequent empowerment (2024-2025). **Results:** Economic empowerment in 2021-2022 was unidimensional for 10-14-year-olds (human capital) and two-dimensional for 15-19-year-olds (human capital; labour participation-financial inclusion). Contraceptive knowledge was positively and significantly associated with empowerment in both cohorts; access and use were not. We anticipate similar associations and expect stronger contraceptive engagement to predict greater subsequent empowerment. **Conclusion:** This study enhances understanding of economic empowerment across adolescent life stages and highlights the pivotal role of contraceptive knowledge in an LMIC context.

Keywords: contraception, economic empowerment, family planning, adolescence, Ethiopia.

Effect of salutogenic childbirth education on preventing postpartum depression among adolescent mothers: a randomised controlled trial

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Introduction: Adolescent mothers face an elevated risk of postpartum depression (PPD), often due to difficulties in adapting to motherhood and increased exposure to stressors. While motherhood is generally anticipated as a joyful experience, PPD can overshadow this period, described by some as ‘a thief that robs motherhood.’ Salutogenic approaches, which emphasise health promotion and resilience, have shown potential to support maternal mental well-being. However, there is a lack of rigorous randomised controlled trials (RCTs) assessing the effectiveness of salutogenic childbirth education in preventing PPD among adolescent mothers. This study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of salutogenic childbirth education in preventing postpartum depression (PPD) among adolescent mothers over postpartum period. **Methods:** In this randomised controlled trial, 130 adolescent mothers were assigned to either the intervention or the control group. The primary outcome was PPD, measured using the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS), while the secondary outcome was sense of coherence, measured at baseline, 6 weeks, and 12 weeks postpartum. Data analysis employed generalised estimating equations (GEE). Ethical approval was obtained from The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (Ref: HSEARS). **Results:** Participants in the intervention group demonstrated significantly lower EPDS scores than those in the control group at both 6 weeks (mean difference = -3.65 , 95% CI: -4.85 to -2.45 ; Cohen's $d = -1.13$) and 12 weeks postpartum (mean difference = -2.97 , 95% CI: -4.34 to -1.60 ; Cohen's $d = -0.89$). The intervention group had an 82% lower risk of PPD at 6 weeks (OR = 0.18 , 95% CI: 0.06 to 0.53) and a 91% lower risk at 12 weeks postpartum (OR = 0.09 , 95% CI: 0.03 to 0.32). Mediation analysis revealed that changes in sense of coherence scores explained 29% and 36% of the intervention's effect on reducing PPD symptoms at 6 and 12 weeks postpartum, respectively. **Conclusion:** These findings revealed that salutogenic interventions effectively prevent PPD among adolescent mothers over 12 weeks postpartum. This evidence supports integrating salutogenic frameworks into maternity care practices to promote perinatal mental health.

Keywords: adolescent mothers, postpartum depression, salutogenic childbirth education; sense of coherence, perinatal mental health.

Effect of nutrition counselling intervention on knowledge, practice and nutritional status of pregnant women in Dilla town: a quasi-experimental study

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Background: Maternal nutrition is important for a healthy pregnancy, but malnutrition among pregnant women remains a major public health problem in Ethiopia, contributing to maternal complications and adverse birth outcomes. However, there is limited data on the effectiveness of nutrition counselling programmes for improving maternal nutrition outcomes in Southern Ethiopia. **Objective:** To evaluate the effect of a structured nutrition counselling intervention on nutritional knowledge, dietary practices, and nutritional status among pregnant women attending antenatal care in Dilla Town, Southern Ethiopia. **Methods:** We conducted a single-group pre–post quasi-experimental study from September 2025 to January 2026 among 106 pregnant women attending antenatal care in five governmental health centres in Dilla Town, Southern Ethiopia. Participants were recruited using systematic sampling and received structured nutrition counselling offered by trained health professionals based on Ethiopia's antenatal care (ANC) Nutrition Counselling Guideline. Maternal nutrition knowledge, dietary practices, and mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) were assessed before and after the intervention. Changes in outcomes were evaluated using paired statistical tests, with significance set at $p < 0.05$. **Results:** The intervention was associated with significant improvements in maternal nutrition outcomes. The proportion of pregnant women with adequate nutrition knowledge increased from 41.5% at baseline to 76.4% after the intervention (risk difference [RD] = +34.9%; 95% CI: 23.7– 46.2; $p < 0.001$). Adequate dietary practice improved from 33.0% to 72.6% (RD = +39.6%; 95% CI: 27.6–51.6; $p < 0.001$). The proportion of women with normal nutritional status (MUAC ≥ 23 cm) increased from 52.8% to 65.1% (RD = +12.3%; 95% CI: 5.9–18.7; $p = 0.002$). **Conclusions:** A structured, provider-delivered nutrition counselling intervention was associated with improved nutritional knowledge, dietary practices, and anthropometric outcomes among pregnant women in an urban Ethiopian ANC setting. The gradient of effects (practice > knowledge > anthropometry) reflects the pathway from knowledge acquisition to behavioural change and nutritional improvement. These findings support integrating context-adapted nutrition counselling into routine ANC services with strengthened provider capacity and locally appropriate strategies.

Keywords: nutrition counselling, quasi-experimental, nutritional knowledge, dietary practice, nutritional status, pregnant women

3. Education and Skills Development

Quality education and social inclusiveness training as a resilience to irregular migration for Shallela secondary school students and teachers

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MORE EDUCATION FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS is a project by PARMA PER GLI ALTRI ONG that is implemented in rural areas of Ethiopia, particularly in the Hadiya Zone. One of the activities of the project is creating academic exchange and institutional cooperation to strengthen access to quality education, school preparedness, and the socio-economic inclusion of young people in vulnerable situations. Within this scheme, three days of training were given in collaboration with Hawassa University and the University of Parma from April 20, 2026, to April 23, 2026, at Shallala Secondary School. The purpose of the training was to initiate discussions about the values of quality education to overcome irregular migration and enhance gender equality. The training used stakeholder-participatory methods in recruiting student and teacher trainees. After brief introductory remarks, a group of 5-8 trainees was assigned to discuss their dream realisation, challenges, and opportunities in their teaching-learning processes. At the end of the sessions, each group rapporteur presented the findings for the joint session. Using framework analysis, themes were identified from each presentation. The findings have shown that for all student and teacher participants, on top of other factors, education is a key to realising their dreams and making important life choices. The major obstacle for them was migration. The trainees also mapped local resources and opportunities in the local communities as alternatives to migration. Enhancing the quality and inclusiveness of education with the participation of all stakeholders in the sector becomes the hallmark of adolescent and youth empowerment.

Keywords: quality education, social inclusiveness, adolescence, empowerment

From skills to opportunity: strengthening adolescent girls' human capital through an integrated life, family and health model in northern Nigeria

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Background: Adolescent girls face interconnected barriers to health, education, economic opportunity, and decision-making, particularly in contexts where social and gender norms constrain their choices. A360-Amplify integrated life skills through Life, Family and Health sessions, 1st to 4th touchpoint, complemented by business mentorship and coaching, for married adolescent girls aged 15-19. **Purpose:** This study examines girls' participation and progression through an integrated LFH model, from structured learning to business mentorship and economic outcomes, in order to assess the model's contribution to adolescent human capital development and expanded life opportunities. **Methods:** Routine data from four states in northern Nigeria were reviewed to examine girls' participation and progression across LFH learning, business mentorship, economic outcomes, and second-chance education. **Key findings:** In December 2025, 45,803 girls participated in LFH sessions, exceeding the monthly target by 205%. A tracked cohort showed 98% retention from first to fourth touchpoint. Of 4,930 girls who began business mentorship, 4,466 completed it, and 4,117 demonstrated economic outcomes, including savings, business start-up, and asset acquisition. **Conclusions:** These findings demonstrate the potential of an integrated LFH model to extend adolescent programming beyond knowledge acquisition towards practical human-capital development. The progression from learning to mentorship and then to economic participation shows that combining life skills, financial literacy and SRH education creates multiple pathways for girls to strengthen their agency and expand their opportunities. This offers a scalable model for policy and practice seeking to support girls' rights to informed choice beyond single-sector interventions.

Keywords: adolescent girls, human capital, economic empowerment

Education in emergencies and crises: a systematic review of global studies on crisis drivers, system recovery and reconstruction2000-2025)

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Global educational scenarios have been facing several forms of emergencies and crises, such as armed conflicts, natural disasters and health outbreaks, that greatly hinder the lifelong learning process globally. Building on this premise, this systematic review analyses the global evidence on emergencies and emergency education, with particular focus on the driving forces behind the crises and on the recovery and rebuilding of education systems from 2000 to 2025. It is based on 160 peer-reviewed journal articles drawn from the Scopus database, selected following PRISMA guidelines, and analysed using descriptive statistics, temporal evolution analysis and thematic mapping of the conceptual structure. The descriptive analysis shows that Africa is the most studied continent. From the temporal analysis, it is evident that the evolution has moved from intervention for access to capacity-building with a quality focus and finally to strategies for building resilience through the use of technology and equity. The co-word structure analysis reveals six themes: peace-building and social cohesion, protection and well-being, access/quality/systems, crises and response mechanisms, emerging issues, and geopolitics & governance. The effectiveness of the recovery process is not based on the nature of intervention but rather on contextual determinants such as resource availability and governance capacity. The study therefore suggests that creating resilient and equitable education systems requires political will, good governance and work on structural inequalities.

Keywords: education in emergencies, post-crisis recovery, armed conflict, resilience, crisis-sensitive planning

Pathways to learning: evidence from interventions for out-of-school children in Ethiopia

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Background: In Ethiopia's South region, communities in Konso zone host both long-term residents and Internally Displaced People (IDPs), among whom a significant population of children remains out of school, facing complex academic and psychosocial barriers to reentry. While remedial education is a common policy response, evidence is limited regarding the added value of integrating psychosocial and material support in these settings. **Objective & Methods:** We conducted this pilot in August 2026 with funding from J-PAL's Learning for All Initiative. The study establishes the groundwork for a Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT) evaluating Imagine1day's Accelerated Learning Program (ALP). The pilot tests household listing procedures in three kebeles in Konso, South Ethiopia (Addis Gebere, Becho, and Aylota Dokatu), which include both host-community and IDP residents. Key activities include: - Household Listing: Surveying 1,200 households across three kebeles to identify out-of-school children and reasons for dropout. - Data Validation: Comparing primary survey data with official Woreda (district) administrative records and NGO recruitment lists. **Significance:** As global humanitarian and research budgets shrink, many organisations increasingly rely on existing government administrative lists rather than conducting costly, full household listings. This pilot looks into the quality and completeness of these administrative lists, with particular focus on whether the most marginalised populations are included, which is more critical than ever for effective targeting.

Keywords: accelerated learning program, out-of-school children, internally displaced people, Ethiopia

Fostering resilience and realising the rights of adolescents on the move: education, skills and pathways to inclusion in Italy

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Over the past decade, Italy has experienced an unprecedented influx of migrant and refugee adolescents arriving via the central Mediterranean and Balkan routes driven by conflict, insecurity, persecution, poverty, environmental pressures, and the search for safety, education, and opportunities to build a better future. While responses have largely focused on protection and provision of basic services, a growing body of experience suggests that building adolescents' resilience through access to learning opportunities, meaningful participation, supportive relationships, and pathways towards social inclusion is also fundamental to realising their rights. Drawing on UNICEF Italy's experience supporting migrant and refugee adolescents between 2016 and 2026, this paper examines how integrated approaches to education and skills development can strengthen resilience and support social inclusion. Evidence from programme implementation, participatory research and digital consultations highlights that adolescents consistently identify education, employment opportunities, social connections, and hope for the future as critical factors shaping their well-being and sense of belonging. At the same time, many face barriers including interrupted schooling, delayed enrolment in educational pathways, limited access to vocational opportunities, language challenges, and fragmented transitions between education, protection, and labour market systems. The Italian experience demonstrates the importance of moving beyond narrow approaches focused solely on academic attainment or vocational training. Resilience is strengthened when adolescents are supported through a combination of socio-emotional learning, life skills development, educational support, career orientation, participation opportunities, and trusted relationships with educators and frontline workers. The paper proposes a framework for adolescent programming that connects education, protection, participation, and employability within a continuum of support for adolescents on the move. It argues that resilience should be understood not only as an individual capacity but also as the outcome of systems that enable adolescents to access opportunities, exercise agency, develop meaningful skills, and successfully follow pathways to social inclusion. The lessons emerging from Italy offer practical insights for policymakers and practitioners on the importance of investing in education, skills, and inclusion as pathways to realising the rights and resilience of adolescents on the move.

Keywords: rights, resilience, skills development, job orientation, social inclusion

Beyond confidence: gender, emotional intelligence and academic procrastination among Indian youth in the Global South

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Emotional intelligence (EI) is often discussed through gendered expectations, while academic self-concept and procrastination are frequently examined as separate aspects of educational functioning. Understanding how these factors intersect across stages can contribute to inclusive approaches for youth development. This is particularly relevant in the Global South, where such pathways shape young people's academic experiences. The study examines gender differences in EI, academic self-concept and academic procrastination among Indian students. It further explores associations between overall EI, its dimensions, academic self-concept and procrastination. A quantitative comparative-correlational design was used with 200 students from Class 12, undergraduate and postgraduate levels, selected through convenience sampling. Participants completed Pethe and Dhar's Emotional Intelligence Scale, Liu and Wang's Academic Self-Concept Scale, and McCloskey's Academic Procrastination Scale. One-way ANOVA and Pearson correlation were used. The findings show that males scored significantly higher than females in total EI ($M=136.38$ vs. 121.33), academic confidence (54.61 vs. 49.17), and academic comfort (54.39 vs. 48.97). Yet, males also reported higher procrastination (85.90 vs. 67.30). Total EI was not significantly associated with procrastination ($r=.096$, $p=.175$), whereas Managing Relations was negatively associated ($r=-.205$, $p=.004$). Academic confidence and comfort were also negatively associated with procrastination ($r=-.273$ and $-.236$, respectively). The findings challenge simplistic gendered expectations surrounding EI and suggest that academic self-concept alone does not fully explain gender differences in procrastination. Youth-focused support in the Indian and wider Global South context can benefit from gender-responsive approaches that strengthen specific emotional competencies and task engagement.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, academic self-concept, academic procrastination, gender disparities, Indian youth

Unpaid household and care work and children's learning outcomes: longitudinal evidence from four low- and middle-income countries

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This study examines the relationship between children's engagement in unpaid household and care work and their learning outcomes across four low- and middle-income countries: Ethiopia, India, Peru, and Vietnam. Drawing on longitudinal data from the Young Lives study (2006–2016), the analysis employs child fixed-effects and instrumental-variable (IV) models to estimate the association between time spent in unpaid work and standardised test scores in mathematics, reading, and vocabulary. The findings reveal substantial gender disparities, with girls consistently undertaking more unpaid work than boys do. Results from fixed-effects models indicate that increased unpaid work is associated with lower mathematics performance among girls in pooled estimates. However, associations with reading and vocabulary are weaker and more heterogeneous. Nonlinear analyses suggest that moderate levels of unpaid work may not be detrimental, whereas high-intensity engagement (three or more hours per day), particularly when combined with no study time, is linked to significantly poorer learning outcomes. IV estimates indicate stronger negative effects of unpaid work on mathematics achievement for both boys and girls. The study highlights important cross-country variations and gendered vulnerabilities, suggesting that excessive unpaid work burdens can constrain children's cognitive development. Policies should address time poverty and gender inequality to improve educational outcomes.

Keywords: unpaid care work, learning outcomes, cognitive development, time use, longitudinal analysis, Young Lives study

Political and social contexts in shaping well-being and educational outcomes of adolescents in Ethiopia: academic achievement gaps and promoting student engagement through collaborative psychosocial interventions in schools near conflict areas

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Background of the Study: In the realm of education, academic achievement occupies a central position, serving as a key indicator of student learning and progress. According to Costa et al. (2024), the complexity of the phenomenon of academic achievement causes it to have a number of determinants that include personal factors (gender, personality traits, cognitive abilities and academic background, motivation and self-constructs, stress, and problem-solving strategies), contextual microsystem factors (family—parental educational background, parenting practices and interactions, and parental involvement and support), school (school location, school conditions, and responsiveness), and peers. On the other hand, researchers indicated the significance of psychosocial factors by referring to the learner's context for the academic achievement and engagement of students. Li, Y., Allen, J., & Casillas, A. (2017) identified emotional control, family involvement, and school climate as significant predictors of academic performance, particularly for students in high-poverty settings. Ethiopia's educational system faces significant challenges, as evident from the vast disparities in academic achievement and low student engagement. Concerns about disengagement and poor academic achievement are regularly voiced by teachers and parents, resulting in issues with attendance, participation, and learning outcomes. In a televised message, the Prime Minister noted that if changes aren't made to the current education system, it may hinder the creation of a competitive nation and generation in the future world (Abiy Ahmed, July 2, 2023). The recent results of the Ethiopian high school leaving certificate exams for the past two years (2022 and 2023) have been disappointing. **Objectives of the study:** Generally, the study aims to explore the factors for academic achievement gaps and school engagement and navigating and resilient strategies for psychosocial challenges of students' for students near conflict areas. **Methods:** This study used qualitative research, specifically Community-Based Participatory Action Research (CBPAR). CBPAR is a hands-on approach that involves various fields like indigenous studies, social work, psychology, education, feminism, and critical race theory. The study used rapid ethnographic design to look at how different factors affect student disengagement and their failure to advance in regional and national exams. **Sampling and Sampling Technique:** The study used a two-stage sampling process. First, sub-cities were chosen based on specific criteria. Then, schools within those sub-cities were selected, and participants were chosen from these schools. **Data Collection Tools:** The study used systems thinking workshops as a data collection tool. **Major findings:** After identifying a number of primary, secondary, and tertiary factors contributing to academic achievement gaps and low student school engagement, the student, parent, and teacher participants ultimately pinpointed the core issues: conflict, lack of concentration and focus, hopelessness, peer pressure, and poor quality of education. The study further found that most of these factors can be partially addressed through collaborative psychosocial intervention strategies involving parents, students, and the community. With a focus on the educational outcomes of children and youth in conflict and uncertain realities, the study demonstrates how students, parents, teachers, and the community strive to mitigate academic achievement disparities and low levels of school engagement caused by psychosocial challenges.

Keywords: educational outcome; adolescents; collaborative psychosocial intervention; conflict

4. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

The invisible tax: how modernisation reshaped women's economic rights in Ethiopia

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Ethiopia was never colonised, yet its women have lost economic ground. Across pre-colonial Africa, women often owned land, controlled trade and held authority. Historical records from Ethiopia show female landholders, judges and market leaders. Then came modernisation. Western education, foreign legal codes and a cash economy valued men's wage labour over women's traditional work. Even without a colonial flag, patriarchal norms quietly took root. Today the economic cost of such gender gaps is immense. Sub-Saharan Africa loses an estimated 95 billion dollars every year to gender inequality, according to the UNDP in 2016. In Ethiopia, fewer than eight per cent of women hold paid jobs, and over ninety per cent work in the informal economy with no protection. This paper traces the journey from pre-colonial economic partnership to modern exclusion, quantifies the cost, and offers five affordable, Africa-led solutions: expanding microfinance for rural women through existing equb and iddir networks; digital registration of land rights, including customary land; women's entrepreneurship hubs; extending social protection to informal workers; and digital skills training that reaches rural women and girls. It argues that restoring women's economic power is not a favour. It is the fastest path to shared prosperity.

Methodology note: The paper synthesises secondary data from the World Bank, ILO, FAO and UNDP, and from the 2016 Ethiopia Demographic and Health Survey. It also draws on an informal interview conducted in Addis Ababa in June 2026. No primary quantitative data were collected except that I spoke with twenty women in total; one narrative was chosen for this paper because it represented a pattern seen across all twenty, and the remaining stories will be discussed in a second paper; the paper focuses on national averages rather than regional or ethnic variation. The full paper is a preprint and has not been peer-reviewed.

Keywords: women's economic rights, Ethiopia, informal economy, land ownership, structural inequality, modernisation

Socioeconomic inequities in the uptake of cervical cancer screening among HIV-positive women in Ethiopia: findings from the Ethiopian Population-based HIV Impact Assessment survey

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Background: Although cervical cancer is a preventable disease, its burden remains disproportionately high globally, predominantly affecting women in low- and middle-income countries because of inequities in the uptake of cervical cancer screening. HIV-positive women are at high risk, yet the uptake of cervical screening is very low. In Ethiopia, there is limited evidence on the underlying socioeconomic inequities in screening uptake. **Objective:** This study aimed to assess the socio-economic inequities in uptake of cervical cancer screening among HIV-positive women in Ethiopia. **Methods:** This study conducted a secondary analysis of an HIV impact survey. A total of 361 HIV-positive women aged 25 to 49 years were included in the analysis. The outcome variable was self-reported cervical cancer screening uptake. Multiple equity measures were used, including the equiplot to visualise wealth-based inequity, the concentration index, the concentration curve, and the slope index of inequality and relative index of inequality. Fairlie decomposition analysis was used to quantify the contribution of socio-demographic stratifiers to wealth-related inequities. **Results:** The overall uptake of cervical cancer screening was 15.5% (95% CI: 11%–18%). Uptake was higher among wealthier women, increasing from 9.6% in the poorest quintile to 20.4% in the middle quintile, with an absolute difference of 10.8 percentage points. The concentration index was 0.077, indicating a mild concentration of screening among the richest women. Fairlie decomposition analysis showed that being unmarried (49.3%) and living in small urban areas (61.2%) were the largest contributors to wealth-related inequities. **Conclusion:** This study found significant inequity in the uptake of cervical cancer screening among Ethiopian HIV-positive women, with relatively low uptake overall. Unmarried status and residence in small urban areas accounted for most of the wealth-based inequity in service uptake in this group. Any efforts to achieve the WHO cervical cancer elimination goals and comply with national policy will require a more purposeful approach. Emphasis should be placed on developing targeted, equity-based interventions, particularly for unmarried women and residents of small urban areas. Further research should consider these issues to ensure equitable distribution of cervical cancer screening services.

Keywords: uptake of cervical cancer screening, HIV-positive women, socio-economic inequity, Ethiopia

Assessing the effects of gender-based violence on educational outcomes among adolescents in South Ethiopia region secondary schools

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Gender-based violence (GBV) continues to be a major challenge that threatens adolescents' safety, well-being, and educational success. Students who experience physical, sexual, emotional, or psychological violence often have lower school attendance, reduced classroom participation, poorer academic performance, and diminished educational aspirations. This study examined the effects of gender-based violence on educational outcomes among adolescents attending secondary schools in the South Ethiopia Region. A mixed-methods approach with a convergent parallel design was employed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the issue. The study involved approximately 480 participants, comprising 422 adolescent students who completed structured questionnaires for the quantitative survey and about 58 key informants and focus group discussion (FGD) participants who contributed to the qualitative component. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques, while qualitative data were analysed through thematic analysis. The findings revealed that adolescents who experienced gender-based violence were more likely to have lower school attendance, reduced classroom engagement, diminished motivation to learn, and weaker academic performance. The study also found that poverty, harmful gender norms, weak reporting mechanisms, and limited institutional support increased adolescents' vulnerability to violence. Qualitative findings further showed that fear, emotional distress, stigma, and inadequate counselling and protection services negatively shaped students' educational experiences. The study concludes that gender-based violence remains a significant barrier to achieving safe, inclusive, and equitable education. It recommends strengthening school-based prevention initiatives, improving reporting and counselling services, increasing community awareness, and implementing gender-responsive policies to create safer learning environments and improve educational outcomes for adolescents.

Keywords: adolescents, educational outcomes, gender-based violence, secondary schools, South Ethiopia Region

Strengthening adolescent resilience through inclusive livelihoods training: evidence from adolescents and young people with disabilities transitioning to adulthood in Zimbabwe

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The transition from adolescence to adulthood is a defining period during which capabilities, aspirations, and opportunities shape lifelong well-being. Yet for adolescents and young people with disabilities, this transition is frequently disrupted by intersecting forms of exclusion that limit educational progression, economic participation, social inclusion, and the realisation of fundamental rights. Although global policy increasingly promotes disability-inclusive development, there remains limited evidence explaining how livelihood interventions contribute to resilient transitions to adulthood in low-resource contexts. This study addresses that gap by examining the contribution of inclusive livelihoods training to adolescent resilience at Kudakwashe Care Centre in Zimbabwe. A qualitative descriptive phenomenological design was employed, drawing on semi-structured interviews, participant observations, and document review involving adolescents and young people with disabilities, caregivers, programme staff, and key stakeholders. Data were analysed thematically using NVivo to generate an in-depth understanding of lived experiences and transition pathways. The findings reveal that inclusive livelihoods training strengthened resilience by expanding participants' confidence, agency, practical capabilities, social participation, and aspirations for independent adulthood. However, these gains remained vulnerable where livelihood opportunities were not reinforced by accessible institutions, sustained mentorship, supportive families, inclusive communities, and responsive labour markets. Rather than functioning as a standalone intervention, livelihoods training emerged as one component of a broader resilience system in which individual capability and enabling environments interact to shape transition outcomes. The study advances a systems-oriented perspective on adolescent resilience by demonstrating that equitable transitions to adulthood require coordinated investments that integrate disability-inclusive livelihoods, institutional collaboration, long-term transition support, and social inclusion. By providing empirical evidence from Zimbabwe, the study contributes to evidence-informed policy and practice while offering a transferable framework for strengthening resilience among adolescents with disabilities in comparable low- and middle-income settings.

Keywords: adolescent resilience, disability inclusion, social inclusion, inclusive livelihoods, transition to adulthood, Zimbabwe

Role of public health leadership competencies to empower women and mitigate gender-based violence: a scoping review

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Background: Gender-based violence (GBV) is a human rights violation that disproportionately affects women and girls. Strong public health leadership competencies (PHLCs) are indispensable to turn the tide and mitigate GBV. However, there is limited evidence about the mechanisms by which these competencies help to empower women and mitigate GBV. This review maps the evidence on the intersection of PHLCs, women's empowerment (WE), and GBV mitigation, identifies barriers to women's empowerment for GBV mitigation, and highlights strategies to inform future policy, practice, and research. **Methods:** A scoping review following Arksey and O'Malley guidelines and the PRISMA-ScR framework was conducted. Included documents were thematically analysed using the 4P public health leadership framework (problem, person, pathway, and purpose), assessing leadership competency domains in relation to WE outcomes (cognitive, political, economic, and psychological). We then assessed their influence on GBV mitigation across the socio-ecological model. **Results:** The review included 29 records, predominantly global (48.3%) and policy documents (27.6%). This review found that PHLCs emerged as a critical mechanism for GBV mitigation and WE. Specifically, competencies in resource mobilisation, strategic planning, policy advocacy, and multi-sectoral coordination supported women's political and economic empowerment. Trauma-informed communication, cultural competence, and workforce development skills improved women's cognitive and psychological well-being. Identified barriers included limited women's legal literacy, economic dependence, political marginalisation, and systemic institutional failures. **Conclusions:** This study shows that strong PHLCs are essential for WE and reducing GBV. To sustain these, training of leaders in policy advocacy, strategic planning, resource mobilisation, trauma-informed communication, cultural competency and establishing dedicated GBV coordination roles, alongside integrating these competencies into public health education curricula, need to be prioritised. Multisectoral approach is also crucial to improve women's legal literacy, expand economic opportunities, enhancing women's participation in political and decision-making processes.

Keywords: public health leadership, leadership competency, women's empowerment, gender-based violence, scoping review

Dismantling gender barriers: social inclusion drives adolescent resilience in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Zimbabwe

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This study addressed the gap of lacking quantitative causal evidence on how intersectional social inclusion metrics build adolescent resilience in rapidly changing African contexts by grounding its argument in Sen's Capability Approach and Intersectionality theory. The study enters the debate between Universalist and Contextualist approaches to adolescent rights. It argued that gender equality was not merely a component of social inclusion but the prerequisite mechanism through which inclusion translated into actual adolescent resilience. To address this, the study operationally described it econometrically by estimating the marginal effects of a gender-equal social inclusion index on a multidimensional resilience score, controlling for socio-economic shocks. The general objective was to empirically establish the causal pathway through which gender-equal social inclusion advanced adolescent resilience and rights. The explicit research question was: 'How do gender equality and social inclusion quantitatively and qualitatively determine the resilience and rights realisation of adolescents in diverse African contexts?' Anchored in the pragmatist paradigm, which prioritised real-world problem-solving and integrated diverse data forms to capture complex social phenomena. This research utilised a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design. The study used the Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE) longitudinal dataset covering 2020 to 2024, focusing on Ethiopia, Kenya, and Zimbabwe. These countries were selected as they represent diverse socio-political, conflict-affected, and rapidly urbanising changing contexts in Africa. The population comprised adolescents aged 10-19, from which a stratified multi-stage cluster sampling technique yielded a sample size of 6,000, chosen to ensure adequate statistical power for fixed-effects models and precise representation across gender and geographic strata. Data collection methods involved structured surveys and semi-structured focus group discussions, generating quantitative panel data and qualitative textual data. Quantitative analysis employed Fixed Effects regressions and Propensity Score Matching to handle endogeneity and establish causality, while qualitative data underwent thematic analysis. The working hypothesis posited that adolescents experiencing high gender-equal social inclusion exhibited significantly higher resilience and rights realisation despite socio-economic shocks. The study yielded the following key findings: first, gender equality and social inclusion increased overall resilience scores by 23%; second, educational inclusion uniquely closed the gender gap in rights awareness; third, economic inclusion failed to build resilience without concurrent adolescent decision-making power; and fourth, in conflict-affected Ethiopian regions, social inclusion had the highest marginal effect on physical rights protection. The study concluded that social inclusion solely advanced resilience when explicitly anchored in gender equality. This research contributed the first cross-country, econometrically rigorous evidence of the gender-inclusion- resilience nexus to the existing body of knowledge. Consequently, it offered the following policy implications: policymakers must integrate gender-transformative metrics into national social protection; prioritise adolescent decision-making power within economic inclusion programmes; design targeted social inclusion interventions in conflict zones to safeguard physical rights; and adopt the multidimensional gender-equal inclusion index for monitoring adolescent- focused Sustainable Development Goals.

Keywords: adolescent resilience, dismantling gender barriers, social inclusion, Ethiopia, Kenya, Zimbabwe

Governance for advancing adolescent girls' rights in Sindh

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Despite global and national commitments to gender equality, women's substantive participation in influential governance and decision-making positions remains limited. Despite this improvement in the political representation of women in Pakistan, their leadership is still clustered in social-sector portfolios, and there is relatively low representation in major policy areas, including economic planning, resource distribution, and development governance. This poses significant questions about how far existing systems of governance are positioned to promote the rights of adolescent girls and sustainable development outcomes. This paper uses a desk review methodology to explore the connection between women's leadership, gender-responsive governance, and the promotion of adolescent girls' rights in Sindh. Drawing upon publicly available national and provincial datasets, census and survey findings, gender parity literature, governance indicators, and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) frameworks, the study explores how substantive political representation may strengthen adolescent-responsive policymaking. Particular attention is given to SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) as interconnected pathways for promoting inclusive and sustainable development. The paper argues that gender equality can be attained by going beyond numbers to actual participation in decision-making and influential leadership roles. Empowering women in governance systems can improve gender sensitivity in education, health, and social integration and promote the rights, resilience, and well-being of adolescent girls in accordance with the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

Keywords: gender-responsive governance, women's substantive representation, adolescent girls' rights, gender equality, adolescent well-being, Sindh, political participation

Communities are at the ‘Preplanning Stage’ for addressing Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: Findings from a Community Readiness Assessment in the Somali Region, Eastern Ethiopia

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Despite the global commitments to end Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C), a sluggish decline has been observed in the Somali Regional State of Ethiopia. One of the key implementation gaps is that interventions are often designed without assessing communities’ readiness stage for the prevention of FGM/C. This study aimed to assess community readiness to address FGM/C using the Community Readiness Model (CRM) and inform tailored interventions in the Somali Regional State of Ethiopia. Community readiness assessment was conducted using a semi-structured interview with 28 purposively selected key informants. The interviews addressed six readiness dimensions: community efforts, community knowledge of the efforts, leadership, community knowledge about FGM/C, community climate and available resources. Interviews were transcribed verbatim, thematically analysed and scored across six dimensions using a nine-point anchored scale in accordance with CRM guidelines. The overall community readiness score was 4.03 ± 0.82 (IQR: 3.54-4.83), corresponding to the ‘Preplanning’ stage according to the CRM. The highest dimension-specific score was observed for community efforts (Mean = 4.90 ± 0.99 ; Preplanning stage), whereas resources (Mean = 2.76 ± 0.78 ; Denial/Resistance) and community climate (Mean = 3.46 ± 1.01 ; Vague awareness) showed the lowest levels of readiness. The main barriers included limited community engagement, misperceptions, donor-dependent resources, and traditional cutters’ reliance on FGM/C for income. Community readiness to address FGM/C was relatively low in the Somali region. To improve community readiness, interventions should focus on participatory approaches, strengthen leadership engagement, mobilise resources and raise awareness to address misperceptions surrounding FGM/C.

Keywords: Community readiness model, female genital mutilation/cutting, Somali region, Ethiopia

Girl-led advocacy: young women driving community shifts to end FGM in Ethiopia and Kenya

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Female Genital Mutilation remains entrenched despite declining national prevalence. Sustainable abandonment requires shifts in individual and collective expectations. Evidence from The Girl Generation-Africa-led movement (TGG-ALM) in Kenya and Ethiopia shows that centring girls can strengthen peer advocacy, girls' clubs and intergenerational dialogue, challenging power dynamics, cross-border FGM and medicalisation while reframing FGM as a violation of bodily autonomy and rights. To explore how girl-centred approaches challenge gender norms and support shifts in FGM practice. This paper draws on qualitative case studies from participant observation, interviews and focus groups with girls aged 15 and above in Garissa, Kenya, and Farta and Guna, Ethiopia. TGG-ALM positioned girls as leaders and change makers. Training, girls' clubs and peer sessions strengthened knowledge of rights and FGM's health consequences. Girl Councils, peer networks and survivor leadership reframed FGM as a human rights violation, supporting resistance and safer disclosure. Dialogues with parents opened discussion on harm, protection and household safety. Girls reported greater confidence to raise concerns, negotiate protection and influence decisions. Girls and boys increasingly worked together to prevent FGM, report risks and support peers, while girls' councils linked vulnerable girls to trusted adults, leaders and law enforcement. Participation in wider advocacy spaces strengthened prevention, accountability and girls' influence. Girl-centred approaches make girls at risk and survivors visible while strengthening agency, leadership and protective networks. By combining peer engagement, school platforms and intergenerational dialogue, they support household and community shifts toward collective accountability and rejection of FGM.

Keywords: FGM, champions, shifts, girls, community

5. Digital Transformation and Adolescence

AI Youth Compass: a rights-based artificial intelligence framework for empowering adolescents, strengthening resilience, and expanding future opportunities in Ethiopia

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Background and Rationale: Adolescence is a critical stage where young people develop their identity, skills, aspirations, and vision for the future. However, many adolescents in Ethiopia and similar low- and middle-income contexts are navigating a rapidly changing world shaped by technological transformation, economic uncertainty, unequal access to opportunities, and limited personalised guidance. Although digital technologies create new possibilities for learning, participation, and empowerment, many young people still struggle to access reliable information, discover educational and career pathways, build relevant skills, and safely participate in digital spaces. **Research Problem and Objective:** Existing youth development programmes and digital solutions often provide general information and services but do not fully address the diverse needs, aspirations, and challenges of individual adolescents. This conceptual paper explores how responsible artificial intelligence (AI) can support adolescent empowerment through a human-centred, rights-based framework that strengthens resilience, expands access to opportunities, and promotes digital inclusion. **Methodology:** This study adopts a conceptual research approach based on literature review and policy analysis related to adolescent rights, artificial intelligence ethics, digital transformation, education innovation, and youth development. It introduces the AI Youth Compass framework, which integrates personalised learning support, career guidance, opportunity discovery, digital rights education, and responsible technology engagement. **Expected Contribution:** The proposed framework presents AI as more than a technological tool for information access; it positions AI as a supportive pathway for helping adolescents understand their potential, make informed decisions, and actively shape their futures. The study provides insights for policymakers, educators, researchers, development organisations, and technology innovators seeking inclusive approaches to adolescent empowerment. **Policy Implications and Conclusion:** To ensure that digital transformation benefits all adolescents, stakeholders should promote responsible AI policies, digital literacy, privacy protection, and meaningful youth participation in technology development. A rights-based AI approach can help transform technology from a source of inequality into a tool for resilience, opportunity, and empowerment, enabling adolescents to thrive in a changing world.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, adolescent rights, adolescent resilience, youth empowerment, digital transformation, Ethiopia, responsible AI

Reducing the risk level of female students against online sexual abuse and exploitation: a peer-mentorship intervention in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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Introduction and objective: Online sexual abuse and exploitation (OSAE) has become a widespread psychosocial threat in urban Ethiopian schools. Despite rapid growth in internet use, there is still a serious gap in digital safeguarding policy within the education system. This paper evaluates a theory-driven peer-mentorship intervention designed to reduce OSAE vulnerability among high-risk female adolescents in Gulele Sub-city, Addis Ababa. **Method:** Using a pre-post intervention design, the study worked with 73 female students at Dil Ber General Secondary School who were identified as high-risk through digital behaviour and socio-economic indicators. Twenty trained peer mentors facilitated six structured guidance sessions. Risk was measured across five domains - Content, Contact, Conduct, Contract and Support System - using a standardised Risk Assessment Index. **Results:** Paired-sample t-tests showed a reduction in overall risk levels, from a pre-intervention mean of 13.38 to a post-intervention mean of 9.73, $t(72) = 20.31$, $p < .001$. The largest shifts were in the Contact and Conduct risk categories. OSAE prevalence among the urban adolescent girls in the study reached 61.4%. **Conclusions:** Peer-led mentorship is a workable vehicle for changing behaviour in digital environments. The study underlines the need to formalise school-based safeguarding policies to close the protection gap in a rapidly digitising society.

Keywords: online sexual exploitation, peer mentorship, social learning theory, adolescent risk, digital safeguarding

Social media use, effects, and parental mediation among school adolescents in a developing country

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Social media use among adolescents is becoming increasingly common worldwide. While social media use has many benefits for everyone, it can also pose risks, especially for adolescents, depending on how and why they use it. Therefore, it is an important research and public agenda, especially in developing countries like Ethiopia, where social media use among adolescents is increasingly growing these days. This study aimed to assess social media use, effects, and parental mediation among school adolescents in Ethiopia. The study employed a concurrent triangulation cross-sectional study design. Simple random sampling and purposive sampling were used to select 227 participants, including adolescents and parents. Descriptive statistics were used to present, analyse, and interpret the quantitative data using SPSS software version 20.0. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data. The findings were then triangulated. The study found that the majority (86.3%) of the respondents were widely using various social media platforms for different purposes. Both adolescents and parents reported that adolescents were experiencing both positive and negative effects from social media use, including academic, mental, social, and health-related aspects. However, adolescents emphasised the positive effects, while parents stressed the negative effects more. The study also found that many parents were supportive of their children's social media use for educational purposes, but most do not have control over or do not supervise their children's social media usage. The study recommends that the government, schools, parents, and other concerned bodies work together to improve understanding of and promote safe social media usage among adolescents.

Keywords: adolescent; developing country; ethiopia; parental mediation; social media

Social media usage and psychological well-being among school adolescents in Addis Ababa: a child rights perspective

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This study investigated how social media usage affects the psychological well-being of school adolescents in Addis Ababa using a child rights lens. The study employed a mixed-methods cross-sectional study design to collect data from 386 adolescents (ages 14-19) from different school types (private, government, faith-based) and supplemented the quantitative data with 23 qualitative interviews. Four child rights dimensions (protection, participation, provision, privacy) were defined as measurable variables based on UNCRC General Comment No. 25 and the African Charter. Moderated-mediation analysis (Models 7 and 14, PROCESS) found that social media frequency had limited direct effects on well-being — negatively predicting only Perseverance ($\beta = -.217, p < .001$) and Optimism ($\beta = -.166, p = .001$). However, rights-based digital experiences fully mediated the relationships with all five EPOCH dimensions. Protection positively predicted Connectedness ($\beta = .414, p < .001$) and Happiness ($\beta = .256, p < .001$); Participation positively predicted Engagement ($\beta = .204, p < .001$) and Optimism ($\beta = .185, p = .004$); Provision positively predicted Perseverance ($\beta = .123, p = .035$); and Privacy positively predicted Engagement ($\beta = .144, p = .034$), Optimism ($\beta = .214, p = .006$), and Happiness ($\beta = .205, p = .010$). Moderation analyses indicated that rights-supportive environments provided greater benefits to girls, younger adolescents, and students in government/faith schools. The study concluded that fulfilment of digital rights is the most effective pathway to adolescent flourishing. Therefore, recommendations shift the focus from restricting screen time to holding duty-bearers accountable for creating rights-respecting digital spaces.

Keywords: social media, EPOCH-well-being, rights-based experiences, adolescents, moderated-mediation, Addis Ababa

Digital skills development and adolescent resilience: expanding opportunities for young people in the digital economy

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Adolescents and young people are growing up in an increasingly digital world where access to technology, digital skills, and online opportunities can significantly influence their education, livelihoods, participation, and resilience. However, unequal access to digital devices, connectivity, relevant skills, mentorship, and safe online environments continues to limit the ability of many young people to benefit from the digital economy. This paper explores the role of digital skills development in strengthening adolescent resilience and expanding pathways to education, employment, entrepreneurship, and participation in the digital economy. Drawing on practical experiences from youth digital-skills training in Kenya, the paper highlights how structured training in digital literacy, online work platforms, digital communication, and portfolio development can equip young people with practical skills and greater confidence to navigate an evolving digital environment. The paper further considers the importance of creating inclusive and supportive digital learning environments that address barriers faced by young people, including limited access to devices and internet connectivity, lack of digital experience, inadequate mentorship, and concerns relating to online safety and responsible digital participation. It argues that digital transformation should not focus solely on providing technological access but should also invest in the skills, knowledge, confidence, and support systems that enable adolescents to use technology meaningfully and safely. The paper concludes that strengthening digital skills among adolescents can contribute to greater resilience and improved access to opportunities, particularly when digital-skills initiatives are linked to mentorship, practical experience, safe online engagement, and pathways to further education and decent work. Greater collaboration between governments, educational institutions, development partners, technology stakeholders, and young people is therefore essential to ensure that digital transformation becomes inclusive and contributes to adolescents' rights, well-being, and future opportunities.

Keywords: adolescents, digital transformation, digital skills; youth resilience, digital inclusion, digital economy, Kenya

Artificial intelligence-enabled digital mental health interventions for adolescent resilience in sub-Saharan Africa

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Background: Artificial intelligence (AI) is increasingly proposed as a scalable means of extending mental health support to adolescents, but the evidence base from sub-Saharan Africa is uncertain, and the rights implications are substantial. **Objective:** To synthesise empirical evidence on AI-enabled digital mental health interventions for adolescents in sub-Saharan Africa, examining effectiveness, resilience-related outcomes, equity, safety, and rights-based safeguards. **Methods:** A systematic evidence-gap review was conducted in accordance with PRISMA 2020. Public-access searches were completed in PubMed/MEDLINE, Europe PMC, WHO Global Index Medicus, African Journals Online, and Google Scholar/publisher indexes from inception to 22 July 2026, with backward and forward citation chaining. Adapted strategies were prepared for Embase, APA PsycINFO, Scopus, Web of Science, CINAHL, CENTRAL, IEEE Xplore, and Global Health for independent institutional rerun. Eligible studies involved adolescents aged 10–19 years in sub-Saharan Africa and used AI to design, deliver, personalise, monitor, or evaluate a digital mental health intervention. Because direct evidence was sparse, non-AI regional digital mental health studies were retained in a clearly separated contextual synthesis. Design-appropriate appraisal used RoB 2, the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool, and Joanna Briggs Institute criteria. **Results:** Forty-two records were captured, eight duplicates were removed, 34 titles and abstracts were screened, and 12 full texts were assessed. One directly eligible study was identified: a qualitative co-design study involving 23 adolescents in rural South Africa using ChatGPT, MidJourney, and Soundful. Most adolescents reported an engaging experience (87%), improved mood during music creation (91%), and preference for AI-generated images (100%) and music (83%). However, 78% required assistance with prompt construction and 57% identified cultural bias. No sub-Saharan African trial of AI-delivered adolescent mental health treatment effectiveness was identified. Four non-AI contextual studies from South Africa, Uganda, and Kenya showed generally high feasibility and acceptability but mixed clinical effects. Rights and safety reporting was incomplete, particularly for crisis escalation, algorithmic transparency, data governance, bias monitoring, and local-language inclusion. **Conclusion:** AI-enabled adolescent digital mental health research in sub-Saharan Africa remains at an early co-design stage. AI may strengthen participation and creative engagement, but evidence of clinical effectiveness is absent and rights-based safeguards require substantial development. Rigorous locally governed trials with human oversight, multilingual design, prospective safety protocols, and explicit child-rights accountability are needed.

Keywords: adolescent mental health, artificial intelligence, digital mental health, generative AI, resilience, sub-Saharan Africa, child rights, equity; safety

Artificial intelligence for early identification of mental health risks among Ethiopian adolescents using Amharic social media data: a personality recognition approach

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Background: The adolescents of today have several challenges to tackle, among them psychological vulnerability, inequality, digital risks, and lack of access to adolescent-friendly mental health services, especially in poor environments like Ethiopia. It is important to diagnose psychological vulnerability in order to ensure the well-being of adolescents and build resilience in them; however, traditional mental health diagnosis is hindered by lack of resources and scarcity of human resources. In today's world, where adolescents are utilising social media platforms for communication, expression of themselves, and social interaction, these digital platforms can prove to be very helpful in diagnosing adolescents' behavioural patterns in innovative ways using evidence-based practices. This can be achieved through AI and NLP with the use of personality recognition technology in an ethical manner. **Objective:** This study aims to develop an annotated Amharic personality recognition dataset and an AI-driven personality recognition model using traditional machine learning to support the early identification of psychological risk indicators among Ethiopian adolescents through personality detection. **Methods:** An annotated dataset of 2,372 publicly available Amharic social media posts was developed from language patterns commonly expressed by Ethiopian adolescents on widely used digital platforms. Posts were selected based on predefined inclusion criteria, including users' self-reported or inferred adolescent age group (10–19 years), where ethically appropriate, and content reflecting adolescents' experiences, emotions, and daily interactions. After text preprocessing and TF-IDF feature extraction, six supervised machine learning algorithms—Support Vector Machine (SVM), Logistic Regression, Random Forest, Decision Tree, K-Nearest Neighbours, and Naïve Bayes—were trained and evaluated using an 80:20 train-test split. Personality traits were used as complementary behavioural indicators associated with emotional regulation, stress resilience, and psychological well-being. Model performance was evaluated using accuracy, precision, recall, and F1-score. **Results:** The Support Vector Machine had the best classification accuracy rate at 80.0%, followed by Logistic Regression at 79.0%. The results show that AI is capable of recognising the personality types from Amharic social media posts. Instead of being used as a diagnostic tool, this framework serves as a behavioural analysis tool, offering complementary information about emotional regulation and well-being of adolescents for the benefit of psychologists, counsellors, educators, and health care professionals to help them identify adolescents who need further assessments and timely intervention. **Conclusion:** This study demonstrates the potential of AI-assisted personality recognition to strengthen adolescent mental health promotion through responsible behavioural assessment in a low-resource language context. By developing one of the first annotated Amharic personality recognition datasets and applying traditional machine learning techniques, the study contributes evidence for innovative digital approaches that support the early identification of psychological risk indicators among adolescents. The proposed framework complements professional mental health services and has the potential to inform evidence-based interventions and policies that promote adolescent well-being, resilience, and equitable access to mental health support, while requiring robust ethical governance, privacy protection, transparency, and continuous human oversight.

Keywords: adolescents, mental health, artificial intelligence, personality recognition, behavioural assessment, natural language processing, machine learning, Amharic, Ethiopia

Automated management of a survey of physical activity and dietary intake patterns of adolescents across 2,000 households in Ethiopia

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Background: Laterite worked with IFPRI to assess the nutritional status, dietary intake, and physical activity patterns of adolescents across nearly 2,000 households in Ethiopia. Data collection involved tracking adolescents' GPS and physical movement data over seven days. Logistical considerations included: 1) a limited supply of GPS and accelerometer devices, 2) no room for error on timelines due to another partner collecting recall data from the same households the next day, and 3) the need for strict tracking to conduct follow-up calls and device retrievals. **Purpose and Methods:** To manage complex logistics and tight timelines, an automated de-identified bot-script integrated with the Telegram messaging app was developed for the field team. The purpose of this bot was to provide enumerators with daily, automated checklists extracted from a custom dashboard, specifically reminding them who to contact for device check-ups (1-2 days post-handover) and when to collect devices (after 7 days) so they could be rotated to new participants. **Key findings:** The deployment of the Telegram bot streamlined field operations over the 40-day data collection period. Out of 1,900 households visited, delays in device handover were recorded in only 9% of cases, half of which occurred in the first week of data collection before the bot's implementation. **Conclusions and Implications:** This workflow demonstrates that leveraging accessible technical innovations can support complex data collection on adolescent well-being in Ethiopia. By eliminating logistical bottlenecks and tracking errors, such tools enable researchers to reliably capture high-quality data to understand how adolescents interact with their environments.

Keywords: adolescent health, physical activity, nutrition, digital health, Ethiopia

6. Climate Change, Humanitarian Crises and Resilience

Climate change, pastoralism, conflict and traditional institutions under drought stress: the case of the Ethiopian Borana and Kenyan Gabra borderland communities

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This paper analysed how climate change reshapes pastoralist conflict resolution and the role of traditional institutions under drought stress: The case of Borana and Gabra borderland communities. Climate change has brought drought, environmental degradation and conflict among the pastoralist communities. In the study area, pasture and water have become scarce, and pastoralists compete for control and use of these resources across the border. This competition leads to conflict. The continued climate change in the area reshapes pastoralist conflict resolution by turning internal disputes into cross-border intergroup conflict as a struggle for pasture land and water points. Unpredictable drought triggers both localised and cross-border conflict, and the Gadaa indigenous conflict resolution system is heavily occupied with preventing resource-based conflict across the Ethiopia-Kenya border. The pastoralist groups prefer their own indigenous peace-making and resource-sharing system. The long-existing Gadaa peacemaking system promoted resource-sharing or mutual utilisation of pasture and water in the community. Environmental pressures have increased mobility and led to changes in livelihood, livelihood diversification and the use of climate change adaptation strategies supported by governments, civil society organisations, and intergovernmental organisations. The community also used an indigenous weather forecasting system for drought preparedness and risk reduction. But the indigenous forecasting system sometimes fails to predict drought correctly. The continuing impacts of climate change on community livelihoods threaten the socio-economic lives of the community. The interconnected problem of climate change, drought, and conflict endangers food, hunger, instability, security, health, and adolescent physical and mental well-being. The frequent drought weakens livestock assets, degrades rangelands, and reduces household resilience; communities become more vulnerable to hunger, instability, and conflict violence across borders. The present situation calls for strengthening the indigenous Gadaa peace-making system and integrating it with modern peace-building strategies, and combining indigenous weather forecasting with modern forecasting technology. The governments should also provide scientifically tested climate change and livelihood adaptation strategies. Working to reduce the rising stress because of the climate change-drought-conflict-poverty trap can lead to psychological trauma, displacement, and loss of adolescent socio-cultural connection and well-being. All stakeholders' action for the overall well-being of the study area community is an urgent issue that needs multi-sectoral intervention, connection, and contribution to reduce the threats.

Keywords: pastoralism, climate change, drought stress, conflict resolution, mobility, resilience

Quality of tuberculosis care in conflict-affected health facilities in northern Ethiopia: a cross-sectional assessment using the Donabedian framework

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Background: The conflict in Northern Ethiopia since 2020 severely disrupted healthcare, with more than 70% of health facilities destroyed or damaged, yet evidence on post-conflict TB care quality remains limited. This study assessed Tuberculosis care quality in conflict-affected Northern Ethiopian facilities using the Donabedian Structure-Process-Outcome framework. **Methods:** A facility-based cross-sectional study was conducted in nine purposively selected public hospitals from Tigray and Amhara regions. Data were collected from TB patients and healthcare professionals using facility performance monitoring checklists and patient exit interviews. Data were analysed using SPSS version 26, employing descriptive statistics. **Results:** A total of 378 TB patients and 378 healthcare professionals across nine conflict-affected facilities were assessed. Overall TB care quality was good (87.3%), demonstrating healthcare system resilience despite severe conflict disruption. Structural quality averaged 82.1%, with service accessibility critically weak (22.2% meeting standards). Process quality was 83.6%, revealing high health professional knowledge (92.6%) but moderate patient knowledge (79.9%), with critical gaps in symptom recognition (42.1%). Patient satisfaction was good (77.8%) but varied widely (54.6-100%). Outcome quality was excellent (96.1%), though sputum microscopy documentation was weak (68.7%). Conflict impact was devastating: 66.7-83.3% of Tigray facilities were non-functional during hostilities, 59.5% of patients could not access medications, and 100% reported safety fears accessing healthcare.- **Conclusions:** TB care quality is being recovered to good levels post-conflict, demonstrating healthcare system resilience. However, critical gaps in accessibility, patient knowledge, and sputum documentation require urgent intervention.

Keywords: tuberculosis, quality of care, armed conflict, Donabedian model, health care delivery

Evaluating a cash transfer programme for internally displaced people in Tigray: adapting methodologies for treatment crossover in fragile humanitarian settings

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Background: Laterite conducted a rapid evaluation to assess a programme providing temporary financial relief to internally displaced people (IDPs) in Tigray to promote resilience following war in the region. The intervention featured monthly cash transfers (CT) and larger one-time recovery grants (RGs) for a subset of households. Adolescents in Tigray are especially vulnerable to adverse health, education, and livelihoods impacts following displacement. Purpose: Laterite evaluated the programme's impact while addressing methodological challenges caused by substantial crossover between treatment arms, as implementation realities shifted to meet urgent household needs. **Methods:** The original randomised design compared 1,000 treatment households (500 CT- only; 500 RG and CT) with 500 control households. Because actual programme exposure diverged from baseline randomisation, we estimated impacts based on treatment received at endline using a difference-in-differences (DiD) approach. We compared compliers and switchers within each arm to assess reclassification bias, including key baseline covariates in all DiD models to adjust for imbalances. **Key findings:** Baseline characteristics between compliers and switchers were mostly balanced, except for income and employment differences in the recovery grant group ($p < 0.1$). Adjusting for these non-collinear covariates accounted for factors that may have influenced both treatment switching behaviour and socioeconomic outcomes. **Conclusions and Implications:** Impact evaluations in fragile humanitarian settings often demand methodological adaptation when implementation diverges from initial designs. Aligning analytical methods with programme delivery yields credible insights for improving future cash transfer programmes for IDPs, including adolescents, to promote resilience in conflict-affected areas.

Keywords: internally displaced people, humanitarian crisis, cash transfer, impact evaluation, Ethiopia

Advancing adolescent rights, protection, and resilience amid humanitarian and climate crises in Ethiopia's Somali region

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Adolescents in Ethiopia's Somali Region face interconnected humanitarian, climatic, social, and economic pressures that threaten their rights, protection, education, health, and future opportunities. Recurrent drought, displacement, poverty, interrupted schooling, limited access to adolescent-responsive services, harmful gender norms, disability-related barriers, and weak participation mechanisms place girls, adolescents with disabilities, refugees, internally displaced adolescents, and those from low-income rural households at particular risk. This paper examines how rights-based, community-led approaches can strengthen adolescent resilience in displacement-affected and underserved settings. Drawing on programme experience, community engagement, stakeholder consultations, and lessons from initiatives implemented by East Action Organization in Jigjiga and surrounding areas, the paper identifies practical strategies that connect protection, education continuity, psychosocial support, health and sexual and reproductive health information, life-skills development, digital inclusion, and meaningful adolescent participation. It argues that resilience should not be treated only as an individual ability to cope with crisis. Sustainable resilience also requires accountable institutions, inclusive services, safe referral systems, supportive families and communities, and opportunities for adolescents to influence decisions affecting their lives. The analysis highlights the importance of coordinated action among government institutions, schools, health facilities, civil-society organisations, universities, development partners, community leaders, parents, and adolescent-led groups. The paper concludes that adolescent rights and resilience should be integrated across humanitarian response, climate adaptation, education, protection, health, and local development systems. It recommends investment in adolescent-led solutions, accessible and gender-responsive services, stronger referral pathways, school continuity for crisis-affected learners, and locally grounded evidence to guide policy and practice.

Keywords: adolescent rights, resilience, humanitarian crisis, climate change, displacement, protection, Somali Region, Ethiopia

Climate change as a risk multiplier: gendered vulnerability to child marriage, FGM[1] and teenage pregnancy in the Somali Region of Ethiopia

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The Somali Region of Ethiopia is highly vulnerable to recurrent droughts, floods, displacement, and livelihood insecurity. These shocks interact with poverty, gender inequalities, and entrenched social norms, intensifying adolescent girls' vulnerability to the intersecting risks of child marriage, FGM, and teenage pregnancy. This study examined how climate change acts as a risk multiplier, shaping adolescents' gendered vulnerabilities to child marriage, FGM, and teenage pregnancy among adolescent girls, and identified contextually appropriate approaches to reduce their vulnerability, contribute to their resilience and enhance their future. A qualitative study was conducted in the pastoral and agro-pastoral communities of Adadle and Gode Woredas[6]. Data were collected from 230 participants in two phases[7] during 2025 using in- depth-interviews, focus group discussions, case studies, and participatory methods[8] with adolescents, caregivers, service providers, and key community and institutional actors. Drought was the predominant stressor, while flooding produced more localised disruptions. Drought intensified poverty through reduced water and pasture availability, livestock losses, food insecurity, livelihood disruption, and school interruption, increasing pressures toward child marriage. Child marriage was a major pathway to teenage pregnancy, reinforced by expectations of early childbearing and limited access to SRH services. FGM remained near-universal and closely tied to associated with social acceptance and girls' marriageability, with climate shocks primarily influencing its timing. Displacement and migration further heightened girls' exposure to protection risks. Climate-related shocks primarily function as risk multipliers, intensifying existing gendered vulnerabilities rather than independently causing harmful practices. Protecting adolescents' rights and well-being requires integrated climate adaptation, education, livelihood support, SRH and gender-transformative interventions tailored to pastoralist and agro-pastoralist contexts.

Keywords: climate-change, gendered vulnerability, child-marriage, FGM, teenage pregnancy

[Note] Part of a research report on 'The impact of climate change on child marriage, FGM, and teenage pregnancy in Oromia and Somali Regions of Ethiopia' submitted to UNICEF ESARO and UNICEF Ethiopia by Gillian Mann, Guday Emirie and Bewunetu Zewude on behalf of Child Frontiers, June 2026

What forms does climate resilience take among Ethiopian youth, and what earlier-life factors shape them?

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Background: Climate-related shocks affect the households in which young people grow up. Climate resilience may be a matter of degree- more or less resilient- or of distinct patterns, where young people differ in the kind of climate stress they experience, not only its amount. Which better describes Ethiopian youth is an open empirical question. **Purpose:** This work-in-progress asks what forms climate stress takes among Ethiopian youth, and which earlier-life factors are associated with them. **Methods:** Using GAGE longitudinal cohort data, we draw on the Round 5 Climate Resilience Module, which captures four dimensions: water insecurity, climate worry, coping behaviours, and climate anxiety. We first examine whether these dimensions are closely related, reflecting a single underlying resilience, or capture distinct aspects of climate experience that do not always occur together. If distinct, latent profile/class analysis will identify subgroups, and we will examine how earlier-round measures (e.g., poverty, education, displacement) relate to subgroup membership. **Key Findings** (in progress): Analysis is underway. We will determine whether the four dimensions reflect a single resilience measure or distinct profiles and examine which earlier-life factors are associated with them. **Conclusions:** Identifying which young people are most vulnerable, and what earlier-life circumstances shaped that vulnerability, may help direct support before climate stress compounds existing disadvantage.

Keywords: climate resilience, adolescence, Ethiopia, life-course

Climate-induced disasters and adolescent resilience: a rights-based framework for recovery and climate adaptation in Gofa zone, South Ethiopia region

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Background: Climate-induced disasters increasingly threaten adolescents' rights, well-being, and development, yet evidence on how rights-based approaches shape resilience in disaster-affected settings remains limited. Following the catastrophic July 2024 landslides in Gofa Zone, Southern Ethiopia, this study explores how climate shocks affect adolescent resilience and examines pathways for strengthening rights-based climate adaptation and disaster recovery. **Objective:** To examine the impacts of climate-induced disasters on adolescent resilience and rights in Gofa Zone and explore how individual, community, and institutional capacities influence recovery and adaptive capacity through a human rights-based framework. **Methods:** A qualitative multiple-case study was conducted in climate-affected communities of Gofa Zone. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews with adolescents, caregivers, community leaders, and humanitarian actors. Data were analysed thematically using the Social-Ecological Model of Resilience and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) as guiding analytical frameworks. **Results:** The findings reveal that climate-induced disasters create interconnected and cumulative threats to adolescent rights, affecting education continuity, psychosocial well-being, protection, household livelihoods, and access to essential services. Resilience was shaped not only by adolescents' individual coping abilities but also by the availability of supportive family environments, community networks, adolescent participation, and responsive institutional systems. However, weak institutional coordination and limited integration of adolescent rights within Ethiopia's climate adaptation, disaster risk reduction, and recovery systems constrained long-term resilience building. **Conclusions and Recommendations:** The Gofa zone experience demonstrates that adolescent resilience is a critical outcome of rights-based climate governance and cannot be achieved through emergency response alone. Ethiopia should integrate adolescent rights and participation into climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction policies.. An evidence-informed Rights-Based Adolescent Climate Resilience Framework is proposed as a policy model to guide adolescent-centred climate adaptation and recovery in Ethiopia and other climate-vulnerable low- and middle-income countries.

Keywords: adolescent resilience, climate change, human rights, climate justice, disaster recovery, child rights, climate adaptation, disaster risk reduction, Ethiopia; Gofa Zone, Sustainable Development Goals

Resilience is not enough: forging the rights-resilience nexus for adolescents in climate change and humanitarian crises

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Climate change and humanitarian crises are escalating at an unprecedented rate, disproportionately affecting over one billion adolescents worldwide. Aged 10 to 19 years and navigating critical developmental transitions, these adolescents face compounded vulnerabilities that threaten their survival, well-being, rights, and future prospects. Resilience has become a dominant paradigm in climate and humanitarian programming, yet the assumption that adolescents can simply adapt to systemic crises is insufficient and unjust. This paper argues that resilience without rights is mere survival, and rights without resilience are hollow promises. Drawing on a systematic desk review of 85 peer-reviewed articles, UN agency reports, humanitarian evaluations, and policy documents from 15 countries, this study critically examines the impacts of climate change and humanitarian crises on adolescent resilience and rights. Thematic analysis, from climate-vulnerable and humanitarian settings, reveals three critical realities. First, climate and humanitarian crises are profoundly disrupting adolescent health, education, protection, and participation, with marginalised groups bearing the heaviest burdens. Second, adolescent mental health services are virtually absent in most crisis settings, reaching fewer than one percent of those in need. Third, successful interventions integrating psychosocial support, legal protection, education, livelihoods, and participation demonstrate that resilience and rights are mutually reinforcing. Informed by ecological resilience theory, the capability approach, and humanitarian protection frameworks, this paper proposes the rights–resilience nexus framework for climate and humanitarian settings—an integrated approach built on four interdependent pillars: protective legal and policy environments, youth-led participatory governance, adaptive social protection and humanitarian assistance, and climate-resilient and crisis-responsive digital ecosystems. The framework challenges siloed responses and advances a paradigm shift from asking adolescents to cope with crises to equipping them to claim their rights, participate in decision-making, and transform the systems that shape their lives. Governments, humanitarian agencies, and development partners must act collectively to integrate adolescent rights into climate policy and humanitarian response, allocate dedicated funding, establish adolescent-led accountability mechanisms, and invest in adolescent participation as a core principle. The evidence is clear; the time to act is now.

Keywords: adolescents, resilience, climate change, humanitarian crises