The Status of NEET in Ethiopia

A Quantitative Analysis of Youth Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) (15 – 24 years old)

Country Report

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Acknowledgements

The author thanks Robert Dalais for math calculations, Liz Ebersohn for research, graph content, layout and edits, Jess Qvist for proofreading, Isabella Schmidt of the UN Women East and Southern Africa Regional Office, as well as the UN Women Research and Data Section for support and technical guidance, and the ILO Department of Statistics for input on data definitional issues and survey methodology.

The author would also like to thank the following UN Women staff members (in alphabetical order) who have provided inputs and comments during the internal review process: Antra Bhatt, Cecilia Tinonin, Ghida Ismail, Ginette Azcona, Mehjabeen Alarakhia and Simon Nissling.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ALMP	Active labour market policies
CSA	Central Statistics Agency of Ethiopia
ESS	Ethiopia Socioeconomic Survey 2018/19
ESA	Eastern and Southern Africa
GDP	Gross domestic product
ILO	International Labour Organisation
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LMIC	Low to middle income country
NEET	Not in employment, education or training
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SDG	Sustainable development goals
SSA	Sub Saharan Africa
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UN DESA	United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UN Population Division	United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UN Women ESA-RO	UN Women Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

1 INTRODUCTION

Neither good quality education nor productive employment is universally available to the world's yout. Reducing the number of young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) is captured as Target 8.6 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN DESA 2021). The ILO, in their Global Employment Trends for Youth 2020 estimate that:

> *"One-fifth of young people currently have NEET status, which means they are neither gaining experience in the labour market, nor receiving an income from work, nor enhancing their education and skills. Clearly, their full potential is not being realized, though many may be contributing to the economy through unpaid work, which is particularly true of young women"* (ILO 2020a).

Data analysed for this report from the Ethiopia Socioeconomic Survey (ESES) 2019/20 shows that 32% of women between the age of 15 and 19; and 68% of women between the age of 20 and 24 are not in employment, education or training (NEET). Increased school enrolment of young women between 15 and 19 has meant that they are only slightly more likely than young men to be NEET – 32% and 29% respectively. However, data from the ESES 2019/20 shows that young women between the ages of 20 and 24 in Ethiopia are more likely than men to become married without furthering their education or entering the labour market. Young men in this age group are less likely to be NEET (47%) due to continued enrolment in education or finding employment.

Young women in East and Southern Africa are disproportionally affected by NEET status. Leaving school early, marriage, assisting with subsistence farming, unpaid domestic work, taking care of family members and fewer opportunities to take up work which may be seen as inappropriate or unsafe for young women, all play a role in the NEET status of young women. NEET status is also more likely to become a permanent state for young women. The NEET rate in many developing countries has declined very little for young women between the ages of 25 and 34 years ten years later (ILO 2020a).

In Ethiopia, economic growth, development efforts, declining poverty rates and shifts in gender norms over the past two decades were slowly improving the overall outlook for young women. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic threatens to roll back these gains. The COVID-19 pandemic and associated worldwide economic decline has affected the entire East and Southern African region with job losses and increases in poverty – especially in the urban centres. Schools and educational institutions were closed for extended periods. Development initiatives, healthcare services and nutrition levels have

all declined since 2020 (UN Women 2020). Young adults whose place in the labour market is often informal, temporary and tenuous at best have seen greater job and income losses than their parents. Increased numbers of young adults are likely to be lost to the education system. Young women are more vulnerable to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Interrupted education, economic and food insecurity, disruptions in services, unplanned pregnancy, all increase the risk of early marriage (UNICEF and UNFPA 2021).

To ensure that recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic also reduces the number of youth NEET, especially young women, the UN Women Eastern and Southern African Regional Office has commissioned a quantitative research report on the status of youth NEET in East and Southern African countries – nine of which had recently conducted a household or labour force survey and have data available for analysis. This report constitutes the analysis into the status and determinants of NEET in Ethiopia.

This report is structured to describe Ethiopia's economic and social development context, including the status of women. It then presents a descriptive and a statistical analysis of the data from the Ethiopia Socioeconomic Survey 2019/20. The statistical analysis will look at the determinants of NEET by developing a logistical regression model that estimates the probability of being NEET. The last section of the report will reflect on the findings of the determinants of NEET in the light of country policy on gender equity and youth development.

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE ETHIOPIAN CONTEXT

The country context plays a determining role in the prospects for young people's ability to attain good quality education and enter the labour market. Economic development, demographic growth and societal attitudes towards young women affect whether the youth can contribute to the overall development and poverty reduction efforts which have been eroded by the impact of COVID-19.

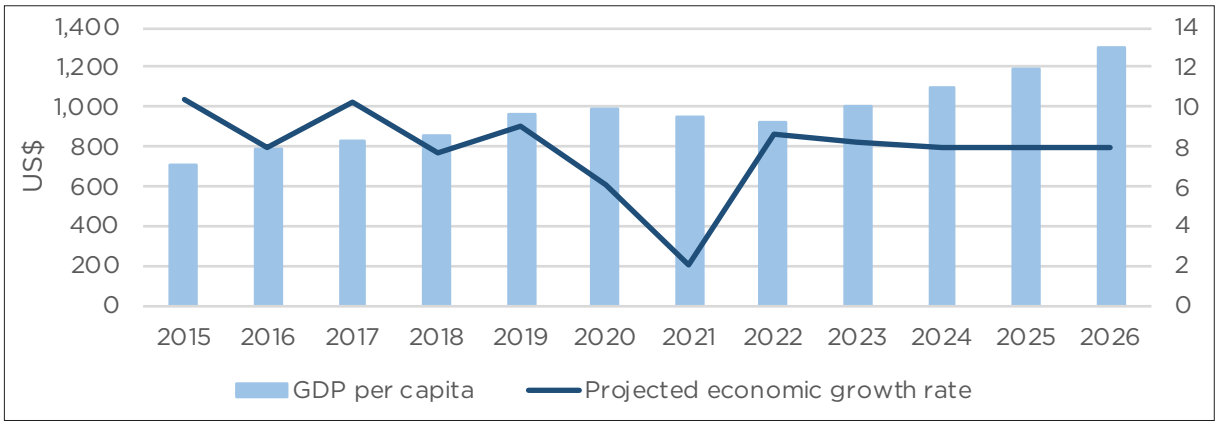
This section gives a description of Ethiopia's economic growth prospects in terms of GDP growth and GDP per capita; it presents the projected growth of the youth population; the impact of poverty on young women and the gender dimensions of development in Ethiopia. Issues related to education and employment are considered as central to the NEET analysis and are therefore discussed in more detail in Section 3.

2.1 Economic growth projections

> *"One of the most consistent, indeed universal, findings in the literature on the causes of youth labour market outcomes is that aggregate demand is a fundamental determinant of the state of the youth labour market. It is firmly established that what happens to young people as they enter the labour market is very much dependent on what is going on in the economy as a whole"* (O'Higgins 2017).

Ethiopia is projected to have mixed prospects for growth and development in the next five years. Before the Covid-19 pandemic Ethiopia had sustained an economic growth rate of between 8% and 10% for the past decade. However, due to both the pandemic and heightened civil conflict GDP growth is projected to have dropped to 2% in 2021. Per capita GDP is projected to decline from UD$1000 (51,000.0 BIR) in 2020 to USD$850.00 (43,350.0 BIR) in 2022 (World Bank, 2021). A slower recovery is projected for Ethiopia than other countries in the sub-region and a number of challenges face the country in the coming years. While government has devoted a high share of its budget to pro-poor programmes and large infrastructure programmes, sustained investment will be needed if these are to result in permanent employment creation. Ethiopia is currently facing the worst locust invasion in decades which threatens the livelihoods of millions of Ethiopians. This, coupled with ongoing civil conflict in parts of the country, could see poverty levels rising for the most vulnerable sectors of society (AfDB 2021).

Figure 1: GDP per capita and GDP growth rates projected to 2026



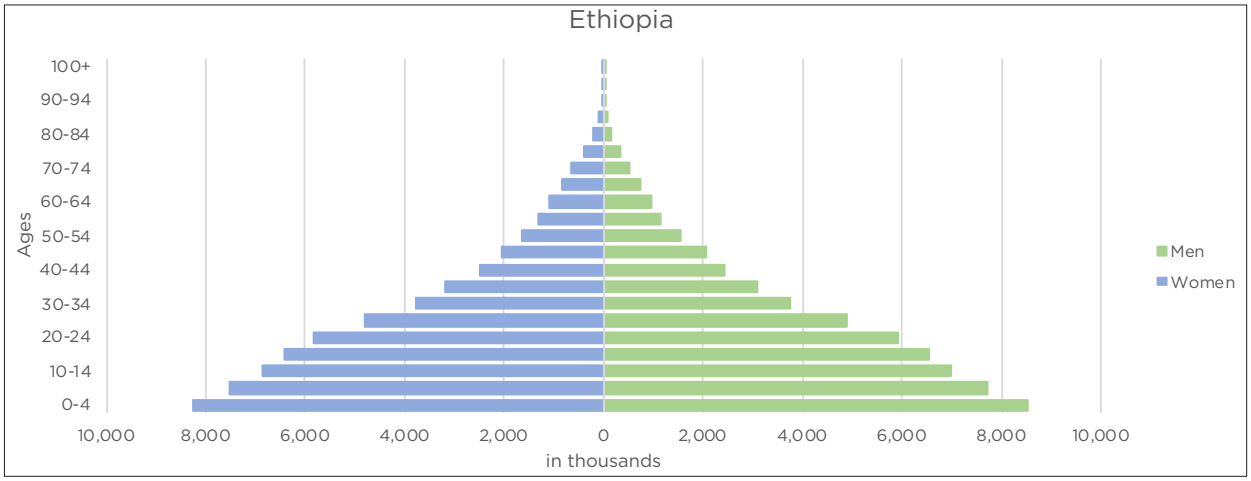
Source: IMF World Economic Outlook Database (2021).

2.2 Demographic profile by sex and age

Intrinsic to wealth is population growth. This impacts at a macro level in per capita terms, in the labour absorption capacity and in the state's ability to provide services. At a family level without sufficient employment the number of dependents increases and the potential for a spiral of vulnerabilities increases. Those countries whose population growth rate has slowed down "are much better placed to achieve economic take-off and middle-income status" (Bryceson 2018).

Ethiopia's population growth rates have stabilised sufficiently to see a levelling-off of youth 15 to 24 years old as a percentage of the total population (UN Population Division 2019). However, the overall population growth rate is still 2.5% per year and the youth population is expected to increase by 4 million in the next 10 years. It is not likely that Ethiopia will be in a position to realise the demographic dividend until the youth population begins to decrease as a percentage of the total population. (UN Population Division 2019). The population pyramid for Ethiopia in Figure 2 shows the size of the population by 5 year age groups.

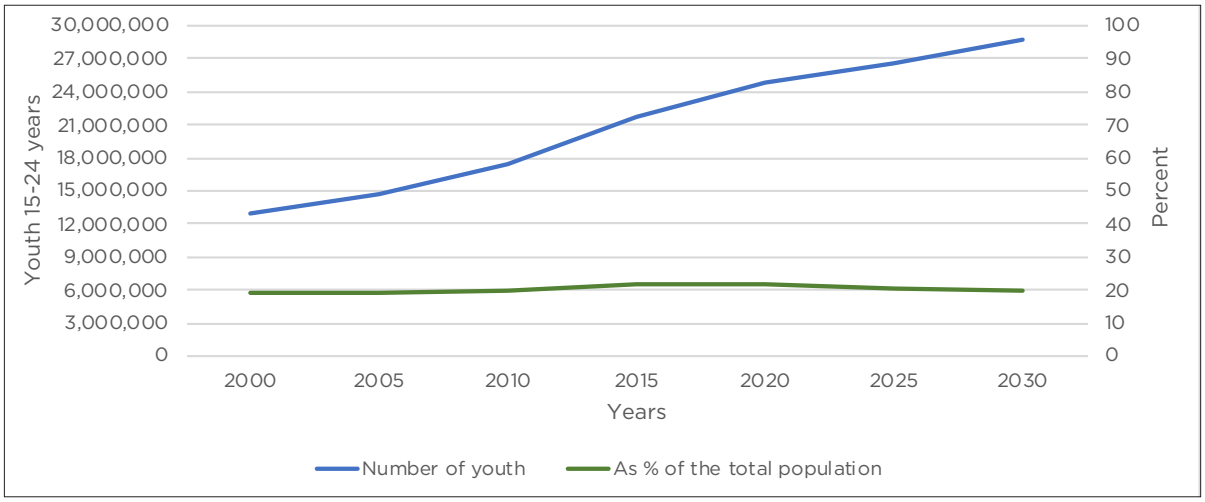
Figure 2: Ethiopia population pyramid



Source: Data from the UN Population Division 2019.

Figure 3 shows the number of youth aged 15 to 24 and the number of youth as a percentage of the total population from 2000 projected to 2030 (UN Population Division 2019).

Figure 3: Number of youth (aged 15-24) and youth as a percentage of the total population from 1990 projected to 2030



Source: Data from the UN Population Division 2019, author's calculations.

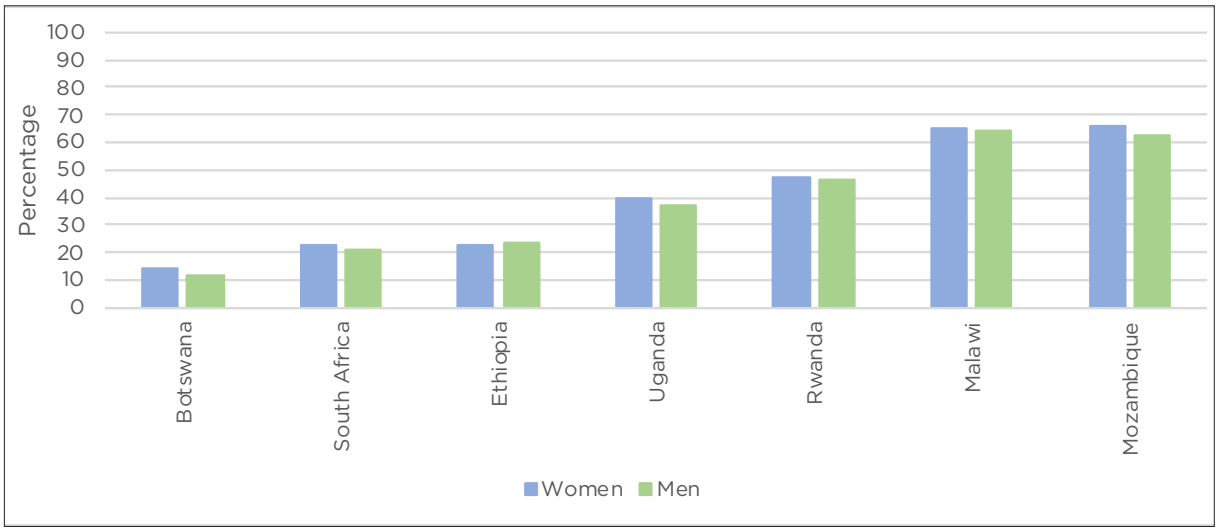
2.3 Poverty profile by sex and age

Extreme poverty in Ethiopia affects 23% of Ethiopia's population with slightly more men and boys living in poverty than women and girls (UN Women et. al. 2020). While extreme poverty levels have dropped over the past 20 years from 45% to 23% nationally, rural Ethiopians are more likely to be impoverished than urban. Rural areas are dependent on agriculture both for employment and for family consumption. Climate shocks and ongoing civil strife impact negatively on all aspects of rural development. Currently a three year drought as well as the worst locust infestation since the 1980s is causing famine conditions across the entire horn of Africa and rural poverty is likely to increase in Ethiopia (World Bank. 2020).

Youth poverty rates are slightly lower than those of the population as a whole with 17% of young women living in extreme poverty and 20% of young men living in extreme poverty UN Women et. al. (2020). While more young men than women are employed, the difference in poverty is possibly due to young men leaving the household in search of work and often being employed in temporary and poorly paid jobs – especially in the rural areas where casual labour is dependent on seasonal agriculture (World Bank 2020).

Figure 4 and Figure 5 show the percentage of the total population living in extreme poverty in 7 of the countries in included in this study. Ethiopia has the third lowest percentage of its total population and the second lowest percentage of its youth population living in poverty.

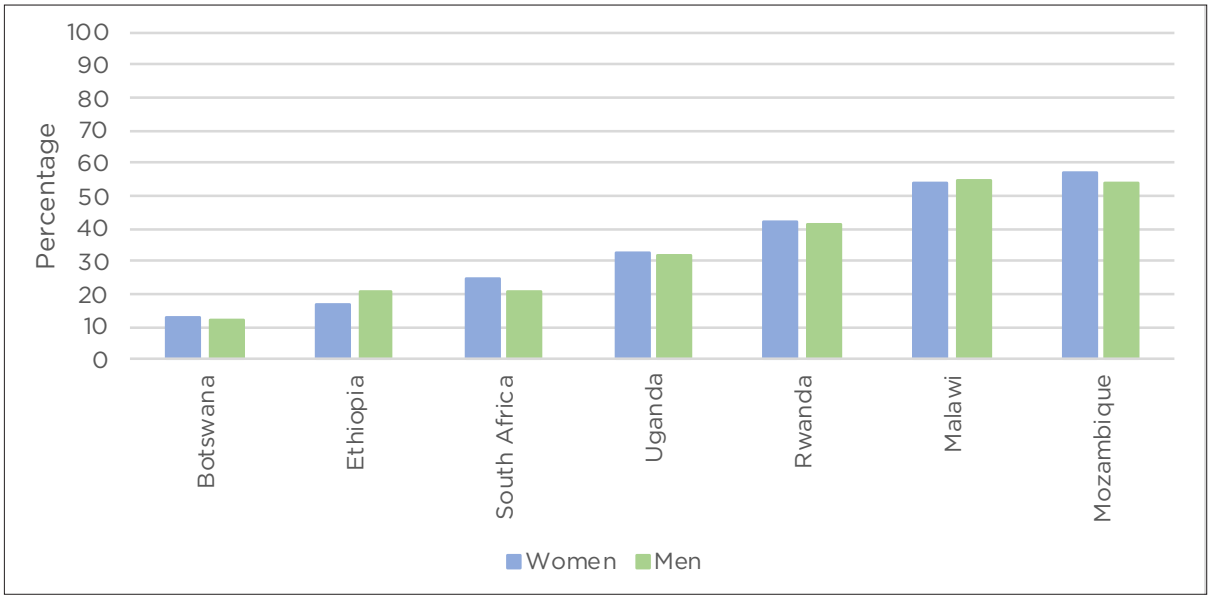
Figure 4: Percentage of population living in extreme poverty in selected East and Southern African countries by sex



Notes: Extreme poverty is below US$ 1.90 per person per day in 2011 parity purchasing power (PPP); Data not available for Kenya and Namibia.

Source: UN Women et. al. (2020)

Figure 5: Percentage of youth population (aged 15-24) living in extreme poverty by sex



Notes: Extreme poverty is below US$ 1.90 per person per day in 2011 parity purchasing power (PPP); Data not available for Kenya and Namibia.

Source: UN Women et. al. (2020)

2.4 Gender norms and women's equality in Ethiopia

> *"Ethiopia has made numerous efforts to counter such a highly gendered cultural, social, and political landscape through the introduction and adoption of policies geared towards achieving gender equality and the promotion of women's rights… The past decades have seen not only positive policy and institutional frameworks with respect to gender and development but also measurable outcomes on women's economic empowerment, educational advancement, elimination of violence and harmful practices, participation in politics and public leadership, and improved health outcomes"* (Geset and Zeleke 2020)

Government has been proactive in social services that affect women's wellbeing such as the Productive Safety Net Programme which targets women and includes improved maternity care and child nutrition. However there are still gaps in human capital development that affect women specifically. These include the need to improve the *quality* of education and training; expand women's reproductive health care coverage which in 2019 only had 48% of women giving birth in a health care facility; and increasing access to modern contraception which is extremely varied by region. Fifty per cent of women use modern contraception methods in Amhara province and Addis Ababa while only 3% of women in Somali and 13% of women in Afar use modern contraception methods (Ethiopian Public Health Institute 2021).

Given the size of the rural population and the agricultural sector which accounts for 36% of Ethiopia's GDP, it is important to understand the extent to which gender norms continue to impact negatively on women's access to employment in the agricultural sector. Agriculture is traditionally male dominated and despite changes in legislation allowing women to own land they seldom have access to the resources needed to purchase it (IDRC 2020). Women's participation in family agricultural work that generates an income is also low with women having less access to land and agricultural inputs than men (Rodgers and Akram-Lodhi 2015). Data from the Ethiopia Socioeconomic Survey 2018/19 analysed for this report finds that even in unpaid family farming young women are less likely than young men to work in agriculture which has the potential for future employment possibilities as the agricultural sector grows.

Estimates of the number of women headed households in Ethiopia are around 30%; and the gap in agricultural productivity between women and men headed households ranges between 30% in northern Ethiopia and 65% in southern Ethiopia (Gezimu Gebre et. al. 2021). These households are more vulnerable to food insecurity and poverty which in turn impacts on young women's continued enrolment in education and their vulnerability to early marriage and childbirth (UNICEF and UNFPA 2021).

3 ANALYSIS OF THE ESS 2018/19 SURVEY: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

The Ethiopia Socioeconomic Survey (ESS) 2018/19 was conducted by the Central Statistics Agency of Ethiopia (CSA) as part of the Living Standards Measurement Study co-ordinated by the World Bank (CSA and World Bank 2020). 6 894 households were sampled which included 29 503 individuals of all ages. This country report looks at the profile of youth in the survey between the ages of 15 and 24 who live in the households surveyed and were present at the time of the survey.

> *"Youth NEET are a highly diverse group and reasons for being NEET vary. There are many reasons why a young person may leave school and not actively be seeking a job. They may face particular obstacles; have other demands on their time such as assisting in family own use farm or enterprise production; they may be disabled, and/or there may simply be (or perceived to be) no suitable jobs available"* (ILO 2020b).

The relative number of youth NEET in a country is affected by how many 15-24 year-olds are able to access education or employment. To understand the drivers of NEET, it is also important to look at the prospects for youth in both of these areas. This section first gives the definition of NEET and employment as well as an explanation of the difference in the NEET rates that arise depending on the definition of employment that is used. The section also has an overview of youth NEET, in education, by highest education level, employed by type of employment and engaged in unpaid family farming.

3.1 Definition of NEET and employment

Across East and Southern Africa the NEET rates are affected by the precise definition of employment captured in the various household survey instruments – which may differ slightly by survey and by country. Many countries are still in the process of updating household and labour force surveys to reflect the definition of employment as revised at the ILO 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) in 2013 (ILO 2013).

The major revision in the definition of employment in the 19th ICLS is that it *excludes* "own use production work comprising production of goods and services for *own final use*" (ILO 2013). In East and Southern Africa NEET rates using the definition of employment from the 19th ICLS standards are substantially higher than the NEET rates using the 13th ICLS (1982) definition of employment (ILO 2013). The removal of "production of goods and services for *own final use*" from the definition of employment effectively increases the numbers of NEET youth – especially in largely subsistence agricultural countries where young people assist with unpaid family agricultural production for own use. There may also be more youth currently engaged

in family production for own use that now become defined as unemployed – hence also potentially raising the youth unemployment rate.

The process of updating household and labour force surveys to reflect the 19th ICLS standards takes time and care needs to be taken with the design of the survey questionnaires so they reflect the standards as defined. Measuring the differences in work for pay or profit (and therefore employed) versus work for production of goods and services for own final use (and therefore not employed) can be particularly sensitive to questionnaire design – especially amongst groups in less formal employment such as youth and women. In a review by the ILO and the World Bank in Sri Lanka more detailed and carefully structured survey questions find differences in the numbers and hours of paid employment – including increased numbers of women engaged in small enterprise activities. They also find greater hours worked than previously reported in unpaid family work. (Discenza 2021).

A detailed review of employment data in household surveys by the World Bank finds that household and labour force surveys that do not have questions designed to elicit the revised definition of employment tend to collect data that overstates employment in both youth and women (Desiere and Costa 2019). Klasen (2018) points out that there is likely to be a discontinuity in comparisons of NEET before and after countries implement changes to the 2013 19th ICLS standards. In addition, countries are likely to have different time-scales for the implementation of the new standards. Care should be taken with both inter-country and in-country comparisons over time.

Definition of NEET

Youth not in employment, education or training is the indicator of the Sustainable Development Goal 8, Target 6: "By 2020 substantially reduce the proportion of youth aged 15-24 not in employment, education or training". According to UN DESA (2021) the youth NEET rate differs from the youth unemployment rate as it includes the discouraged work seeker category as well as those who are outside the labour force and not in education or training (ILO 2013).

The NEET rate is calculated as follows*:

$$\text{NEET rate (\%)} = \frac{\text{number of youth aged 15-24 in employment} + \text{number of youth aged 15-24 in education or training)}}{\text{total number of youth aged 15-24}} \times 100$$

It is important to note that the indicator is composed of two different sub-groups – unemployed youth (actively seeking work) not in education or training as well as youth outside the labour force (not actively seeking work) not in education or training. Unemployed youth who are in education and training who should not be counted as NEET.

**Education* is formal or non-formal education (institutionalised, intentional and planned by an education provider).

Employment is defined as all persons of working age who, during a short reference period (one week), were engaged in any activity to produce goods or provide services for pay or profit. This specifically excludes work in family agriculture or family enterprises for own consumption and it excludes unpaid domestic and care work.

Training is a non-academic learning activity through which a person acquires specific skills intended for vocational or technical jobs. (UN DESA 2021)

Implications of the 19th ICLS definition of the labour force for NEET rate calculations

This report uses the Ethiopia Socioeconomic Survey (ESS) 2018/19 for analysis of youth NEET. The published report on the Ethiopia Socioeconomic Survey does not explicitly mention whether it follows any ICLS protocol but it also does not publish total employment or NEET rates (CSA and World Bank 2020).

It must be noted that the Ethiopia Labour and Migration Survey 2021 (Ethiopia Statistics Service 2021) explicitly does not follow the 19th ICLS definition of employment and remains with the 13th ICLS definition of employment which includes work in family agriculture and enterprises for own use as employment. However, in order to use the same methodology and have as much inter country comparison in the 9 country reports as possible, this report will use the 19th ICLS definition of employment. Data is available in the labour section of the Ethiopia Socioeconomic Survey which distinguished whether family agriculture is for own use or for sale. It does not distinguish if work in family enterprises is for own use of sale but in all other East African countries in this study the involvement in agriculture for own use is a substantial proportion (up to 30%) of youth engagement.

In Ethiopia this distinction gives a substantial difference in employment rates and youth NEET rates between this analysis and previous publications. The employment rate in this report using the 19th ICLS standards 13% for all 15- to 19-year-olds and 22% for all 20- to 24-year-olds compared to the Labour and Migration Survey which shows a youth employment rate of 44% for 15- to 19-year-olds and 60% for 20- to 24-year-olds (Ethiopia Statistics Service 2021).

In terms of NEET rates, using the 19th ICLS standards, this report shows a 47% NEET rate for women and a 36% NEET rate for men; whereas the *Modelled Estimates* in the ILO Data Explorer show a 16% NEET rate for women and a 6% NEET rate for men (https://ilostat.ilo.org/). The following table gives a brief overview of the questions included in the ESS on employment and the difference in definitions as they would apply to either the labour and migration survey or the 19th ICLS used in this analysis.

3.2 Population of youth by sex and age (15-24)

Table 2 and Figure 6 show the number of youth represented in the survey when weighted by their sample weight. There are a total of 17.309 million young women and men between the ages of 15 and 24, of these 9.071 million are women and 8.237 million are men. It appears that there may be some coverage bias in the survey whereby fewer men in this age group are living in households. Table 3 shows the percentage and ratio of women to men in the survey. For the whole age-group the ratio is 1.10. However, the lower coverage affects the age group 20 to 24 more than 15 to 19. The ratio of women to men in the 15- to 19-year-old population is 1.02 and in the 20- to 24-year-old population is 1.24.

This coverage bias of young men is typical of many of the surveys analysed for this study and is also apparent in the Ethiopian Labour and Migration Survey (ESS 2021). The difference between the two is likely to be due to the greater number of young men who leave the household for education, employment or seeking employment and are living in hostels, at their places of work or sleeping rough and therefore not included in the household count.

Table 1: 19th ICLS standards for employment applicable in the Ethiopia Socioeconomic Survey 2018/19

Definitions	Ethiopia SES 2018/19 labour questions		Definition used the 2021 Labour and Migration Survey (13th ICLS 1982)	Definition used in this report (19th ICLS 2013)
Employed or not employed	s4q12	12. Has [NAME] worked for payment in last 7 days?	Employed	Employed
	s4q10	10. Has [NAME] engaged in casual/ part-time/temporary labour in last 7 days?	Employed	Employed
	s4q08	8. Has [NAME] worked on own account or in HH business enterprise in last 7 days?	Employed	Employed; however, • Does not differentiate between intended use of products • May overstate employment
	s4q05 s4q07	5. Has [NAME] done any agricultural work for HH in the last 7 days? 7. Intended use of products obtained from [NAME]'s agricultural work	Employed	• Differentiates between intended use of products • For sale – employed • Own use – not employed
	s4q17	17. Does [NAME] have an activity to return to?	Employed	Employed (as per definitions above)
	s4q04a	4. Total time [NAME] spent collecting firewood for use by HH yesterday	Employed	Not employed
Unemployed	s4q24	24. Has [NAME] do anything to find paid job or start business in last 4 weeks?	• All three need to be applied for narrow definition of unemployed • Ethiopia currently* defines unemployment more broadly as "want work" and "available"	• All three need to be applied for narrow definition of unemployed • This report shows both narrow and broad definitions
	s4q27	27. At present does [NAME] want to work?		
	s4q30	30. Could [NAME] start working within the next 2 weeks?		

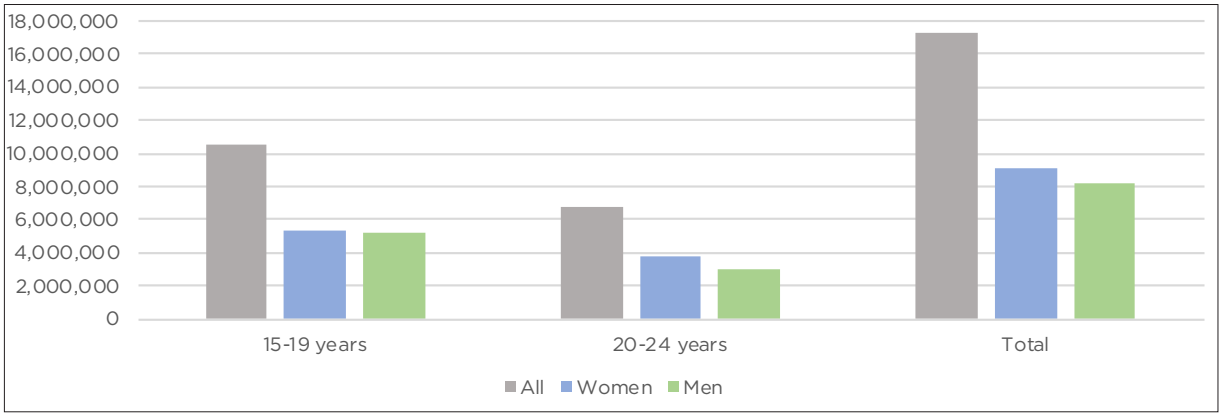
* Ethiopian Statistics Service (2021)

Table 2: Total number of youth included in the survey, by sex and age group

	Total	Women	Men
15-19 years	10 478 046	5 291 602	5 186 445
20-24 years	6 831 336	3 780 052	3 051 284
Total	17 309 382	9 071 653	8 237 729

Source: Ethiopia Socioeconomic Survey 2018/19. Author's calculations.

Figure 6: Population by sex and age group



Source: Ethiopia Socioeconomic Survey 2018/19. Author's calculations.

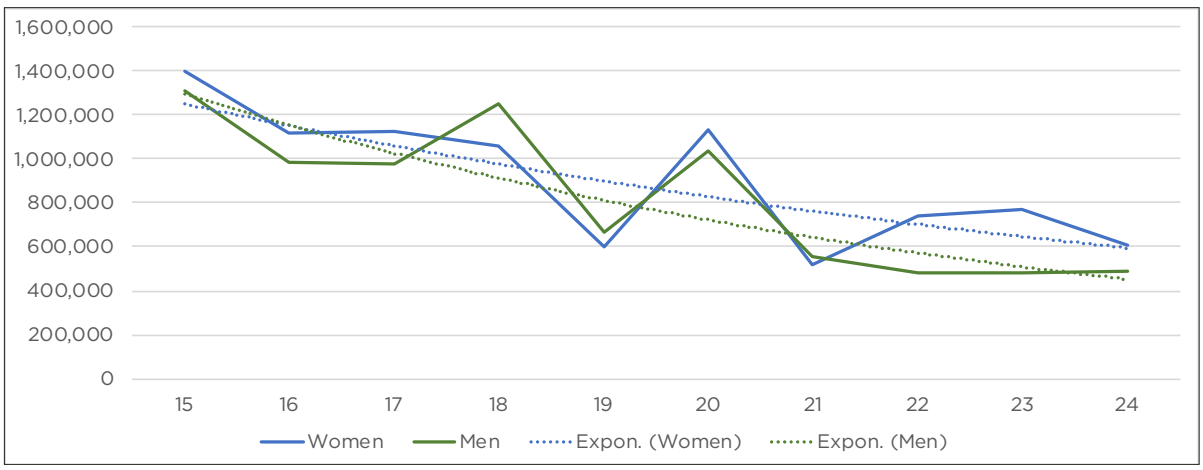
Table 3: Percentage and ratio of women to men, by age group

	Women (Per cent)	Men (Per cent)	Ratio of women to men
15-19 years	51	49	1,02
20-24 years	55	45	1,24
Total	52	48	1,10

Source: Ethiopia Socioeconomic Survey 2018/19. Author's calculations.

The survey data also shows evidence of age-heaping throughout the survey at ages 5, 10, 15, 20 etc. Figure 7 shows the population by year of age and sex between 15 and 24. In this age range there is also age-heaping around 18 years of age. The age-heaping does affect the analysis of the data but this will be commented on in the relevant sections.

Figure 7: Age-heaping at 15, 20 and 25: population for the age group 15-24, by sex

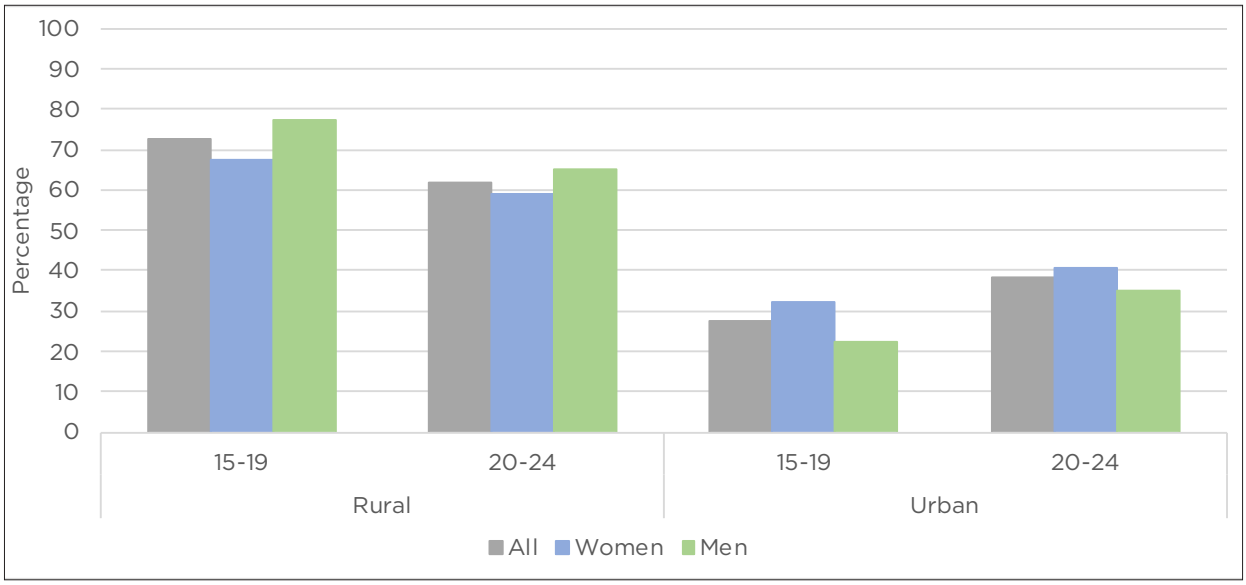


Source: Ethiopia Socioeconomic Survey 2018/19. Author's calculations.

In Ethiopia an estimated 79% of the total population reside in rural areas, however according to the Labour and Migration Survey (LMS) 2021 (ESS 2021) a slightly higher proportion of women (21%) than men (20%) live in urban areas. This is more marked in the younger age groups and both the LMS 2021 and the data analysed in the ESS for this report have the same trend. Figure 8 shows the percentage of young women and men by rural and urban residence. Of all women between 15 and 19 years old, 68% live in rural areas while 77% of men between 15 and 19 years old live in rural areas. In the 20- to 24-year-old age group 59% of women and 65% of men live in rural areas.

As mentioned above, the difference between the two is likely to be due to the greater number of young men who leave the household for education, employment or seeking employment and are living in hostels, at their places of work or sleeping rough and therefore not included in the household count.

Figure 8: Urban and rural youth as a percentage of the youth population, by sex and age group

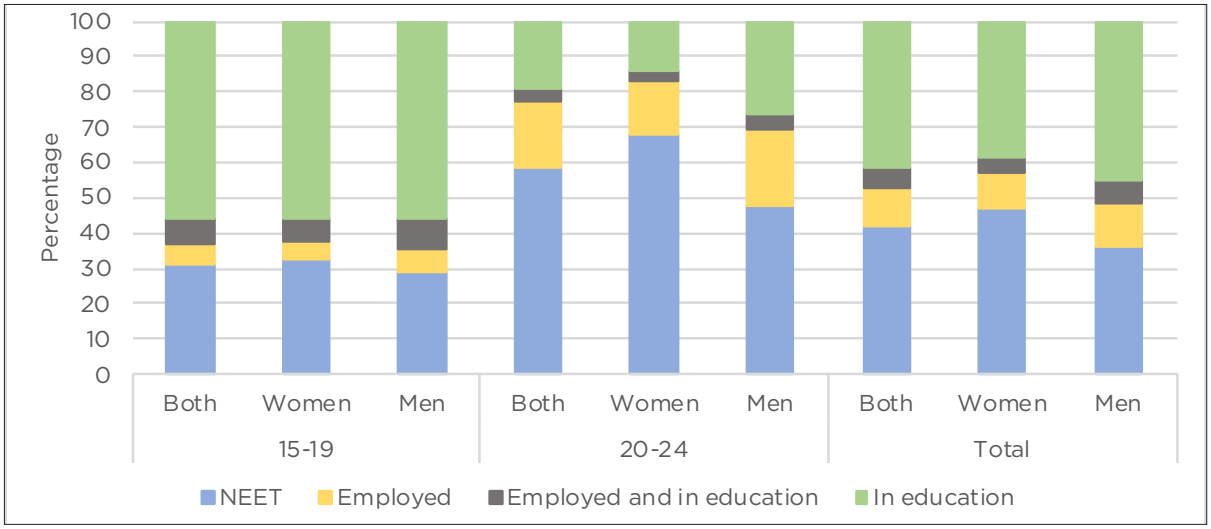


Source: Ethiopia Socioeconomic Survey 2018/19. Author's calculations.

3.3 Overview of youth by activity status

The data analysed for this report shows that the highest percentage of youth NEET in Ethiopia are women aged 20 to 24, 68% of whom are NEET. Young men in the 20- to 24-year-old age group are much less likely to be NEET and have a NEET rate of 47%. Of young women between the age of 15 and 19, 32% are NEET while 29% of young men this age are NEET. Figure 9 and Table 4 give the percentage of youth by activity status – NEET; employed; employed and in education; and in education only – by sex and age group.

Figure 9: Percentage of youth by activity status – NEET; employed; employed and in education; and in education only, by sex and age group



Source: Ethiopia Socioeconomic Survey 2018/19. Author's calculations.

Table 4: Percentage of youth by activity status – NEET; employed; employed and in education; and in education only, by sex and age group

	Age Group	Women Per cent	Men Per cent	Ratio of women to men
NEET	15-19	32	29	1.13
	20-24	68	47	1.77
	Total	47	36	1.44
Employed	15-19	6	6	0.88
	20-24	16	22	0.88
	Total	10	12	0.88
Employed and in education	15-19	6	8	0.75
	20-24	3	5	0.78
	Total	5	7	0.75
In education	15-19	56	56	1.02
	20-24	14	26	0.66
	Total	38	45	0.94

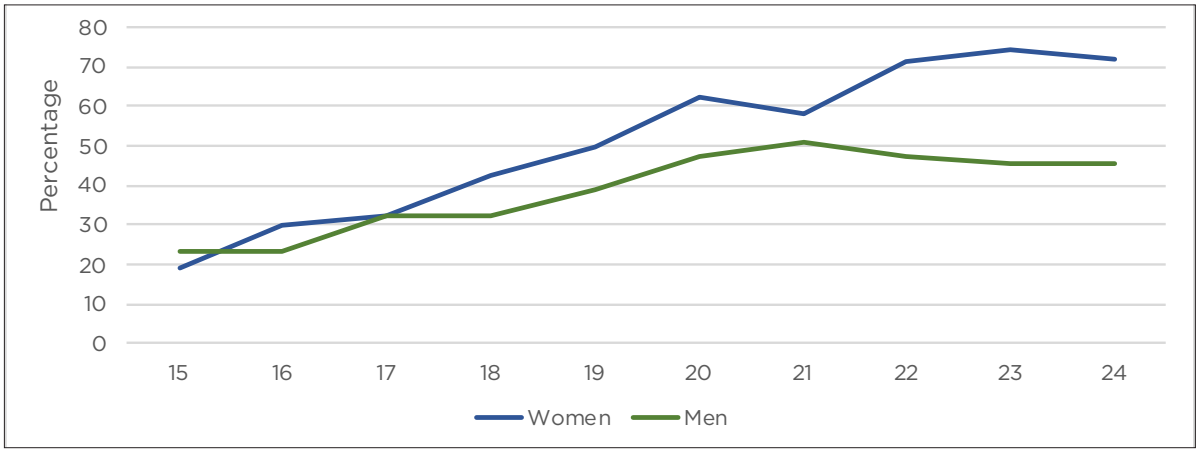
Source: Ethiopia Socioeconomic Survey 2018/19. Author's calculations.

3.4 Profile of NEET youth by sex

NEET status for both men and women increases with age, with the percentage of women NEET increasing from 19% at 15 years old to 72% at 24 years old. The percentage of men that are NEET increases from 22% at 15 years old to 45% at 24 years of age. The transition from school to work for youth is problematic for youth globally but the number of Ethiopian women entering the labour force after school appears to be particularly low (ILO 2020a). Figure 10 shows the percentage of youth NEET by sex and age in single years. The difference in percentage of women NEET between 20 and 21 is probably due to the age heaping[1] observed in the data.

1 Age heaping is a phenomenon that refers to the tendency of individuals to report their own and the age of others rounded to the nearest 0 or 5 for example reporting 25 instead of 24 or 26 or 20 instead of 18 or 22.

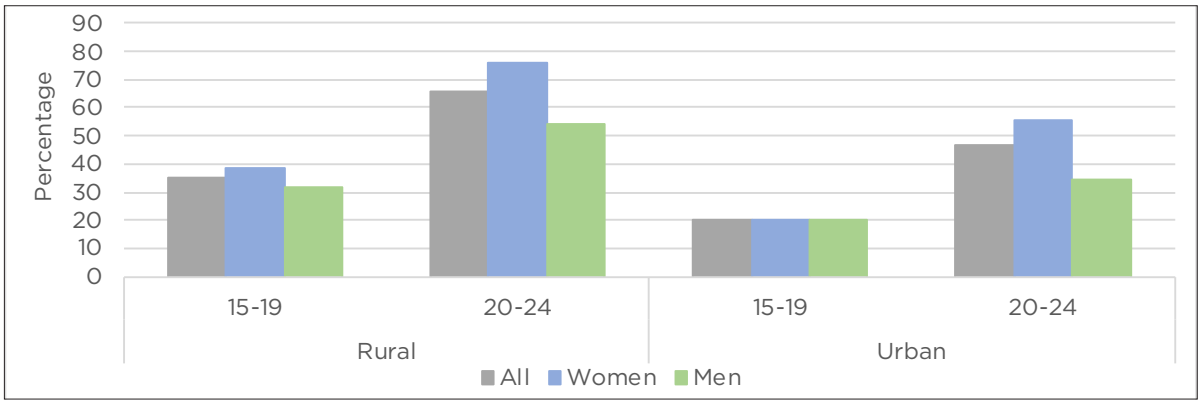
Figure 10: Percentage youth NEET (15 to 24) by sex and age in single years



Source: Ethiopia Socioeconomic Survey 2018/19. Author's calculations.

Figure 11 shows the percentage of NEET by urban and rural areas. Rural women between the ages of 15 and 19 have a higher NEET rate than men in this age group – 38% and 32% respectively. Both rural and urban women between the age of 20 and 24 have a NEET rate that is 20 percentage points higher than that of men. The NEET rate of rural women is 76% and of urban women is 55%.

Figure 11: Urban and Rural youth as a percentage of the youth NEET, by sex and age group



Source: Ethiopia Socioeconomic Survey 2018/19. Author's calculations.

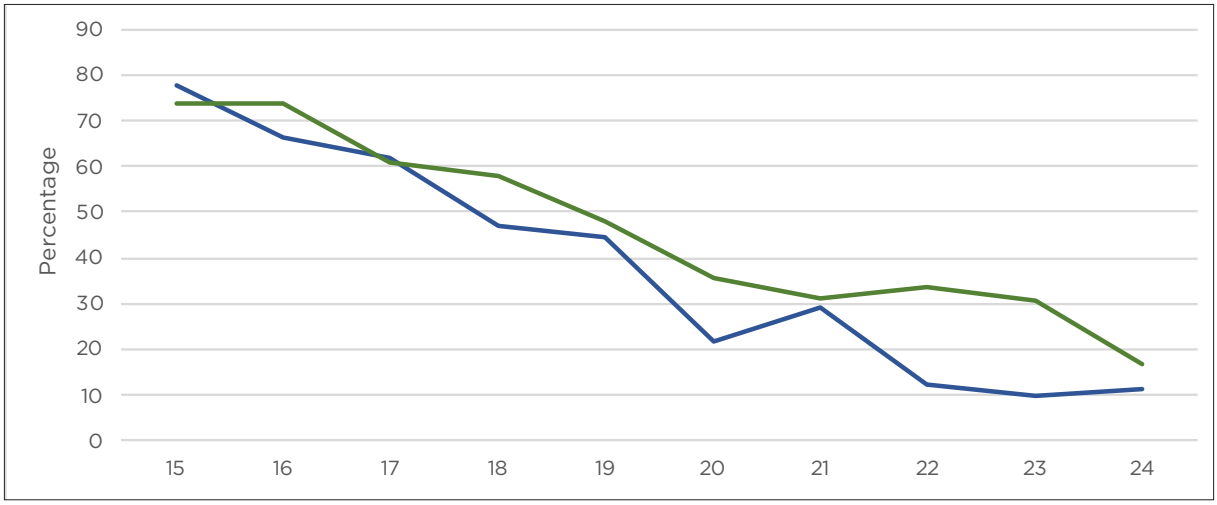
3.5 Education profile of youth

Increased access to primary and secondary education in Ethiopia by girls and young women has meant that in the age group 15 to 19 years old, the percentage of women enrolled is the same as young men at 56%. It should be noted that this percentage of young men enrolled in school may be affected by the undercount of young men in the survey and could possibly be lower than 56%. In comparison to other countries in this study where only between 2% and 3% of women and men aged 15 to 19 work while they are in education, Ethiopia has a fairly large percentage of youth working while attending an education institution – 6% of women and 8% of men.

Figure 12 shows the percentage of women and men enrolled in education by single age. The percentage enrolment in education is relatively equal for men and women until the age of 17 after which women's enrolment in education drops below that of men. 17% of women between 20 and 24 are enrolled in education and training (including those who are also

employed) and 31% of men are enrolled in education and training (including those who are also employed). As with the NEET rate, the difference between women's enrolment in education between 20 and 21 is probably due to age heaping at 20 years old.

Figure 12: Percentage of youth (aged 15-24) currently enrolled in education, by sex and age in single years



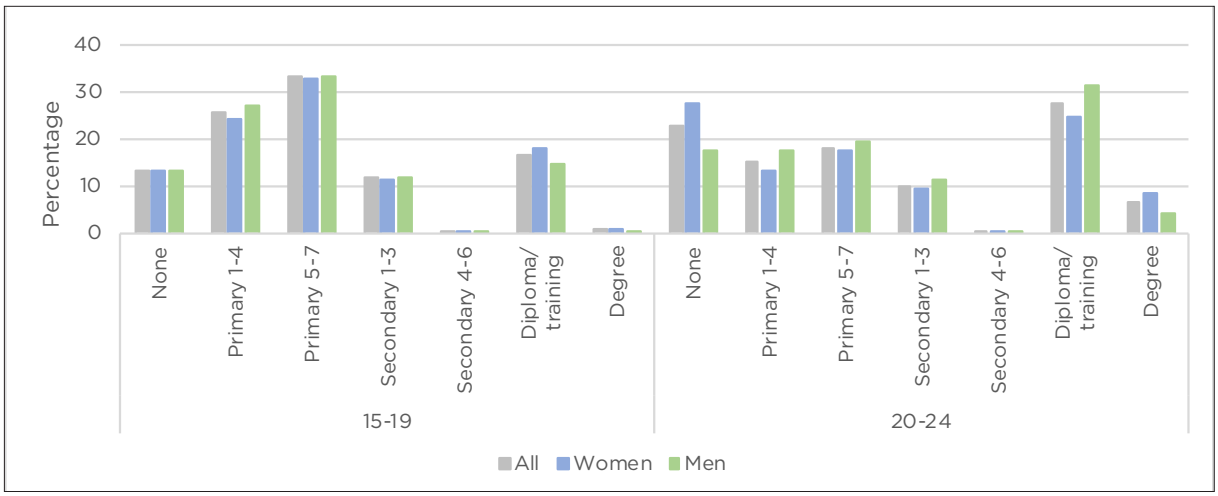
Source: Ethiopia Socioeconomic Survey 2018/19. Author's calculations.

Efforts to improve girls' and women's education attainment in Ethiopia have resulted in rapid reductions in the number of women who have never attended school. Figure 13 shows the percentage of youth by highest level of education attained. Thirteen per cent of the 15- to 19-year-olds in the ESS 2018/19 (both men and women) have had no education at all compared to 27% of women and 17% of men in the 20 to 24 age group. This is a remarkable achievement. By way of comparison Figure 14 shows the number of women and men between the age of 25 to 34 years of age by highest level of education attained. In the 25- to 29-year-old age group 44% women and 20% men have never attended school; and 67% women and 32% men between 30 and 35 years of age have never attended school.

Increasingly young women are accessing lower secondary school and post school diploma level education and training. With 11% of 15- to 19-year-old women reaching lower secondary and 18% reaching post school diploma level education and training. Both of these areas of education attainment should have continued growth as young women flow through from upper primary school. However, a major limitation on this growth will be the current difficulties in improving the quality of primary schooling which has grown faster than the availability of resources such as classrooms, teachers and materials (Tiruneh et. al. 2021).

Data on attainment of higher education in the survey needs to be treated with caution. The sample size of higher education students is too small to be significant and due to the undercount of 15 – 24 year old men in the survey it is not possible to accurately estimate the number of men attaining higher education. Unesco Institute of Statistics (UIS) data for Ethiopia cites that in 2015 only 35% of undergraduate students and 24% of post graduate students were women (UIS 2021).

Figure 13: Percentage of youth by highest level of education attained*, sex and age group



Note*: This is the level of education reached – not necessarily completed.

Primary school in Ethiopia includes grade 8. However, grade 8 has been included in Secondary 1-3 for comparison with other countries in the study.

Source: Ethiopia Socioeconomic Survey 2018/19. Author's calculations.

Table 5: Percentage of youth by highest level of education attained*, sex and age group

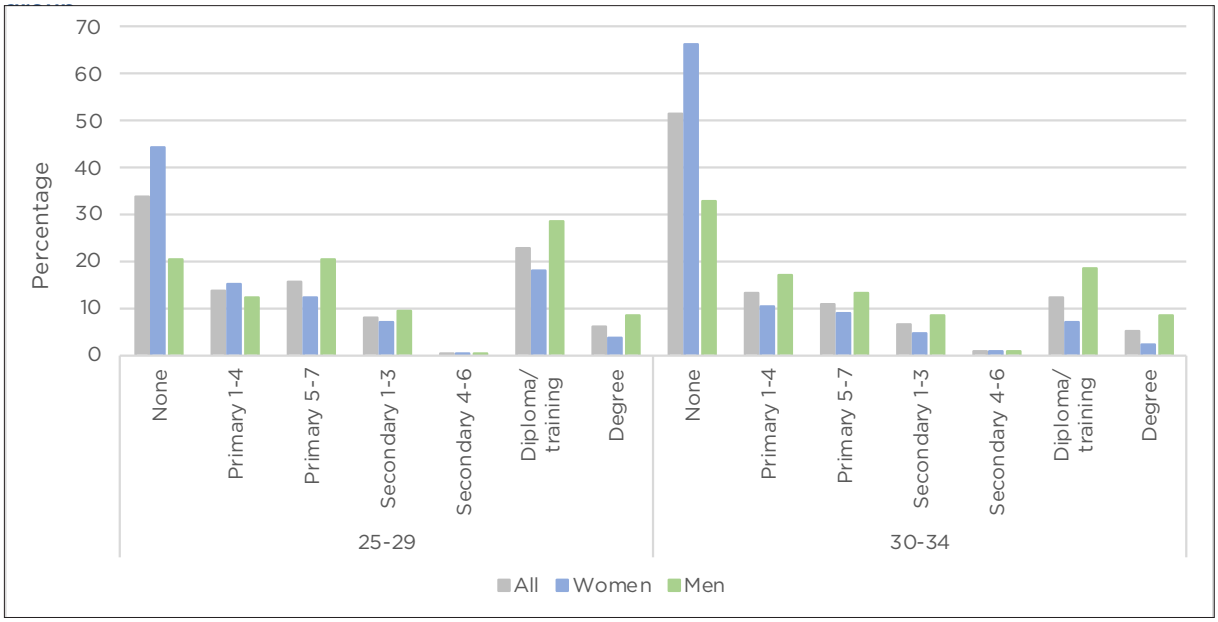
		Women Per cent	Men Per cent	Ratio of women to men
15-19	None	13	13	1,0
	Prim 1-4	24	27	0,9
	Prim 5-7	33	33	1,0
	Sec 1-3	11	12	1,0
	Sec 4-6	0	0	0,3
	Diploma/training	19	15	1,3
	Degree	0	0	2,6
20-24	None	27	17	2,0
	Prim 1-4	13	17	0,9
	Prim 5-7	17	19	1,1
	Sec 1-3	9	11	1,0
	Sec 4-6	0	0	1,5
	Diploma/training	29	33	1,1
	Degree	4	2	2,6

Note*: This is the level of education reached – not necessarily completed.

Primary school in Ethiopia includes grade 8. However, grade 8 has been included in Secondary 1-3 for comparison with other countries in the study.

Source: Ethiopia Socioeconomic Survey 2018/19. Author's calculations.

Figure 14: Percentage of 25- to 34-year-olds by highest level of education attained, sex and age



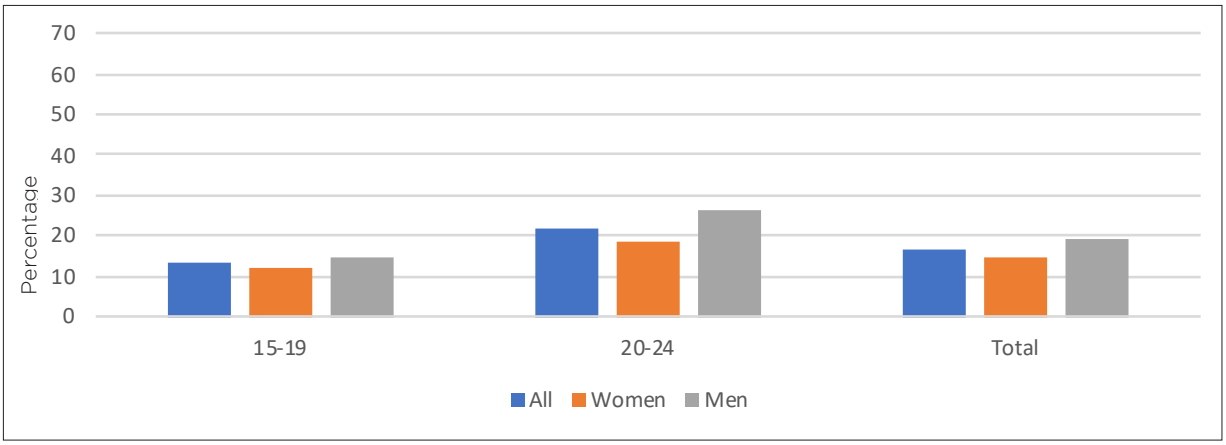
Source: Ethiopia Socioeconomic Survey 2018/19. Author's calculations.

Note: This is the level of education reached – not necessarily completed. Primary school in Ethiopia includes grade 8. However, grade 8 has been included in Secondary 1-3 for comparison with other countries in the study.

3.6 Employment profile of youth (including type of employment)

Levels of youth employment in Ethiopia are low. Figure 15 shows the percentage of youth employed by sex and age group. Including those employed and in education, 12% of women and 14% of men aged 15 to 19 are employed; and 19% of women and 27% of men aged 20 to 24 are employed.

Figure 15: Percentage of employed youth by sex and age group

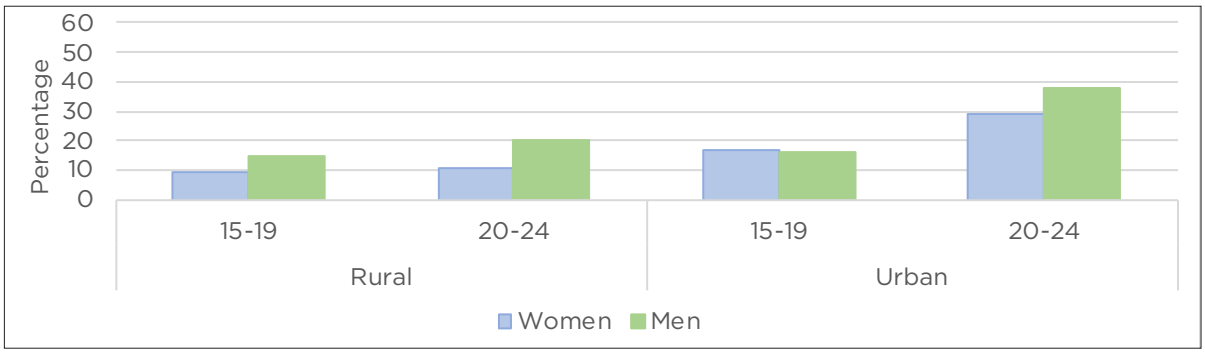


Source: Ethiopia Socioeconomic Survey 2018/19. Author's calculations.

Note: These percentages include youth employed only and those employed and in education.

Figure 16 shows the percentage of youth employed by urban and rural areas. Unlike most of the other countries in the study, Ethiopia has an extremely low percentage of youth employed in rural areas. Despite the relatively high percentage of the population living in the rural areas, there appears to be very little opportunity for employment of young people.

Figure 16: Urban and Rural youth as a percentage of the employed youth, by sex and age group

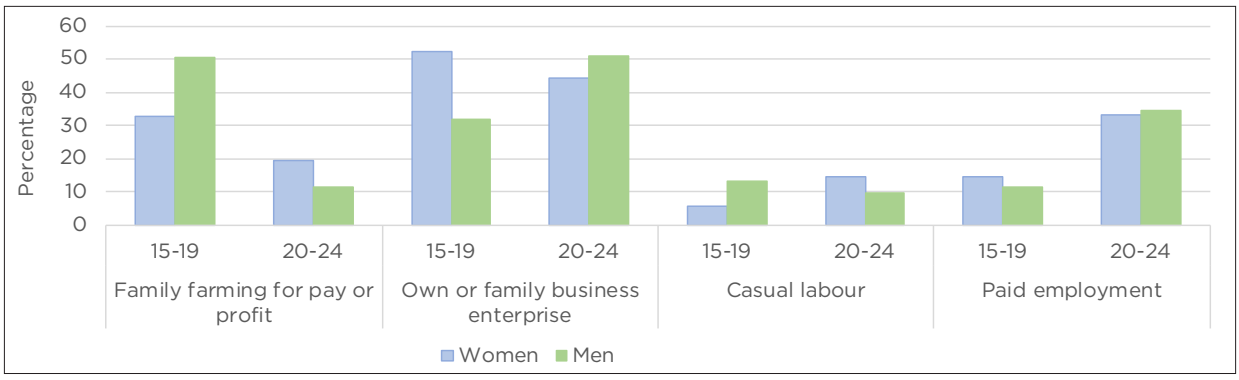


Source: Ethiopia Socioeconomic Survey 2018/19. Author's calculations.

The percentage of youth employed by type of employment is shown in Figure 17. The percentage of youth working in family farming for own use is shown in and Figure 18.

Both young women and men aged 20 to 24 who are employed, are more likely to have either paid employment or work in family business enterprise than in family farming for pay or profit. 45% of employed women and 51% of employed men aged 20 to 24 work in family business enterprise. 33% of employed 20- to 24-year-old women and 34% of employed 20- to 24-year-old men work in paid employment. However, young men between the age of 15 and 19 who are employed are the most likely to work in family farming for pay or profit (50%).

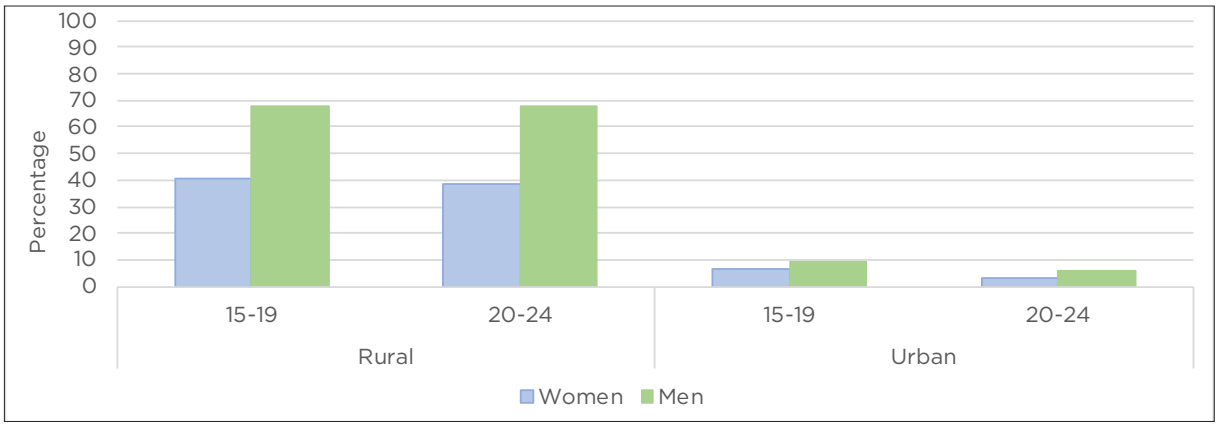
Figure 17: Percentage of employed youth by type of employment, sex and age group



Source: Ethiopia Socioeconomic Survey 2018/19. Author's calculations.

Young men between 15 and 24 are also more likely to be engaged in family farming for own use than young women. In both age groups approximately 40% of women and 70% of men in rural areas are engaged in family farming for own use (Figure 18).

Figure 18: Family farming for own use, by sex and age group

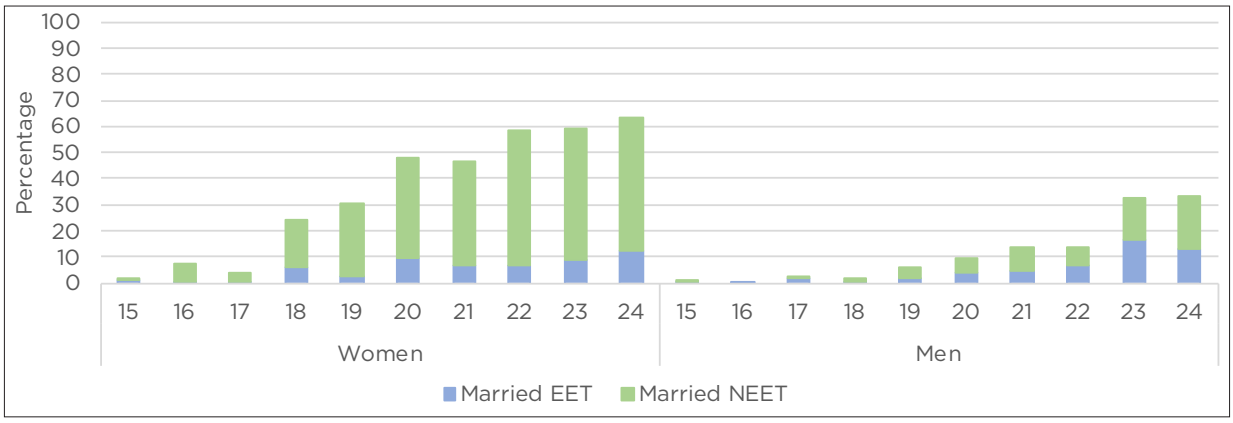


Source: Ethiopia Socioeconomic Survey 2018/19. Author's calculations.

3.7 Marriage and cohabiting

The ESES 2018/19 data analysed in this report shows that implementation of government policy and non-governmental advocacy efforts have largely succeeded in raising the age of adolescent marriage to 18 years of age. Less than 5% of women are married at 17 but there is a rapid escalation in marriage from 18 years old (24%) to 20 years old (48%).

Figure 19: Married or cohabiting NEET and EET youth as a percentage of youth (aged 15-24), by sex and age in single years



Source: Ethiopia Socioeconomic Survey 2018/19. Author's calculations.

4 DETERMINANTS OF YOUTH NEET

The descriptive data from the Ethiopia Socioeconomic Survey (ESS) 2018/19 shows the differences between young women and men in terms of their enrolment in education, employment status and NEET status. While younger women in the age group 15 to 19 are achieving parity in primary education attainment, they are not yet progressing to secondary and higher education or entering the labour market at the same rate as their male peers. Women between the ages of 20 and 24 have much higher rates of NEET (68%) compared to men in the same age group (47%). Only 19% of women in this age group are employed (including 3% employed and in education), compared to 27% of men (including 5% employed and in education).

In addition to these observations, it is important in identifying possible policy interventions to ascertain whether there are any particular factors in the Ethiopian context that are associated with the probability of being NEET. In previous research on the individual and household factors associated with the number of years of education attained it has been fairly widely ascertained that socioeconomic status, education levels of parents, availability of learning resources such as books and electricity, time spent on household chores, distance from school and nutritional status are amongst the most important (Bashir et. al. 2018, Karamperidou et. al. 2020 and Tiruneh et. al. 2021). Similar factors are associated with the probability of youth and women's employment (Klasen 2018 and O'Higgins 2017). For young women in particular, early marriage, childbirth and gender norms around the cost benefits of further years of education as well as gender norms around household roles and the suitability of certain employment for women, impacts on both education levels attained and employment (Comblon 2017 and Nieuwenhuis 2018).

In order to ascertain whether there is an association between these factors and the probability of being NEET a multivariate logistic regression model was constructed with NEET status as the dependent variable. Independent variables were tested based on research as mentioned above and the descriptive analysis of the data from the ESS 2018/19 which shows possible correlations between NEET and sex, age group, marriage, highest level of education attained, urban or rural residence and involvement in family farming for own use.

This section of the report is structured as follows: the first section gives the structure of the model and the method used in coding the variables for analysis is given; then the findings of the model are presented; and lastly the limitations of the model is explained. Those who do not need the statistical detail on the methodology may skip directly to section 4.2.

4.1 Structure of the model

A multivariate logistic regression is a widely used statistical method appropriate to the categorical nature of survey data. As well as the dependant variable (NEET status) being categorical, many of the independent variables in the survey data are categorical such as sex, married, highest level of education, urban/rural.

The logistic model is:

$$\log(\pi/(1-\pi))=\beta 0 + \beta 1X1 + \beta 2X2 + \beta 3X3 \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots$$

where $\Pr(Y=1)=\pi$

The model was run in *Stata* as a weighted sample of the survey set.

The dataset for the regression analysis was compiled for all 15 to 24 year olds from the ESS 2018/19 individual level data. Files from the following sections were used: Section 1 – Roster of individual demographic information; Section 2 – Education data; and Section 4 – Labour and time use data. Data was coded as noted in Table 6 which lists the variables used in the model.

Table 6: List of variables used in the logistic regression model and method used for compiling the coding

Variable	Type of variable and code used	Method used to compile codes
Dependent variable		
NEET status	Dummy variable 0 = not NEET 1 = NEET	Labour and time use data was used to establish employed or not; Education data used to establish in education or not.
Independent variables		
Sex	Dummy variable Male = 0 Female = 1	Data from individual roster
Age group (15-19)	Dummy variable 15 to 19 = 0 20 to 24 = 1	Data from individual roster. Age in years coded as age group
Married (No)	Dummy variable No = 0 Yes = 1	Data from individual roster
Sex of head of household	Dummy variable Male = 0 Female = 1	
Urban/rural (Rural)	Dummy variable Rural = 0 Urban = 1	Data from individual roster

Variable	Type of variable and code used	Method used to compile codes
Highest level of education (none)	Dummy variable with 8 categories None = 0 Prim 1-3 = 1 Prim 4-5 = 2 Sec 1-3 = 3 Sec 4-6 = 4 Training = 5 Higher Ed = 6 Adult literacy = 7	Data from the survey on the highest grade attained was coded into combined levels of lower and senior primary and secondary; training; higher education; and adult literacy.
Can read and write	Dummy variable No = 0 Yes = 1	Data from the Education data set
Number of employed adults in the household	Continuous variable	Summary data on number of employed adults living in the household
Number of dependent adults in the household	Continuous variable	Summary data on number of adults not in employment living in the household
Number of children under 18 in the household	Continuous variable	Summary data on number of children under the age of 18 living in the household
Number of children under 5 in the household	Continuous variable	Summary data on number of children under the age of 5 living in the household
Working in family agriculture for own use	Dummy variable No = 0 Yes = 1	Calculated from Labour and Time Use data set

There were substantial differences in the NEET rate observed in the descriptive data between the age groups and between women and men. This includes the number who are in education, employed, married and type of household they may live in. In order to establish whether the various factors impact differently on the NEET rate depending on age group and gender four separate models were run as follows:

- All 15- to 19-year-olds;
- Only 15- to 19-year-old women;
- All 20- to 24-year-olds;
- Only 20- to 24-year-old women

The results of the statistical models that were run separately for the two age groups and women only for each age group are in Table 7. Within each of the models, variables were tested while controlling for all the other variables.

4.2 Findings of the model

The odds ratios of the independent variables are presented in Table 7. The odds ratios measure the strength of the association of a variable with the probability of being NEET. An odds ratio greater than one indicates that the variable is associated with an increased probability of being NEET. The strength of the association will be the odds ratio times

one. For example, if a variable has an odds ratio of 2 it will be associated with twice the probability of being NEET. If the odds ratio is less than one it means that the variable has there is a decreased probability of being NEET. The associated value of the odds ratio is again times one. For example, the associated probability of being NEET is multiplied by 0.4 or, in other words, has a 60% lower probability of being NEET. An odds ratio of one (or close to one) means that there is little to no association between the variable and the probability of being NEET.

Marriage: This has the greatest association with the probability of being NEET. Married women between the age of 15 and 19 having a 9 times greater probability of being NEET than their unmarried counterparts. Between the ages of 20 and 24, married women are 4.6 times more likely to be NEET.

Education attainment: While increased levels of education attained are important in reducing NEET, it appears that being able to read and write further reduces the probability of being NEET in the 15 to 19 year age group. Women in this age group are 66% less likely to be NEET if they can read and write. This is probably indicative of the number of girls and young women accessing school but leaving early without being able to read and write.

Higher levels of education reduce the probability of being NEET for both women and men in the 20- to 24-year age group as seen in the regression model run for both sexes together. However, due to the small number of women who obtain senior secondary or higher education this variable is not statistically significant. Attaining post school training reduces the probability of being NEET for women in this age group by 87%.

Being able to read and write decreases the probability of being NEET for young men in this age group as does attending adult literacy courses. However, neither of these factors are statistically significant for young women.

Urban/rural residence: Living in urban areas decreases the probability of being NEET in the 15- to 19-year age group possibly due to increased access to school. However, living in urban areas increases the probability of being NEET in the 20- to 24-year age group. This factor has a greater impact on young men than women with a 39% increase in the probability of being NEET calculated in the model with women and men; while the result of the model run with women only is not statistically significant.

Engagement in family agriculture for own use: As shown in the descriptive data, more young men between the age of 15 and 19 work in unpaid family agriculture than any other group. The model run for both women and men aged 15 to 19 shows a 67% greater probability of being NEET. The model run with data for 15- to 19-year-old women only has a 12% increase in the probability of being NEET. The NEET status of young men between the age of 20 and 24 is not affected by family farming for no pay. In fact it is slightly reduced. It seems from the descriptive analysis that young men are more likely to be able to combine family farming for own use with other employment including family agriculture for profit.

Household structure: Somewhat counter-intuitively women headed households don't have much of an impact on youth NEET. There appears to be a small increase in the probability of being NEET in the 15- to 19-year-old youth but the results are not statistically significant. Again, counter intuitively women headed households appear to increase the probability of 20- to 24-year-old men being NEET and decrease the probability of 20- to 24-year-old women being NEET. This might be due to the higher percentage of young men who assist in unpaid family farming versus the greater number of young women who assist in the family

business enterprises. Both activities are equally important to family survival but work in a family business is classified as employment.

The number of children under 5 years old in the household is likely to increase the probability of young women being NEET, more so than young men. Women between 15 and 19 are 1.85 times more likely to be NEET than if there were no children under 5 in the household and women between 20 and 24 are 1.65 times more likely to be NEET if there are children under 5 in the household. It is not possible to know if this increase in NEET status for young women in the household is due to the role of childcare in general being allocated to younger women in the household as older women are more likely to find employment; or whether younger women who have given had their own children are more vulnerable to NEET status than older women who have had their own children.

Table 7: Results of the logistical regression models

		15 to 19 year-olds		20-24 year-olds	
		Women and men	Women only	Women and men	Women only
Number of observations (unweighted)		3 217	1 661	2 415	1 409
Population size (weighted)		10.430 million	5.257 million	6.831 million	3.775 million
Category (omitted variable in parenthesis	Variable	Odds Ratios			
Sex (men)	Women	1.09~		2.17***	
Married (No)	Married	9.28***	9.18***	4.32***	4.58***
Female head of household		1.12~	1.03~	1.20~	0.78~
Urban/rural (Rural)	Urban	0.90~	0.70~	1.39*	1.37~
Highest level of education (none)	Prim 1-3	0.30***	0.24***	0.79~	0.73~
	Prim 4-7	0.13***	0.14***	0.21***	0.23***
	Sec 1-3	0.33***	0.20***	0.41**	0.50~
	Sec 4-6	1.74~	~	0.35~	2.60~
	Training	0.33***	0.21***	0.18***	0.13***
	Higher Ed	0.06**	0.01***	0.50~	0.57~
	Adult literacy			0.01***	1.00
Can read and write (No)	Yes	0.24***	0.34***	0.93~	1.32~
Number of employed adults		0.61***	0.66***	0.34***	0.29***
Number of dependent adults		1.15***	1.25***	1.45***	1.33**
Number of children under 18		0.90**	0.80***	0.95~	0.89~
Number of children under 5		1.40***	1.85***	1.33**	1.64**
Unpaid family agriculture (No)	Yes	1.67***	1.12~	0.92~	0.93~
Constant		3.14***	4.04	1.20~	3.11

Note: Statistical significance is indicated as follows: * = p <.10; ** = p < .05; *** = p < .01; ~ = no statistical significance. Some coefficients with statistical significance of up to p < 0.3 where retained – these have no asterisk.

Source: Ethiopia Socioeconomic Survey 2018/19. Author's calculations.

4.3 Limitations of the model

One of the key limitations of the model is not being able to easily test the association between NEET and socioeconomic status. While a consumption aggregate is calculated from data in the ESS 2018/19 by the Ethiopian Central Statistical Agency and the World Bank (2021), this is not available for public use to determine socioeconomic status. While other indices could be constructed to use as a proxy for income or relative poverty this was not done for several reasons. Firstly, the time required for the construction of such an index was not included in the research brief which originally intended the reports to be orientated more towards a policy audience. Secondly, a relative poverty index was constructed from house type, water availability and frequency of food deprivation for three of the countries in the study – Malawi, Botswana and Uganda. Not only was there no impact on NEET status of this relative poverty index (nor any of the individual components) but it's inclusion in the model created collinearity to the extent that it weakened both the impact and the statistical significance of nearly *all* the other variables – but most especially highest education level attained. While there are certainly various statistical methods to correct for this – most notably by creating interaction terms, it was felt that the complexity of interpreting the interaction terms would be too complex for the policy reader. (See O'Higgins 2017 pp 179 to 197). In any case, while there is research that shows a relationship between number of years of school attained and socioeconomic status (Bashir et. al. 2018, Karamperidou et. al. 2020 and Tiruneh et. al. 2021), there is less direct evidence of a relationship between women's employment prospects and socioeconomic status (Klasen 2018). In conclusion, an index of socioeconomic status was not included in any of the country studies without necessarily first testing each country's data. This work will have to be the topic of further research.

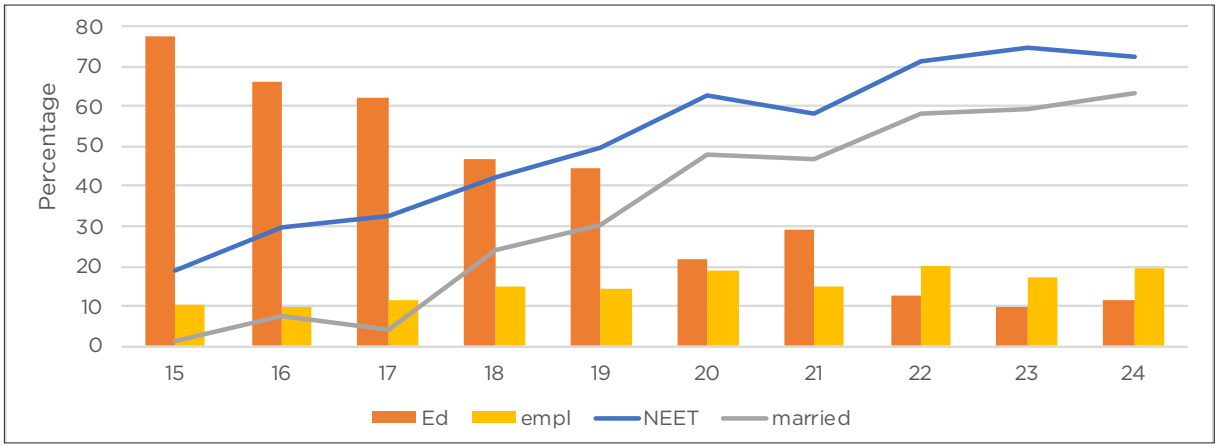
5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The two factors that have the greatest impact on the NEET status of young women in Ethiopia are marriage and the presence of children under the age of 5 in the household. The survey data shows that implementation of government policy and non-governmental advocacy efforts have largely succeeded in raising the age of adolescent marriage to 18 years but for those younger than 20 who are married their probability of being NEET increases by 9 times. Increased access to education has the greatest impact on reducing the NEET rate amongst young women. However, the quality of education received is important as women aged 15 to 19 who can read and write have a 66% lower probability of being NEET.

Figure 20 shows the percentage of women in education, employment, NEET and married by year of age. The relationship between these four factors is important – NEET rates start rising steadily from 20% at 15 years old and are over 70% from 22 to 24 years old. Marriage rates start rising at 18 years old (24%) and see their most rapid increase to 20 years old with 49% of women aged 20 married. The rate of employment reaches 18% at the age of 20 and does not increase (on average) over the next 4 years.

Retention in education, training options and increasing employment opportunities for young women who are currently leaving school at 15, 16 and 17 years of age are urgent targets if the number of 18 and 19 year olds getting married and becoming adolescent mothers is to be reduced.

Figure 20: Percentage of women in education, employed, NEET and married by single age



Source: Ethiopia Socioeconomic Survey 2018/19. Author's calculations.

In policy terms continued provision of and access to good quality education and training is a priority but it needs, as a matter of urgency, to be combined with inputs that give young women real choices about marriage and their reproductive health. This ultimately means expanding opportunities for young women to contribute to their own and their family's financial well-being. In Ethiopia increasing young women's access to training programmes, improving agricultural productivity and access to government employment schemes have been shown to improve employment opportunities (Rodgers and Akram-Lodhi 2015, Fox and Kaul 2018 and Geset and Zeleke 2020).

5.1 Reducing early marriage and adolescent motherhood

Ethiopia has one of the lowest percentages, at 13.5%, of adolescent childbirth and pregnancy in the region. Rwanda with an adolescent childbirth and pregnancy rate of 7% is the lowest, followed by Kenya at 13%. In Ethiopia marriage rates of women between 15 and 17 years old are under 5%. 24% of women are married at 18 years old, 30% at 19 and 49% at 20.

Being married in the age group 15 to 19 increases the probability of being NEET by over 9 times. Unfortunately, data on childbirth was not available in the survey and thus, it was not possible to measure the relationship between marriage and adolescent childbearing or their separate impact on NEET status.

5.2 Raising the productivity of family agriculture and increasing employment in the agricultural sector for young women

The survey data shows that young men between 15 and 24 are the predominant labour in family agriculture. In the rural areas 69% of young men work in unpaid family agriculture. Young men between 15 and 19 are the predominant labour in *paid* family agriculture and over 50% of all young men in this age group work in paid family farming compared to 12% of men aged 20 to 24. The increased NEET status of these young men in women headed households suggest that their role in unpaid family agriculture is crucial in food security for their families.

While the burden of family agriculture appears to fall on young men, young women do participate in paid family agriculture – 33% of women aged 15 to 19 and 20% of women aged 20 to 24 work in family agriculture for pay or profit.

It seems that an essential component of rural employment opportunities for youth lies in family agriculture. Fox and Kaul (2018) suggest that over the next decade at least, the household agricultural sector is likely to provide most of the new employment in Africa.

Changing gender roles in agriculture where there is a strong culture of it being men's work is beyond the scope of this paper. However, estimates of the number of women headed households in Ethiopia are on average 30%; and the gap in agricultural productivity of these households range between 30% and 65% between northern and southern Ethiopia (Gebre 2021).

In order to access these possibilities women headed households and youth need access to more productive agricultural inputs and training in modern farming methods. Rodgers and Akram-Lodhi (2015) and Gebre (2021) found in their research on gender productivity gaps in agricultural output that the factors affecting women's lower productivity are: access to agricultural inputs; less secure land rights; gender-based distortions in product markets; rigid gender divisions of labour at the household level; lack of male family labour; lack of access to family agricultural implements; and fertilizers which have to be purchased in the marketplace.

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