



‘CORONA HAS REALLY SPOILED A LOT OF THINGS’ ADOLESCENT GIRLS EXPERIENCES OF COVID IN BURKINA FASO AND SIERRA LEONE

GENDER AND POVERTY DIMENSIONS OF COVID-19 IN LMICS

BRISTOL POVERTY INSTITUTE, FEBRUARY 11TH 2020

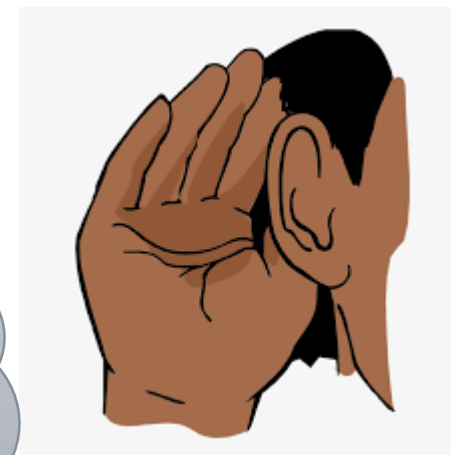
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OUTLINE : *THE AFRICAN REPORT ON CHILD WELLBEING 2020*

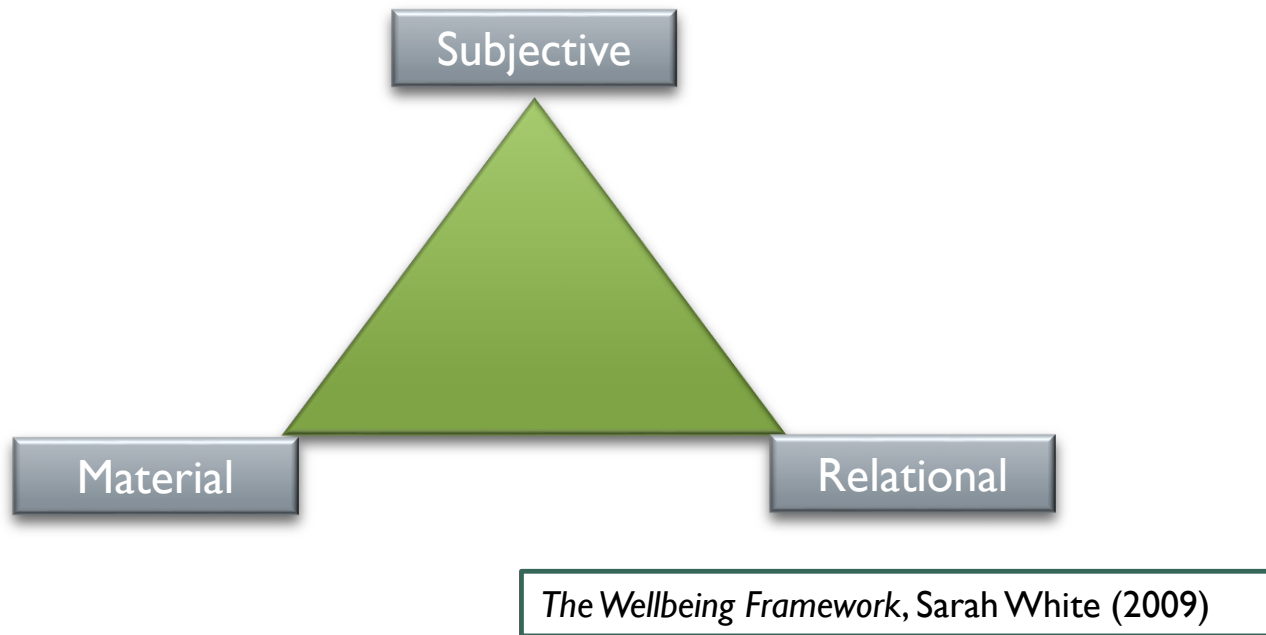
- Background
- Methods
- Findings
- Discussion

Giving a hearing.....



Collaboration with **African Child Policy Forum, University of Bristol, Plan International**, plus 11 researchers including the team coordinating the data collection on the ground based across five countries

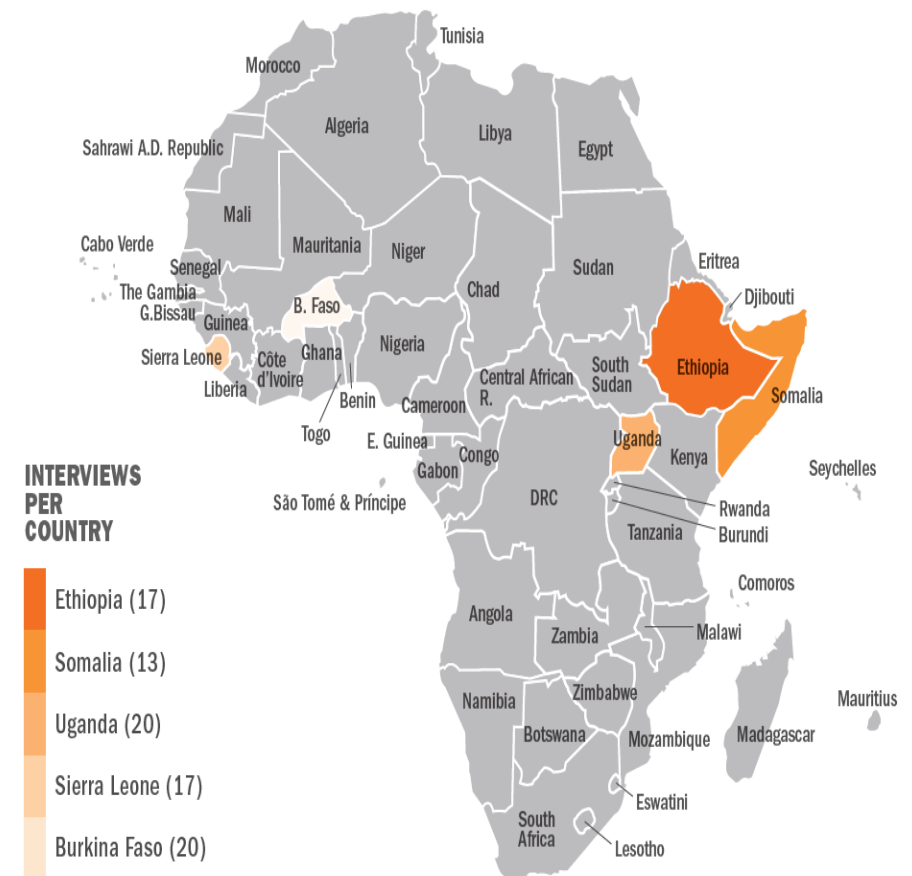
PROJECT: THE WELL-BEING OF **ADOLESCENT GIRLS** IN AFRICA



Burkina Faso: Dr. Madeleine Wayack-Pambè, University Joseph Ki-Zerbo in Ouagadougou

Sierra Leone: Dr Luisa Enria, Assistant Professor, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and Mr Angus Fayia Tengbeh, Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh

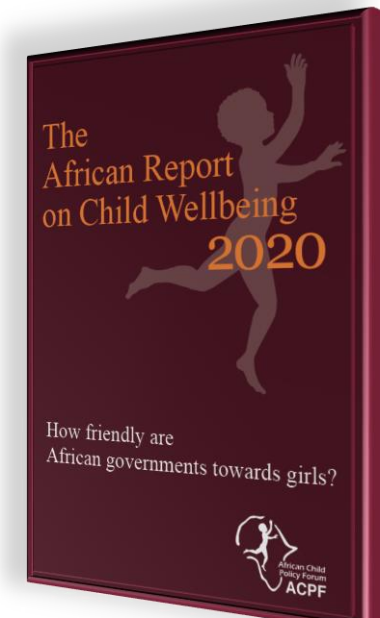
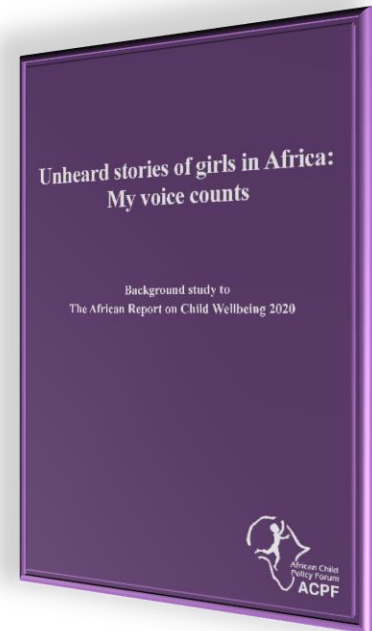
UK: Dr Kate Pincock, Researcher, Overseas Development Institute



THE AFRICAN REPORT ON CHILD WELLBEING 2020

Full reports

<https://www.africanchild.report/>



ADOLESCENT GIRLS' PERSPECTIVES ON THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF COVID-19

RQ:

What was the economic impact of the COVID pandemic on adolescent girls?

To what extent is the impact of COVID mediated by girls socio-economic position, geographical location, etc.?

BACKGROUND – THE SITUATION OF GIRLS

Burkina Faso

- Burkina Faso has prioritised improving young people's access to health care through its National Health Development Plan
- Dollar-a-day poor 43% 2014 (est 36% 2019, WB)
- conflict and post-conflict situations
- Relatively low incidence of COVID-19 (53 deaths reported 28th July 2020) (WHO)
- **markets were closed at the time of the interview**
- Investment in girls recommended as a priority (WB 2020)

Sierra Leone

- Sierra Leone's 2017 National Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health Strategy, which aims to ensure health services throughout the life course & abolition of secondary school fees
- Dollar-a-day poor 43% 2018
- Economy is projected to contract by 2.3 to 4.0 percent in 2020
- Relatively low incidence of COVID-19 (66 deaths reported 28 July 2020) (WHO)
- **markets and business were open at the time of the interview**
- Investment in girls recommended as a priority (WB 2020)

COVID-19 + POVERTY: **WHAT DO WE KNOW?**

- **Poverty** in Sub-Saharan Africa **is expected to increase** following the pandemic as a result of closures and loss of jobs/trade (Wieser et al., 2020; Nestour et al., 2020; Rafaele & Hutchinson, 2020).
- An estimated 42-66 million children could fall into extreme poverty as a result of the crisis this year, adding to the estimated 386 million children already in extreme poverty in 2019 (ACPF 2020, p. 13)
- **Increased food insecurity** as school feeding programmes stopped (Wieser et al., 2020).
- More than 26 million girls across Africa normally rely on school meals for a reliable source of daily nutrition (ACPF, 2020)

Studies are generally health focus, **Girls voices are rare**

METHODS - RESEARCHING UNDER GLOBAL PANDEMIC

Design, access, data collection, ethical procedures and analysis

- 87 adolescent girls aged 14 to 19 across five countries.
- **Today we draw on data from Sierra Leone (17) and Burkina Faso (20)**
- Interview questions were adapted to and conducted in nine different languages and translated to English or French for analysis
- Girls were asked about their experiences in **education, health and safety** and their **hopes** for the future, as well as their **understanding of COVID-19** and implications of it on their lives and those of other girls close to them
- Interviews were on mobile phones and conducted between July & September 2020



Sensitive matters
SRHR etc...

**NO QUESTIONS
ASKED**

METHODS - RESEARCHING UNDER GLOBAL PANDEMIC

Design, access, data collection, ethical procedures and analysis

- Effort to ensure that our analysis enhances rather than obscures their voices
- Data was initially analysed by country teams, then subjected to deeper analysis by three researchers
- Ethical procedures - voluntary parental/caregiver permission and double informed consent was required – 3 session calls and sometimes more...



Sensitive matters
SRHR etc...

**NO QUESTIONS
ASKED**

FINDINGS

- The pandemic has reinforced existing inequalities
- Girls have different experiences depending on their positionality
- We identify 3+1 groups
 1. Limited economic impact
 2. Coping
 3. Struggling/Severe impact
 4. Lives defined by conflict (BF only)

GROUP I – LIMITED ECONOMIC IMPACT

- Relatively sheltered from the economic impact of the pandemic
 - BF: Economic ease. Sources of income: Import/export, trade, international remittances
 - SL: Economic ease to managing. Sources of income: professions, trade

GROUP 2 COPING

- Loss in livelihood, income losses, middle to low resources
- Sources of income: small traders, farmers, small business, multiple earners
- Coping
 - By using savings
 - By using human resources

GROUP 3 STRUGGLING/SEVERE IMPACT

- Extreme poverty/hunger
- Sources of income: farmers, petty trade, border trade, cared for by kin
- Some girls report others struggling and turning to sex work

GROUP 4 – LIVES DEFINED BY VIOLENCE/CONFLICT

- Live in/escaped conflict areas
- Violence as key determinant in their lives
- Lives not altered by COVID (economic, schooling, mental health)

FINDINGS OVERVIEW

- Experience of the pandemic mediated by socio-economic and geographic position
 - Better-off are often protected
 - Coping
 - Restrictions matter markets/business closed in BF vs SL
 - Length of the pandemic/ restrictions ability to cope erodes over time
 - Severely affected who have lost their livelihood report hunger, sex work
 - Lives dominated by conflict (in BF Sahel, expanding)
- Girls commonly report isolation, fear of COVID and feelings of uncertainty

DISCUSSION

- Important to listen to children voices to understand their lived experiences
- Girls downplay economic struggles
 - Local reference groups
 - Complain avoidance
- Difficulty to identify macro-processes e.g. Girls not recognizing the pandemic having had an economic effect on their lives it does not mean that it has not
- COVID one of many events in girls lives
- Fieldwork during COVID: Telephone 'can be done'
 - Pre-existing networks + multiple calls

CONCLUSION / IMPLICATIONS

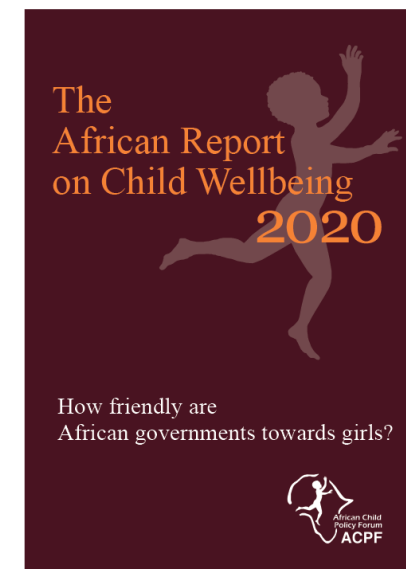
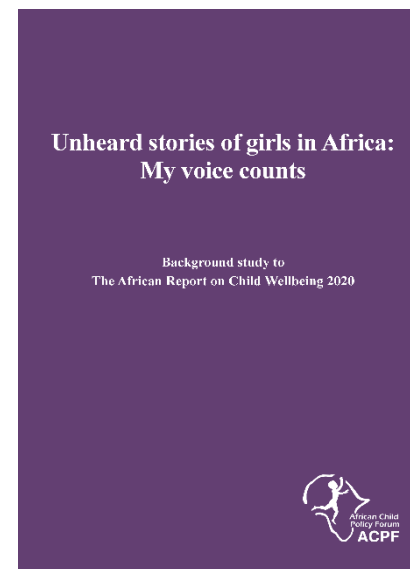
- The pandemic is likely to increase economic inequality
 - Has affected the poor hardest (short and medium term)
 - More stretched support networks
 - Income support is needed for those working in the informal sector/small farmers
 - The pandemic is likely to deviate transitional trajectories accelerating end of schooling and/or marriage, increasing gender inequality
 - Responses to the (post)pandemic must be gender sensitive
- ‘Early marriage is when you are sent to marriage at an early age due to poverty’ (SL7, 16 yo)

THANK YOU AND QUESTIONS

Thankful for your input!

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