Ethiopia recognized as the arch to Africa

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Background

History – some decisive events and issues

Ethiopia's long history and its present-day geopolitical position require a sufficiently large context of investigation both from a temporal and a geographic perspective. The (possible) image of Ethiopia as the "gateway to Africa" needs to be interpreted in the macro region of the Horn of Africa as much as analysed from a more internal setting of political dynamics and state formation. There is a rather unique status in the wider African context of state developments the Horn of Africa possesses, which can be labelled as 'non-colonial' (Clapham, 2017), "*the central political feature* [of which] *has been the survival at the core of the region of the only indigenous sub-Saharan state, the Ethiopian empire, to retain its independence through the era of colonial conquest.*" (Ibid, 2017: 3) In the process of the 'scramble for Africa' between 1876 and 1912 (Pakenham, 1991), the entire African continent had been carved up by the European imperial powers except for the territories of Ethiopia and Liberia. Although Italy claimed the Ethiopian empire as its protectorate referring to the Berlin Act of 1885, Ethiopia rose victorious after defeating the Italian army at the Battle of Adwa (Adowa) in 1896. Ethiopia was never colonized, and this certainly had lasting implications for the position and image of Ethiopia during colonial times and in the post-colonial political developments across the continent. With the advent of fascism in Italy from 1922, however, "*the ideal of restoring the power and glory of the ancient Roman Empire*" (Zewde, 2002: 151) fuelled Mussolini to invade Ethiopia. During the years of occupation (1936–1941) the Italians met with a strong guerrilla resistance of the Ethiopians and after five years left the area defeated again. The "*post-1941 period marks the culmination of modern Ethiopian history*" (Ibid: 272). The modernization process that Emperor Menelik of Shoa (Menelik II, 1889–1913) started his successor, Emperor Haile Selassie (1930–1936, then, 1941–1974) continued. The result was a unitary state with advanced feudalism, in which the opposition of a growingly large segment of society against the absolutism of the monarch with all the oppressions of his reign reached a peak in a series of struggles and rebellions with the climax of the revolution of 1974. The Derg (military junta, also sometimes spelled as Dergue) gradually embraced a Marxist approach with command economy-led development, widespread nationalization of industries, forced villagization, and an unfolding Stalinist type of terror (Kelsall, 2013; Zewde, 2002), which came to an end in May 1991, when the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) introduced a multinational ethnic federalist framework.

Under both the monarchy and military dictatorship, the struggle for autonomy and freedom in Ethiopia had a long tradition. The younger generation knows that the generations of the 1960's paid a heavy price for this fight (Tadesse, 1993). This was manifested by the expression of concern for public issues, and advocacy for civil and political rights that rewarded public prosecution in general, but actively denied the Ethiopians freedom of expression and assembly. During the Derg regime, many people left their schools and universities to join resistance groups, while other members of the country's intelligentsia were either killed, imprisoned, or exiled (Young, 2006).

Frontiers and borders had always had crucial importance in African political developments. The principle of the inviolability of the frontiers inherited from the colonial era (*uti possidetis juris,*

which is part of customary international law) had been taken for granted by the leaders of the independent African countries. As for the macro region of our investigation, "*the frontiers of the Horn are far more contentious*" (Clapham, 2017: 6) than in other corners of the continent. Most of the African armed conflicts had been taking place within states, and not between states, in spite of the "*artificiality of the region's political boundaries, which were established by the colonial powers over the heads of the local people and their leaders*" (Hyden, 2006: 19). The sole interstate war was fought between Ethiopia and Eritrea (1998–2000) – after decades of the Eritrean war of independence against Ethiopia –, which finally ended in the Algiers Agreement of 2000, then, after continuing and renewed tensions between the two countries, a joint declaration was signed by Eritrea's president and Ethiopia's prime minister in July 2018 in Asmara, closing the period of the state of war.

Many Eritreans basically had sown the seeds of resentment and hatred towards their Ethiopian kings since the Battle of Adwa in 1896. From this moment, the border remained a controversial topic, with many allegations arising that may be associated with foreign invasions and identity issues in general. History shows that Ethiopia has geographically expanded and contracted at various times, and that Eritrea was an integral part of Ethiopia (Zewde, 2014). Eritrea was part of Ethiopia (as the Kingdom of Aksum) (Zewde, 2014) until it was brought under Italian control in 1890 (Tiruneh, 2009; Kebbede, 1993; Mulugeta, 2011). In fact, many Eritreans had a deeply rooted critique even before the time of Emperor Haile Selassie. They accused King Menelik II not aiding them during the Battle of Adwa, when he defeated and liberated the rest of Ethiopia (Zewde, 2014). King Menelik halted the Italian expansion, but he did not eliminate the entire Italian force from the northern part of Ethiopia (present-day Eritrea). Italy concluded the treaty of extortion with Emperor Menelik in 1889 (Mulugeta, 2011; Červenka, 1977), on the basis of which, Eritrea became a colony until 1941. The Italian rule in Eritrea certainly imparted a separate Eritrean identity (Mulugeta, 2011).

Since the launch of a continent-wide integration – first in the framework of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), then, in the 21st century, driven by the African Union (AU) – "*African leaders were concerned that changing even one boundary would open a Pandora's box of ethnically based secessionist movements and lead to the further Balkanisation of the African continent into ever smaller economic and political units*" (Schraeder, 2020: 159). Ethiopia has chosen a different path of state development, in which "*the revolutionary movement is what keeps the country together […] the movement legacy perpetuat[ing] a form of rule that relies on informal relations that transcend the boundaries of formal rules*" (Hyden, 2006: 204-205).

Map 1 – Ethiopia's location in its macro region
Source: https://www.britannica.com/place/Ethiopia

Since 1991, also under the pressures of the external actors of the Global North and the multilateral institutions they had been dominating, a new constitution was adopted in 1995, underscoring ethnic federalism "*as the bedrock of [democratic] governance*" (Zewde, 2002: 11). All these historical developments are important for a better understanding of the functioning of the state as of today, with all the reforms and improvements that embrace all walks of life in Ethiopia.

Ethnic landscapes and ethnic federalism

Ethiopia is similar to most of the African societies in the sense that it also "*presents a mosaic of nationalities speaking a multiplicity of languages*" (Zewde, 2002: 5). The total population of 120.8 million (as of April 2022 according to worldpopulationreview.com, see: Chart 1) is rather heterogenous, but predominantly Oromo (34.4%) and Amhara (27%). Other major ethnic groups include the Somali (6.2%), Tigray (6.1%), Sidama (4%), Gurage (2.5%), Welayta (2.3%), Afar (1.7%), Hadiya (1.7%), and Gamo (1.5%). (worldpopulationreview.com, see: Map 2) The 80+ different ethnic groups speak more than 70 languages. (Roach 2018)

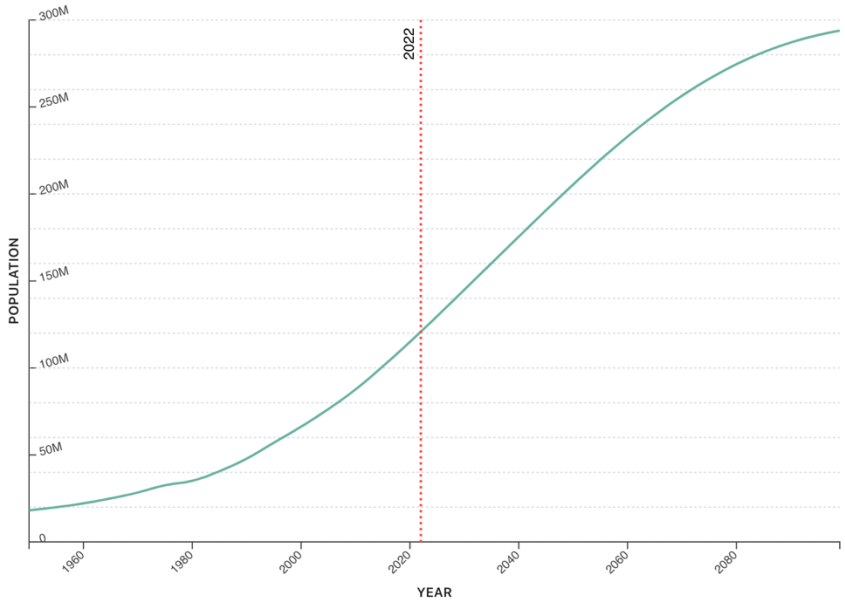
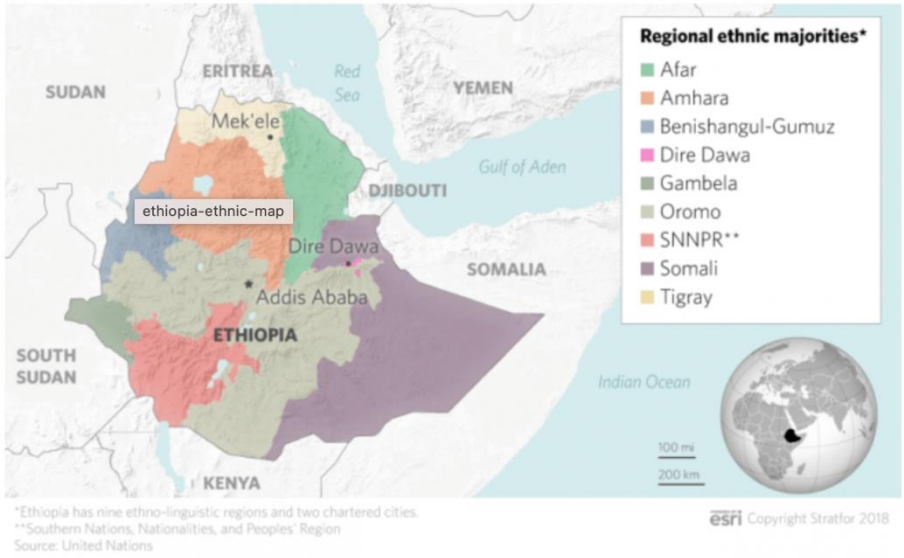
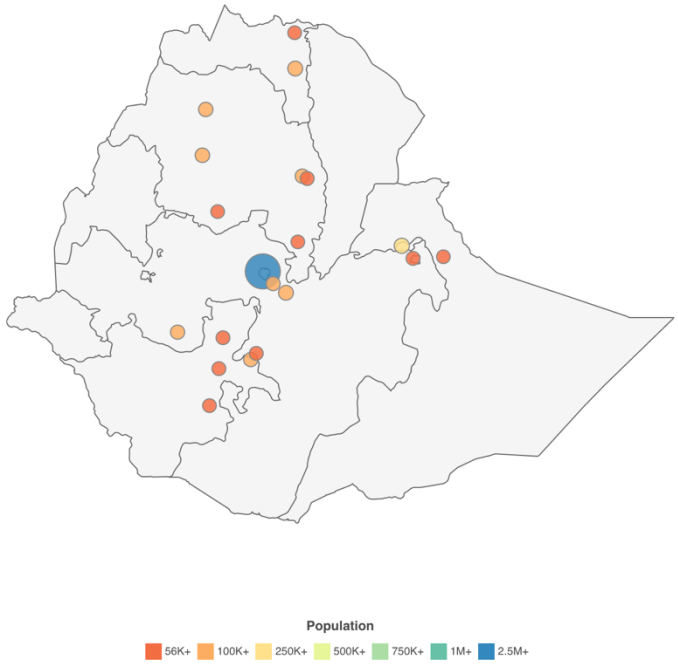


Chart 1 – Population dynamics since the 1960s
Source: https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/ethiopia-population



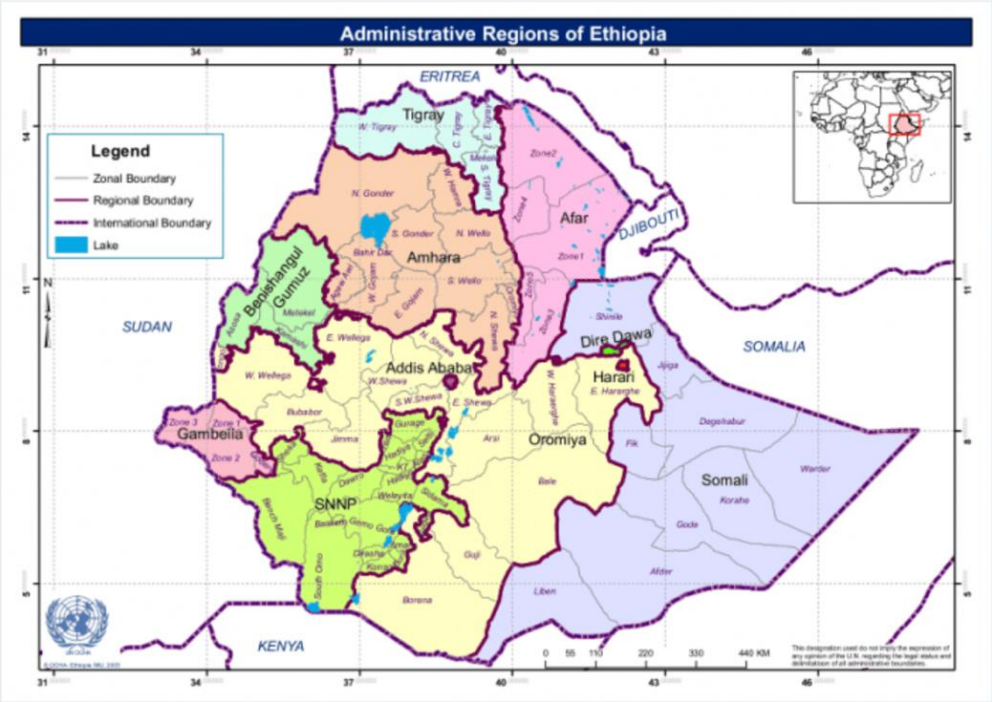
Map 2 – The geographic distribution of ethnic communities in Ethiopia
Source: https://kichuu.com/long-running-headache-minority-rule-ethiopia/ethiopia-ethnic-map/

Since 1991, Ethiopia has laid emphasis on the formulation and implementation of a policy of regionalization. The federal state framework has nine regional states on an ethno-linguistic basis (national regional states, NRS), coupled with two autonomous administrative areas, or councils, i.e. Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa (see: Map 2). In its c. 1.1 million km^2 territory (over 426 thousand square miles), the density of the population is much higher in urban settlements. According to worldpopulationreview.com, *Ethiopia has a population density of 83 people per square mile (214/square mile), which ranks 123rd in the world*. (Map 3)



Map 3 – Ethiopia's population density in 2022
Source: https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/ethiopia-population

The decisive decentralization steps of the federal state resulted in a landscape favouring the devolution of power to local government authorities (Ayenew, 2002). The tiers that had been defined cover zones, woredas and kebeles. Each region (see: Map 4) is entitled to transfer responsibilities and resources to these distinct levels of administration. "*The main objective of Ethiopia's regionalization policy are to enable the different ethnic groups to develop their culture and language, manage socio-economic development in their respective areas, exercise self-rule and bring about an equitable share of national resources among the regions.*" (Ibid, 2022: 130)



Map 4 – Decentralization in Ethiopia
Source: https://reliefweb.int/map/ethiopia/administrative-regions-ethiopia

Since 1991 ethnic minority groups have had the right to make their curriculum and decide their instruction language. From the assessment tests results, we can see that this mother-tongue policy led Ethiopia to become one of the best on the continent. The district (*woreda*) is in charge of the education policies (Engel 2010), but supervised by zonal administrations.

It is worth noting that "*the shortage of trained personnel and inadequate institutional and administrative capacity that many regions are experiencing have hampered efforts to institutionalize decentralized governance and promote balanced development in the country*" (Ayenew, 2002: 130).

Foreign relations, external partners, continent-wide integration schemes

The government of Ethiopia has been making efforts to attract foreign investors from different corners of the world, and the diversification of its foreign relations has become a key policy angle of the Abiy administration. Although trade and investment relationship with China has stayed robust, the Gulf States, Turkey, Russia, the USA and Western countries have also appeared recently as major competitors for Ethiopian deals. (Tarrósy et al. 2020) In addition, several EU members from the post-Communist spaces of Central and Eastern Europe, such as Hungary, Poland, or the Czech Republic, have strengthened their re-engagements with Ethiopia.

From the perspective of the education sector, there are numerous external actors engaging with Ethiopia and its various levels of public administration, both in a bilateral, as well as a multilateral sense. In 2004, for instance, Ethiopia joined the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), and since 2008 when the multi-donor fund of GEQIP (General Education Quality Improvement Program) was set up, the overall learning environment and the quality of teaching

have improved. The support coming from GPE focused on "*training teachers, providing effective learning materials, and developing relevant curricula*" (globalpartnership.org) – amongst others.

The government's commitment to investing in education via all partnerships and means has been stable and prioritized high on the political agenda. With GEQIP II (the second phase), focus was laid on improvements from preprimary to the secondary level. "*It was financing activities in six areas: (a) curriculum implementation and textbook and learning material provision; (b) teacher and school leader development; (c) school improvement program (SIP); (d) strengthening system management and capacity building; (e) improving education quality through information and communication technology; and (f) program planning and coordination, monitoring, and evaluation.*" (World Bank Grant Report, December 2019, p. 5. https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/278011579096308073/pdf/Ethiopia-Education-Results-Based-Financing-Project.pdf)

Turkey
China
USA

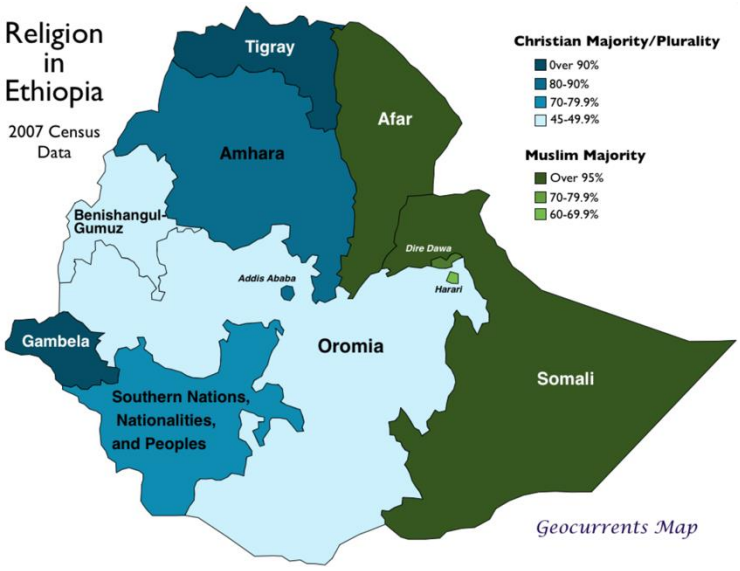
African Union
https://au.int/en/directorates/education

Social integration

Religious diversity and the role of religion in education

Africa's rich cultural heritage stems largely from religious and belief-based experience and traditions. Religion "*has dominated the thinking of African peoples to such an extent that it has shaped their cultures, their social life, their political organizations and economic activities*" (Mbiti, 1991: 10). In Ethiopia, all three major Abrahamic religions are significant. Christianity came to Ethiopia in the fourth century, and "*with the conversion of the emperor, church and state became united*" (Moyo – Schraeder, 2020: 343). Two-thirds of the country's population is Christian (including Ethiopian Orthodox, Pentay, which is Pentecostal, and Roman Catholic Christians), with 44% belonging to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. (worldpopulationreview.com) In addition to Christianity, which represents the dominant faith in the country, Muslims account for at least 32% of the population. There are communities adherent to the Jewish faith with a long-standing historical thread. In fact, "*in the mid-nineteenth century, Ethiopia alone was home to between 200,000 and 300,000 'Beta Israel' or Ethiopian Jews*" (Falasha Jews), most of whom "*were resettled in Israel […] after the advent of the 1974 Ethiopian Revolution*" (Moyo – Schraeder, 2020: 332). Traditional African faiths are also substantial, especially in Oromia and the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region (SNNPR). According to a Pew Research Report from November 2017, Ethiopian Orthodox Christians are "*considerably more religiously observant than Orthodox Christians living in Europe and those living in the United States. The majority of Orthodox Christians in Ethiopia say they attend church weekly (78%) and pray daily (65%), and nearly all (98%) say religion is 'very important' in their lives.*" (Pew Research, November 8, 2017) Map 5 shows the distribution of Christians and Muslims – based on the last full national census from 2007 (the planned 2017 census was postponed several times). It is important to note that Muslisms and Christians of various denominations have been cohabitated in a peaceful manner for

generations – in the past couple of years, however, certain violent instances were reported between the two major faiths in different corners of the country.



Map 5 – Christianity and Islam in Ethiopia
Source: https://www.geocurrents.info/cultural-geography/religion/religious-change-and-tension-in-ethiopia/attachment/ethiopia-religion-map-3

From an educational point of view, it is documented that the Ethiopian Orthodox Church could maintain an indigenous education system since the coming of Christianity in the fourth century. Such church schools "*have long been connected with instilling values of patriotism, loyalty, and national identity*. […and playing a role] *in the development of a national culture*" (Kassa 2021) (https://cfee.hypotheses.org/7978).

Islamic education in the country dates back to the 7th century, and "*ever since (then), schools supported by the community proliferated in rural and urban Ethiopia*" (Tessema 2021) (https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/islamic-education-thrives-expands-faith-in-ethiopia/2276719#). Recently, it has been thriving across Ethiopia, which is "*reinforced by the burgeoning Islamic media and related public activities*" (Ibid). The engagement of external actors, such as Turkish charities, are also noticeable in this respect.

Women in the society

Women's position in society is closely intertwined with modernization tendencies, particularly the proportion of traditional and non-traditional elements both in an immaterial and material sense. For example, demographic transitions, the level of working women, and gender roles are inseparable. In this section, we focus on women's place in today's Ethiopian society. Since some parts of Ethiopia went through a rapid and pervasive transformation due to the increasingly evolving capitalism, women's situation is also twofold. Depending on how 'modernized' the area under examination is, we find less or more traditional ways of thinking about women. Yet, this is not merely a question of culture. For example, in rural areas, more traditional gender roles are indissoluble from everyday life built around agriculture in which women have their traditional place and obligations (Yorke et al., 2021). This complex and interplaying nature is what designates women's opportunities.

With regard to the democratization process, women's place and role are also provided with clear guarantees by the Constitution, as Art. 25 talks about equality and "*makes any discrimination illegal*" (Giorgis, 2002: 169). This is of particular importance, as many women are "*considered and treated as inferior in the family and mistreated by their husbands and male partners, [therefore] they suffer injustice and maltreatment by various agents and mechanisms*" (Ibid). One of the most tangible manifestations of vulnerability is seen in their economic dependence.

Taking a step closer, Ethiopia seems to be in the second stage of demographic transition ('early transition'), which can be described by falling death rates and relatively high birth rates, which leads to rapid population growth. The modernization processes, such as urbanization, industrialization, education, empowerment of women, and comprehensive socio-economic development, are pointing to low mortality and fertility rates (Quak-Tull 2020). Since 2000, there has been a steady decline in the total fertility rate: in 2000, it stood over 6.5 children per woman; in 2020, it fell to a bit over 4 (World Bank 2022, see: Chart 2), and it is forecasted that this figure will stay around 4 births per woman in the coming decades. In 2019, 40% of the population was 14 years old or younger (UNESCO 2019). In 2020, this figure was 39.92% (countryeconomy.com). The median age in Ethiopia is 19.5 years. Such rapid population growth and a crowd of young individuals present heavy labour, educational and gender-related challenges. The government of Ethiopia seems to be aware of it, as its goal is clearly to build a well-informed society with as narrow gender gaps as possible.

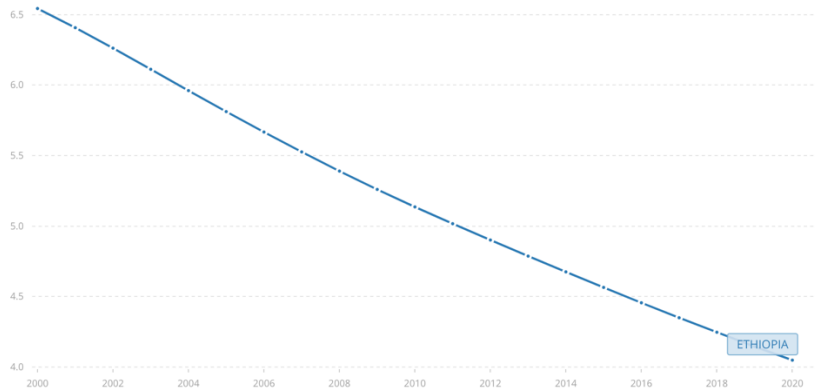


Chart 2 – Total fertility rate in Ethiopia, 2000–2020
Source: data.worldbank.org

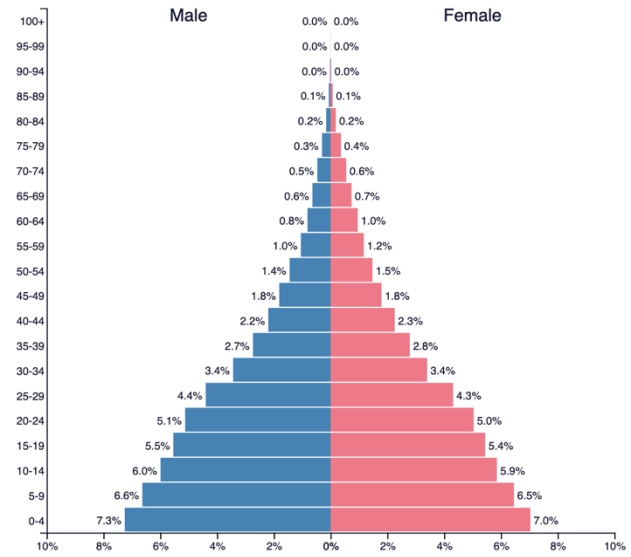


Chart 3 – Population pyramid of Ethiopia in 2022
Source: https://www.populationpyramid.net/ethiopia/2022/

The difference between more and less traditional areas appears in the difference in fertility rate between urban (2.3) and rural areas (5.2). The rate is also much lower among highly educated women (1.9) and women living in Addis Ababa (1.8). Women living in urban areas are a few years older at the first birth and have longer intervals between births than in rural areas as well (EDHS 2016; World Bank 2016). High fertility rates relate to the workforce position of women as well; 48% of women (currently married, between the age of 15 and 49) were employed 12 months before the survey, while men with the same characteristics were 99% employed. Hundreds of years of traditional roles have not lost their significance despite the government's pronounced efforts. 25% of women were attending school when they first married, but 75% of these women stopped going to school after they married. Rural women (86%) were more likely to have stopped attending school after marriage than their urban peers (54%).

The traditional gender roles show different aspects of freedom as well. Most ever-married women (61%) said that their parents decided about their first marriage, and only 35% said that the decision was theirs. These tendencies seem to lose their significance with time and education gradually, as younger and more educated women are more likely to make their own decisions (EDHS 2016, World Bank 2019). According to a recent qualitative study and over 200 interviews about girls' education and early marriage, the situation is profoundly mixed and diverse (Raj et al., 2019). On the one hand, girls and their decision-makers about marriage (primarily fathers) were aware of the benefits of education; they saw it as a tool that makes girls able to improve life and financial skills, and they mainly had positive attitudes.
In many cases, agency and autonomy were seen as something desirable. Educated girls who delay marriage could become community role models to support these changes for other girls and families. On the other hand, several factors make it hard to participate in education, which are connected to gender roles and tradition. According to that, marriage and education are not compatible as social norms dictate that education is only available for unmarried girls since women's primary function is managing children and the household. Some participants mentioned that older and educated women are not appealing in the marriage market. Practical and everyday tasks turned out to be so demanding that even if decision-makers supported women, in most cases, they could not manage school and household – including childbearing –

at the same time. Since rural areas tend to be more traditional, a possible way of women's empowerment is migration to urban areas. "*Inequalities across the rural-urban divide have a disproportional impact on the lives of rural girls and women. They continue to compensate for the lack of basic resources and infrastructure in their rural communities (e.g., running water, electricity) through the heavy domestic labor that they carry out daily*" (Yorke et al., 2021). This mechanism further deepens the function of marriage to secure girls' economic future.

In summary, women's position in society is intertwined with modernization. Due to demographic, economic, labour, and other significant tendencies, Ethiopia faces new challenges, such as shifting gender roles and the consequently diverse and interweaving nature of traditional and non-traditional day-to-day life, social norms, and other significant issues. The tension between old and new ways is the underlying challenge beyond practical, everyday problems. With regard to these, it is of significance that the political roles of women have strengthened, and Ethiopia is among the four leading African countries worldwide (also including Rwanda, Seychelles and South Africa) "*with gender parity cabinets in which an equal number of female and male cabinet ministers serve the executive*" (Bauer, 2020: 283).

EDUCATION

Structure of the education system

Legislations

All states in Ethiopia have two own educational bureaus (National Regional States Education Bureaus). These Bureaus are responsible for the administration and management of the general education, technical and vocational education and teacher training programmes and institutions. The federal Ministry of Education is responsible for higher education. The Ministry of Education formulates policy and guidelines, which are implemented by the various Bureaus. There are also two government bodies charged with regulating higher education, namely the Higher Education Strategy Center (HESC) and the Education and Training Quality Assurance Agency (ETQAA) (formerly HERQA) (NUFFIC 2018). Compulsory education is the first 8 grade, until 14 (Roach 2018).

Education at all level is free, the official language is Amharic in the primary and secondary level – based on the country profile by Roach the language of instruction could be various depending on the regional majority (Roach 2018) and English in the tertiary education level. The academic year starts in September and runs toward July. (NUFFIC 2018; Roach 2018)

Suggestion/recommendation: widening compulsory education at least for the last 1-2 years of pre-primary level and raising it to 15 or 16 years. It can reduce functional analphabetism too.

Organizations, types of schools at different levels

Primary school duration is 8 years and contains two 4 year rounds. After lower primary level each student has to pass the national exam, and should reach at least 50%, in order to start 5th grade. After the 8th grade all student is required to take the so called Primary School Certificat

exam. At secondary level after the 10th grade they need to pass the Ethiopian General Secondary Education Certificate or 10th Grade National Examination. By passing the exam pupils are able to attend the last two years of the Secondary od Vocational level (NUFFIC 2018). These two years of the secondary education are the preparatory years for the universities. After finishing these years students can take an entrance exam to the universities (called EHEEE). In the second phase of the secondary students can choose between social or natural science track. They are also able to choose vocational or technical training after passing the 10th grade exam. There are 1 and 2 year program followed by a certificate and a 3 year program on completion of a Diploma. Note that due to the limited spaces of the higher education system, only best students can enter univiersities by passing EHEEE exam. See above in Table 1. the structure of the mentioned levels and certifications. (NUFFIC 2018)

Type/level of education	Type of school providing this education	Duration of programme in years	Age level	Certificate/diploma awarded
Primary	Primary school	8	7–14	–
First cycle secondary	General secondary school	2	15–16	Ethiopian General School Leaving Certificate Examination (EGSLCE)
Second cycle secondary	Preparatory secondary school	2	17–18	Ethiopian Higher Education Entrance Examination (EHEEE)
Technical	Technical school and junior college	3	17–19	
Vocational	Vocational school and junior college	3	17–19	

Table 1: Ethiopian education system from the Ministry of Education webpage

In the universities BA programs run for various years, tendency is 4 years, technical studies, law and pharmacy are 5 years programs, veterinary and medical school is for 6 years. Master programs run for 1 or 2 years, most of those are at Addis Ababa University. PhD programs from various fields are also run by Addis Ababa University and required to finish within 7 years.

Infrastructure

History of education

For centuries, the Orthodox Church owned the Ethiopian Education System until the 1900s secular education system was introduced. As Shiemer mention it Menelik has found the first school in 1908. It was called Menelik II school and the language of instruction was French – until 1935 (Shiemer 2013; Roach 2018). In the 1920s students were sent to France to study there, and only at the 1930s they started to build schools outside of Addis Ababa and in the capital too. In 1931 the first school was built to girls founded by the wife of Halie Selassie. During the Italians in power 1935/36-41 the education was stagnating and in the Big massacre (February 19-20th 1937) 75% of the educated class was killed by Italians (Shiemer 2013).

After the World War II, British an USA education advisors arrived and the instruction language at secondary level was English. Under the Derg regime influences continued but compared tot

he previous era the advisorsd came from the Soviet Union and East Germany. The biggest increase was the enrollment in elementary level. A large-scale illiteracy program was also succesful despite the civil war (Roach 2018). The first higher education institution in Addis Ababa was established in 1950 and was the only one until 1974 when the Mengistu Haile Mariam regime /1974-1991/ founded four more university colleges. Until 2000 there were 2 universities and 17 colleges, and the Ministry of Education was incharge of the entire system (Nuffic 2018; Roach 2018). Reforms were needed, and as a result, the government introduced the following Acts in 2003 and 2009 (Proclamation Nr 351. and Nr 650.). From that point, universities became autonomous and set in charge of their managers, presidents, programs. The main reason for these reforms was to reach the required quality and standardization. (Woldeyes – Sehoole 2015, p. 159.) As a side effect, comparing 2007 to 2012, the ratio of female students from 9% increased to 20,2%.
At the moment there are 38 universities, 40 private institutions and 29 teacher training colleges. (Nuffic 2018)
After the civil war was ended in 1991, the enrollment in education started to increase. From 29 % the elementary level enrollment jumped to 86% by 2015 and secondary encreased to however modestly, and upper-secondary from 16% to 26% between 1999 and 2015.

Reforms and developments

The higher education system in Ethiopia faced different problems in the 20th century, such as inequitable access, outdated curriculum, inefficient utilization of resources, and poor quality education. These problems lead us to possible alternative ways of higher education, such as open universities and other online possibilities. Compared to other countries measured by UNESCO, we can see examples of expansion in higher education. It is caused by the new age group – over 30 ys old learners who have missed their chance to study in their 20s or wish to improve their qualifications or change their carrier path. (Woldeyes – Sehoole 2015, p. 159.) In Ethiopia, we can see this tendency with 1991 79.000 enrolled students and 600.000 in 2012. However, this expansion wasn't followed by a rising in quality. Despite of the increasment of enrolling it still remain under the African level, eg. half of the Sudanese, and only third of the students are woman. Based on the research led by the Indira Gandhi National Open University in the African continent, and especially in rural areas of Ethiopia, distance learning could be a quality alternative to on-site higher education as the government could provide a policy framework. This kind of education could be beneficial, especially for disadvantaged groups such as women. (Woldeyes – Sehoole 2015; Roach 2018)
On contrary only 15% of the university instructors had doctoral degrees in 2015. Many students are taught by inexperienced BA degree holder teachers. Many private universities diplomas have dubious quality (Roach 2018).

By 2015 the goal was to achieve complete enrollment in primary education by reforming the curriculum and involving rural areas changing gender inequalities.
Now the education system is in a state of crisis since elementary enrollments face stagnation and drop-out rates are among the highest in the world (Roach 2018). There is a huge gap between social classes, low-income housholds, enrollment of boys and girls – see details below.

As concluding the numbers we can state that the tertiary level education is still elitist, and mostly men from well-off households are able to attend, women still have more potential in attending the universities.

Curriculum changes

Since Amharic is the official language of Ethiopia, in most schools it is the language of instruction, however, Amharic is spoken by only about 30% of the population. Oromo, Amharic, Somali, Tigrinya and about 10 other languages are used in elementary and secondary level. As mentioned above in tertiary education English is the language of instruction.

Most children start school at age 7, however there are overaged ones.

The curriculum is standardized nationwide, the instruction language vary on the region.

The subjects are from grades one to four Amharic, mother tongue, English, mathematics, environmental science, and arts and physical education. From grades five to eight includes languges – mentioned above, as well mathematics and physical education, but also features civics, integrated science, social studies, and visual arts and music, as well as biology, chemistry, and physics. (Roach 2018)

The assessment system is below explained in table 2 and 3.

Assessment system under university level (Table 2. based on NUFFIC 2018)

Letter grade	In percentages	Meaning
A	90-100	excellent
B	80-89	very good
C	60-79	satisfactory
D	50-69	average
E	Under 50	failure

Exceptionally gifted pupils receive the following grades:

Very great distinction	Five or more A's
Great distinction	Four A's
Distinction	Three A's

Higher education assessment system (Table 3 NUFFIC 2018)

In numbers	Letter grade	Meaning
4	A	excellent
3	B	good
2	C	satisfactory
1	D	unsatisfactory
0	F	failing

When we compare the two assessment system as seen above, we can see the differences in the structure. At the same time, letters from A to E are used from excellent to failure at university at primary and secondary levels. We might see 4-0 in numbers or A-F excluding E to measure similar rankings. From our perspective, as a meta-analysis of the Ethiopian education system, we must underpin here some anomalies. We suggest using the same assessment system during all levels of education to minimize confusion among teachers and students.

Calendar – school year

"The Ethiopian school year runs from September to the end of June or the beginning of July. Universities usually have two semesters of 16 weeks each. When reviewing academic documents from Ethiopia, it's important to note that the country follows its own ancient calendar, which can be difficult to understand. The Ethiopian year begins on September 11 and has 13 months: 12 months of 30 days and another month of five days (six days in a leap year, which occurs every four years). As a rule of thumb, Ethiopian calendar years are approximately seven or eight years behind Western calendar years, that is, November 1, 2018, is Tikimt (February) 22nd 2011 on the Ethiopian calendar." Online conversion tools might help if there is no date stamp with both calendar mentioned in official documents. (Roach 2018)

Finance

Funds, sponsors, investments – other countries

As one of the government's priorities, since the 1980's, public expenditure on education has increased from 10% to over 23% of the total budget. By 2013, the government gradually increased its spending up to 27% after a fall from 29-30% in 2011-12.

	Education expenditure as % of total government expenditure
1985	8.2
1990	7.5
1995	13.8
2000	13.6
2005	16.7
2009	23.6

Table 2 – Education expenditure trends 1985–2013
Source: (Engel 2010)

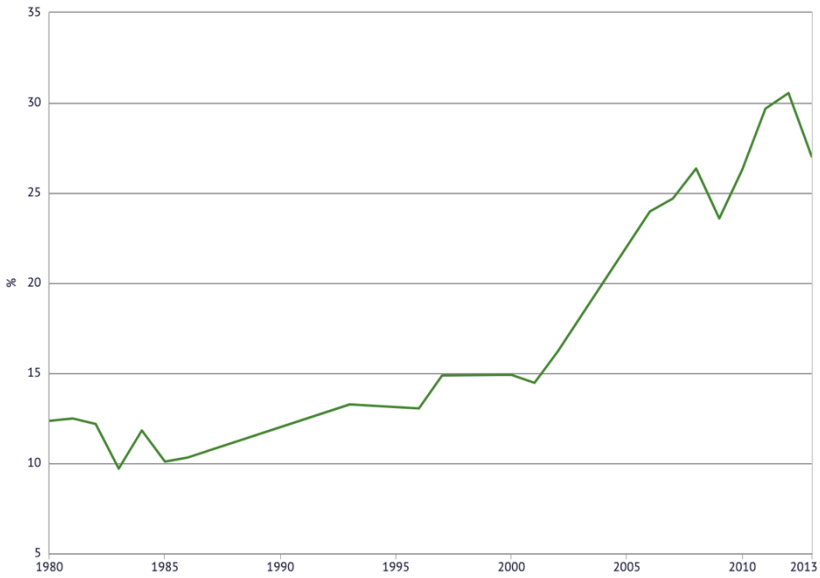


Chart 2 – Ethiopia's total government spending on public education since the 1980's
Source: https://public.knoema.com/hdysppc/education-statistics

According to knoema.com, public expenditure on education as % of total government expenditure embraces the total public education expenditure (current and capital) expressed as a percentage of total government expenditure for all sectors in a given financial year. This includes government spending on educational institutions (both public and private), education administration, and subsidies for private entities (students/households and other privates entities).

The allocated budget focused mainly on the marginalized groups, such as women, the rural and pastoral communities. The government eliminated school fees in primary and lower secondary, constructed schools, teacher hiring and training programs offered, adult literacy programs, alternative programs for children in rural areas, and school catering for free. The reforms seem to be working because of the effective development partnerships between parent-teacher associations, local education training, woreda boards, and the government. To put in force, the local autonomies are recently recognizing the importance of education among boys and girls. These reforms also have coincided with social protection and poverty reduction strategies. The legislation also leads to raising food security as a side effect too. (Engel 2010)

All these should be understood in the context of the country's annual growth figures, which have been among the highest in the world for many years – also acknowledging the fact that it has been challenged lately as a result of the pressures of the global pandemic to a large extent. Between the 1980s and 2021, the annual growth rate averaged 5.94 %. Ethiopia is still among the fastest growing economies with a figure of around 6 % per annum. (See charts 3 and 4) As explained by Kelsall, from an economic point of view, "*the government has retained a great deal of control over the principal levers and strategic sectors of the economy, rather in the manner of an East Asian developmental state*." (Kelsall, 2013: 102) As long as Ethiopia was among the top performers seeing high GDP growth for over two decades since the mid-1990s, "*the next generation entered the economy with incomes that were twice as high as the previous generation's*" (Kevane, 2020: 127). In addition, other development indicators were improving steadily, amongst which the Human Development Index (HDI) was also improving significantly (Chart 5).

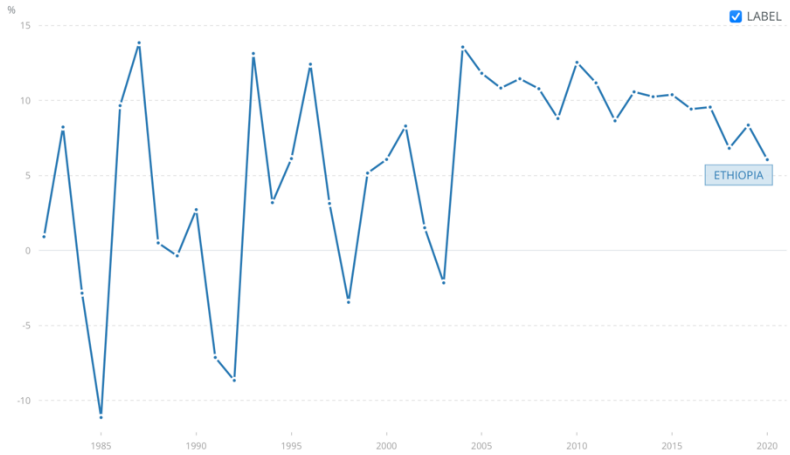


Chart 3 – Ethiopia's annual GDP growth (%)
Source: data.worldbank.org

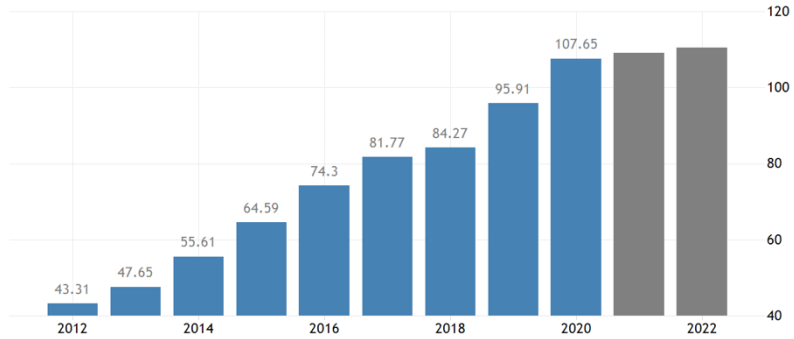


Chart 4 – Ethiopia's GDP in billion USD
Source: https://tradingeconomics.com/ethiopia/gdp

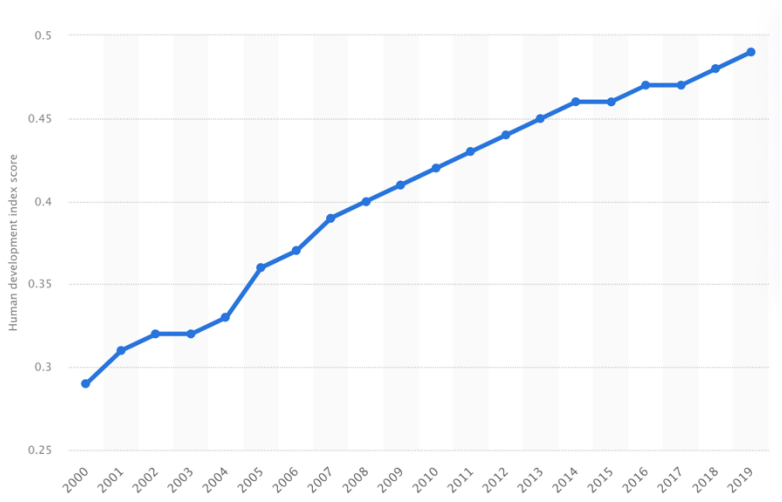


Chart 5 – Ethiopia's Human Development Index 2000–2019
Source: https://www.statista.com/statistics/1236824/human-development-index-of-ethiopia/

Statistics, data

Participation in education in Ethiopia has increased significantly. Approximately 3 million pupils were in primary school in 1994/95. By 2008/09, primary enrolment had risen to 15.5 million, which is a 500% improvement. (Engel 2010) This tendency has continued and by 2020, it has been on a steady upward curve, exceeding 100%, “due to the inclusion of over-aged and under-aged students because of early or late school entrance and grade repetition.” (theglobaleconomy.com based on UNESCO data)

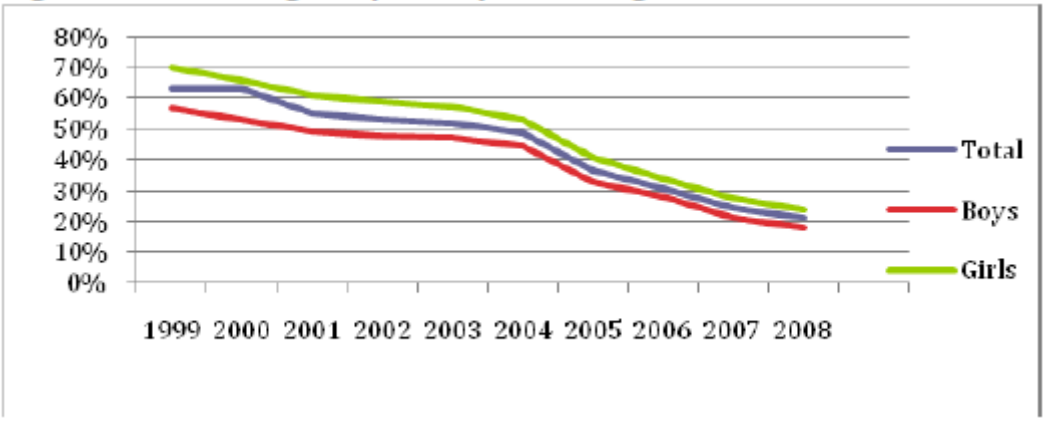


Chart 6: Percentage of primary-school-age children out of school, 1999-2008
Source: (Engel 2010)

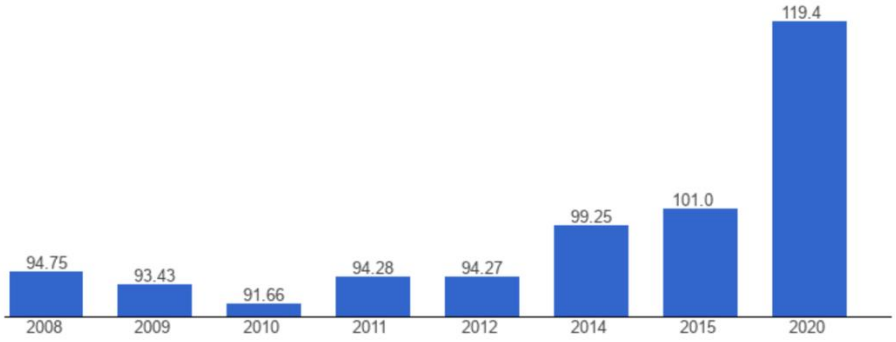


Chart 7: Primary school enrollment, percent of all eligible children, 2008-2020
Source: https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Ethiopia/Primary_school_enrollment/

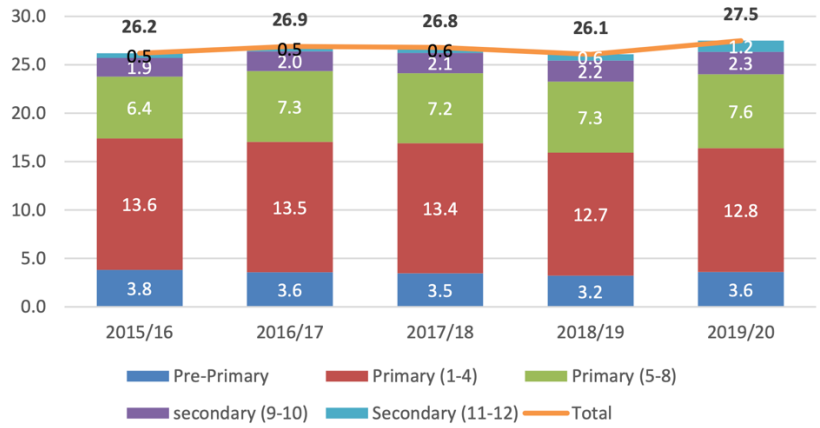


Chart 8: General education enrollment trends, in million, 2015-2020
Source: https://www.unicef.org/ethiopia/media/4751/file/Education%20Budget%20Brief%202020-21.pdf

According to Engel, the expenditure in the education sector has increased, leading to higher participation (Engel 2010). However, based on PISA, TIMMS, and other assessment examinations, it is not enough to improve literacy. Increased local and regional autonomy and community-based programs might also lead to this successful result.

STEAM

Women at school – gender issues emphasis on STEM

The gender gap – especially in tertiary education – is a center of scientific attention. There are several papers investigating the issue, emphasizing the scientific performance of women, especially in the STEM fields. As explained earlier, education has primary importance in Ethiopia as a developing country. The gender gap means economic and human resource squandering. It is also shown by the fact that the annual cost of the gender gap is 1,1 billion dollars in agriculture and entrepreneurship and other 1,5 billion dollars in wage employment, according to WorldBank (Buehren et al. 2019). However, there is some contradiction. While the government of Ethiopia consistently marks reaching gender equality, providing better education for youth and women, etc., as a goal of primary importance, public expenditure doesn't seem like contributing enough. Based on numbers and capital of operational investment projects by sector, spending on education was 0,2% of GDP in 2017/2018, 0,7% in 2018/2019, and 0,1% in 2019/2020 (NBoE 2020). It is far beyond the average 5% of European countries in 2020 (Eurostat 2020). There are differing opinions about to which degree policies are effective. According to Molla (2013), policies don't include structural inequalities, although this is why gender inequality is in general. Despite the growing number of women in tertiary education, gender inequality stays because of the lack of active participation. Academic women also have lower positions than men, insecure about sexual harassment. The goal of policies is getting more women into universities and reducing the number of drop-outs, which can be seen as a relatively shallow symptomatic treatment. Therefore, according to Molla, policies need to consider underlying causes. It is supported by Buehren's finding of wage employment, where factors like age, marital status, or having a university degree didn't explain gender gaps. The study didn't consider characteristics (like motivation and communication skills), suggesting more complex and underlying causes behind gender gaps (Buehren et al., 2019). We aim to review the deep roots of the gender gap in education in the following.

In 1994, the new Education and Training Policy was a milestone in expanding tertiary education. A decade later, Semela (2006) examined the effects of expansion. Looking at the enrolment rates between 2000 and 2005, Semela found that "*the expansion of the higher education sector is rather widening the already existing social inequity between the sexes"* due to a steady increase in men. Based on the total numbers of dismissed enrolments in 2003/2004, the male has only 6,2% opposed to 30,7% of women. The majority of these dismissals (22,3%) in descending order stem from natural sciences, agriculture, engineering, social sciences, and health sciences. Many difficulties unfold from interviews with university students gathered into three main groups. The first is socio-psychological factors, which consist of interpersonal problems.

Bullying, sexual harassment by male students, and request by them to do sexual favor in return are to support shows the deep-seated nature of gendered beliefs, which exceed verbal expressions. The fear of approaching women's instructors to ask for academic support and falling in love with somebody who doesn't support them also contributes to the problems. The second group of difficulties is educational and guidance and counseling support, which is "*also cited as a reason behind high female attrition*," Semela claims. There are mainly institutional problems, just as the lack of adequate learning materials, previous academic experience. (Secondary schools don't provide this.) The absence of guidance and counseling services leads to high rates of attrition and the inconsistent qualifications of teachers, especially in physics, mathematics, civics, and history, where there are many unqualified teachers. More subjective factors contain beliefs that instructors are not taking them seriously. Do not attempt to extend sympathy and support and view that the 'Gender Office' with its current organizational capacity, can do little to fend off women's problems at university. The third group of difficulties concerns financial and health obstacles, which can be the reason behind women's lack of success in their studies. Considering the above, Semela concludes that *"despite gender-sensitive policy frameworks, female access to higher education study did not show a balanced growth over five years. (...) Policies adopted to bolster females participation via affirmative action in higher education do not seem to come into full force due to the multi-dimensional nature of the problem. It* consists of *"Socio-psychological factors and problems related to interpersonal relationships conditioned by the university environment, provision of academic and guidance and counseling support, and financial and health problems"* (Semela 2006:88-89). Although this study was created more than one and a half decades ago, many of the mentioned problems seem to be remaining in time: in 2006/2007, only 7,9% of enrolled students were women and only 5,7% of graduates in the ten major public universities (Tesfaye 2010). According to a study from last year, the gender gap in the numbers of graduate students and enrollments in STEM fields continues to exist. However, the general gap - excluding STEM - is narrowing. In the case of STEM, the gap is more significant: more than 8,000 males were graduating in 2013 and less than 2,000 women. For comparison, the two numbers in 1999 were over 1,000 and almost 0 (Melak 2021).

In a more recent study, questionnaires about university females' perception of factors affecting their academic performances showed the following. "*Most female students agreed that institutional, family and background, environmental and socio-cultural, behavioral and commitment related factors affect their academic performance and competency*" (Mamo 2017). Similar to Semele's findings, institutional–related problems persist: the quality of dormitory, shortage of learning materials, and other objective aspects were holding women back from achieving more. Poor teacher assessment and evaluation were also a problem, which seems to be a personal and institutional problem. Female students perceived that teachers don't measure their knowledge, pointing in the direction of the issues in the structure and thoughtfulness of the evaluation system. Other findings are consistent with this: high school education

performance, a potential role model in the family - also an engineer or technologist - and the family's annual income positively influenced women's choice of learning engineering and technology (Melak-Singh 2021). The main factor was expected higher salary, to which we return later. Melak (2021) analyzed women's participation in STEM education, investigating the factors affecting women's achievement in engineering and technology university majors in Ethiopia.

Based on their statistical models, significant factors affecting academic performance are:

Socio-cultural factors (labor market, regional differences).
High school educational background and university infrastructure.
The teaching methodology followed by teachers and peer learning habits of students.
Academic curriculum and sexual harassment.

While most of the studies are about tertiary education, a study was carried out in the government schools of Wolaita Soddo Town. They made questionnaires with 490 10th grade students, investigating levels of interest and hate on physics, biology, chemistry, and mathematics using a 5-degree scale from 'very interesting' to 'hate very much' (Hamelo 2016). They found that no females were interested in physics and less than 10% were somewhat interested. It is in stark contrast with boys' answers. The level of interest of girls was 20. In the case of boys, it was 120. The story of hate was 110 in the case of girls and 30 in the case of girls. The contrast is clear and sharp, making physics stand out from other subjects, showing similar but less extreme tendencies in gendered interests. In the case of chemistry, the trend is similar but not as black and white. Mathematics seems to have equal attitudes between genders: the level of interest was 150 in the girls' case and 160 in the boys', and the level of hate was only 30 in the boys' and 50 in the girls' case. Biology showed similar tendencies. Beyond the reasons for hating physics, boys' most stand-out reasons were teachers' approach (28%) and the difficulty of the subject (28%). At the same time, in the girls' case, it was primarily the teachers' approach (45%) and no practical session (20,8%). It seems that teachers cause difficulties in general, which is especially true in the case of girls, while the plight of the subject isn't a problem for them – or at least not the most decisive (Hamelo 2016). It may indicate gender-based behaviors and beliefs of teachers, negatively influencing girls' interest in physics.

Regional specificities may also influence this observation, as this study isn't representative. Howsoever, teachers' attitudes serve as a significant influence on girls' education which is supported by others too: "Teachers' *professionalism, planned classroom practice and positive interaction with students have vital importance in learning improvement and enhancing students' academic competency*" (Mamo 2017:214). The peculiar position of physics is also supported by the fact that enrolment in physics is the lowest compared to other STEM fields. Applicants assigned to the physics undergraduate programs scored lowest according to Ethiopian National Higher Education Entrance Examination, which "*is a disturbing finding, particularly for a country that thrives on building its human resource in science and technology*" (Tesfaye 2010:329). According to the author, some reasons behind this are limited job opportunities in the industrial sector; it's excessively abstract for application in day-to-day life**.** Other reasons are weak mathematical background, the lack of well-qualified high school teachers, and the culture: "*physics is viewed as an exclusively male preserve, and this has unfortunately perpetuated institutionally*" (Tesfaye 2010:328). On the contrary, some studies found that gender has no significant influence on scientific attitude. Based on self-report questionnaires among secondary school students: "Both male and female students scored

similar and excellent grades in chemistry, biology and physics subjects, indicating that gender has no significant influence on their achievement in science" (Missaye 2018:51).

In 2003, the government of Ethiopia made a comprehensive reform that affected every aspect of the education system. The paradigm shift called Teacher Education System Overhaul [TESO] was "*designed to address educational problems in Ethiopia. TESO introduced significant structural changes and promised to bring a 'paradigm shift' in the Ethiopian educational system by engaging teacher education in changing society and promoting democratic, practical, and problem-solving education*" (Mekonnen 2008:281). However, studies about its effect suggest a somewhat unfavorable picture as TESO seemed contradictory. On the one hand, it provided elements missing from the education system before – mainly an overall framework –. Still, on the other hand, "*The promise and assumptions of TESO are challenged by considering extant realities in Ethiopian schools and evidence from the literature on effective teacher education programs and educational reform. The paper reflects on how TESO compromises some elements of effective teacher education programs*" (Mekonnen 2008:281). A few years later, Bekele and Messe (2011) investigated the effect of TESO amongst mathematical and natural science teachers after they participated in the program. The goal was a shift towards a more student-centered way of teaching. The results were mixed: different components of student-centered teaching were implemented at different levels based on classroom observations. Half of the aspects were enacted (using students' existing knowledge; teachers' use of discussion-provoking questions), while the other half was implemented inadequately (providing opportunities for learners to utilize new ideas conducive classroom environment for discussion). They also found weak performance in using materials and learning activities, letting students independently work with the learning materials – all of which provide life-relating activities. It is connected to the dominance of theory which drives students away. "*Teachers were active in making their lesson student-centered at the beginning of the classes but fell back to the traditional teacher-centered approach after that*" (Bekele-Messe 2011:44). This attitude "*has become a tradition in Ethiopia*," which shows the inertia of traditional ways of education and the short-term effects of the program. Similar problems were identified by Yeenalem (2019). Examining mathematics education as a discipline, the author found that teaching mathematics as a domain of knowledge and research is in an early stage in Ethiopia. They were investigating both institutional and scientific aspects (postgraduate academic programs, conferences, published articles). *"Collectively, the reviewed articles tend to demonstrate the process or activity aspect rather than the disciplinary values of mathematics education. It could be attributed to the dynamics of teacher education programs over the last two decades.*" They won't publish their work.

In what has been explained so far, the role of cultural beliefs and gender roles are significant issues that influence females' participation and success in education. Yirgalem(2019) led research regarding stereotypes about females in STEM fields among university students. Female and male participants both "*shared the belief that the Ethiopian society attributes less mathematics/science ability to females and better mathematics/science ability to males*," but none endorsed it. They also tested negative stereotypes and their effects by activating them. Results showed that stereotype threat negatively influenced female participants' intention to major in STEM fields both directly and indirectly: stereotype threat reduced mathematics/science self-efficacy, which in turn reduced intention to major in STEM fields. Lack of self-efficacy acted like a self-fulfilling prophecy: women who think about themselves like that are prone to avoid challenging activities and *"dis-identify with education and occupations that demand mathematics/science knowledge*" (Yirgalem 2019:110-111). However, exposure to stereotype threats doesn't automatically mean a lack of self-efficacy or reduce the

possibility to choose from STEM fields. The combination of exposure to such stereotypes and perceived lack of social support from teachers and parents influences women negatively (the effect of stereotype threat reached statistical significance only when the support from parents and teachers was low). "*Participants in the stereotype threat condition reported persisting in their STEM intention given that they perceive others' support. These participants might feel that they have coping resources to manage any threats in the STEM contexts. Because of this, they might not avoid STEM activities and environments"* (Yirgalem 2019:113). Little support can fulfill this function if it derives from authority figures. In summary, the importance of teachers' or parents' legitimation and support can compensate for stereotype threat. It draws attention to the collaboration between parents, teachers, and students.

Several factors go beyond university. The lack of potentially good work outside of university influenced women negatively, similarly to limited job opportunities and excessive deviation from practice (Mamo 2017, Tesfaye 2010). Mamo also highlights the importance of family background as educated parents can support their daughters better. If there was an academic background in the family, it also positively influenced women through role models and socialization in the family. Others also support that, but counterintuitively, they found that the family's income level of education counts as a minor influence (Gobena 2018). There are some contradictions; as expected, a high salary and a higher family annual income positively influenced (Melak-Singh 2021). To sum it up, students' scientific attitude depends on several factors both inside and outside the university. Labor market position and opportunities are determining factors, while the effect of family background is more complex, which shows in contradictory studies over the years.

Literacy

The last census in Ethiopia took place in 2007; this is the latest statistics regarding the whole population. This section prefers to rely on more new statistics, primarily from UNESCO. Partly due to the large population, statistics are often incomplete - for example, from 2011-to 2018, there were only two years where statistics about net enrolment rate [NER] are available. It means some limitations when it comes to drawing conclusions or comparability. Literacy is a central and indispensable ability for a modernizing country like Ethiopia, especially when the government intends to build a society that can participate in the global capitalist competition as effectively as possible (NPC 2019). The foundations of this can be laid out by education. Therefore in this section, we aim to give an overview of that today's Ethiopia.

The total adult literacy rate - among the population aged 15 years and older - was 27 in 1994 and grew to 51.8 in 2015, including a remission in 2005, which is significantly lower than the average in Sub-Saharan Africa (65.8), according to UNESCO. The youth literacy rate (between the ages of 15 and 24 years) is far better (72) than among the population aged 65 years or older (15.2). The illiterate population senior 15-24 years has decreased since 2005 but has grown among the population aged 15 years and older, which partly may be caused by the general aging of the people. Gender differences also show literacy as females are significantly more illiterate, especially in people older than 15 years. The difference is minor in the case of young people (about 2%, contrasted with 16% in adult literacy rate), which also supports the tendency of the shrinking gender gap over time. Due to the relatively high rates of illiterate population, Ethiopia has several adult literacy programs, which we will discuss later.

There has been a significant improvement in the historical trends of education since the 1970s. In 1971, GER was only 39,7% in primary school, which grew to 161% in 1996. Since then,

there has been a minor recession; it was 141,3% in 2012 (WDI 2014). How could society adapt to such a vast expansion? One of the measurements worth considering is the number of out-of-school children, or dropout rates, as it shows the retaining power of education. The number of out-of-school children has decreased significantly. In 2011, over 3.000.000 children were out of school (1.415.000 male, 1.697.000 female). In 2014, it was under 2.500.000. A closer look reveals that the decrease is gendered as it stems primarily from males; the decline was less significant in the case of females (1.313.000). By 2020, there was a slight decrease among boys (763.000 instead of 911.000).

In contrast, a slight increase happened in the case of girls (1.424.000). It suggests an ambiguous effect of policies regarding education and education itself as it seems to affect boys more than girls (UNESCO). An important note is that while these numbers mean a country's average, there are heavy differences between regions.

Gender differences also show in the enrolment rates at different school levels. Gender Parity Index [GPI] boils down inequalities found in gross enrolment rates to one number, using female GER divided by male GER, where one means gender parity and 0 means gender imparity. There isn't a significant difference between the genders in pre-primary school; GPI stays between 0,94 and 0,96 between 2011 and 2020. In primary education, slight differences show: GPI was between 0,91 and 0,93 (UNESCO). This small inequality became even more interesting, knowing that both repetition and dropout rates for grades 1-8 are lower in girls' cases.

Similarly, the survival rate to grade 5 is also higher (53 compared to 50), but the completion rate to grade 8 is significantly lower (68 compared to 73), according to UNESCO. In 2020, the ratio decreased notably between grades 1-4 and 5-8, indicating a low transition rate between the first and second cycle of primary education (MoE 2020). Moving to secondary education, GPI was 0,96 in 2015, which improved from 0,88 in 2011. Nevertheless, in 2019/2020, the GER of females (48.6) is less than males (53.5), suggesting that "*transition from primary to secondary education is low nationally as the GER for secondary is shown to be much lower than primary, with notable regional disparities"* (MoE 2020:48). In tertiary education, gender differences became spectacular. There is some improvement, starting from 0,44 GPI in 2011 and 0,6 in 2018. However, almost twice as many boys get enrolled in tertiary education as girls (UNESCO). The conclusion is similar to the out-of-school children: on a macro level, there is a tendency toward more expanded education, but it seems that boys benefit more from that than girls. "*There is a huge gender gap in enrolment among male and female, and most universities are confronted with insufficient supplies of text and reference books; laboratory and workshops equipment; and access to ICT facilities*" (ESC 2017:50).

This section reviewed statistics about literacy and education, with some reflection on gender differences. As we saw, women face several inequalities. They also seem more conform: lower dropout and repetition rates and higher survival rates suggest a better adaptation to the educational framework. It is not surprising as female socialization, especially in traditional areas, still requires compliance and cooperation from women. Based on that, it would be logical if more women would finish school, but as we see, statistics show otherwise. In the next section, we'll investigate further the relations between genders and the possible explanations for educational disparities.

Assessments

Ethiopia is not involved with the international assessment examinations, not in PISA, TIMMS or PIRLS. If we need internationally recognized assessments and comparisions, we might need to suggest to the legistlators to get involved with these examinations. The OECD's Program for International Students Assessment (PISA) is about reading literacy, mathematics and science knowledge. International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) organizes the following two assessment examintions. TIMMS and PIRLS are tools for monitoring international trends in mathematics and science achievement at the fourth and eighth grades (TIMMS) and reading literacy at fourth grade (PIRLS). Hovewer some African country participate these examinations – PISA: Egypt and Ivory Coast, Ethiopia doesn't. TIMMS: Egypt, Morocco, Lebanon, South Africa, Ethiopia doesn't. PIRLS: Egypt, Morocco, South Africa, Botswana participated once in 2011, Ethiopia doesn't. We need to understand why?

Inclusion – drop out

Traditionally boys were more likely to attend and drop out of school since girls expected to get married as soon as they reached their first period. The dropout rate has decreased after increasing the minimum marriage age to 18 and implementing gender-sensitive teaching methods. Hiring new teachers also helped to increase attendance – according to Engel (2010). However, the quality of education is still an issue that needs to be solved. If the quality is higher, the dropout rate will drop further. Recognizing the importance of attendance at the secondary level would also minimize the dropout rate at the primary level. Child labor needs to be also annulled, according to the summarized research and internationally recognized child protection laws, such as the UN Convention of Rights of the Child.[1]

As we can see in the following table, some regional characteristics are indisputable.

	Region	Multi-dimensional Poverty Index[a]	Population (million)[b]	Population of preschool-aged children (million)	Primary net enrolment ratio[c]	Primary gender parity index[d]
Group 1	Addis Ababa	0.085	3.27	0.20	105.8	1.18
	Dire Dawa	0.338	0.44	0.03	87.2	0.91
	Harari	0.333	0.23	0.02	97.6	0.85
Group 2	Tigray	0.537	5.06	0.39	109.7	0.94
	Amhara	0.588	20.40	1.73	103.7	0.96
	Oromia	0.592	33.69	3.09	97.0	0.87
	SNNP	0.574	18.28	1.60	109.1	0.89
Group 3 Emerging	Afar	0.663	1.72	0.13	48.4	0.90
	Somali	0.647	5.45	0.52	72.3	0.78
	Benishangul-Gumuz	0.584	1.01	0.09	96.1	0.84
	Gambella	0.474	0.41	0.03	113.8	0.92

Table 3. Regional characteristics are education enrollment (population is based on the 2007 census) (Kim et al. 2022)

In the table, we can examine how certain regions' enrollment indexes differ. The poverty index is based on health, living standards, quality of education, and empowerment indicators. The gender parity index is the ratio of female to male students.
In Table 3. we see the overview of some regional characteristics in Etiopia.

Inclusive legislation

There are about 17 million people has disabilities in Ethiopia. And in the other hand, about 80% of the total population of Ethiopia resides in rural areas with limited or no access to the healthcare system and social services. (Aldersey et al., 2019) The University of Gondar serves

[1] Convention on the Rights of the Child is adopted and opened for signature, ratification, and accession by General Assembly resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989 entry into force 2 September 1990, by article 49. www.unicef.org

people with disabilities with mentorship opportunities and an inclusive campus for disabled people. However, the broader definition of inclusive education is not performed indeed. This idea mentioned above is based on the meaning of inclusion as a lack of ability. According to Booth and Ainscow's definition, inclusive school environments involve everyone's equitable access to school, not limited to disabled and SEN children and people (Booth and Ainscow 2011).
First ever possible interaction with school was in the end of the 1980s and soon more schools were built. (Schiemer 2017)
Another aspect of inclusion is based on the language of insturction. Since there are several language groups are spoken in Ethiopia, the involvment of children can be based ont he instruction language. As mentioned in History of Education section bigger part of the 20th century the language of instruction was French, during the 1990s English was found in textbooks and in 1994 respective ethnical languages were introduced in primary schools. It must be the key to treat everyone equal as the Constitution states. (Schiemer 2017).

In Ethiopia, several types of research have shown why school principals are not able to transform their schools into inclusive institutions; the main factors, according to these investigations, are the following:

- physical and social barriers
- curriculum inflexibility
- teachers preparedness
- poor collaboration between schools and stakeholders (Jaffer & Aminu 2020).

In western Oromia, the investigation by Jaffer and Aminu assessed 225 principals about their readiness and commitments to inclusive education as the school leaders could be one key toward inclusive schools. They realized that only 62,67% -141 principals had attended inclusive education classes during their studies. Those who attended pre-service education before the 1990s not have had special education training. And only 31 of them had training on their job bases. They also recognized that those who attended courses about special needs or inclusive education were more likely committed to such school settings. It means that more knowledge might influence confidence in accommodating students with disabilities. In the mentioned research there was significant attitude difference between principals who obtained training and who are not. It gave confidence to those to attended such seminars. Based ont he research the first step toward an inclusive setting is to gain positive attitude about the inclusive concept. (Jaffer & Aminu 2020, 192.)

Inclusion during the COVID closure

Schools opened in 2020 October after a 7 month closure in Ethiopia, in a present research they examined the impacts on students during these months, and they noticed that girls and adolescents with disabilities are less likely joined distance edutation due to lack of access. Re-enrollment is highly uneven due to the investigation, which has shown higine guidance, smaller class size and catch-up classes are less reachable for marginalized groups. Remote learning was involved Tv and radio and social media platforms such as Telegram. Note that 78% of the students tried remote learning and 84% of them are living in urban areas. In rural areas radio was the most common and self-study among approaches (Jones et al. 2021).

Early childhood institutions

Raising the education standards leads to recognizing the importance of early childhood institutions. There are some common standards in any countries ECCE's (Early Chidhood Care Education) system. Quality and evaluation is a must (Diale & Sewagegn 2021). Attending early childhood education might help to reduce the drop-out rate later on. Another internationally recognized factor and impact is the role of the economic system, especially in disadvantaged groups. Despite these research results, low-income countries neglect them. To UN Sustainable Development Goal in education, total attendance is a benchmark by 2030. (Kim et al. 2022:103) Major policy reforms were put in force in 2010 regarding the early childhood care system. However, children from rural areas are still less likely to attend pre-primary education after the reform, the number of attendees is still increasing. The reading readiness is better among those who attended these institutions, and lower children's reading skills are positively changed after the reform. Attendance rate has increased from 5% - 2010 to 46% - 2016. Parental literacy is a major factor in determining the attendance of early childhood education (Kim et al. 2022: 103)

Conclusions and recommendations

We must consider the role of women in the Constitution, politics, religions, and education. According to the Constitution mentioned above, women has all right equally to men in Ethiopia, and it is essential to note these rights in the legislation. We can see women in high positions in politics and judicial power. But still, according to some religious aspects, women have no right to study in some religions throughout Ethiopia.

According to the statistics we have found, there are over 80 languages spoken in Ethiopia. The phenomenon of triglossia is valid within the education context since, at the primary level, students usually study their mother tongue as the language of instruction; however, at the secondary level, they study Amharic, English, and their regional mother tongue. Last but not least, at the tertiary level, only English is the language of instruction. We note by analyzing the system that multilingual strategies are needed to make everyone feel included. As we note in the Education and Training Policy of Ethiopia, this fact is known by the legistlators too (ETP 1994). According to the Convention Rights of the Child, to use their mother tongue in education is a fundamental right. In this case, Ethiopia should think over the question of the language of instruction.

Ethiopia is missing out on international assessments such as PISA, PIRLS, and TIMMS. We need to understand why they don't join any assessment system? It would be helpful to try at least one of these since it is an objective ranking worldwide and directly enhances the quality of any education system.

What is going on in shadow education? We need further research and an action plan in this regard. We didn't find any evidence of the existence of the so-called shadow education; however, it must exist. There must be at least English teachers or other private teachers preparing students for entrance exams, academic competitions, or final certification exams. To understand the inner world of the education system, we need research and investigation on this topic. It usually influences formal education, the students' grades, and performances during their studies.

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