



Youth in Action Ethiopia Tracer Study

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Youth in Action (YiA) is a six-year program implemented by Save the Children in partnership with the Mastercard Foundation. The goal of YiA is to improve the socioeconomic status of around 40,000 out-of-school young people (12-18 years), both girls and boys, in rural Burkina Faso, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Malawi, and Uganda. The Theory of Change is to achieve this by enhancing youths' foundational skills and social assets, facilitating their action in livelihoods opportunities, and building key partnerships to remove barriers to youth's participation in their economies and communities. The project in Ethiopia aims to reach 9,050 youth in some of the most vulnerable and rural communities of the North Wollo Zone of the Amhara region.

Study Design

The Tracer Study is a retrospective study. A sample of youth who graduated from the YiA program at least nine months before data collection were asked a set of questions that required them to reflect back on their socioeconomic and livelihood status before starting YiA and at the present moment. These data are used to answer two research questions:

- **RQ1:** What changes in socioeconomic and livelihood outcomes do youth retrospectively report several months after finishing their engagement with YiA?
- **RQ2:** To what extent are these changes explained by demographic characteristics and the amount of time that has passed since completing YiA?

Sample

The tracer study sample consists of 382 youth (185 female, 197 male), ranging in age from 15 to 25 years, with an average age of 19. On average youth in this sample completed YiA 22 months prior to data collection.

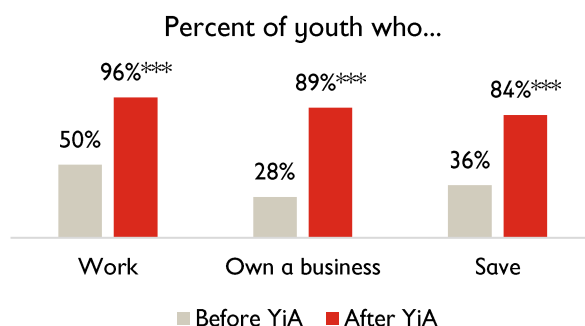
Analytic Strategy

To answer RQ1, we compare youths' responses to questions about education, work, family support, mentor support, autonomy and entrepreneurial skills before and after YiA, and between male and female youth. To answer RQ2, we fit a series of multiple regression models to estimate the relation between sociodemographic characteristics, months since completing YiA, and reported changes in outcomes.

Findings

RQ1: A significantly greater percent of youth reported working, owning a business, and saving after YiA. On average, youth reported a gain of 26.26 ETB (1 USD) in daily income after YiA. In terms of the enabling environment, youth reported increases in the types of material and emotional support

received from their family and greater support from mentors. They also reported greater autonomy in economic decision-making and increased entrepreneurial skills. Gaps at baseline between male and female youth in terms of the percent who work, mentor support, and entrepreneurial skills diminished significantly.



RQ2: Youth with greater household wealth at baseline experienced lesser gains in entrepreneurship skills. The number of months since completing YiA is associated with lower gains in daily income and autonomy in economic decision-making.

Limitations

This study relies on retrospectively reported information on youth's experiences of their socioeconomic and livelihood status at the two different time points, and has no comparison group. Thus, rather than the impact of YiA, our findings represent the role of YiA in youth socioeconomic and livelihood development from the perspective of YiA youth themselves.

Messages

1. Youth reported significant gains in socioeconomic and livelihoods outcomes several months after graduating YiA
2. Gains were similar for male and female youth

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Overview of the Tracer Study

What is the Youth in Action Project?

Youth in Action (YiA) is a six-year program implemented by Save the Children in partnership with the Mastercard Foundation. The goal of YiA is to improve the socioeconomic status of around 40,000 out-of-school young people (12-18 years), both girls and boys, in rural Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, Malawi, and Uganda. The Theory of Change is to achieve this by enhancing youths' foundational skills and social assets, facilitating their action in livelihoods opportunities, and building key partnerships to remove barriers to youth's participation in their economies and communities.

YiA supports youth to identify and explore livelihood opportunities through a combination of nonformal education and practice-oriented learning experiences. For many youth, these livelihood opportunities are grounded in agricultural value chains or agri-business. While there is a wide array of programs focusing on education for out of school youth or on youth employment, very few incorporate employability, social assets, literacy, numeracy, financial literacy, and real-life experience. YiA integrates all of the above into a participatory learning cycle, designed to increase livelihoods opportunities through the acquisition of a broad spectrum of foundational and work-readiness skills.

Youth in Action in Ethiopia

The project in Ethiopia aims to reach 9,050 youth in some of the most vulnerable and rural communities of the North Wollo Zone of the Amhara region. The project targets youth between the ages of 14-18.

Like the other YiA countries, Ethiopia follows a three-phase model of the program that rolls out over nine consecutive months. The first phase—selection—deals with the recruitment of rural youth to a program cohort. Community advisory groups help the program recruit and select youth for the program, coordinating the mobilization events and screening process. The second phase—learning—consists of a six-month curriculum focused on foundational literacy, numeracy, financial literacy, and transferable skills. Youth meet three times a week, for three-hour sessions.

The last phase—action—lasts for three months. In this phase youth apply the skills from the learning phase to a pathway option that allows for active and mentored learning. In Ethiopia, all youth focus on a self-employment/entrepreneurship activity in the action phase. During the first month youth focus on developing business plans, approval for their business, specific business training, cash transfer, youth-led procurement, and links to financial systems/markets. Youth are supported with USD 230 each. To disburse the money, youth are connected with the Amhara Credit and Savings Institute (ACSI). Operating in Amhara region since 1995, this well-established microfinance institution has a strong legal base, clear working systems, and geographical spread.

In the last two months, the program focuses on mentoring youth through their business. Youth are connected with adults in their communities who can provide specific mentorship to help them establish their business. Program youth also meet with program graduates at least twice a month to share experiences and learning.

Purpose of this Study

The data collected from beneficiaries and stakeholders in previous YiA studies have focused on the outcomes during youth's participation with the program, or right after they have finished the program. While we have some anecdotal information about the trajectories of youths' lives after they leave YiA, we do not have structured data on their livelihood development. The Tracer Study aims to understand the added value of YiA in the lives of youth several months after they have left the program. In other words, this study helps us



uncover the changes that have occurred in the lives of YiA beneficiaries after they have graduated from the program.

Given these aims, the Tracer Study tracked down youth who graduated from the program more than nine months before data collection and conducted a 1:1 survey with them. The Tracer Study focuses on outcome areas that are aligned with the YiA Theory of Change and the Learning Framework. The outcomes from this Tracer Study will feed into individual learning question narratives and help us understand participants' experiences of the effect of YiA on their ultimate socioeconomic outcomes.

Study Design

The tracer study is a retrospective study. The survey asked youth to think back to their life before YiA and provide responses based on this recall. Following the International Labor Organization's guidance¹ on designing a tracer study, we asked youth a similar set of questions that require youth to reflect back on their socioeconomic and livelihood status both before starting YiA and at present.

The **Tracer Study is not focused on establishing causal links between attending YiA and changes in youth socioeconomic and livelihood outcomes.** In other words, there is a limited amount that we can say about YiA *causing* changes in youth outcomes; rather we explore the effect of YiA on youth livelihood development *from the perspective of YiA youth themselves.*

Research Questions

Our primary research question is:

1. What changes in socioeconomic and livelihood outcomes do youth retrospectively report several months after finishing their engagement with YiA?

We are also interested in how youths' experiences differ according to their demographic characteristics and the number of months that have passed since they completed YiA activities. Thus, our second research question is:

2. To what extent are the changes in socioeconomic and livelihood outcomes that youth report explained by demographic characteristics and the amount of time that has passed since completing YiA?²

Measures

The Tracer Study focuses on outcome areas that are aligned with the YiA Theory of Change and the Learning Framework. The table below provides a mapping of the main outcome areas and describes how the Tracer Study outcomes link to the YiA Learning Framework³.

Tracer Study data were collected by trained enumerators via one-on-one, in-person interviews with youth respondents.

¹ ILO (2011). Child labour impact assessment toolkit: Tracer study manual. Geneva, Switzerland: International Labour Organization.

² In the Ethiopia Tracer Study we do not assess the relation between YiA pathway chosen and changes in outcomes because 98% of youth in the Ethiopia Tracer Study sample chose the Entrepreneurship Pathway.

³ The full survey is available upon request, please contact Nikhit D'Sa at ndsa@savechildren.org.



Table 1. Measures used in the Tracer Study

Outcome	Description/Items	Mapping to Indicator or Learning Question
Socioeconomic status	Poverty questions adapted from the DHS wealth index	Goal: % of youth enrolled in the program who record an improvement in socio-economic status at endline over baseline
Income	Amount of income and productive assets Use of Income	
Work status	Hours worked Type of work	What improvements in self-employment capabilities do we observe in youth engaged with the YiA program model?
Savings	Amount saved Frequency of savings Access to financial services	
Entrepreneurial skills	Youth experiences of their entrepreneurship competencies	
Mentorship	Type of business mentor Nature of business mentorship	How successful have peer-to-peer and business mentorship been in providing youth with opportunities to grow their businesses?
Family support for work	Amount of financial support Presence of physical and emotional support for workforce development	How has the YiA program affected parental support (e.g.: financial contribution) of livelihood development in youth?

Sample

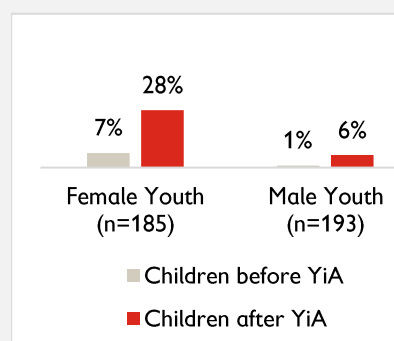
Because this study is focused on the youths' experiences of the effect of YiA after (a) *youth have graduated from YiA*, and (b) *youth have spent some time away from the project*, the population this study seeks to extrapolate to are *all youth who graduated from YiA nine months ago, or more*. This means that youth from any cohort that completed the learning phase, action phase, and post-action monitoring more than nine months ago were eligible to participate in the study.

Given the total direct beneficiary population in Ethiopia, a 5 percent margin of error, 95 percent confidence interval, and a 50 percent response distribution, the Tracer Study sample size was designed to be 360 youth in Ethiopia.

The Ethiopia country team used a stratified random sampling approach. After creating a list of all project graduates who had completed the project more than nine months ago, the team stratified the list by gender (a 50:50 ratio of males to females), cohort (the recruited sample should be spread equally across all cohorts) and districts (the sample should be proportional to the main districts participating in YiA). The team then used a

What percent of youth in this sample are parents?

Female youth were more likely to have children than male youth, both before and after YiA ($p < 0.001$). The percent of youth who reported having children increased from before YiA to after for both males and females, but especially for female youth.



The percent who reported being married also increased, from 16% to 49% for female youth, and from 3% to 14% for male youth.

random number generator to recruit 720 youth for the Where are they Now List (WNL)⁴. After creating the WNL the team tracked down the first 360 youth from the list and collected the tracer study data from them.

Because of over-sampling, the team was able to collect data from **382 youth (185 female, 197 male), ranging in age from 15 to 25 years old, with an average age of 19.5 years.**

Table 2 describes the distribution of youth in the Tracer Study sample according to YiA pathway chosen and cohort (presented as time in months since graduating YiA).⁵ The majority of youth participating in YiA in Ethiopia chose the Entrepreneurship pathway (98%).

Table 2. Months Since Completing YiA and YiA Pathway Chosen

	YiA Cohort (number of months since completing YiA)	
	Percent of Female Youth	Percent of Male Youth
11 months	25%	23%
17 months	19%	31%
27 months	8%	7%
30 months	48%	39%
N	185	193
	YiA Pathway Chosen	
	Percent of Female Youth	Percent of Male Youth
Employment	1%	1%
Entrepreneurship	95%	98%
Vocational training	1%	0%
Back to school	1%	1%
N	184	197

Table 3 presents the distribution of the sample according to education level before. Before YiA, about half of the sample has completed only some primary school, and 21% of female youth and 13% of male youth had completed secondary school. The **average years of education increased from 6.7 before YiA to 6.9 years after YiA, a small but statistically significant difference ($p < 0.001$).**⁶ There is no significant difference between female and male youth in terms of years of education completed.

⁴ ILO (2011). Child labour impact assessment toolkit: Tracer study manual. Geneva, Switzerland: International Labour Organization.

⁵ Time since graduating YiA was calculated by subtracting the month of Tracer Study data collection from the official end month for the cohort that the youth attended.

⁶ Given how few youth chose the Back to School YiA Pathway (1 male and 1 female), we do not include changes in educational completion as one of the socioeconomic and livelihoods outcomes assessed in RQ1 and RQ2.

Table 3. Years of education

	Female Youth		Male Youth	
	Before YiA	After YiA	Before YiA	After YiA
No education	2%	2%	6%	5%
Some primary	51%	45%	52%	47%
Primary complete	16%	15%	17%	17%
Some secondary	9%	10%	9%	8%
Secondary complete	21%	21%	13%	17%
Some preparatory	1%	1%	0%	0%
Preparatory complete	1%	1%	0%	0%
Some tertiary	1%	4%	3%	7%
Years of Education	6.8	7.1	6.3	6.6
N	185	185	197	197

Differences between years of education between males and females, before and after YiA * $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$. *** $p < 0.001$

Findings

RQ1: What changes in socioeconomic and livelihood outcomes do youth retrospectively report several months after finishing their engagement with YiA?

To answer Research Question 1, for each outcome we work through three steps:

1. Conduct descriptive statistics comparing youths' self-reported outcomes before and after YiA.
2. Fit a one-sample t-test (for continuous outcomes) or a one-sample z-test (for binary outcomes) to assess whether the difference in self-reported outcomes before and after YiA is statistically significant.
3. Understand whether or not there is a significant difference between male and female youths' reported outcomes. We report differences that are meaningful (i.e., statistically and practically significant).
 - a. For binary outcomes, we conduct two sample z-tests comparing the difference in outcomes between male and female youth prior to YiA, and two-sample z-tests comparing the difference in outcomes between male and female youth after YiA.
 - b. For continuous outcomes, we fit a univariate regression model, with youth's self-reported change in socioeconomic and livelihood outcomes modeled as a function of sex. This tells us whether or not there is a statistically significant association between sex (being a female, or being a male) and the reported change in outcomes.

Work

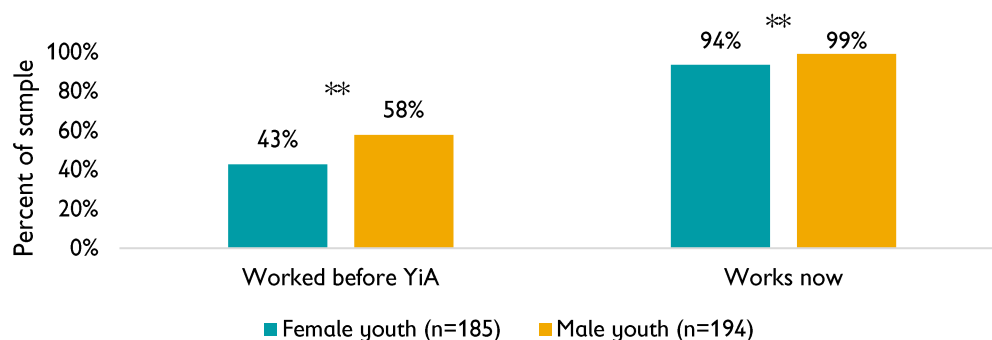
Work was defined as any activity that youth did for themselves, their family, or for someone else for which they received some kind of payment. This payment may have been money, or some other type of payment like food or things.

50% of youth said they were working before YiA, and 96% said they are currently working. In addition, **28% reported owning a business prior to YiA, compared to 89% who reported owning a business now.** Both of these differences are statistically significant at $p < 0.001$.

Before YiA, 58% of male youth worked compared to 43% of female youth. This gap mostly closed after YiA, but there remains a significant difference between the percent of male youth versus female youth who

reported working, as shown in Figure 1. There is no difference between male and female youth in terms of percent who reported owning a business.

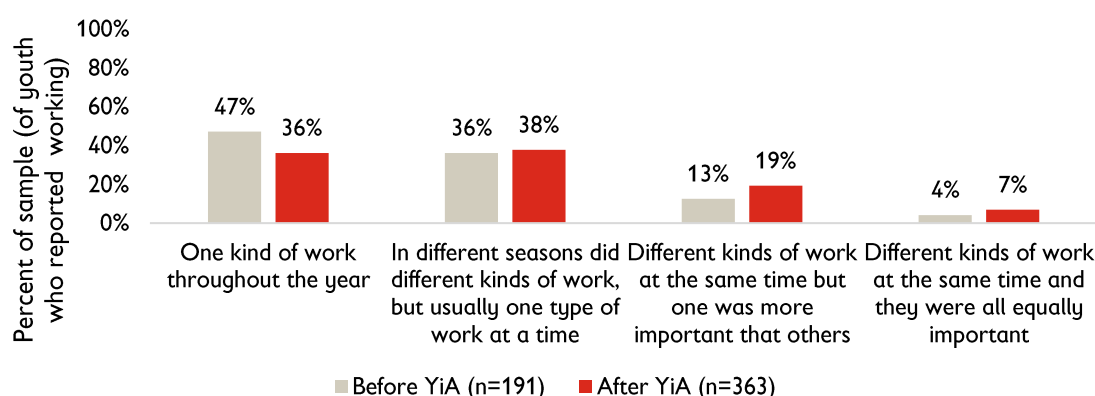
Figure 1. Percent of youth who worked before and after YiA, by sex



* $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$. *** $p < 0.001$

After YiA, among the sample of youth who reported working, a greater percent are engaged in multiple kinds of work at the same time, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Number of different kinds of work youth are engaged in



In Table 4 we present the types of work (i.e., sector) that youth were engaged in before and after YiA. Female youth were more likely than male youth to trade agriculture, do domestic work, and work in sales. Male youth were more likely than female youth to work in agriculture, animal trading, construction, and transport, and were also engaged in more types of work.

Table 4. Types of work youth engaged in before and after YiA, by sex

	Before YiA			After YiA		
	Female youth	Male youth	p-value	Female youth	Male youth	p-value
Youth owned a business⁷	59%	54%		94%	91%	
Agriculture	44%	63%	***	32%	51%	
Animal rearing	33%	39%		57%	64%	
Trading agriculture	25%	4%	***	13%	5%	**
Domestic	14%	0%	***	3%	1%	*
Sales	7%	3%		9%	3%	*
Garments	5%	1%		3%	1%	
Animal trading	2%	22%	***	7%	31%	***
Construction	2%	9%		0%	5%	**
Cosmetology	2%	1%		2%	3%	
Electric	1%	0%		1%	0%	
Transport	1%	3%		0%	3%	*
Automotive	0%	1%		1%	1%	
Mining	0%	0%		0%	1%	
Other	19%	13%		16%	18%	
Number of kinds of work	1.6	1.5		1.4	1.8	***
N	71	112		172	194	

* $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$. *** $p < 0.001$

Income and household assets

Average self-reported income before YiA was 60.60 ETB (adjusted for inflation to be comparable to 2017 ETB currency values) and 82.00 ETB after ($p < 0.001$)⁸. This corresponds to roughly 2.20 USD before YiA and 3.0 USD after.

Table 5. Youth's self-reported daily income, full sample

	Daily income before YiA		Daily income after YiA	
	ETB	USD	ETB	USD
Mean	60.56	2.22	81.98	3.01
Standard deviation	79.36	2.91	92.28	3.38
N	169	169	337	337

In order to estimate self-reported gains in income, we restrict our sample to include only those youth who worked both before and after YiA ($n=160$). For these youth, **the average gain in daily income is 26.2 ETB (about 1 USD)**, statistically significant at $p < 0.001$. There is no difference in income between male and female youth. Figure 3 illustrates the distribution of youth who worked before and after YiA according to reported

⁷ Table 5 includes only youth who worked before and after YiA. The percent who owned a business before and after YiA, of youth who worked, is greater than the percent of the full sample of youth who owned a business before and after YiA reported above.

⁸ Income prior to YiA was converted to 2017 Birr using the formula $P_n = P(1+i)^n$; where P_n = inflation adjusted income, P = reported income prior to YiA, i = annual inflation rate (2013-2017, estimated at 8.2%), and n = amount of years that have passed since youth completed YiA (calculated by dividing the number of months out of YiA by 12).

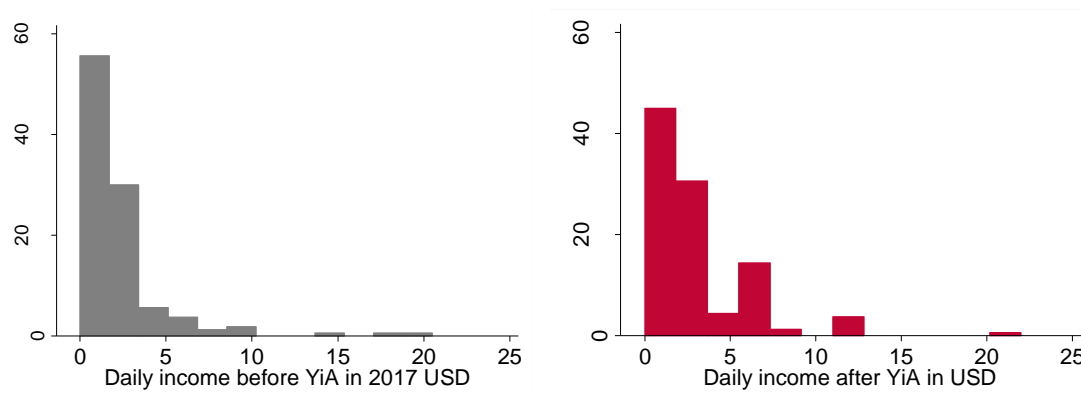
daily income in USD. There is a visible shift to the right (towards higher values) after YiA, with more youth earning between 5 and 10 USD/day.

Table 6. Youth's self-reported daily income, youth who worked before and after YiA

	Daily income before YiA		Daily income after YiA		Gain in daily income***	
	ETB	USD	ETB	USD	ETB	USD
Mean	60.08	2.20	86.70	3.18	26.62	0.98
Standard deviation	77.57	2.84	82.47	3.02	62.95	2.31
N	160	160	160	160	160	160

* $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$. *** $p < 0.00$

Figure 3. Distribution of youth according to daily income in USD, before and after YiA



N= 160 (sample of youth who worked before and after YiA).

However, the daily income data are limited in terms of precision, and also the extent to which they are representative of the population of youth who participated in YiA. This is in part because we rely on youth recall, and it may be hard for youth to remember the exact amount they earned before YiA, especially if their daily income fluctuated. Likewise, the inflation adjustments are based on the average annual inflation rate, which means we cannot account for monthly/weekly fluctuations. Finally, we only have data on gains in income for about 42% of the sample, since only 42% worked before and after YiA.

Considering these limitations, we include another proxy of changes in wealth: household assets. Specifically, we asked youth about whether or not their home had a series of 13 household possessions, as well as access to land, tools, and animals. In order to assess changes in household wealth we created an index equal to the number of household assets youth had before and after YiA (or 16 total items, see table 7). In this sample, **on average, youth had 5 of 16 household items before YiA, and 6 after** ($p < 0.001$). There is no difference in reported household assets between male and female youth.

These data may provide a more reliable estimate of changes in youths' economic status, given that unlike the income data, this analysis draws from the full sample of 382 youth, and our estimates do not rely on inflation adjustments. However, the number of household possessions youth have before and after YiA is influenced by all members of the youth's household, not just the youth who participated in YiA. To this end, changes in household wealth are likely related to factors external to YiA.

Table 7. Household assets before and after YiA

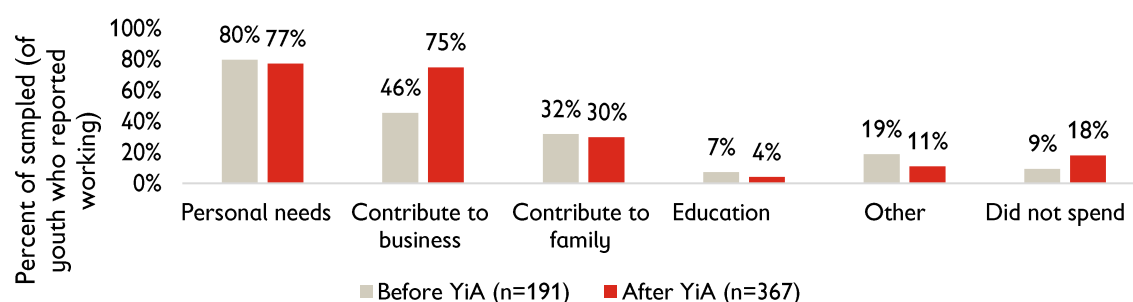
	Before YiA	After YiA
Family owns or has access to...		
Land	94%	97%
Animals	81%	87%
Tools or machines for business	56%	63%
Household has...		
Electricity	18%	27%
Water from faucet	23%	34%
Tin roof	49%	65%
Indoor toilet	72%	82%
Separate kitchen in house	26%	38%
Television	6%	10%
Satellite or cable TV	5%	9%
Land telephone	1%	3%
Mobile phone	65%	83%
Refrigerator	2%	2%
Bicycle	2%	1%
Motorcycle	0%	0%
Car, van or truck	0%	0%
Total of 16 assets***	5.0	6.0
N	382	382

* $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$. *** $p < 0.001$

Spending and saving

Youth who reported working were asked how they spend the money they earn. In terms of spending practices, **a greater percentage of youth reported spending money on contributing to a business, after YiA than before YiA**, and **a greater percentage said they did not spend the money they earned**, as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Youth spending practices



Female youth were more likely than male youth to report spending money on education before YiA, (12% versus 4%, $p < 0.05$). There are no differences after YiA.

All youth, regardless of whether they worked or not, were asked about whether they saved money before and after YiA. Savings practices increased significantly, both in terms of the percent of youth who reported saving and the amount saved. **94% reported saving after YiA, compared to 36% before YiA** ($p < 0.001$). In terms

of the amount saved, the **average savings increased from 502 inflation-adjusted ETB (18.00 USD) to 3,318 ETB (121.69 USD)** ($p < 0.001$).

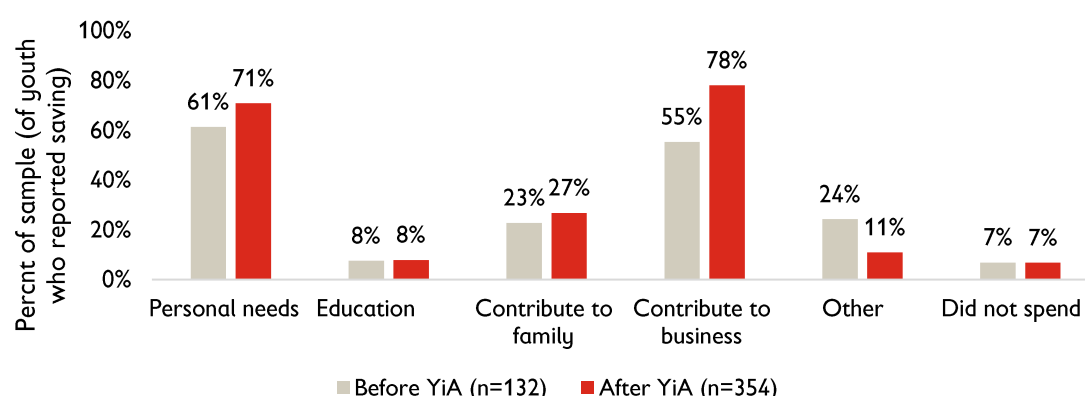
Table 8. Savings amount⁹

	Savings before YiA		Savings after YiA		Gain in savings***	
	ETB	USD	ETB	USD	ETB	USD
Mean	502.51	18.43	3847.83	141.10	3318.59	121.69
Standard deviation	1533.69	56.24	5772.09	211.66	5856.57	214.76
N	352	352	375	375	347	347

* $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$. *** $p < 0.001$

Youth used the money they saved primarily to contribute to business (especially after YiA), personal needs, and contribute to family. There is no difference between male and female youth in terms of the percent of youth who saved, the amount of saving, nor how youth spend savings.

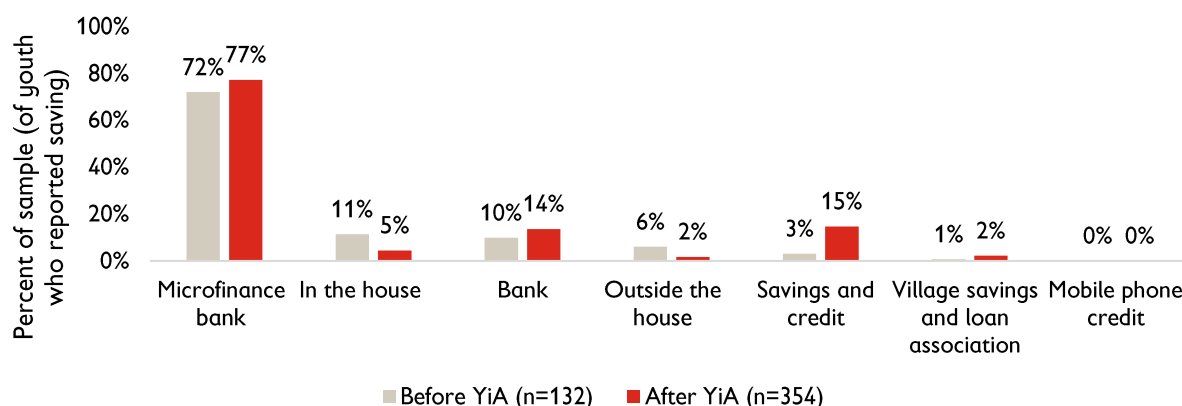
Figure 5. How youth spend saved money



The **majority of youth who reported saving do so at a microfinance bank**, both before and after YiA, although after YiA more youth reported saving in banks and savings and credit associations. After YiA female youth are more likely to save in village savings and loans associations (4% of female youth, compared to 1% of male youth, $p < 0.05$).

⁹ The savings amount for youth who said they did not save is coded as 0. Before YiA, 26 of the youth who said they did save did not report a savings amount, and 4 did not report whether or not they saved. This explains the sample size for this value ($N = 382$ total sample – 26 who saved but did not report the amount saved – 4 who did not report whether they saved or not = 352). After YiA, 2 youth who said they did save did not report the amount, and 5 youth did not report whether or not they saved ($382 - 2 - 5 = 275$).

Figure 6. Where youth save



Support from family

Support from family is conceptualized in three ways: financial support, material support, and emotional support. These questions were administered only to the sample of youth who reported working. **Only youth who worked were asked about support from their family.**

In terms of **financial support**, **38% of youth reported receiving money from their family prior to YiA, compared to 62% after** ($p < 0.05$).

The average amount of financial support received from families before YiA was 1,185 inflation-adjusted ETB (43 USD) and 2,398 ETB (88 USD) after. Given the limited number of youth (54) who provided information on the amount of support received from their family before and after YiA, we do not have a sufficient sample size to test for the significance in gains.

Material support includes land, space within the house, tools and/or raw materials, and animals. We summed the responses to these items to form an index of the material support from families, defined as the number of types of material support from family (of 4). Rather than testing the statistical significance individually for each type of support, we used this index to test the significance of the difference in reported material support before and after YiA. This is in line with our interest in assessing the total change in support, and also important so as to avoid spurious correlations. **We find a small but significant increase in number of types of material support from families before and after YiA, from 1 to 2 types of support** ($p < 0.001$).

Table 9. Material support from family

	Before YiA	After YiA
Family gives land	24%	45%
Family gives space	30%	52%
Family gives tools	32%	62%
Family gives animals	35%	35%
Number of types of material support from family (of 4)***	1.2	1.9
N	191	368

* $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$. *** $p < 0.001$

Emotional support includes helping youth learn the skills needed for work, supporting youth's ideas for work, giving youth sufficient time to complete work, and helping to manage and run the youth's business. As in material support, we created an index of emotional support, defined as the number of types of emotional support received (of 4). Again, rather than testing the statistical significance individually for each type of support, we used this index to test the significance of the difference in reported emotional support before and after YiA. **Youth reported greater emotional support from their family after YiA, from 3.1 to 3.7 types of emotional support** ($p < 0.001$).

Table 10. Emotional support from family

	Before YiA	After YiA
Family helped learn skills	66%	84%
Family supported ideas	85%	98%
Family gave time	86%	97%
Family helps manage	85%	98%
Number of types of emotional support from family (of 4)**	3.1	3.7
N	83	87

* $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$. *** $p < 0.001$

There are no differences between female and male youth in reported financial, material support or emotional from family members.

Support from mentors

Youth were much more likely to have a mentor after participating in YiA. **30% said that they had a mentor before YiA, compared to 74% who said they had a mentor now** ($p < 0.001$). There is no difference between male and female youth in terms of the percent who reported having a mentor, although female youth were more likely to have a female mentor, and male youth were more likely to have a male mentor. Most of the mentors were relatives or friends, as shown in Table 11.

Table 11. Relationship between mentors and youth

	Before YiA	After YiA
Relative	59%	63%
Friend	32%	26%
Community member	8%	5%
CBO or NGO worker	1%	0%
Teacher or facilitator	0%	4%
N	113	284

We also asked youth about the types of support they received from mentors. Similar to the questions about family support, we created an index of mentor support, defined by the number of types of support from mentors (of 5). This is the outcome we use to test for a statistical difference in overall support from mentors before and after YiA. **On average, youth reported about one to two additional types of support from their mentor after YiA** ($p < 0.001$).

Table 12. Support from mentor

	Before YiA	After YiA
Mentor shares information	59%	82%
Mentor provides emotional support	70%	89%
Mentor builds confidence	66%	89%
Mentor teaches skills	61%	84%
Youth can go to mentor for advice	65%	85%
Number of types of mentor support (of 5)***	3.2	4.3
N	113	284

* $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$. *** $p < 0.001$

Male youth reported more types of support from their mentors both before and after YiA, as shown in Table 13 below. Univariate regression analyses show a negative and significant association between sex (being a male) and reported gains in mentor support, which indicates that **female youth experienced greater gains in types of mentor support than male youth. Nonetheless there remains a significant gap in total support from mentors, with male youth reporting one more type of support from their mentors than female youth ($p < 0.05$).**

Table 13. Number of types of mentor support before and after YiA, by sex

	Female youth			Male youth		
	Before YiA	After YiA	p-value	Before YiA	After YiA	p-value
Number of types of mentor support	2.8	4.1	*	3.5	4.5	*
N	51	140		65	149	

* $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$. *** $p < 0.001$

Autonomy in economic decision-making

We operationalize youth autonomy in economic decision making as the extent to which youth have a say in key decisions about how they earn money and what they do with their money. Specifically, youth were asked: “Who decides (1) the kind of work you do? (2) How to spend the money you earn? (3) Where you save your money? And (4) How to spend the money you save?” Youth could respond “I decide” or “someone else decides.” Like the indices of support from family and mentors, we created an index of youth autonomy, ranging from zero (no say in economic decisions) to four (youth make all of the decisions).¹⁰

Youth reported having a say in one to two decision prior to YiA, and three to four after YiA. This increase is explained in part by the finding that more youth are working and saving after having participated in YiA, and thus have more economic and livelihoods decisions to be making.

¹⁰ Youth who said they did not work or did not save were not asked the corresponding questions about who decides the kind of work they do, how to spend, or where to save and how to spend saved money. We include these youth in the index, with scores of 0 for these questions, based on the assumption that youth who do not work and do not save have little say in decisions about how to spend money or save.

Table 14. Youth decision making

Youth decides:	Before YiA	After YiA
...the kind of work s/he should do	39%	87%
...how to spend money	38%	90%
...where to save	23%	89%
...how to spend saved money	27%	90%
Number of decisions made by youth (of 4)***	1.3	3.6
N	382	382

* $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$. *** $p < 0.001$

Prior to YiA there was no difference in autonomy between male and female youth. After YiA, male youth reported greater autonomy than female youth, although this difference is small in magnitude, less than .5 decisions ($p < 0.05$).

Entrepreneurial skills

To assess self-reported entrepreneurial skills, youth were asked if they knew how to do a series of eight activities (see table 17). In general youth had a positive perspective of the skills they gained through participation in YiA. **When thinking about their skills prior to YiA, less than half said they knew how to create a business plan, identify customers, plan for seasons, make price decisions, identify where to get the funds to start a business, or develop and track budgets.** Conversely, **after YiA, for each skill we asked about, 92% or more felt competent.**

Similar to the support and autonomy variables, we created an index of entrepreneurial skills before and after YiA, equal to the number of skills youth reported knowing how to do (of 8), and used this to test the significance of reported gains before and after YiA. **On average youth reported having 2 to 3 entrepreneurial skills before YiA, compared to between 7 and 8 after ($p < 0.001$).**

Table 15. Youth skills

Percent who respond “agree or strongly agree” when asked if they know how to...	Before YiA	After YiA
Create a business plan	19%	92%
Identify customers and competitors for a business	19%	93%
Plan a business for different seasons	29%	94%
Decide the best price at which to sell an item	43%	97%
Identify places to get money to start or grow a business	35%	96%
Budget money for your business and personal life	33%	97%
Identify how much money you need to start a business	42%	96%
Track how much money you spend and on what	38%	96%
Number of entrepreneurial skills (of 8)***	2.6	7.6
N	382	382

* $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$. *** $p < 0.001$

Male youth reported slightly more skills than female youth before YiA (2.3 compared to 2.8, $p < 0.05$). After YiA this gap closed, male and female youth reported equal skills levels.

RQ2: To what extent are the changes in socioeconomic and livelihood outcomes that youth reported explained by demographic characteristics, the amount of time that has passed since completing YiA, and their chosen YiA pathway?

To answer Research Question 2, we fit a series of multiple regression models to estimate the relation between sociodemographic characteristics, months since completing YiA, and reported changes in socioeconomic and livelihoods outcomes. Table 16 describes the outcomes, and Appendix C presents the fitted estimates.

Table 16. Socioeconomic and livelihoods outcomes used to explore RQ2¹¹

Outcome	Description	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	N
Change in daily income	The difference in self-reported daily income before and after YiA, in 2017 ETB	27	63	-187	268	160
Change in household assets	The difference in self-reported household assets before and after YiA, of 16	1	1.8	-12	8	382
Change in savings amount	The difference in self-reported savings amount, in 2017 ETB	3,319	5,856.6	-14,536	-57,564	347
Change in material support from family	The difference in the number of types of material support received from family before and after YiA, of 4	0.8	1.3	-2	4	190
Change in emotional support from family	The difference in the number of types of emotional support received from family before and after YiA, of 4	0.6	1.3	-4	4	190
Change in mentor support	The difference in the number of types of support received from mentors before and after YiA, of 5	1.3	1.8	-3	5	105
Change in autonomy in economic decision making	The difference in the number of decisions about work and how to spend and save money that youth make before and after YiA, of 4	2.3	1.6	-2	4	382
Change in entrepreneurial skills	The difference in the number of entrepreneurial skills youth say they have before and after YiA, of 8	5.0	2.8	-7	8	382

Change in daily income, change in material support from family, and change in emotional support from family only apply to youth who worked before and after YiA. Change in mentor support only applies to those youth who had a mentor before or after YiA. This results in a smaller analytic sample for these outcomes.

¹¹ We do not include models exploring the relation between the YiA Pathway and changes in outcomes, given the limited variation in chosen YiA Pathway in the Ethiopia Tracer Sample (95% chose the Entrepreneurship pathway). Likewise, we do not include models exploring the relation between being a parent prior to YiA and changes in outcomes, since only 15 youth had children before YiA.

In the first set of models, we estimate the association between youths' sociodemographic characteristics and the changes they reported by modelling these changes as a linear function of *age in years*, *sex*, *years of education prior to YiA*, and *household assets prior to YiA*.¹² We find a negative association between sex (being a male), and gain in types of mentor support. This is consistent with the univariate regression results demonstrating that **female youth experienced greater gains in mentor support than male youth. However, after YiA there remains a significant gap in terms of total types of support from mentors, with male youth reporting one more type of support from their mentors than female youth on average.**

We also find a negative association between household assets and self-reported gains in and entrepreneurial skills. In other words, **the greater the youth's reported household wealth at baseline, the lesser the gains in self-reported entrepreneurship skills.** This suggests that YiA was most successful for youth from more disadvantaged households, at least in terms of supporting youth to strengthen their entrepreneurial skills.

Next, we estimated the association between the amount of time in months that has passed since youth completed YiA and the changes they reported, controlling for the above sociodemographic characteristics (age, sex, educational attainment and household wealth). Overall we find no relation between the number of months since completing YiA and self-reported changes in socioeconomic and livelihood experiences, with the exception of two outcomes: daily income and autonomy in economic decision making. For these two outcomes, we find a negative association between months since completing YiA and self-reported changes. **This indicates that the socioeconomic and livelihoods gains youth experience through participating in YiA may diminish over time, at least for daily income and autonomy.**

Limitations of this Study

This study relies on youth's experience of their socioeconomic and livelihood status at two different time points: before they participated in YiA and currently (11-30 months after completing YiA). In this sense, **we rely on retrospectively reported information on youth's experiences** of their socioeconomic and livelihood status at the two different time points. We did not attempt to validate any of the youth's responses through other data sources. **Youth's reported changes in daily income is particularly subject to imprecise measurement.** We have data on income prior to YiA from less than half the sample, so our ability to detect a relation between gains in income and sociodemographic characteristics, months since completing YiA, and whether or not youth had children before YiA is limited. Likewise, we do not have detailed information about the specific week/month that youth had in mind when they responded, so we cannot adjust for fluctuations in currency or in youths' wages. We are assuming that they reported on their average daily income in the weeks/months immediately prior to YiA.

This poses a number of limitations. First, it can be hard to remember the specifics of things like mentor interactions, family support, or even daily income from months or years prior. This limits the precision of our findings. Second, youth may have an incentive to report larger gains than they actually experienced in order to signal their interest in participating in future types of livelihoods programs. On the other hand, this incentive could work in the opposite direction, youth may be inclined to report smaller gains to signal that they are in need of continued support from programs like YiA.

We also did not have a comparison or control group in this Tracer Study. The data we collected for this study come from youth who have participated in YiA, so we have no way of knowing what youths' outcomes would have been in the absence of YiA. We cannot know for sure that the gains youth reported are

¹² Change in household assets is also an outcome (dependent) variable. For this regression model, we do not include household assets prior to YiA as an independent variable.



due to their participation in YiA. Youth are generally expected to develop more skills and assets/income as they mature, regardless of intervention, so this limitation, present in all studies with youth development that do not employ a comparison or control group, is critical to acknowledge.

Because of these three reasons—retrospective study, experience-based responses, and no comparison/control group—there is a limited amount that we can say about YiA causing changes in youth outcomes. Rather, **our findings represent the role of YiA in youth socioeconomic and livelihood development from the perspective of YiA youth themselves.**

Discussion

Several months after completing YiA, **we find marked improvements in socioeconomic and livelihoods outcomes.** A greater percent of youth reported working, owning a business, and saving after YiA. Self-reported gains in income were small but significant (26.26 ETB, or about 1 USD), and youth also reported a significant gain in household assets before and after YiA. In terms of the enabling environment, youth reported increases in the types of material and emotional support received from their family. They were more likely to have a mentor after YiA, and received greater support from mentors. Finally, youth reported greater autonomy in socioeconomic and livelihood decisions, and there are large gains in self-reported entrepreneurial skills. These changes in outcomes are mostly consistent regardless of how many months have passed since completing YiA, although there is evidence that gains in daily income and autonomy in economic decision making fade over time.

Overall, the YiA program in Ethiopia seems to have mostly closed the gender gap, helping female youth catch up with their male peers. Three significant gender disparities were present prior to YiA: the percent of male versus female youth working, the number of types of support from mentors, and the number of self-reported entrepreneurial skills. After YiA these gaps have mostly closed. For example, months after graduating from YiA nearly all the male and female youth are working. Additionally, female youth reported greater gains in support from mentors than male peers, even though there is still a gap—after YiA, male youth reported about one more type of support from mentors than female youth. Meanwhile, the gender-gap in entrepreneurial skills has closed completely, with both male and female youth reporting mastery of most of the 8 skills included in the tracer survey.

Our findings also suggest that the program was particularly effective for the most vulnerable youth, at least in terms of skills building: **youth with lower household wealth prior to YiA experienced greater gains in self-reported entrepreneurship skills.** We do not have supporting evidence to explain this finding. However, it is possible that youth from wealthier households started out at an advantage in terms of daily income, and thus the changes observed were comparatively smaller than those from poorer households. Second, youth from less vulnerable households may have had more opportunities outside of YiA, meaning they were less engaged with the entrepreneurship training than their peers from poorer households.

The findings of this tracer study do not imply causality; we do not claim that YiA caused all these positive outcomes in youth. Given developmental and employment trajectories of youth in rural Ethiopia, we would expect that more youth would be working and earning higher amounts as they got older. However, comparison to national studies demonstrate that YiA youth may be doing better as compared to their peers when it comes to their socioeconomic status. Ethiopia's Central Statistical Agency provides detailed information on the demographic and socio-economic status of adolescents and youth in the country, albeit the last labor survey for



which data is available is from 2013. Based on the 2013 data¹³, “The mean amount of payment for paid employees at national level is 1,305 Birr per month” (p. 79). Adjusted for inflation this would be ~1788 Birr in 2017. The average YiA youth of 19.5 years reported earning approximately 1200 Birr/month per month before YiA and ~1734 Birr/month after YiA. This means that several months after graduating from YiA **the average youth was earning the same as the national average for paid formal employees in Ethiopia even though YiA youth live in extremely rural areas of the Amhara region of the country.**

This comparison, though coarse and non-precise, leads us to believe that the YiA project had a measureable positive effect on the lives of youth, especially from the perspective of the youth themselves. Youth reported that they were doing better on nearly all of the work readiness and socioeconomic indicators 11-30 months after completing the project. And, when compared to national income trajectories, YiA youth reported earning at a similar rate to the national average for paid formal employees.

¹³ Central Statistical Agency (2014). Analytic report on the 2013 national labour force survey. Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Central Statistical Agency: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Appendix A: Sociodemographic information of the sample

Table 17. Distribution of the sample according to district

	Number	Percent of total sample
Gidan	91	24%
Gubalafto	91	24%
Habru	96	25%
Raya Kobo	104	27%
Total	382	100%

Table 18. Basic sociodemographic information, by sex

	Female youth	Male youth	p-value
Age in years	19.3	19.7	*
Years of education before YiA	6.8	6.3	
Years of education after YiA	7.1	6.6	
Married before YiA	16%	3%	***
Children before YiA	10%	6%	
Married after YiA	49%	14%	***
Children after YiA	28%	5%	***
N	185	193	

* $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$. *** $p < 0.001$.

Appendix B: Internal consistency reliabilities of composite indicators of socioeconomic and livelihoods outcomes

Table 19. Scale reliability coefficient (Alpha) for socioeconomic and livelihood outcome indices

	Before YiA	After YiA
Material support from family	0.71	0.62
Emotional support from family	0.76	0.45
Support from mentor	0.83	0.82
Autonomy in economic decision making	0.79	0.71
Entrepreneurial skills	0.90	0.85

Appendix C: Fitted estimates of equity analysis predicting self-reported change in socioeconomic and livelihoods outcomes

Fitted estimates in tables 20 and 21 are modelled as linear regression functions, with robust standard errors.

Table 20. Fitted estimates of the association between sociodemographic characteristics and reported changes in socioeconomic and livelihood outcomes

	Daily income (ETB)		Household assets		Savings amount (ETB)		Material support from family		Emotional support from family		Mentor support		Autonomy in economic decisions		Entrepreneurial skills	
	Beta (S.E.)	Effect in SD	Beta (S.E.)	Effect in SD	Beta (S.E.)	Effect in SD	Beta (S.E.)	Effect in SD	Beta (S.E.)	Effect in SD	Beta (S.E.)	Effect in SD	Beta (S.E.)	Effect in SD	Beta (S.E.)	Effect in SD
Age in years	-2.41 (3.08)	-0.04	0.04 (0.06)	0.02	507.16* (253.00)	0.09	-0.00 (0.05)	-0.00	0.04 (0.05)	0.03	0.05 (0.13)	0.03	-0.10* (0.05)	-0.06	-0.06 (0.10)	-0.02
Sex (male)	-7.18 (10.73)	-0.11	-0.24 (0.19)	-0.13	326.90 (579.19)	0.06	0.15 (0.19)	0.11	0.03 (0.19)	0.02	-0.86* (0.34)	-0.48	0.10 (0.16)	0.06	-0.32 (0.29)	-0.11
Years of education	1.67 (1.70)	0.03	0.06~ (0.03)	0.03	110.60 (110.18)	0.02	0.02 (0.03)	0.01	0.03 (0.03)	0.03	-0.01 (0.07)	-0.00	-0.02 (0.03)	-0.01	0.07 (0.06)	0.03
Household assets	-7.53 (5.25)	-0.12			423.72 (399.86)	0.07	-0.04 (0.12)	-0.03	-0.14 (0.10)	-0.11	-0.11 (0.17)	-0.06	-0.12 (0.09)	-0.08	-0.41** (0.15)	-0.15
Constant	67.73 (57.70)	1.07	-0.02 (1.12)	-0.01	-7436.91 (4599.48)	-1.26	0.60 (1.03)	0.47	-0.36 (1.10)	-0.29	0.91 (2.33)	0.51	4.31*** (0.93)	2.75	5.92** (1.84)	2.09
R ²	0.0222		0.0173		0.0402		0.00434		0.0167		0.0601		0.0251		0.0286	
N	157		369		337		183		183		102		369		369	

~ $p < 0.10$. * $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$. *** $p < 0.001$.

Table 21. Fitted estimates of the association between months since completing YiA and reported changes in socioeconomic and livelihood outcomes, controlling for sociodemographic characteristics

	Daily income (ETB)		Household assets		Savings amount (ETB)		Material support from family		Emotional support from family		Mentor support		Autonomy in economic decisions		Entrepreneurial skills	
	Beta (S.E.)	Effect in SD	Beta (S.E.)	Effect in SD	Beta (S.E.)	Effect in SD	Beta (S.E.)	Effect in SD	Beta (S.E.)	Effect in SD	Beta (S.E.)	Effect in SD	Beta (S.E.)	Effect in SD	Beta (S.E.)	Effect in SD
Age in years	-1.38 (3.14)	-0.02	0.02 (0.06)	0.01	488.21* (244.36)	0.08	-0.01 (0.05)	-0.01	0.03 (0.06)	0.03	0.06 (0.12)	0.03	-0.08~ (0.05)	-0.05	-0.05 (0.10)	-0.02
Sex (male)	-10.85 (10.58)	-0.17	-0.22 (0.19)	-0.12	364.48 (586.30)	0.06	0.15 (0.20)	0.12	0.04 (0.20)	0.03	-0.84* (0.34)	-0.47	0.07 (0.16)	0.04	-0.32 (0.30)	-0.11
Years of education	1.57 (1.64)	0.02	0.07* (0.03)	0.04	113.78 (110.53)	0.02	0.02 (0.03)	0.01	0.03 (0.03)	0.03	-0.01 (0.07)	-0.00	-0.03 (0.03)	-0.02	0.07 (0.06)	0.03
Household assets	-7.94 (5.12)	-0.13			441.73 (406.09)	0.07	-0.03 (0.12)	-0.02	-0.14 (0.10)	-0.11	-0.13 (0.16)	-0.07	-0.14~ (0.09)	-0.09	-0.43** (0.15)	-0.15
Months since completing YiA	-1.53* (0.67)	-0.02	0.02~ (0.01)	0.01	25.00 (39.01)	0.00	0.01 (0.01)	0.01	0.01 (0.01)	0.01	-0.03 (0.02)	-0.02	-0.02* (0.01)	-0.02	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.00
Constant	83.84 (56.71)	1.33	-0.22 (1.15)	-0.12	-7652.66 (4715.94)	-1.29	0.55 (1.04)	0.43	-0.41 (1.11)	-0.32	1.45 (2.33)	0.80	4.58*** (0.90)	2.91	5.99** (1.86)	2.11
R ²	0.0602		0.0249		0.0414		0.00693		0.0184		0.0817		0.0406		0.0296	
N	157		367		337		182		182		102		367		367	

~ $p < 0.10$. * $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$. *** $p < 0.001$.