**The contribution of girls’ longer hours in unpaid work to gender gaps in early adult employment: Evidence from Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam**

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**Abstract**

Across many countries girls perform more unpaid work than boys. This article shows how time spent in unpaid household work by young women and girls contributes to the gender pay gap which is already evident by age 22. We analyse employment participation, type of employment and wages using five waves of the Young Lives longitudinal survey for Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam. Longer hours in unpaid household work in adolescence positively predict later employment participation but negatively predict job quality, that is a job with a private or public organization, and hourly earnings, particularly for women. Oaxaca-Blinder decompositions of the male female wage gap show the female penalty for past household work is due to longer hours of such work rather than a higher female penalty for a given amount of unpaid work.

Keywords: low and middle-income countries, young adults, gender wage gap, life course, unpaid household work

JEL Codes: J16 J22 J31 J71

**Declarations:**

***Declarations of interest****:*None

***Funding*** Not applicable

***Conflicts of interest/Competing interests*** None.

***Availability of data and material*** The data are from Young Lives, a 15-year study on the changing nature of childhood poverty in Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam ([www.younglives.org.uk](http://www.younglives.org.uk/)).

***Code availability*** The Stata code that was used in this analysis is available upon request.

***Authors' contributions*** All in equal shares. Names of authors are listed in alphabetical order.