

TALKING ABOUT YOUNG LIVES

VIDEO BACKGROUND NOTES

The following notes provide some additional information, suggested discussion questions and a glossary for use with the video *Talking about Young Lives*. This video shows an interview with Pati, a Young Lives researcher. Pati discusses the types of data collected by Young Lives, and how the data is collected and shared with other organisations and members of the public.

What is Young Lives?

- Young Lives is an international *multidisciplinary study* which aims to improve people's understanding of the effects of poverty on children's lives. It also provides evidence to help *policy makers* to make better and more effective plans to improve the lives of children and their families.

What types of data are collected?

- For over 15 years, researchers have followed the lives of nearly 12,000 children in four *low and middle income* countries: Ethiopia, India, Peru and Viet Nam.
- The study has two *cohorts* or groups of children in each country. The younger group of children were one year old when the data collection started in 2002 and children in the older *cohort* were eight years old. So far these children have been visited and interviewed five times. Each visit is called a round of data collection.

The children were randomly selected from 20 communities in each country. These communities are called *sentinel sites*. These *sentinel sites* were specifically chosen to represent the poorer areas in each of the four countries. This is because Young Lives was set up to specifically research the effect of poverty on children's lives. The communities were also selected to represent a variety of geographical locations, with families from different ethnic groups and people who earn money in different ways.

Questions to think about:

- *Why do you think that the researchers interviewed thousands of children rather than just a few?*
- *What do you think is the total number of children aged 0 to 14 in each of these four countries? (Ethiopia: 41 million, India: 380 million, Peru: 9 million and Viet Nam: 92 million. World Bank Open Data, 2015: data.worldbank.org/, answers rounded to the nearest million). Even though Young Lives interviewed thousands of children, the sample size is still relatively small compared to the total number of children in each country.*
- *Do you think all children in these four countries have similar lifestyles to those involved in the Young Lives project? In each of the four countries there are also richer children (usually living in larger towns or cities) who have lifestyles similar to those of many young people in the UK.*

- Young Lives collects lots of different types of data about the children, their families and their communities. Examples of the data collected about the children and their families include:
 - Who is in their family and how they are related.
 - Health and nutrition; for example, diet, height and weight, as well as details of any illnesses or diseases that they might have had.
 - Education history; for example, whether the children go to school (or used to in the past) and whether their parents did.
 - How the children spend a typical day.
 - Whether the children and/or other people in their family work and if so, what they do.
 - How the children feel about their lives; for example, whether or not they think they have a good life.
 - Hopes for the future; for example, what jobs the children would like to have and if/when they would like to get married and/or have children.



Image info: Measuring height in Viet Nam.
Photo credit: © Young Lives

Questions to think about:

- *Why do you think this data might be collected?*
- *Who do you think might use this data?*

How is the Young Lives data collected?

- Young Lives works with partner organisations in each of the countries to collect the data. Every three or four years, teams of *field workers* travel to the communities where the children and their families live. First, they check whether or not the families are still happy to be part of Young Lives and to be interviewed. Some of the *field workers* have been with Young Lives since the start of the project and so know the families well. This means that the families are more likely to continue to want to be involved because they trust the *field workers* and Young Lives.

How have the ways of collecting data changed since Young Lives began in 2000?

- The way of collecting data has changed quite a lot during the project. Data for the first two rounds was collected using paper-based questionnaires. Once these questionnaires were completed, the data then had to be entered into an electronic database.
- After the first two data collection rounds, the Young Lives researchers thought about how they could collect the data electronically, rather than by completing the paper-based questionnaires. They started to explore the use of *Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing* or *CAPI*. With *CAPI* the researchers were able to visit the communities with the questionnaire loaded onto an electronic device such as a tablet or laptop. This meant that the responses could be entered electronically and that the data was ready to be checked, analysed and used immediately.



Image info: Using paper-based questionnaires in Ethiopia.

Photo credit: © Young Lives



Image info: Using a laptop to collect data in India.

Photo credit: © Young Lives

Questions to think about:

- *What do you think might be the advantages and disadvantages of using paper-based questionnaires to collect data?* For example, using paper-based questionnaires may increase the risk of error and the time taken to process the data. However, it could be less intrusive for interviewees and more practical in areas with limited or no access to electricity.
- *What do you think might be the advantages and disadvantages of using a tablet or laptop to collect data electronically?* For example, the use of *CAPI* may increase data accuracy and the speed and ease at which data can be processed. However, it may be off-putting for some interviewees as well as being expensive. It also relies on researchers having the necessary skills to use the new technology and software.

How is the Young Lives data shared with others and how is it used?

- Once the data has been collected, it is first checked and cleaned to identify and correct (or remove) any incomplete, incorrect, inaccurate or irrelevant data records. The data is then *anonymised*. This means that none of the data is linked to the actual names of specific people or communities. This is done to protect the identities of the people interviewed.
- The Young Lives data is then sent to the [UK Data Service](https://www.ukdataservice.ac.uk/) where any researcher, policy maker, or anyone interested in working with the data can access it and download it for free. The data is used by researchers and policy makers working to understand children's lives and how to improve the lives of children growing up in poverty.

Questions to think about:

- *Why do you think the data is anonymised? Why do you think it's important that the people involved can't be identified?* For example, to protect the children from outside interest and prevent individuals from being identified and possibly singled out in any way.
- *How do you think this data could be used to improve the lives of children growing up in poverty?* For example, this data can help governments and organisations to decide which areas, such as health or education, to spend more money on.

Glossary

- **Anonymised**
This means to remove any information that could lead to a particular individual or community being identified.
- **CAPI**
CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing) is an interviewing technique in which the interviewee (person being interviewed) or interviewer uses a computer.
- **Cohort**
A cohort is a group of people with a shared or common characteristic.
- **Field workers**
The Young Lives field workers are the people going out into the communities to collect the data.
- **Geographic, ethnic and livelihood diversity**
This refers to a variety of geographical locations, families from different ethnic groups and people who earn money in different ways.
- **Labour market**
The labour market is the supply of people in a particular country or area who are able and willing to work.
- **Legacy**
This means that the Young Lives data will make a difference to the lives of children living in poverty and be important for a long time.
- **Low and middle income countries**
Countries can be sorted into different groups (low, middle and high) depending on the average income per person living there. This is calculated by adding up the total amount of money being made in a country over the year and then dividing this by the number of people in the country. There are huge differences between the incomes of countries. The UK is a high income country.
- **Multidisciplinary study**
This means that Young Lives is a study combining different topics or areas of research.
- **Policy maker**
A policy maker is a person responsible for or involved in making policies (plans or ideas of what to do in particular situations).
- **Refusal rate**
The refusal rate is the percentage of families who refuse to take part in Young Lives and be interviewed.
- **Sentinel Site**
A sentinel site is a community from which in-depth data is collected and analysed to inform programmes and policies affecting a larger geographic area.

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