

# The Rights and Livelihood of Children: Experiences from Southern Ethiopia

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## Executive summary

*Children have been the objectives of the research for many years. There are different perspectives regarding children in the literatures. The Universalists and children geographers are the dominant perspectives on children. The Universalists perspective considered children as dependent, incomplete, powerless, irresponsible, vulnerable and ‘becoming’ to adulthood individuals. As a result, Universalists were not recognizing economic contributions of child work. Children geographers, on the other hand, recognized children as social actors’ with the ability to interpret their lives. Accordingly, children are socialized to participate actively in economic and social activities of the community. This perspective together with children’s right to participation which is stated in the United Nations Children Rights Convention has brought a paradigm shift in the study of children. However, there is no clear understanding in the literatures to what extent children contribute to their livelihood. Hence, the aim of this thematic project is to fill this knowledge gap by examining the rights and livelihood of children in Gamo Gofa, Gedeo, Gurage, Hadiya, Sidama zones and Hawassa City Administration of SNNPRS. The Project comprises three interrelated sub-themes. The first sub-theme is on “Bringing Child Rights to Life: Prospects and challenges of child rights implementation in SNNPRS.” The objectives of this sub-theme are to appraise the current status of child rights practices; to scrutinize the positive outcomes of children’s rights implementation; identify the roles of various actors in realizing children’s rights; to examine the hindering factors in implementing children’s rights and to identify the intervention mechanisms for the effective implementation of children’s rights in southern Ethiopia. The second sub-theme is entitled “The Contributions of Children to Household Livelihood in SNNPRS” The objectives of this sub-theme project are to find out the reasons behind expecting children contributions to household livelihood in Southern Ethiopia, to examine mechanisms of children contributions to household livelihood in Southern Ethiopia; to identify the main factors affecting the contributions of children to household livelihood in Southern Ethiopia; to examine to what extent children contribute to household livelihood in southern Ethiopia. The third sub-theme is entitled “Perspective on child Labor and its effects on schooling*

in SNNPRS.” The objectives of this sub-theme are to explore the perspectives of children and the community on Child Labor, find out the major triggers that prompt children to work, identify the impacts that child labor has on schooling in the study areas, explore the complex ways through which working children cope with adversities and create opportunities to achieve their goals and explore practical experiences of running both work and schooling in southern Ethiopia. Three post graduate students whose thesis proposals are related to this thematic research project will be invited to work as members of this project on merit basis.

**Box 1: Summary of research components (Sub-thematic areas) and their respective objectives;**

**Sub-theme I: Bringing Child Rights to Life: Prospects and challenges of child rights implementation in Southern Ethiopia**

*(Meseret G\*, Dr. Engida E., Tassew A. & Meskerem A.)*

- ✓ To identify the gap between theory and practice in the protection of child rights;
- ✓ To scrutinize the positive outcomes of children’s rights implementation;
- ✓ To identify the roles of various actors in realizing children’s rights;
- ✓ To examine the hindering factors in implementing children’s rights and
- ✓ To identify the intervention mechanisms for the effective implementation of children’s rights

**Sub-theme II: The Contributions of Children to Household Livelihood in Southern Ethiopia**

*(Tassew A.\*, Meseret G, Dr. Engida E., & Meskerem A.)*

- ✓ To assess the contributions of children towards improving socio- economic conditions of their families in southern Ethiopia;
- ✓ To find out the contributions of children to improve their own livelihood in southern Ethiopia;
- ✓ To examine to what extent children contribute to household livelihood in southern Ethiopia.

**Sub-theme III: Perspective on child Labor and its effects on schooling in southern Ethiopia**

*(Meskerem A.\*, Tassew A.\*, Meseret G, & Dr. Engida E.)*

- ✓ To explore the perspectives of children and the community on Child Labor
- ✓ Find out the major triggers that prompt children to work
- ✓ Identify the impacts that child labor has on schooling in the study areas
- ✓ Explore the complex ways through which working children cope with adversities and create opportunities to achieve their goals.
- ✓ Explore practical experiences of running both work and schooling

*\*sub-theme leaders*